

Symbol and Theme: A Study of Natural Imagery

in Selected Novels of Emily, Charlotte and

Anne Brontë

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts

University of Cape Town

1994

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Mrs Ruth Boxall, for her unfailing support and guidance during the writing of this thesis. Thanks also go to my colleague, Ms Lara Dunwell, who proof-read the original draft, and whose criticisms were invaluable.

This thesis comprises an in-depth study of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre and Villette, and Anne Brontë's Agnes Grey and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, examining each sister's individual use of nature, and its related symbols and images. This thesis will show how the natural world provides the structural principle on which each of these novels is based, and how the Brontës' use of it reflects and enhances the thematic concerns of their novels. The individuality as writers of each of the sisters is upheld in the thesis, as it examines the novels as separate entities. This is done in order to show that whilst the Brontë sisters all placed an important emphasis on the natural world in their novels, they did so with varying emphasis and intentions.

In Wuthering Heights nature is given a place of prime importance, both as provider of symbols and images, and as a tangible realm. Physically, nature is perceived as the moors that surround Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange; symbolically, it is a realm of freedom from the human world of classification and differences. The thesis employs a Lacanian interpretation of the separation of Catherine and Heathcliff, and this illustrates how the natural world, for them, becomes a realm in which they can regain their childhood unity. It is eventually in the spiritual world, the supernatural realm, that they are united, and this realm is seen as an extension of nature.

In Jane Eyre and Villette, the landscape over which the protagonists move is read as a reflection of their inner emotional states. It is this Romantic 'emotional reciprocity' that is emphasised in Charlotte's novel, and the thesis

illustrates how the symbols and images drawn from the natural world enhance the novels' thematic concerns. Both of Charlotte's novels describe a young woman's retrospective account of a search for fulfilment, and a place within society that simultaneously allows her self-expression and self-control. The natural world is not perceived as separate from the human world, but as part of it, and the thesis demonstrates that Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe can achieve a place within both.

In Anne Brontë's novels, the natural world is given a different emphasis. It is used to enhance the thematic intention of both Agnes Grey and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, which is moral instruction. Nature is perceived as part of God's creation and hence pure, and the protagonists' and the other characters' attitudes towards it are indicative of their inner moral stance. This thesis demonstrates that Anne's powers of description are worthy of critical note, and that her use of symbols and images is as evocative as that of her sisters.

This thesis contributes to the already wide range of criticism pertaining to the Brontë sisters, in that it attempts to shed new light on their use of nature, both as a physical entity, and as a provider of symbols and images. It also aims to prove that Anne, frequently marginalized by the critics, is a serious writer, and that her novels, although different to Emily's and Charlotte's, are equally as deserving of a place in the canon of English Literature.

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Introduction

The five Brontë novels under scrutiny -- Emily's Wuthering Heights (1847), Charlotte's Jane Eyre (1847) and Villette (1853), and Anne's Agnes Grey (1847) and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (1848) -- have running through them the common thread of the emphasis placed on the natural world, and the images and symbols the three sisters derived from it. They shared a deep and abiding love for the heath and moors surrounding Haworth, and all three yearned to return whenever they were separated from home, first by being sent to school, and later by financial necessity¹. The natural world thus became a symbol of freedom from the constraints and pressures of society for them, and this much is evident in all five novels.

This thesis will attempt to show that the natural world holds a place of prime importance in each of the Brontë novels chosen, and that whilst each novel's treatment of nature is thematically different, it is nevertheless the thread that binds the sisters together as artists. The relevant chapter pertaining to each novel under study examines the utilization of nature from a different perspective, scrutinizing each novel as an individual entity. This is done in order to show the works of Emily and Charlotte in a new light, as well as to demonstrate Anne's independence, as a novelist, from her sisters, despite the shared usage of nature as the structural principle of their novels.

Whilst chronologically Victorian writers, the Brontë sisters are often allied with the earlier Romantic tradition,

owing to their reliance on the natural world for imagery and symbols. This alliance is strengthened by the importance that each of them places on the creative imagination and on the individual seeking self-fulfilment. Immersed in the outside world of nature, the sisters' protagonists are frequently seen, like the Romantic poets, to be engaged in a type of 'emotional reciprocity' with the landscape. Their own emotional states are projected onto the landscape, and nature's changing patterns and appearances are read as a reflection of that emotion. It is thus "an interweaving of extreme objectivity [the landscape has no 'emotion'] with extreme subjectivity", one that "uses external nature to clarify and give body to inward feeling, and uses inward feeling to give significance to external things" ². This reading ^{of} "meanings into the landscape" ³ is important for gaining a greater understanding of all five novels, and is discussed more fully in the relevant chapters.

The terminology "natural", "nature", and "landscape" utilized in this thesis is taken to signify the outside, external world, manifested in the land itself, its vegetation and animal-life, and in the weather and the elements of fire, wind and rain. This is opposed to the human world of society, with its constraints and social divisions, although "landscape" is often extended to include the houses built on it, for their appearances either blend with the natural landscape or starkly contrast with it, which is in itself significant:

Each of these houses is seen as a projection of the owner's personality... each, in its way, stands for a way of life, for values ⁴.

So, too, do the various characters' attitudes to nature reflect

their way of life and their values, and the symbols and images applied to them are drawn accordingly.

These symbols and images in each of the five novels are drawn from the natural world, and are used predominantly to explain and give significance to the protagonists and their emotions. The Romantic symbol, according to Todorov, is a complex thing: it does not

simply signify, it also is... it is productive, intransitive, motivated; it achieves the fusion of contraries; it is and it signifies at the same time⁵.

Thus, when the natural world is utilized to give significance to something or someone else, it is simultaneously itself and connected to that which it signifies, creating an important, unified entity: "the object is not given in advance to the viewpoint -- but the viewpoint adopted creates the object"⁶. In the terminology of M. H. Abrams, the Romantic poetic mind is not a "mirror", in the traditional sense of the word -- "a reflector of external objects" -- instead it is a "lamp", "a radiant projector which makes a contribution to the objects it perceives"⁷.

This definition of the symbol is important in a reading of the Brontës' work for, owing to the fact that all five novels are personal, retrospective accounts of events, the narrators single out those aspects of nature that add to, and give cohesion to, the prevalent emotion at the time. It is their "viewpoint" that "creates the object"; it is their retrospective narration that "makes a contribution" to the landscape. For Jane Eyre, Lucy Snowe, Agnes Grey and Helen Graham, the landscapes over which they pass are simultaneously themselves -- objective

things-in-themselves -- and reflections of the protagonists' emotions, hence subjective. Even the passions of Catherine and Heathcliff, recounted by Nelly Dean and Lockwood, are evident in the natural symbols used to describe them, for the subjectivity is both the narrators' own and of those whose words they repeat. It is on this structural principle that the novels are founded.

It is, however, crucial to note that whilst all three sisters relied on the natural world for the symbols and imagery in their novels, they did so with differing thematic concerns. The natural imagery of each novel is individually patterned, supporting individual themes, and consequently, nature is granted a different status in each novel. The difference between 'symbol' and 'imagery' is perceived when the natural 'symbols' frequently recur, which thus creates an 'imagery' of nature, a "distinctive pattern" or "tonality" of the text, as opposed to when, in some of the novels -- especially those of Anne -- the 'symbols' are "episodic and isolated images"⁸, which, whilst nevertheless important, are fitted into the hierarchical structure of the novel.

Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights gives prime importance to nature and the symbols and imagery drawn from it. Nature is physically manifested as the moors and heath surrounding the two houses, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, but this tangible nature is superseded by the vast range of referential natural imagery utilized in the text. All the characters of the novel are allied in some way with the natural world, either in a positive or a negative way. For the main protagonists, Catherine and Heathcliff, the natural world symbolizes a realm of no differences, an escape from the cultural and sexual divisions of human society that demand their separation. They embody the

wildness of the moorlands in their own passion, seen as:

a presentation of elemental energies displayed
in their pure activity and not as subject to
moral evaluation⁹.

In contrast, the occupants of Thrushcross Grange cultivate nature, symbolized in their walled park and household pets. The chapter on Wuthering Heights uses Lacanian terminology to illustrate the separation of Catherine and Heathcliff by the occupants of the two houses, and to demonstrate how the natural world becomes a symbol of their childhood unity.

Charlotte's two novels, Jane Eyre and Villette, proffer the most complex use of nature and its symbols. The five arenas of action in Jane Eyre offer a reading of 'emotional reciprocity' in its purest form. Thematically, the novel hinges on a single woman's search for self-fulfilment, as well as her place within society. It balances the external demands of society with her own inner need for emotional expression and individuality. Jane's emotional hunger, and its subsequent fulfilment, is reflected onto the landscapes she traverses, and nature is 'read' to give greater understanding of Jane's own emotional state. The tropes of 'form' and 'feeling', illustrated by Karen Chase's figures of Eros and Psyche, are used to demonstrate how Jane learns to express her inner emotions; how she learns to give form to her feelings. The 'upward and outward' movement of Jane Eyre contrasts with the 'inward' movement of Lucy Snowe in Villette.

Charlotte's later novel is a deeper and darker version of Jane Eyre's search for self-knowledge and fulfilment. It is a psychological drama in which the recurrent pattern of storms and

calm reflect Lucy's own suppressed emotions struggling for expression. She, too, has to balance the demands of society with her own inner emotional desires, what David Lodge termed the:

Great Faustian dilemma bequeathed by Romanticism to modern man [and woman!]: how to reconcile the development of the individual consciousness with the acceptance of the checks and restraints necessary to social and individual moral health -- how to buy bliss without selling one's soul ¹⁰.

The dichotomy of romance and reality is used in Villette to demonstrate this struggle for Lucy. Unlike Wuthering Heights, where the moral world is completely suppressed beneath its raging passions, in Jane Eyre and Villette, the moral world is of extreme importance. Both Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe have to be guided by their inherent morality, and must find the balance between unchecked passion and rigid self-control. For them, nature symbolizes freedom, but importantly, it is not an alternative to, but a part of the human world of existence. Whereas Catherine and Heathcliff seek, through nature, to escape the social world entirely, Charlotte's protagonists must find its place, and theirs, within the social context.

Anne's treatment of nature is different in that it is secondary to the thematic concerns of her novels. Both Agnes Grey and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall have a didactic intention, in which the protagonists teach, by the example of others, of the dangers of an ungoverned and uncontrolled lifestyle. Nevertheless, to say "she never showed any great artistic command over fictional materials" ¹¹ is erroneous. Both her novels are well-controlled and well-articulated pieces of work, and worthy of as much critical attention as those of her sisters. Anne, however, has been marginalized, or even ignored,

by the critics, almost since the publication of her novels. She has been called Emily's "small satellite", "docile Anne" and "modest" ¹². There is, however, little that is small, docile or modest in her descriptions of a man adulterously womanising and drinking himself to death, as did Arthur Huntingdon, or of his wife refusing him his conjugal rights, or even in her portrayal of a governess killing fledglings to prevent their cruel torture at the hands of a spoilt child. Her descriptions are bold and to the point. Even Anne's sister, Charlotte, seemed to have missed the originality of her work, saying:

Anne's character was milder and more subdued; she wanted the power, the fire, the originality of her sister [Emily], but was well-endowed with quiet virtues of her own ¹³.

It is probable that Anne did not 'want' (lack) the power and fire of Emily, but that she did not want (desire) it. The intention of her novels is entirely different ~~from~~ Emily's. For Anne, religion and morality were primary, and if, in her uplifting of ~~these~~ in her novels, she lacks power and fire, then her portrayals are still accomplished with greater artistic ability than 'quiet virtue' would suggest.

Nature for Anne, like her sisters, is used as a symbol of freedom. Her protagonists struggle, imprisoned within rooms and houses, against the immorality and unchecked behaviour of those around them, and the outside world proffers respite from this. There is not, however, the same emotional reciprocity with the landscape as witnessed in Charlotte's novels. Instead, the landscapes over which Agnes Grey and Helen Huntingdon pass are primarily themselves, physical and tangible, and secondary in their significance of the protagonists' emotions. Nevertheless,

nature is allied with what is good and pure, and contrasted with the immorality of humankind. Anne's intense religious beliefs are imported into both her texts, and hence nature is seen as beautiful because it is part of God's creation. Her protagonists do not 'soul-search', as do Charlotte's, because their faith in the divine nature of God and in salvation through Him sustains them through even the strongest of trials. There are no supernatural occurrences in either of Anne's novels, as the only 'spirit' with which she is concerned is the spirit of God, and the dead are removed from the natural order, to face what they will with their Maker. Anne's eyes are firmly fixed on the life after death promised by God, and her protagonists' earthly struggles are only a passage towards that end.

The supernatural, however, enjoys an important role in both Emily's and Charlotte's novels. For Emily it is a realm above and beyond the natural realm of tangible nature and of humankind, but nevertheless real. It defies rational, human explanation and is perceived as the essence of freedom, the ultimate in oneness with creation, beyond the order, divisions and constraints of physical human existence. Importantly, for Emily, this supernatural realm has little or no connection with the traditional concepts of Heaven and Hell: as Heathcliff says just before his death,

Last night, I was on the threshold of hell. Today I am within sight of my heaven... I tell you, I have nearly attained my heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued, and uncoveted by me! (Wuthering Heights, 358, 363).

The ghosts and unexplained forces that pervade the novel are all part of the 'spirit' of the natural world for Emily.

In Charlotte's novels, the supernatural is also part of the 'spirit of nature', but is only evident to those in tune with its power. In Jane Eyre, disembodied voices are heard and carried, and they guide and instruct Jane. Whilst this is still inexplicable in human, rational terms, Mellor sees this 'spirit of nature' as part of a type of "sisterhood" enjoyed between the female protagonist and the natural world. Nature is for Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe "a female friend, a sister, with whom they share their most intimate experiences", and for them, the natural world gives them:

a sense of personal exultation, a consciousness of virtue and self-esteem, and hence of tranquility, a mental freedom from the tyrannies of men and women who are now reduced to impotent insignificance¹⁴.

In Villette the supernatural is darker and more brooding; it 'haunts' Lucy in the form of the twisted Mme Walravens' plottings, and in the ghostly nun. Whilst both these have rational explanations, the ramifications push Lucy to the very extremes of emotion, and her turbulent state of mind is reflected in the storms of the outside world. For both Emily and Charlotte, like the Romantic poets, the 'spirit of nature' is identified with creative energy and with the Imagination, and for both sisters:

the imagination... is a sacred, subversive force -- one which goads you outwards and onwards towards an unfathomable fulfilment, and at the same time plunges you vertiginously into the seething depths of the self¹⁵.

It is thus the aim of this thesis to show in detail how nature and its relevant symbols and images form the inherent

structure on which each novel is based. It has been pointed out that each of the sisters uses nature in an individual way, and whilst nature, as a provider of these symbols and images, is common between them, their novels demand to be read and interpreted as individual entities. Each novel has its own thematic concerns which, once established, are examined in the light of the natural imagery that informs them. This individuality of each text guided the present writer to a different treatment of each novel in its relevant chapter, and these chapters should be read with this difference in mind. The thesis will thus illustrate both the common usage of nature in an artistic way, and the merit of each Brontë sister, ascertained by an individual appraisal of the symbols, themes and natural imagery evident in the novels under scrutiny.

1 Wuthering Heights

The bleak Yorkshire moors, Wuthering Heights on the hill, and Thrushcross Grange in the valley below comprise the physical, natural world of Wuthering Heights and are the arena for the entire action of the novel. The geographical positioning of the two houses immediately establishes resonances of opposition which permeate the whole text, in which Wuthering Heights and the Grange become "twin poles of the action" ¹, and symbols of the two warring families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons. The natural landscape that separates the two is not to be perceived as a mediator between them, but as an escape from them, as nature itself is free from the social and sexual divisions that tear the two families apart, and it exists as a consistent, enduring entity that is not disturbed by the machinations of humankind. Thus the focus is not on nature itself, as a physical entity, but on its significance for the actors in the drama, and especially for the main protagonists, Catherine and Heathcliff ².

In a novel that places so much emphasis on divisions, the natural world -- itself a symbol of unity -- stands counterpoised to the fragmentation and opposition witnessed in, and precipitated by, the human world. The complex, and fragmented, narrative structure of the novel -- Lockwood's journal accounts which 'frame' the text, Nelly's 'story' told to Lockwood, and Isabella's letter -- has a unifying thread running throughout: this is located in the natural imagery and symbolism. All three narrators rely on the natural world as a

means of expression. Throughout the text, nature is used as a point of reference, the protagonists drawing on it to explain and describe not only their own feelings, but also to describe one another, in both a positive and a negative way, drawing on all aspects of the natural world.

The tangible natural world of rocks, moors and heath that separates Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights on a physical, geographical level is utilized symbolically to signify the attitudes and life-styles of the two families. The Earnshaws, a yeoman-farmer family, live on the hill and are thus exposed to the harsh winds and storms of nature. The hardness of their life-style, as they attempt to wrest a living from the unyielding land, is seen reflected in the wildness of the landscape around them. In contrast, the Lintons, in the sheltered valley below, live in a comfortable, protected environment, in which nature is controlled and domesticated, signified by the walled-in park and household pets. These two opposing lifestyles become symbolic in their reflection of the emotional climate of the two families, especially after the separation of Catherine and Heathcliff, where his anger and pain are reflected in the wildness of the Heights, and the Grange's domesticity and culture represent the divide that separates them.

Thematically, the novel pivots on oppositions and divisions:

Its interaction, its extraordinary intricacy of opposed and moderated but still absolute feelings, is an active, dynamic process: not balance but dialectic: contraries³.

The greatest of these "contraries" is the opposition of the natural world, and the human world of laws and classifications.

In Lacanian terminology, nature is allied with the 'Imaginary', an order that is pre-classification, and thus for Catherine and Heathcliff, it represents their childhood unity. The human world is in the 'Symbolic' order, one which defines itself by opposites: whilst nature merely is, the human world is one thing, because it is not something else. It is this type of classification that demands the separation of Catherine and Heathcliff, and which in turn precipitates the tragedy of the novel.

Ultimately, there is a shift from the physical, tangible level of nature to the realm of the supernatural. It is this realm that defies human understanding or explanation, and like nature itself, exists beyond classifications or divisions. It is the "unknown, unconscious realm of nondifferentiation" ⁴. In Natoli's words:

The natural world has both a denotive aspect attached to the familiar and a figurative aspect attached to what is unfamiliar and absent. The chthonic dimension of the natural world is a ghostly dimension that interpenetrates the familiar ⁵.

The unknown realms of death, spirit, and for Catherine, madness, offer a sanctity of no differences. Because Catherine and Heathcliff cannot regain unity with one another in the physical world of nature, they go beyond it, into death, where spiritually they can regain 'paradise', defying the physical and cultural divisions that separated them in the tangible world. The move from the physical/natural world into the spiritual/supernatural realm proffers a symbology of 'space', in which the natural elements of earth and air are allied with physical death and the grave, and freedom of the spirit respectively. This

spatial shift is seen in a movement out of the two houses, into the natural world outside, and then beyond both of these into the supernatural world of the spirit. This supernatural realm is manifested by Catherine's ghost, seen by Lockwood, and sensed by Heathcliff, and after his death, by their re-united spirits which are said to 'walk' on the wild landscape around the Heights.

The moors, modelled on the Haworth moors of Emily Brontë's own experience, are initially seen through the eyes of Lockwood. To him, it is a "perfect misanthropist's heaven" and he intends to "divide the desolation" (45) between himself and his landlord, Mr Heathcliff. Whilst Lockwood is as yet unaware of it, the desolation of the landscape is a reflection of the earthly torment Heathcliff suffers once Catherine is dead. Lockwood is, however, unsuspecting of this and it is from his journal entries that one is privy to the most objective view of the landscape. Whilst he himself injects his own subjectivity into the landscape -- at first, a delight in the isolation, and then a horror at its seemingly dangerous and unknown aspect -- because he is the 'outsider' of the text, it is his descriptions that the reader must trust. His 'emotional reciprocity' with the landscape is, to all intents and purposes, divorced from the true drama of the text. It is he who tells^{us} that "the grass grows up between the flags" (46) at Wuthering Heights, and that "the cattle are the only hedge-cutters", and it is his ~~speculation~~ that provokes the comment that "one may guess the power of the north-wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun" (46).

These opening descriptions at first seem the idle

speculation of a disinterested observer, and yet on a symbolic level Lockwood's words are multifaceted signifiers: the natural elements attributed to the house act as a presentiment. The twisted aspect of the vegetation becomes, on a psychological level, a symbol of the twisted lives of the three inhabitants of the Heights, and also of the twisted master-mind behind the tragedy, that of Heathcliff himself. He is symbolically the "power of the north-wind" (46) that deforms those around him. It is the fusion of these two contraries, the natural world and the psychological human world, that renders the symbolic form so important. Each exists independently, and yet mirrors the other, each imbued with the spirit of the other's "otherness". Even within this building with its "narrow windows", signifying simultaneously a prison and a fortress, the natural world is represented. The wildness of the moors is embodied in the animals that inhabit the house alongside the unorthodox humans.

Symbols of violence are ubiquitous within the four walls of Wuthering Heights. Lockwood sees "sundry villainous old guns, and a couple of horse pistols", "clusters of legs of beef" and a "huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies and other dogs [haunting] other recesses" (46,47). The puppies, usually allied with domesticity, "swarm", suggesting anger and danger, like a swarm of bees, and that the dogs "haunt" the house acts as an adumbrage of Lockwood seeing Catherine's ghost. These descriptions are all metonymic representations of the violence, on a mental and spiritual level, that has rendered the house and its inhabitants as it is in 1801. The emphasis on raw meat (and dismemberment), tools of death, and creatures that haunt the house rather than live in it, is suggestive of a supernatural force operating within the

novel.

The contraries on which the novel pivots are presented within the first few pages, comprising Lockwood's initial visit and forced stay at Wuthering Heights. He is faced with images of "destruction and creation, hell and heaven, exile and reunion, death and rebirth, dejection and joy, paradise lost and paradise regained" ⁶. Or at least, he is faced with the negative pole of each opposition: the products of "paradise lost". It is only through Nelly telling him the story of Heathcliff and Catherine, and ultimately Nelly's own account of Heathcliff's death, that the positive side, the "paradise regained", is revealed.

The fact that Lockwood describes Heathcliff as being "a dark-skinned gypsy, in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman" (47) suggests, on a physical level, that Heathcliff is a man defined by opposites. In the novel he presents a paradox: at once an outsider, the interloper, and also the centre of the drama. Symbolically, he is the destructive force of nature -- embodying the wildness and storms of the outside world -- bringing ruin and disaster to those caught unprotected from his blast. Simultaneously, he is allied with the supernatural realm, defying the natural order and human comprehension: to others he is a "devil" (127), "an unreclaimed creature" (141), "a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being" (188), and a "hellish villain" (175). Nevertheless, in keeping with Todorov's definition of the symbol:

it is and it signifies at the same time: its content eludes reason: it expresses the inexpressible ⁷,

Heathcliff exists as himself, and yet symbolizes the extremities

of the human spectrum of emotions. As a human being he feels pain and anguish at his separation; in his anger and torment he embodies the wildness of the moors, his passions being reflected in its elemental storms. He brings this rage within the walls of Wuthering Heights, and with it comes destruction, the symbols of which Lockwood sees but does not comprehend.

The examination of the symbols present in the opening chapter of the novel is important in two ways. Apart from the physical setting of the scene, the constant reference to death and the supernatural, and to death and violence, the symbols stand as omens of the drama Lockwood will hear from Nelly, but on a more personal level, of the drama he shall be involved in, and witness, during the night he is forced to spend in the house. It is a dwelling "haunted" by animals and objects which occupy an uneasy space; the very furniture seems to be "lurking in the shade" (47). Heathcliff's admission that, "I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive [visitors]" (47), acts as an adumbrage of the famous 'ghost scene' of the third chapter. The gnomic nature of the entire household suggests that Wuthering Heights is not only symbolically haunted, but that on a more literal, and hence more unnerving, level really and truly is haunted by a ghost, which is Catherine Earnshaw.

Leo Bersani speaks of the "ontological slipperiness" of the text, saying that in Wuthering Heights "being is always somewhere else, and human utterance tends to make personality problematic rather than to express it" ⁸. A scrutiny, however, of the symbols employed in these "utterances" sheds a certain light on the matter. It is the utterance of Lockwood to his journal that first exposes the other occupants of the dismal

Heights to the reader. On his second visit, two of the three members of the Linton-Earnshaw-Heathcliff third generation are described. Again, natural and supernatural signifiers are utilized in Lockwood's descriptions of them. Catherine Linton-Heathcliff (Catherine II) is seen as "motionless and mute" (52), as much as the "heap of dead rabbits" (52) Lockwood unfortunately mistakes for house pets. The connection between these two 'occupants' of the kitchen reinforces the unnaturalness of the house, but in a symbolic sense suggests that for all her "slender... admirable form... small features... [and] flaxen ringlets" (53), Catherine II is as much 'alive' as the dead animals. The paradox implied is only made accessible on a psychological level: Catherine II is imprisoned in the house as much as Catherine I, her mother, was imprisoned within the "shattered prison" (196) of her body and marriage to Edgar, and as much as Heathcliff is imprisoned in his very existence in the natural, human world. Catherine II "haunts" the Heights as much as Heathcliff's hellish hounds do. Over and over, themes of fragmentation, death, and imprisonment are reiterated.

Catherine II, herself, seems fragmented, as the only part of her that seems to offer life are her eyes. Lockwood observes that

had they been agreeable in expression, they would have been irresistible... [but] the only sentiment they evinced hovered between scorn and a kind of desperation, singularly unnatural to be detected there (53).

Eyes, so important a theme throughout the novel, act as mirrors, reflecting simultaneously that which surrounds them in the external gaze, and that which happens within the human soul.

Symbolically, Catherine II's eyes speak the words she no longer cares to utter, those of her personal tragedy. Like Heathcliff, Catherine II embodies a paradox between appearance and temperament. Lockwood is shocked when, to frighten Joseph, "the little witch put a mock malignity into her beautiful eyes" (57). On the outside, Catherine II may be beautiful to look at, but her eyes suggest passions and emotions to be wary of bottled up on the inside. It is these eyes -- Earnshaw eyes -- that 'haunt' Heathcliff, for not only do they mirror her scorn for him, but they mirror those of her mother. Heathcliff is continually confronted by two sets of these Earnshaw eyes, Catherine II's and Hareton's. Catherine II, like Heathcliff, is a symbol. As herself, she is daughter, wife, cousin, and woman; on a symbolic level she is the product of the union of Catherine I and Edgar Linton, a living memory of Heathcliff's rival, and the embodiment of everything he has fought to destroy. To him, she is part of the

entire world [that] is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! (p353).

If Catherine II is a symbol of the second generation of the two houses, then one can view Hareton as the representative of the first, and of the ancestral, generation of Earnshaws. It is his name that appears above the door amid "a wilderness of crumbling griffins and shameless little boys" (46). Yet Hareton is also allied with nature:

his thick brown curls were rough and uncultivated, his whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks and his hands were embrowned like those of the common labourer (53).

His aspect symbolizes the roughness and crudity of rural life; the aridity of the wild moors parallels the aridness of his upbringing under the reign of Heathcliff at the Heights:

Now, my bonny lad, you are mine! And we'll see
if one tree won't grow as crooked as another,
with the same wind to twist it! (222).

Paradoxically, despite Heathcliff's ghoulish attempts to avenge himself on Hindley's child, when Lockwood observes the resultant man, he sees beneath the "uncultivated" physicality to a "bearing... free, almost haughty" (53). Hareton's face 'haunts' Heathcliff as much as does Catherine II's: he cries in anguish, "when I look for his father in his face, I find her everyday more!... I can hardly bear to see him" (334). Perhaps even more agonizing is that Heathcliff sees himself in Hareton:

Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal
love, of my wild endeavours to hold my right,
my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my
anguish (354).

Symbolically representative of the previous generations, Catherine II and Hareton, as the only survivors of the third generation, have to define themselves in terms of one another, first through antipathy, and later through love. At the beginning of the novel, Lockwood and the reader are only aware of the paradoxes each character embodies. Yet each character is a mirror of the past; a symbolic entry into the drama Nelly will reveal. But Lockwood has still to encounter one other paradox within the walls of Wuthering Heights before his curiosity is sufficiently aroused to question Nelly as to the nature of this

unorthodox group of people, seemingly held together only by their hatred of one another.

Lockwood is literally trapped at the Heights by the

dark night coming down prematurely, [where] sky and hills mingled in one bitter whirl of wind and suffocating snow (56).

Significantly, all familiar landmarks are obliterated by the snow-storm, rendering his return home to Thrushcross Grange impossible. He is a prisoner at the Heights, and an alien, having nothing familiar with which to identify, and this, perhaps, makes him ultra-sensitive to the undercurrents of tension within the house. It is almost as if the foreboding, oppressive atmosphere of nature has invaded the interior of the house, affecting Lockwood's peace of mind. His attempt to sleep, having studied feverishly the names scratched on the window-sill, is haunted by

a glare of white letters [which] started from the dark, as vivid as spectres -- the air swarmed with Catherines (61).

Without consciously realizing it, Lockwood registers the fact that the Heights is possessed by some strange supernatural force; it oppresses all who inhabit the house. His terrifying encounter with the little ice-cold hand and face outside the window forces him to believe that the room was "swarming with ghosts and goblins" (68) and that Catherine was a

little fiend...she must have been a changeling -- wicked little soul! She told me she had been walking the earth these twenty years: a just punishment for her mortal transgressions, I've no doubt (65).

Whilst, however, Lockwood's cultured, logical mind refuses to accept what has occurred, blaming his fright on a nightmare, it is Heathcliff who reinforces what has happened within the supposedly haunted room. The wildness and confusion of the outside night are mirrored in his torment and anguish as he cries out into the empty snow for Catherine to return to him -- man and nature becoming one in their extremes, symbols of one another.

Throughout the first half of Nelly's narrative, from the advent of Heathcliff's arrival at the Heights, until the time of Cathy's death, nature is the predominating symbolic force. The Romantic imagination of Emily Brontë is seen in these pages as she forms

images which go beyond reality, images that are conjured up by the inner eye and that transform existential reality into some higher reality⁹.

The natural world and its components move beyond the mere level of signification; they create entities which stand by themselves, on both the level of the tangible world and that of the spiritual realm, that "higher reality". Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff dominate the first half of the novel, physically as themselves, and symbolically in the passion and spirituality they embody. Constant reference is made throughout the novel to their natures, their psychological make-up, with few references to external appearance. The latter occur symbolically through the use of natural images. This study of the physiognomy of both the natural world and the characters who inhabit it is seen as

the art of judging character from features,
 type of face, external features of the country
 [and] characteristic (moral or otherwise) aspect¹⁰.

Heathcliff, as a child, is described as a "dirty, ragged black-haired child" (77), and the paradoxes evident to Lockwood when Heathcliff is a grown man are as evident when he is a child. Simultaneously, Heathcliff is seen as a "gift of God; though [he's] as dark almost as if [he] came from the devil" (77). The words of old man Earnshaw symbolically set the stage: "I was never so beaten with anything in my life" (77). Not only will he be "beaten" by this waif, but so will his family and that of the Lintons. Throughout his life, those who come into contact with him will question this paradox, the discrepancy between the external appearance, which is human enough, and the internal spiritual force which is almost supernatural in its ferocity and force. Much later, Isabella will question:

Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad?
 And if not, is he a devil? (173).

Nelly describes him as "Rough as a saw-edge, and hard as whinstone" (76), and to Hindley he is a "gipsy", "cuckoo", "beggardly interloper", and "imp of Satan" (80). Without real cognition of the symbolic force of their words, people instinctively register that Heathcliff's arrival is an omen of doom, and the means to the destruction of their way of life.

Cathy and Heathcliff become "very thick" (78), identifying with one another, and fighting against separation. Before the death of the mediating father, old Mr Earnshaw, the two wild children exist in what Lacan calls the "Imaginary" stage; their existence is untroubled by the classifications of culture and

sexuality, and hence they define themselves exclusively within one another. The "Imaginary" stage of childhood is defined as that when a child:

finds reflected back to itself in the mirror a gratifyingly unified image of itself; and although its relation to this image is still of an 'imaginary' kind -- the image in the mirror is and is not itself, a blurring of subject and object still obtains -- it has begun the process of constructing a centre of self ¹¹.

Catherine and Heathcliff, in childhood, are united, having no concept of divisions in their shared "Imaginary" phase. The death of Mr Earnshaw, however, renders Wuthering Heights a prison, and one which demands the fragmentation of their unity. In order to escape Hindley's tyrannical rule, the two children spend as much time as possible immersed in the natural outside world of the moors and heath. It is in nature that their union is unquestioned:

The heath, or Nature itself, is not a site that challenges the desire of Catherine and Heathcliff, but instead is enfolded within that desire ¹².

It is only on the moors that they can "ramble at liberty" (88), free from the constraints imposed by Hindley.

Previously the lives of Catherine and Heathcliff are untrammelled by the normal constraints of society, and this androgynous existence becomes, "both a way to redefine human nature and an alternative to sexual polarization" ¹³.

The trouble begins when the father dies, and is replaced by Hindley, the new father-figure who, with his new wife, signify the sexual nature of male-female relationships. Hindley's home

becomes a prison for the children, in which they are force-fed sexual definition, religion, and culture. It is the wild moors that signify to them the freedom of spirit that Wuthering Heights forbids them, for it is in nature, on the moors, that their previously androgynous existence remains unchallenged. Importantly, however, they are never seen in actuality on the moors -- the freedom of the external world is only ever alluded to. Whilst the landscape constantly beckons to them, as they grow older, Catherine and Heathcliff are continually seen as , imprisoned and separated from one another: Heathcliff by his tormentor; Catherine, later, by the Lintons. Separation of body is inevitable; the problem is their inability to separate their minds, their spirits and their souls.

The fateful journey across the moors to Thrushcross Grange becomes the precipitator of the ensuing tragedy. The event signifies an entry into the world of distinctions, morally, culturally, and sexually; Lacan's "Symbolic" order. Catherine and Heathcliff, whilst in the "Imaginary" phase, had seen only themselves, and had defined themselves only in terms of this unified entity: each representing external reality to the other; each simultaneously subject and object; both simultaneously themselves and not themselves. However, Thrushcross Grange represents the Lacanian "Mirror" phase for the union of Catherine and Heathcliff: they stare through the glass window and see not only Edgar and Isabella on the inside, but also their own reflections in the glass. Because they do not know the world of Thrushcross Grange, they cannot identify with Edgar and Isabella, and laugh at their 'otherness'. Simultaneously, this 'otherness' alerts Catherine to her own 'otherness' to Heathcliff. He is no longer her reflection, but beside her,

separate from her, and equally aware of their distinctions. It is a moment of crisis, as this moment of recognition renders the unity of their past just that: an image, which they will constantly strive to regain, and fail. Their entry into the "Symbolic" order is complete. Thrushcross Grange, in the Lacanian Symbolic-Imaginary-Real triad, represents the Law, with its culture and refinement. Symbolically, at least for Catherine and Heathcliff, it represents the "difference, disjunction, and displacement" of their previous existence ¹⁴.

Catherine has no time to step back, or even to consider stepping back, into that unity she shared with Heathcliff. She is caught and held by Skulker, an acculturated symbol of nature, and representative of the Lintons. They bring Catherine into the Grange, making her one of them, thus collapsing the differences between herself and the Linton children, whose 'otherness' she had laughed at moments before. She is pulled into the "Symbolic" order, a world of classification and divisions, but recognition of this is delayed by the Lintons' naturalizing the symbol for her. Within the walls of Thrushcross Grange she perceives no differences as she is now 'one of them'. For Heathcliff, however, this thrust into the "Symbolic" is much more dramatic. Moments before, he and Catherine were a unified entity, laughing at the Linton's 'otherness'; now he is physically divided from her, and rejected by the Lintons because of his own 'otherness'. Running to the window they had just looked through and staring through it he now sees his own reflection -- himself -- and Catherine on the other side -- not himself.

For the rest of her life, Catherine refuses to acknowledge the division of herself from Heathcliff, even when she plans to marry Edgar, saying:

We separated!... Who is to separate us, pray? They'll meet the fate of Milo! Not as long as I live, Ellen -- for no mortal creature. Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing, before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff... Nelly, I am Heathcliff -- he's always, always in my mind -- not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself -- but as my own being -- so don't talk of our separation again -- it is impracticable (121, 122).

Forced into "a world of morally exclusive choices... Cathy refuses to be limited or imprisoned, demanding a freedom which is symbolically represented by her beloved moors" ¹⁵.

Heathcliff, however, acknowledges the division, and the knowledge makes him bitter and vengeful. He is twisted and perverted by the "Symbolic" because he is aware of the futility of trying to regain the "Imaginary" -- organic unity with Catherine. In his heart he blames Catherine, crying on the night of her death:

Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy?... You loved me -- then what right had you to leave me?... Because misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or satan could inflict would have parted us, you, of your own will, did it (197).

Yet it is not on Catherine that he avenges himself, but on the Earnshaws and the Lintons, who were the ones who created the differences and forced them between himself and Catherine.

Significantly, from the moment of separation, Catherine is never seen out of doors in nature again. Nevertheless, she constantly strives, through open windows, to regain it, symbolically attempting to regain unity with it and with Heathcliff. In marriage, "the young Catherine who ran wild and free and hardy over the moors is tamed, encumbered and

bound" ¹⁶. Trapped within the parlours and bedrooms of Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights, and the world of culture, Catherine cannot escape back into childhood. Heathcliff, on the other hand, withdraws even further from this world of culture, immersing himself more and more in the natural landscape, embodying its wilder side. Nevertheless, Catherine and Heathcliff continue to be symbols of one another: to Heathcliff, Catherine is a symbol of himself, ~~what~~ what he never became, and what he has always rejected; for Catherine, Heathcliff is a symbol of what she has lost of herself.

The duality represented by Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, however, is more than a mere debate of 'Nature versus Culture', as is suggested by Gilbert and Gubar, in which Wuthering Heights is seen as "raw" -- bare and illiterate, and the Grange as "cooked" -- genteel and presentable ¹⁷. If one moves from this particularly literal definition into the spiritual realm, one realizes that both houses represent imprisonment and fragmentation for, and of, the spiritual entity, Catherine-Heathcliff. The Grange and everything it symbolizes shatters this unity as much as the Heights imposes upon it. Nature thus becomes a symbol for both Catherine and Heathcliff -- a symbol of their childhood unity, and an escape from both the houses that represent their subsequent fragmentation. It is when they both realize that the natural order cannot provide reunion, that they turn to death and the supernatural realm, where spiritually, they will be re-united.

Thrushcross Grange exists both as itself and as a symbol, and -- as at the Heights -- so do its various occupants. But whilst Wuthering Heights, technically a farm house, seems to blend with its rough and rugged natural landscape, Thrushcross

Grange and its finery seem as much an imposition on the natural world as its occupants are on the lives of Catherine and Heathcliff. Its walled park, garden and cultivated orchard domesticate and control the natural environment. To the two children of the sparse and comfortless Heights, however, the Grange initially signifies a veritable palace:

it was beautiful -- a splendid place carpeted with crimson -- covered chairs and tables, and 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 (89).

But symbolically, the house represents the moral, cultural and gender classifications which previously left the pair untroubled. It is here that Catherine is seduced away from Heathcliff.

There is an underlying malignity evident in the way Catherine is caught and held that night at the Grange, despite the trappings of refinement and elegance. Skulker, the bulldog, as representative of the occupants, bites and holds fast Catherine's ankle. The dog, technically a representative of the natural world, is here an acculturated symbol; it is nature perverted, and its biting Catherine is symbolically rape:

the devil had seized her ankle...I heard his abominable snorting...his huge purple tongue hanging half a foot out of his mouth, and his pendant lips streaming with bloody slaver (90).

Violated, Catherine falls from innocence into experience; like Eve, she is tempted and she errs. Her subsequent stay with the Lintons is a 'fall' into lady-like behaviour, away from being a 'rude savage' (87) of the moors; a 'fall' into "the decorous

heaven of femaleness", resulting in the doubling or fragmentation of her ego:

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 Heights¹⁸.

The last Heathcliff sees of his 'double' is her sitting being fed "negus" and "cakes":

kindling a spark of spirit in the vacant blue eyes of the Lintons -- a dim reflection from her own enchanting face (92).

Catherine, often associated with fire, reveals her pleasure at being worshipped so, to her downfall. The Lintons, in turn, are mesmerized by her, and their pale, cosseted lives -- signified by their own blonde physiognomies -- are irrevocably drawn into the fiery wildness of Catherine and Heathcliff's lives.

The more Catherine conceals her true feelings behind the trappings of feminine culture and dress, the more Heathcliff is allied to the wildness of the moors. In comparison to his 'double's' finery, he is seen covered

in mire and dust, and his thick uncombed hair, the surface of his face and hands [were] dismally beclouded (94).

While Catherine "shone forth", Heathcliff remains "black and cross" (94). However, this bodily distinction, even opposition, belies the true status quo. Despite her entry into the cultured world of womanhood, Catherine, childishly, does not conceive of her separation -- at least on a spiritual level -- from

Heathcliff. He, however, feels the distinction keenly. Catherine, momentarily fascinated by the "great blue eyes and even forehead" (98) of Edgar Linton, does however, suffer at the ill-treatment of her 'double': she was "in purgatory throughout the day" (100) when forcibly separated from Heathcliff, and risks physical harm by climbing over the roof and into the garrett to be with him. At this point, physical separation is surmountable, but Catherine's marriage to Edgar reinforces the division of the first night at Thrushcross Grange.

In his Freudian reading of the Catherine-Edgar-Heathcliff triangle, Thomas Moser uses the Freudian Id-Ego-Superego triangle in order to illustrate the dynamism of the novel. Having been seduced into the cultural world of the Lintons, Catherine's desires, signified by Heathcliff, have to be suppressed. He becomes her Id; but fragmented thus, they are equally, and dramatically, consumed by a radical desire for the 'other' that they represent to one another. Edgar, as the father-figure, representative of the Law, is caught in between. He, in effect, becomes the Superego for Catherine's psyche, against which she, in her more passionate moments, rebels, and with whom, as symbolic of her Id, Heathcliff is constantly locked in combat. Catherine, as representative of the Ego caught between desire and the Law, becomes, eventually, weakened and dies, psychologically torn in two ¹⁹.

The natural symbolism utilized to describe these three figures at the height of their drama works on two levels. Catherine, at first, is symbolically represented by fire -- it becomes the signifier of her psychological make-up: "she never had the power to conceal her passion, it always set her whole complexion ablaze" (111), and she recognizes the fire of her

'double' in Heathcliff. In her famous speech she says to Nelly:

Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine
are the same, and Linton's is as different as
a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire (121).

Whilst the symbol of fire is not restricted to Catherine alone in the novel, Van de Laar makes an important connection between fire and Catherine on a symbolic level, saying that:

In the image of fire, the creative-destructive
cycle of Catherine's passion is reflected. The
principle of energy present in the element has
been perverted into a principle of destruction ²⁰.

For it is this 'fire' that first mesmerized the Lintons,
especially Edgar who

possessed the power to depart, as much as a cat
possessed the power to leave a mouse half-killed,
or a bird half-eaten (112).

Ironically, it is this "cat" who worries the 'mouse' to death in the end.

Yet as much as fire attracts and hypnotizes, it also has to be fed, and this is what adds to Catherine's own destruction: without Heathcliff, Catherine's 'fire' cannot fuel itself. The morning after Heathcliff's initial departure Catherine is found half-frozen in front of the "almost extinguished embers" (126) of a real fire, crying "I'm starving" [freezing] (126). Symbolically, her 'hunger' for Heathcliff must turn inward, feeding upon itself, pushing her to her ultimate destruction. For the first six months of her marriage to Edgar, "the gunpowder lay as harmless as sand, because no fire came near to explode it" (131). But spiritually Catherine is wasting away

without her 'other', and symbolically, she is being consumed by her desire for him.

Heathcliff is described by Nelly, in contrast to Edgar, as "what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly coal-country for a beautiful fertile valley" (110). Symbolically implied, Heathcliff is arid and infertile -- yet he is to Catherine, "the eternal rocks beneath -- a source of little visible delight, but necessary" (122), and therein lies his strength. Physical beauty and sexual attractiveness are of no importance in comparison to the spiritual oneness between the two. In contrast, however, Edgar's beauty and Catherine's love for him are "like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it... as winter changes the trees" (122). Edgar possesses none of the fire, spiritual or otherwise, that draws Catherine and Heathcliff together. In anger Catherine screams at him:

Your cold blood cannot be worked into a fever -- your veins are full of ice water, but mine are boiling, and the sight of such chilliness makes them dance" (156).

Edgar is constantly referred to in terms of tamed, cultural things. He is a "soft thing", a "honeysuckle" embracing "the thorn" (131), Catherine; he is a limp thing drawing its strength from an outside source. Without Heathcliff to excite Catherine, she is seen in "seasons of gloom and silence" (131), but "the return of sunshine was welcomed by answering sunshine from him [Edgar]" (131). Unlike Heathcliff, who is both mirror and fuel to Catherine's passions and caprices, Edgar can only reflect and endure them.

The landscape which Catherine and Heathcliff inhabit, and which surrounds them, reflects the emotional climate of the

human protagonists, especially in the seasonal cycle of harvesting and sowing, and in the weather. The rain and the wind are frequent signifiers of forthcoming doom -- often commented upon by either Joseph, a true Yorkshire native, linked to the land by timeless heritage, and Nelly, another Yorkshire native, and therefore seemingly "at one" with the landscape she occupies. The night old Mr Earnshaw dies

a high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney; it sounded wild and stormy, yet it was not cold (84).

His death becomes the event that precipitates Heathcliff headlong into degradation at the hands of Hindley, and his ultimate alienation from Catherine. The wildness of the world outside acts simultaneously as an omen of doom, and as a symbol of the chaos Earnshaw's death precipitates.

So too, on the night Heathcliff overhears that it would "degrade" (121) Catherine to marry him, the natural world mirrors the shadow that is cast in Heathcliff's already stormy life: the evening was "a very dark evening for summer: the clouds appeared inclined to thunder" (124). Joseph, a man of the moors and normally unafraid of the desolation, refuses to attempt to find Heathcliff on "a neeght loike this as black as t'chimbly" (124). The whole evening seems charged with some supernatural force, as if Heathcliff's anger and pain are simultaneously mirrored in, and transferred into

the storm [that] came rattling over the Heights in full fury. There was a violent wind, as well as thunder, and either one or the other split a tree off at the corner of the building; a huge bough fell across the roof, and knocked down a portion of the east chimney stack, sending a

clatter of stones and soot into the kitchen fire (125).

Nelly and Joseph, sensitized to the demonic force of the storm, comment ominously that: "I felt some sentiment that it must be a judgement on us also" (125), and, "This visitation worn't for nowt" (125). Consciously or not, both natives of the land register the omen in the storm, connecting it irrevocably with "that fahl, flaysome divil uf a gipsy, Heathcliff" (127).

Catherine, on the other hand, regardless of the storm, and almost in penance for betraying her true desires, submits herself bodily to the fury of the storm, and the symbolically purifying rain. But with Heathcliff gone, and her sickness over, there are no more storms mentioned. Like a fire extinguished, the storm of passion is held in check. The night Heathcliff returns, after an unexplained three year absence, Catherine and Edgar are seen for the last time in calm togetherness:

they sat together in a window whose lattice lay back against the wall, and displayed, beyond the garden trees and the wild green park, the valley of Gimmerton (133).

The idyllic, controlled picture is irreversibly shattered by Heathcliff. At this point Catherine is truly 'framed' by culture and confined within its context, but on his entry this 'portrait of a lady' ceases to exist, and instead, Catherine "flew" to him, signifying a dash for freedom, "breathless and wild" (134). With her life-source returned, ignited by his "eyes full of black fire" (135), Catherine "glowed" (p.135), fire mirroring fire.

Heathcliff's almost supernatural qualities are emphasised on his return: his anger and malevolence defy rational human

explanation. Always surly, he is now grotesque, and the symbolism used to describe him illuminates his contempt for human life and his cruelty to both humans and animals. He is "a bird of ill-omen" (142):

an unreclaimed creature, without refinement,
without cultivation; an arid wilderness of
furze and whinstone... a fierce, pitiless,
wolfish man (141).

At this point Heathcliff becomes the mirror of the wild, untamed moors; he is the enactment of their threat to human life; he is the embodiment of their destructive element. Whilst the storm could only damage the house, Heathcliff carries his destruction inside and cold-bloodedly sets about annihilating the Linton-Earnshaw families. Hindley is reduced to squalor,

his features were lost in masses of shaggy
hair... and his eyes... were like a ghostly
Catherine's, with all their beauty annihilated (175).

Isabella is mesmerized by Heathcliff's presence, and once ensnared, shares a similar fate to Hindley's. But whilst Hindley's eyes, and later those of Catherine II and Hareton, haunt Heathcliff because they mirror Catherine, Isabella's eyes are Linton eyes, the eyes of Heathcliff's rival. Thus, in the most grotesque of fashions, he seeks to make them unrecognisable, finding an outlet for his anguish in violence: he plans to turn "the blue eyes black... they detestably resemble Linton's" (145).

Mirrors and eyes, both for Catherine and Heathcliff, are a source of extreme anguish. Both simultaneously reflect and distort what they seek : themselves and each other. But in the

mirror, and in the eyes of others, they continuously misrecognize themselves, and are instead haunted by "alien versions" of themselves ²¹. In her last illness Catherine "would keep straining her eyes towards the glass" (161). She no longer recognizes her own reflection -- significantly alone and without Heathcliff -- and is convinced that the room is haunted, even when the mirror is covered over. The tragedy of that first night at Thrushcross Grange is fully realized for Catherine: again she stares into the mirror, and is now forced to recognize that what she sees -- herself alone -- is not what she had believed to be herself -- herself and Heathcliff united. It is only through death that she she can regain this unity, yet she does not realize that it is she who haunts the room, that it is her soul seeking freedom from "this shattered prison" (196) of her body through death. In her last days Catherine identifies herself solely within external nature, moving completely into the realm of spiritual signification. Spiritually and symbolically it is only in death that she can escape the fetters of the ordered, cultural life foisted upon her. Death is not a return to the "Imaginary" phase of childhood, nor is it a return to the natural world that symbolizes it for her. It is, instead, an 'upward and outward' move into another realm, that of the supernatural: "I shall be incomparably beyond and above you all" (197). For Catherine it is not an end, but a rebirth, where she can be "a girl again, half-savage and hardy, and free (163) [my emphasis]. No grave could contain Catherine's spirit in the way convention and the Law could break it.

Death, for Catherine, is a release; yet for Heathcliff it is symbolically his own death. It is the ultimate fragmentation: "Oh God! would you like to live with your soul in the grave?"

(197). After losing her, his existence becomes a living hell, spent longing for death in order to join her. While Catherine is released from the physical realm, Heathcliff must endure the "abyss" (204) without her, and without his "soul" he is "a savage beast" (204), a "mad dog" (197). Without Catherine, Heathcliff becomes as wild and dangerous as the moors around him, damning and blasting all those near him, until he, too, is released in death. Heathcliff's existence is now defined by Catherine's absence, by his loss. The remainder of his life is consequently spent in an all-consuming monomism :

Their relationship -- the childhood oneness split asunder by gender distinctions that divide the self and the world into conflicting opposites -- is resumed only in death, which is a return to their lost origins and to wholeness through immersion in primal nature²².

The second half of the novel represents a closure of two separate circles: that of Catherine and Heathcliff, and that of the third generation of Lintons, Earnshaws and Heathcliffs. Physically, Heathcliff is trapped in the realm of living nature, yet always straining to join Catherine in the realm of the supernatural. That he believes fully in this realm is evident in his constant plea for Catherine ~~never to~~ leave him, even after her physical death:

You said I killed you -- haunt me then!...
I believe -- I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always -- take any form -- drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! (204).

His damning cry of anguish is granted in full, for he cries out in tortured madness towards the end of his life, "she has

disturbed me, night and day, through eighteen years -- incessantly -- remorselessly" (320). The burial of Edgar Linton allows Heathcliff to seek Catherine physically, allowing him to blur the line between nature and the supernatural. After eighteen years in the grave, Catherine's face was "hers yet" (319), and Heathcliff maintains that she waits for him before 'dissolving' to dust. Symbolically, it will only be in their reunion that they will return to the earth. His obsession for her, however, goes beyond marriage and sexual relations, for even in death there is the desire to become her: his determination to let his body "dissolve" with hers is a desire to become indistinguishable from her, so that "by the time Linton gets to us, he'll not know which is which" (319). To Heathcliff, union with Catherine is "heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued, and uncoveted" (363), to be achieved without any constraints of Christian religion; and his life's struggle is in removing the obstacles that thwart his journey towards that end. The casement opened to let in the ghost child becomes the opened coffin on the night of her burial, and the opened grave eighteen years later.

Heathcliff's prolonged death blurs the distinction between the realms of the living and the dead, between the natural and the supernatural. Symbolically, even before the return of his body to the natural world, his soul is transcending the bonds of physical life. He is dying the whole of spring -- a time of rebirth -- but in order for Heathcliff to be 'reborn', so he must die. His cry that "my soul's bliss kills my body but does not satisfy itself" (363) is evidence that, like Catherine, his soul tears at its physical prison, longing for release. With his body dying, only his eyes are alive, and even they seem to see

beyond the natural world. There is a "strange joyful glitter" (357) in his eyes, mirroring his passion , but also his torment:

he gazed at something within two yards distance.
And, whatever it was, it communicated, apparently,
both pleasure and pain, in exquisite extremes...
his eyes pursued it with unwearied vigilance (360).

In death Heathcliff attains his 'heaven', and no-one can "extinguish that frightful life-like gaze of exultation" (365) in his eyes. That it is rumoured that the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff "walk" is credible, for as Nelly says: "together, they would brave Satan and all his legions" (365). In life Heathcliff claimed that nothing in Heaven or earth could have separated them, except Catherine herself, thus in death they are invincible.

The other circle that the second half of the novel must bring to a close is the lives of the third generation of the Linton- Heathcliff-Earnshaw triangle; and Heathcliff, as the last representative of the second generation, survives to see the fruits of his passion and hatred. Linton Heathcliff, born of hatred, lives his life fragmented and disempowered. He embodies the worst of his parents' natures : Isabella's petulance and Heathcliff's cruelty, and the self-absorption of both. He remains in obscurity until adolescence whereupon his life is a tool for Heathcliff's design; an object of and for revenge; a means to an end. He is the runt of nature, an "ailing, peevish creature" (218) in babyhood, and a "pale, delicate, effeminate boy" (235) in adolescence. He is a "puling chicken" (235) emasculated by his father: "his thin face, and large eyes were wrought into an expression of frantic, powerless fury" (283). At the hands of cruelty, Linton becomes the instrument of

cruelty himself, venting his impotent anger on Catherine II. His release in death is ignoble, but nevertheless an escape. Always a child "half-alive" (280), he wanted "all to lie in an ecstasy of peace... on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors" (279). No mention is made of his grave -- he was in life an object, a mirror that drew its colouring only from what surrounded it, having no power of its own -- and the last one sees of him is his body removed unceremoniously from one room to another.

It is Catherine II and Hareton who are the true representatives of the third generation. Like Catherine I and Heathcliff before them, they act within the text both as themselves, and as symbols. They are simultaneously two greatly wronged young people, bringing, in the end, order out of chaos; and they are symbols of that which came before, only now the mirror is not clouded by grand passion, nor is there evident the identification within one another that united Catherine I and Heathcliff. This second half of the novel has been criticised by those who see Catherine II and Hareton trying to recreate what Catherine I and Heathcliff had, which is read as the attempt

to endow the thin-blooded Thrushcross Grange people with the emotional language of Catherine and Heathcliff²³.

Leo Bersani sees this second developing love affair as a diluted reflection of what had come before, only now there is a "cosy and conventional romance" where there had once been "neither the family nor society, but merely a restless union, deprived of beginnings and ends with an alien self"²⁴. But whilst Catherine II and Hareton may not pursue the same mythical union as did Catherine I and Heathcliff, their attraction is

nonetheless powerful. With Heathcliff dying, their growing intimacy promises to parallel in life what Heathcliff is gaining in death²⁵: unity with a loved one. What Moser is criticising is the lack of the supernatural force that prevailed in the second generation, in the third. But Hareton and Catherine II are representatives of nature, in its real and physical realm. Catherine I and Heathcliff may have transcended the physicality of the natural world, but the next generation are truly rooted in it.

Catherine II is a blend of her father's cultural world and mother's wild, untameable spirit:

Her spirit was high, though not rough, and qualified by a heart sensitive and lively to excess in its affections... soft and mild as a dove... her anger was never furious, her love never fierce; it was deep and tender (204).

Brought up a "perfect recluse" (225), she nevertheless exhibits her mother's desire to go beyond order and culture, symbolized in Catherine II's yearning to leave the safe and ordered parks of Thrushcross Grange, with its locked gates and high walls, and explore the wild moors and Penistone Crag. Unsuppressed, she wants all in Nature, including herself, "to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee" (280). Whereas her mother was seldom seen immersed in the outside natural world, Catherine II spends most of her early adolescence rambling over the moors. She and the landscape inform each other, each acting as a mirror of the other: caught in the web of Heathcliff's machinations, she is torn between her affection for Linton, and the desire to obey her father, and:

Catherine's face was just like the landscape -- shadows and sunshine flitted over it in rapid succession; but the shadows rested longer and the sunshine was more transient (297).

With the approaching death of her father, her "heart was clouded now in double darkness" (267). The light and sunshine of her childhood is being obliterated by cloud and darkness, until she is a complete prisoner within the walls of Wuthering Heights, and within a mockery of a marriage with a dying boy.

Hareton Earnshaw is born on a fine June morning, a summer child, and of the light. However, under the clouds of his father's degradation, and Heathcliff's hatred, his mind is left dark, as are his senses and drives. Nelly recognises in him:

Good things lost amid a wilderness of weeds, whose rankness far over-topped their neglected growth; yet notwithstanding, evidence of a wealthy soil that might yield luxuriant crops under other or favourable conditions (231).

From early childhood until the time of Heathcliff's dying, Hareton is the embodiment of rough and uncultivated nature, scorning anything weak or cultivated. Yet he is drawn ~~as~~ a candle draws a moth to the light of Catherine's mind and glowing countenance. The growing light within his own mind is indicative of a new and more illuminated phase of his life that sets in towards the end of the novel ²⁶, as the darkness wrought by Heathcliff dispels, and Hareton and Catherine II grow closer together.

To Heathcliff, the fact that Catherine II and Hareton are becoming "thick" with one another is a torment. They signify a mirror of his own past, and what he has lost. Divided, he had a better chance of destroying them, but united they present a

strong front, and as Heathcliff says

five minutes ago, Hareton seemed a personification
of my youth, not a human being -- I felt to him
in such a variety of ways, that it would have
been impossible to have accosted him rationally (353).

To Heathcliff, Hareton is a symbol; he is

the ghost of my immortal love, of my wild
endeavours to hold my right, my degradation
my pride, my happiness and my anguish (354).

In Hareton, as in all things, Heathcliff misrecognizes himself and the 'self' he yearns for in Catherine I. Coming in from the dark to be confronted by two pairs of Catherine I's eyes bathed in light is indeed to be haunted.

With Heathcliff dead, the union of Hareton and Catherine II is free to develop without constraint. When Lockwood returns after his year's absence, Hareton has replaced Heathcliff as "the Master". That which was so powerful and all-pervasive in life, in death is soon rendered nothing more than a rumour of a ghost that 'walks'. Nature and the external world are now brought into control -- begun in the uprooting of Joseph's blackcurrant bushes to make way for flowers, the once wild land of Wuthering Heights is seen as cultivated and serene. Certain plants are specially "imported" from The Grange, signifying a collapsing of differences between the two arenas of the text, and it is learned that once married, the remaining protagonists will settle at Thrushcross Grange, leaving Wuthering Heights shut up for the ghosts of Catherine I and Heathcliff, and the superstitious Joseph, who always believed in Heathcliff's supernatural force.

Lockwood's comfortable observation of the three graves at the moor's edge suggests that the raging passions and restless energy of Catherine I and Heathcliff are now buried and contained, despite the rumours of ghosts on the heath:

I lingered round them, under that benign sky;
watched the moths fluttering among the hare
bells; listened to the soft wind breathing
through the grass; and wondered how anyone
could ever imagine unquiet slumbers, for the
sleepers in that quiet earth (362).

Yet, if one takes, as Robert Kiely suggests, the subject and the verbs of the paragraph, one is left with "I lingered... watched ...listened... and wondered", leaving unanswered the questions such an ending precipitates ²⁷. Whilst there is perhaps comfort in the closure evident in the marriage of Hareton and Catherine II, a bringing of order and culture out of the chaos and darkness, the supernatural element embodied by Catherine I and Heathcliff is beyond such control. In life they defied the conventions, in death there is no reason that they should suddenly obey what is expected of them. In death Catherine says she will be "incomparably beyond and above you all" (197), and in death Heathcliff must surely join her. They are utterly removed from the nature-culture dichotomy, moving into atextual space, leaving no certainty as to their end. But so too, with their absence from the physical realm, the turpitude of Heathcliff's existence is obliterated from the lives of the living, and one has at least comfort in the knowledge that order is restored in the natural realm, if not in the supernatural, where there is still the force of a "ghostly Catherine scorning the pusillanimous Edgar to cry across the moors to her demon lover" ²⁸.

2 Jane Eyre

Presentiments are strange things! and so are sympathies, and so are signs; and the three combined make one mystery to which humanity had not yet found the key... and signs, for aught we know, may be but the sympathies of Nature within man (249).

So says Jane Eyre during her time at Thornfield. Significantly, the weeks following her observation are fraught with omens and events of strange origin. Coincidence seems too thin in order to explain the sudden death of John Reed; Aunt Reed's equally sudden demise; the revelation of another, more concerned relative; Rochester's unorthodox proposal and the malevolent storm that splits the chestnut tree, under which the proposal takes place, in two. It is through Jane's affinity for the natural world that she is able to 'read' the natural landscapes which she traverses, and sense the omens they proffer. In a similar fashion, the natural world also offers a 'reading' of Jane Eyre herself, as often her own mental and spiritual states are mirrored in the physical world around her. The spiritual world is as important as the physical in the narrative, and this is reflected in the "mysterious influence exercised by the elements on those attuned by Nature... to receive their message" ¹.

Jane's narrative takes on a quest-like aspect as she is precipitated by events, and by her own moral conscience, into differing arenas, searching for spiritual and emotional fulfilment; but it is also her attempt to find her own place within the social order. There is built into her quest the

desire to "obtain and preserve a sense of self-respect" ², and when this is challenged -- for example, when Rochester asks her to be his mistress -- Jane has to move away, and continue her search. Jane's quest for self-expression has to be achieved within the parameters of both "external approval and self-approval" ³. To this end, she enjoys a triple role within the text: she is the narrator of her history, looking back in retrospect; she is frequently the observer, watching and evaluating others' behaviour in relation to herself; and she is the protagonist, physically maturing, and moving from one geographical locus to another.

The utilization of natural symbols and imagery throughout the narrative operates on both the physical and the mental/spiritual level. Jane's growth-progress entails a physical journey outwards, and the tangible world around her reflects the simultaneous emotional and spiritual growth within her. Many of the symbols presented during Jane's childhood at Gateshead are honed and refined through the subsequent arenas of action, and are only resolved at Ferndean, when Jane has achieved complete self-hood. The opposing elements of fire and ice, the calm and storm of the natural world, and the seasonal changes of nature provide for Jane a range of symbols on which she draws to give form to the emotions which, in childhood she cannot express, and which, in adulthood, she learns to control.

Jane Eyre's quest for self-actualization is begun in the early years of childhood, at Gateshead Hall, continues through periods spent at Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House and is finally achieved at Ferndean. The key to the 'mystery', of which Jane speaks, is found in searching for the "presentiments", "sympathies" and the "signs", and above all observing those

signs which are indeed "sympathies of Nature within man", which are present in every arena of Jane's narrative. It is 'little Jane', the focalizer, who records the "signs" and events as they occur, but it is the 'mature Jane', the extradiagetic narrator, who gives them their significance ⁴. Ultimately, the narrative unites the 'little Jane' of the earlier chapters with the 'maturing Jane' of the later ones, in the narrator, 'adult Jane'. Through an examination of the natural symbolism evident in the five loci of the narrative, one is able to trace the development of the narrator's psyche, and simultaneously witness the maturation process reflected in the way the landscapes over which she passes are perceived. It is more, however, than the mere "sympathies of Nature within man"; it is a reciprocal process, hence one witnesses the sympathies or emotions of man within nature operating at the same time throughout the text.

The use of Nature, and its relevant 'objective correlatives', in such a way is in keeping with the Romantic philosophy that:

man only regards, and singles out for special comment, those aspects of life which are important to himself, making use of nature as a visible manifestation of the inward state ⁵.

This type of 'emotional reciprocity' is important in the study of the predominant imagery throughout the five arenas of Jane Eyre specifically because it is Jane's text. She has elucidated those aspects of her life that are particularly important to her, and subsequently the 'little Jane' of the earlier narrative reveals to the reader aspects of nature and artefacts of civilization -- such as the houses parts of her life are associated with -- that are emotionally charged. Linder sees

this occurring on both the objective and the subjective levels, which corresponds to the terms utilized by Chase, that of 'Eros' and 'Psyche'. Throughout the text there is a retrospective attempt on the 'mature' narrator's part to give form to her emotions, and the objective world of Nature and of landscapes offers the appropriate symbols for her own subjectivity. Thus, the natural world does not provide "order" as such, but instead, "a reflection of the turbulent, fluctuating inner life of her heroine" ⁶.

Karen Chase's use of the "Eros and Psyche" formula to explain the representation of personality is useful in so far as it goes to explain the dual relationship of 'form' and 'feeling' within the novel. Eros is seen as the representation of "love, desire, need, or mere objectless yearning in so far as they involve impulses towards emotional expression". Psyche is frequently seen as "pure form", whose function is to "give form to emotional life" ⁷. But it is more than the bringing together of two polarities; it is the turning point of the novel in question. Jane Eyre demands a study of the subtle relationship between expression and structure; between the arrangement of events and the expression of feeling. Brontë's use of natural imagery and symbols aids this union, in that the natural world represents, or mirrors, those feelings which the immature protagonist cannot yet express. Nature becomes the mediator between the 'inner life' of Jane Eyre and her external existence in which she is constantly alienated, marginalized or singled out for hostile scrutiny.

Much has been made by the critics of the various spatial arenas of Jane's life. Q.D.Leavis sees Jane's progress as a maturation process : from her childhood at Gateshead, through

maturity at Marsh End, to fulfilment at Ferndean, all linked organically, not mechanically by plot devices, but by imagery and symbolism⁸. On the other side of the scale, the novel has been seen as purely psychologically motivated -- a "mythic quest-plot ... permeated by angry, Angrian fantasies of escape into wholeness" in which one witnesses Jane negotiate the psychological ramifications of "confinement, orphanhood, starvation and rage-even-to-madness"⁹. According to this reading of the text, she must encounter, and reject, various distorted 'alien versions' of herself before she is precipitated into the next arena through some moral or psychological discovery. Yet Jane is not confined to either of these extremities. By bringing together the dichotomy of 'form'-- in the real and tangible landscapes over which she passes -- and 'feeling' -- the spiritual, mental, and emotional growth that occurs simultaneously -- one is able to unify the spiritual and the physical aspects of the narrative. This is enhanced by a sensitivity to the "presentiments... sympathies... [and] signs" that Jane speaks of in adulthood, but which are apparent, if not articulated by her immature self, from the start of her text.

Gateshead Hall presents to the child Jane a place of closure. Physically she is seen as continually confined -- either by choice : "There was no possibility of taking a walk that day... I was glad of it; I never liked long walks" (1); or forcibly, as seen in the "red-room" incident (48). Psychologically, she is also 'confined' within her own loneliness and solitude, and hence seeks what Peter Bellis calls a "window-seat of power", a place where Jane may see, without the threat of being seen; where she can withdraw into herself, away from the scrutinizing gaze of others. Bellis defines this

as, "the converting [of] a boundary line into a new interior space" ¹⁰. It is a motif that permeates the whole text -- one constantly witnesses Jane seeking to hide from the gaze of others, or seeking a place from which she can enjoy her 'prospect'; and her silent observation of others.

The 'prospect' is "the unimpeached opportunity to see", and forms part of John Appleton's 'habitat theory', and has as its counterpart the concept of 'refuge', "the opportunity to hide". Appleton's 'habitat theory' entails the scrutiny of the landscape for "sign-stimuli indicative of environmental conditions favourable to survival" ¹¹. If one also takes into account Appleton's consideration of the type of landscape observed, and the symbolism inherent in its presentation, then one notices that issues of light and dark, surfaces and textures, colours, and natural vegetation and weather are of extreme importance in a reading such as this. Coupled with the concept of a reading of the development of a particular protagonist -- the typical 'Bildung'-- one bears in mind Appleton's observation that:

the symbolic impact of these environmental phenomena can induce in us a sense either of ease and satisfaction or of unease and disturbance, and it is on these emotional responses rather than on the real potency of the danger, the refuge or the prospect that our aesthetic reactions depend ¹².

So it is with Jane Eyre from the beginning of her text, and precisely because it is her narrative, the landscapes and houses which she presents are seen through her eyes, and coloured with her emotional responses to them. Her narrative begins in the winter, a season associated with chill and lifelessness. To the

child Jane the "clouds so sombre and the rain so penetrating" (39), are indicative not only of her forced imprisonment within the house, but a comment on her emotional state within Gateshead. Despite being kept indoors with the Reed family, she is continually marginalized, even exiled, from emotional warmth. The natural symbolism evident in the first pages of Jane's narrative forms the basis of recurrent images encountered again and again. The wind and clouds of that first "dreary November day" (39) haunt her through other warmth-deprived situations in later arenas; the "death-white realms" and "cold and ghastly moon" in the pictures in Bewick's History of British Birds, the "broken boat stranded on a desolate coast", and the "fiend... black, horned thing seated aloof on a rock, surveying a distant crowd surrounding a gallows" (40), signify the symbols of death, despair and horror that Jane experiences throughout her text. The pictures in Bewick's book offer the child Jane emblems of what she feels, but is too young to be able to express in words ¹³. Later in her text Jane describes pictures of her own creation, that in many ways emulate the desolation of Bewick's; they, too, represent another step towards her self-expression.

In contrast, however, to the freezing polar images of the book in which Jane immerses herself is the blaze of anger and frustration that becomes evident in her persecution by John Reed and his mother. Fighting back she is a "rat", a "mad cat", (42; 44). Symbolically, here she is allied to the 'voiceless' creatures of the natural world, and thus persecuted, can only rely on violence as a means of defence, which she ultimately does by lashing out at John Reed. Hunted down and dragged from her refuge behind the curtain -- her window seat of power -- she is imprisoned within the "red-room". The spatial importance of

this sudden shift in loci lies in the psychological implications it holds for the child. The window-seat proffered that privileged space whence she could see, but was not seen. She is protected from both the external, wintry, and therefore hostile, landscape by the glass window, and removed temporarily from the interior hostile family by the thick drapes. She is free to transcend the physical world entirely in her absorption with the book, whose "every picture told a story" (40).

The "red-room", however, despite its closed blinds and locked door, offers no refuge for Jane. It is what Appleton calls a "hazard" to the protagonist, offering neither a place to hide from her persecutors, nor the opportunity to look out from it ¹⁴. Imprisoned against her will, Jane is open to a type of mental scrutiny, and therefore vulnerable. It is her own imaginings that precipitate her into hysteria and ultimately into unconsciousness, but this is rationalized by the adult-Jane-narrator voice, saying "Superstition was with me at that moment" (46). To the child, simultaneously imprisoned and vulnerable to the possibilities of ghosts, the event is fraught with terror.

Symbols of death abound within the chamber : "A bed supported on massive pillars of mahogany"; "blinds always drawn down"; "deep surrounding shades" from which snowy white piles of linen "rose high, and glared white" (45). In this "chill.. silent... solemn" chamber Jane is mesmerized by "the pale throne" the armchair signifies to her. It is the throne of Death to the child's mind. The mirror whose "depth" she "involuntarily explored" (46) shocks her from frozen terror -- "the strange little figure there gazing at me with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all

else was still" (46) -- into fearful outrage. Initially she is "doubly imprisoned" ¹⁵, physically within the chamber, and psychologically within her mind's terror, signified in the mirror's reflection. She is offered a version of herself, and in rejecting it, she is shocked into action. Objectively, the mirror is merely reflecting the frightened child, but on a psychological level, one is privy to a crisis in Jane's development. The Lacanian 'Mirror-stage' is "a decisive moment":

This moment is the source not only for what follows but also for what precedes. It produces the future through anticipation and the past through retroaction ¹⁶.

Aware of the past, and anticipating the immediate future -- albeit erroneously -- Jane rejects that 'alien' version of herself. However, for Jane's real future, the incident is constantly relived, in varying forms, where she is faced with possible alternative 'selves'. Now, in the 'red-room', the 'ice' of the frozen figure is symbolically melted by 'Eyre-ire', whose "blood was still warm" (46). The images of gloom, hush and death are banished by the rush of emotion : Jane likens her mind to a "turbid well", and in her tempestuous state, "my heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings" (49). She screams, and screaming, finds her 'voice'. Symbolically, by taking this step towards finding her voice, Jane traverses the first of many such mental and emotional thresholds. The pouring forth of raw emotion, "Eros", has now to find form, its "Psyche".

The scream, or the "species of fit" (49), is also instrumental in precipitating Jane into the next arena of her childhood. The scream is a threat to the tomb-like Gateshead

Hall and the stolid and cruel Mrs Reed. Jane is to be literally imprisoned at the Lowood Charity School, hidden away from public gaze lest she disturb the veneer of domestic bliss of the Reed family. The unchildlike fury of her outburst is misinterpreted by Mrs Reed as a type of madness, to be incarcerated, much as the insane Bertha is imprisoned, and hidden from view. The confrontation of niece and aunt is an elemental battle, and the polarities of frozen stillness and passionate action are brought together : the "eye of ice continued to dwell freezingly" on Jane, who, "shaking from head to foot, thrilled with ungovernable excitement" (68), explodes in raging, white-hot fury. Jane once again rejects inaction in favour of action and:

my soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph, I've ever felt. It seemed as if an invisible bond had burst, and that I had struggled out into un-hoped for liberty (69).

The narrow confines of Gateshead Hall are broken, if only in part, both on a physical level, in its replacement with Lowood, and on a spiritual level, with Jane rejecting the narrow-minded oppression at the hands of her aunt.

Jane, however, cannot move from complete oppression to complete freedom on either the objective or the subjective level in one instance. It is to be a gradual process, in which she has to acquire confidence in her selfhood and in her voice. Immediately following her outburst, which she symbolically describes as a "ridge of lighted heath, alive, glancing, devouring" (69), the child Jane feels 'burnt out' : "black and blasted after the flames are dead" (70). The rush of emotion, 'Eros', has still to be constructively channelled, so that it

may be sustained instead of consuming itself. The Lowood Charity School offers the first step towards the spiritual 'upward and outward' movement, as well as her "pilgrim's progress from depth to depth in her own heart to reveal the nature of her ultimate self, before it can be fulfilled in love" ¹⁷.

Jane's first step toward physical freedom is seen on her last day at Gateshead Hall. She is seen out of doors for the first time in the frozen garden, the only moving entity in an otherwise immobilized wasteland: "the shrubbery was quite still: the black frost reigned" (70). The natural symbolism utilized to describe the landscape serves as a mirror of the house and its occupants; it is a 'house of death', both in the past and in the future, and whilst Jane will again be drawn into its realm, by the death of her aunt, the symbolism also represents the death of the 'little' Jane's childhood, her first burst of passion, and her oppression. Despite the fact that the "plantation... was quite sequestered", Jane feels threatened by the "silent trees, the falling fircones, the congealed relics of autumn, russet leaves swept by past winds in heaps, and now stiffened together" (70), and draws no comfort from it. Whilst she may be hidden from the human gaze, she is as much surrounded by death outside as she was in the 'red-room', and feels equally as vulnerable.

Threatened, the child Jane asks "What shall I do?" (p70). Technically, she has little choice; symbolically, she has no real 'voice', and Lowood is her only option. The transition is, however, crucial in her development, and it is only much later that her question is answered, when Jane is faced with real choices. Her entry into the realm of Lowood is achieved at "twilight" (74), and it is implied that Lowood will prove to be

an arena in her life that is neither 'light' nor 'dark', but a blend of both. It is a realm in which Jane is seen simultaneously incarcerated and enjoying a limited freedom, on both the objective and the subjective level. The "wild wind rushing through the trees", and "the rain fall[ing] in torrents" (74; 77) is evocative of Jane's own churning emotions as she enters the unknown world of Brocklehurst's realm. The natural realm and the human psyche are in accord with one another.

The garden is described as a "wide enclosure, surrounded with walls so high as to exclude every glimpse of prospect" (80). Initially, the landscape is as threatening as that of Gateshead, and at first Jane's only venture out-of-doors is onto the chilled and exposed verandah where "the bitter winter wind, blowing over a range of snowy summits, almost flayed the skin from our faces" (92). The frozen garden beds, where "all was wintry blight and brown decay" (80) are as evocative of death as the Reed's plantation, and it is equally as significant, for Lowood does prove to house death. At first this is witnessed only on a metaphoric level, the 'death' being that of any form of individualism or emotional warmth. It is also significant in reflecting the twisted logic of Brocklehurst's dogma of mortifying the flesh through starvation in order to save the soul. The "black pillar" of Mr Brocklehurst, a "straight, narrow, sable-clad shape" with a "grim face" of "carved marble" (60 - 63), is seen as Mrs Reed's successor in oppressing Jane, and enclosing her within a physical prison, and in a mental and emotional world of deprivation. But whereas with Aunt Reed Jane was in effect forced to break the tomb-like hush through her scream, at Lowood she, while not openly rebelling, recalls a "strange excitement, and, reckless and feverish, I wished the

wind to howl more wildly, the gloom to deepen to darkness, and the confusion to rise to clamour" (87). It is a desire for action as opposed to stultifying hush that Jane is describing, but, insecure in herself in this still alien landscape, her wish is transferred onto the natural elements. It is that first instance not only of the "sympathies of Nature within man" but also of man within nature.

Lowood, however, is truly a place of "twilight", in as much as despite the first few months of winter -- both physically and emotionally -- it does mark the beginning of emotional and spiritual growth for Jane. Despite the 'hazard' of public scrutiny whilst placed on the stool in the centre of the room, Jane begins to gain confidence that her fellow inhabitants are not the oppressors her relatives were to her. The developing friendships with Helen Burns and Miss Temple provide Jane with the comradeship and spiritual guidance previously denied her. However, it has been posited that those who surround her, reflect her. Put another way, one can see Helen Burns and Miss Temple as other 'alien versions' of Jane; as possible alternatives for Jane to reject in her quest for self-actualization. Karen Chase remarks that:

the reflecting characters do not appear all at once, but emerge in response to Jane's inchoate emotional state. Jane experiences a need, a desire, a hope or a fear, and there soon appears a character who embodies that feeling¹⁸.

Taken a step further, it is possible to see such characters as only embodying one aspect of Jane's own inherent nature, and in the search for a complete and unfragmented self, Jane has to reject their extreme example, without rejecting them completely:

"this is Bildung by negative example. Jane learns how not to be"¹⁹. This explication is useful in so far as it offers a framework in which to view Jane's developing selfhood, but it is important to bear in mind that these other characters are also intricately involved in Jane's desire to give, as well as to receive. They are more than the ghostly reflection Jane confronted in the 'red-room'; Helen and Miss Temple are the first people with whom Jane enjoys a reciprocal relationship. As she receives their guidance, so she gives willingly her love, trust and friendship. Perhaps more importantly, whilst Jane verbally rejects both her own 'ghost' and Mrs Reed, it is Miss Temple and Helen who must leave Jane.

Jane's developing self-confidence is mirrored in her exploring greater horizons in the natural world. The 'winter' of her life is passing, and reflected in the subtle changes of the outside world: "the frosts of winter had ceased; its snows were melted, its cutting winds ameliorated" and "greenness" (107) begins to appear where once only brown decay of winter had been. Symbols of renewal and new beginnings are evident, and signify a richer existence for Jane. The coming spring of the natural world parallels a new hope in Jane, who immerses herself in its regrowth, finding "still sweeter flowers opening by the wayside under the hedges" (107). Although still sequestered within the walls of Lowood, Jane ventures further from the prison-like building, and although physically she is as yet to traverse its walls, her spirit aspires to greater heights :

I discovered, too, that a great pleasure, an enjoyment which the horizon only bounded, lay all outside the high and spike-guarded walls of our garden: this pleasure consisted in a prospect of noble summits girdling a great

hill-hollow, rich in verdure and shadow; in a bright beck, full of dark stones and sparkling edges (107).

The very quality of the landscape thus presented is symbolic of a change within Jane herself. Instead of the dull, flat, almost monochromatic presentation of landscape witnessed up to this period in her life, the panorama now described is rich in colour, texture and depth. The contrast of light and shadow in the scene corresponds to a growing perspective within Jane's mental and emotional situation. She is learning that there are choices, and she is learning how to make them. The pure rush of emotions of the child at Gateshead is now being tempered by the acknowledgement that there are alternatives to the things she endured in early childhood. The blossoming of nature and the tentative beginning of that process in Jane is as much an example of 'natural sympathy' as was the troubled child and the tempestuous night on her entry into this arena.

The "smooth and broad stone stone, rising white and dry from the very middle of the beck" (109) becomes a symbolic throne for Jane, whence she has full command of the prospect, "free, unwatched, and almost alone" (108), [my emphasis]. Symbolically, the 'throne of death' and the 'stool of shame' are replaced, and Jane finds another 'window-seat of power'. Immersed in the natural world, Jane is removed from scrutiny, as well as being symbolically protected from the 'hazard' of the typhus-infected school-house, and she enjoys the refuge it provides her. Importantly, she has the choice whether or not to share the prospect, as the stone is large enough to seat two little girls.

The last detailed description the narrator-Jane offers of the Lowood arena is on the eve of Helen Burns' death. It is

"midsummer" and having brought some wild roots from the forest, Jane lingers to plant them in her garden-patch, fearing they "would wither if I left them till morning" (110). With this presentiment of Helen's death symbolically implied, Jane watches entranced as "the moon rose with such majesty in the grave east", while "the still glowing west promised so fairly another fine day on the morrow" (110). It is a magical time of twilight, and an evening imbued simultaneously with the symbols of death and regeneration, and perhaps most importantly, of hope. At the end of her time at Gateshead, Jane was in a state of mental and emotional turmoil, insecure of her future prospect. The later scene in the garden at Lowood is illustrative of Jane being a step further towards self-actualization. What was a blighted winter scene is now a balmy summer evening, and whilst her mind "shuddered at the thought of tottering, and plunging amid that chaos" that her thoughts on Heaven and Hell precipitate, "it felt the one point where it stood -- the present" (110).

Whilst Jane is not mentally or emotionally equipped to quit Lowood at this early stage, the subsequent eight years of her stay are dealt with rapidly. The events and occasions of supreme importance have been elucidated by the retrospective narrator, and later events are seen as a 'putting-into-practice' of the things first learned and experienced during the first months at Lowood. It is at the end of nine years that Jane's gaze once again seeks out the seemingly insurmountable peaks on the horizon :

my eyes passed all other objects to rest on those most remote, the blue peaks. It was those I longed to surmount; all within their boundary of rock and heath seemed prison-ground, exile-limits... I desired liberty; for liberty I

gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer" (117).

It is with her prayer for "a new servitude" (117) that Jane precipitates herself into a new and alien arena, that of Thornfield and of Edward Rochester.

In the voice of the adult Jane, Thornfield was to be

a fairer era of life... one that was to
have its flowers and pleasures, as well
as its thorns and toils (130).

It proves to be an arena of her life in which one witnesses Jane entering a new phase of her maturation process, one in which she is required to make choices for herself and where she must depend on her own innate sense of self for advice. Unlike either Gateshead Hall or Lowood, Thornfield offers few external constraints, and Jane's adversaries are, for the most part, hidden from her and they cannot actively persecute her. Whilst not deliberately singled out nor ignored, Jane is left predominantly to herself and thus she is forced to turn inward to herself for comfort and advice. For the most part, these instances are reflected in her natural surroundings -- almost as if the natural world has replaced the role once filled by Helen Burns and Miss Temple.

It is an arena in which Jane is seen most frequently out-of-doors -- it the most intense period of her 'sympathies with Nature' and nature's reciprocal sympathies with her. In the process of Jane-the-protagonist being reconciled with the narrator-Jane, Thornfield is that arena in which Jane must learn to utilise wisely the 'voice', ^{which} the experience of the 'red-room' precipitated. The face she sees in her mirror, on her first night in the house, "so little, so pale, and [with] features so

irregular and marked" (130) has to learn to say, with authority "Mr Rochester, I will not be yours... I am going" (342).

In the light of natural symbolism, the most significant part of this era in Jane's life is her relationship with nature and her reactions to the 'objective correlatives' provided by the house, Thornfield, itself. In a novel as "spatially articulate" ²⁰ as Jane Eyre, it is significant that the houses in which Jane is seen are often simultaneously a physical manifestation of their inhabitants' personalities as well as being representative of Jane's own developing sense of selfhood. Thornfield is no exception. From the outside, Thornfield is described by Jane as being

three stories high, of proportions not vast, though considerable; a gentleman's manor-house, not a nobleman's seat; battlements round the top gave it a picturesque look (130)

and is surrounded by:

an array of mighty old thorn trees, strong, knotty, and as broad as oaks... [and] Farther off were hills : not so lofty as those round Lowood, nor so craggy, nor so like barriers of separation from the living world; but yet quiet and lonely hills enough, and seeming to embrace Thornfield with a seclusion I had not expected to find existent so near the stirring locality of Millcote (131).

Symbolically, the house is representative of Rochester's own existence as a semi-recluse, and is the embodiment of his heart:

a physical embodiment of the tropical hell he has tried to escape, enclosed within the half-life which is all he has found. The hell of mindless and uncontrolled passion is barred into the attic, hidden away in the form of his lunatic wife ²¹.

Thornfield is also a semi-enclosed environment for Jane; one in which she is not physically incarcerated, but one which suggests hidden and 'thorny' barriers she must surmount. Its secretive appearance acts also as an omen, for this is also mad Bertha Mason's prison, and whilst Jane is unaware of the woman's existence, she is sensitive to the eerie nature of the third floor of the house.

Karen Chase maintains that houses are representative of "containers within containers", that

houses often exist less as domiciles than as outer shells, rooms and passages serve as inner and intricate spaces²².

The adult Jane recalls the inside of the house, upstairs, as having "a chill and vault-like air... suggesting cheerless ideas of space and solitude" (129); and the third storey rooms were "dark and low" but "interesting from their air of antiquity... all these relics gave to the third storey of Thornfield Hall the aspect of a home of the past -- a shrine of memory" (137). Jane is truly caught in the 'container' of Rochester's past, but only the narrator-Jane is privy to that knowledge. For the protagonist-Jane, the house is neither a 'hazard' nor a 'refuge'; instead the only emotion Jane experiences before Rochester's arrival is a "restlessness" (141). For the first time there are no demands -- of either a positive or a negative nature -- made of Jane, and the people who visibly surround her offer her no mental challenge. There is neither a John Reed to persecute her, nor a Helen Burns to spiritually guide her. Jane has to learn self-sufficiency, and she turns to Nature as her

guide in seeking this.

Jane seeks out, as she has done since childhood, those aspects of nature that afford her solitude, seeking refuge within the natural world away from the ordered lives of others' existence. On the roof-top she is "safe in the silence and solitude of the spot" (141), and on the "lonely" road she rejoices in the "best winter delight [which] lay in its utter solitude and leafless repose" (142). According to the narrator-Jane, this solitude allows for a type of mental or spiritual wandering that is denied her by her physical existence. In the 'upward and outward' movement of Jane's spiritual progression, Jane longs for "a power of vision which might overpass that limit" (140) -- the limit of her own physicality, and her timid exterior -- as well as the barriers placed around her that deny her a 'window-seat' of power. As always, Jane wants to observe without the hazard of being caught in the gaze of others. She longs for a spiritual power, and she turns to the spirit of the landscape, sensitive to its shifting, changing and least tangible aspects.

It is seated on another symbolic seat of power, the stile, from whence "I could look down on Thornfield" (143), that Jane first encounters Edward Rochester. In the magical time of twilight, the moon was "pale yet as a cloud, but brightening momentarily" (143). The shifting face of the moon is always noticed at times of change in Jane's life, its appearance frequently symbolic in signifying a change in her emotions or expectations. The moon also implies a type of pagan-worship and it is symbolically important for Jane's spiritual maturation that Rochester's arrival in her life should correspond with twilight, for it is in twilight that he calls her back to him, as her

spiritual equal. But now it is a "fairy-tale meeting" fraught with "mythic elements" ²³. Physically powerful, Edward Rochester eventually fills Jane's vision to the point where she comments that

My future husband was becoming to me my whole world, and more than the world; almost my hope of Heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for His creature: of whom I had made an idol (302).

Jane Eyre cannot accept Rochester on these terms, for, despite her love for him, her passion demands to be mediated "by an allegiance to the ethical precepts of the Christian code and an acknowledgement of the necessity of exercising reason in human affairs" ²⁴. It is only when they can stand together as spiritual equals that she can be his true wife. Nevertheless, Rochester is captivated by Jane, despite her attempts to avoid his gaze. If Rochester becomes a type of pagan idol for Jane, then she, to him, is equally unearthly. He accuses her of having "bewitched" (153) his horse on their first meeting, and subsequently calls her "fire sprite" (291), "malicious elf" (302), "changeling" (302). He refuses to acknowledge her as Jane Eyre, always trying to make her something else, despite her protestations. His attempts to place her within his life, clothe her with his money, decorate her with his jewels, would ultimately result in her belonging to him; another object 'placed' within Thornfield. Jane's quest for self-fulfilment demands that she be self-sufficient first, and perhaps most importantly, to achieve self-actualization, Jane must act, and not be static, as Rochester would want her to be, caught

directly in his gaze.

The beginning of their relationship, however, is characterized by Jane's attempts to avoid Rochester's scrutiny. She states that "I would have much rather remained somewhat in the shade" (157) than in full view of Rochester's gaze. She attempts to subvert this gaze by allowing him the scrutiny of her paintings. According to Bellis

The work of art is here both a means of self-expression and a veil that conceals the self, even in an act of ostensible revelation ²⁵.

The three paintings singled out by Rochester are the most revealing of Jane's spiritual state. They echo the pictures in Bewick's book, over which she pored in childhood. The paintings were executed during a period in which she, symbolically, had little 'voice' with which to express her true feelings, thus finding a 'mute' medium in art. Respectively, the paintings represent "a drowned corpse" robbed of its bracelet amid a landscape of "clouds low and livid, rolling over a swollen sea"; the bust of a woman in "an expanse of sky, dark-blue as at twilight... The dim forehead was crowned with a star... the eyes shone dark and wild"; and "the pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar winter sky" and a "colossal head..[with] a brow quite bloodless, white as bone, and an eye hollow and fixed, blank of meaning, but for the glassiness of despair" (157).

Symbolically, the paintings can be seen in the light of three phases in Jane's life : the first representing her childhood in which she was 'robbed' of comfort and love, the second prophetically represents herself at Thornfield, allied to the power and passion of the twilight world, and the third acts

as an omen of the despair and anguish she is to experience as she enters the 'frozen' realm of her cousin's existence. Jane has instinctively utilized aspects of the natural world to give expression to her emotions, although it is perhaps only the mature narrator who is aware of the significance. It is again a combination of immature experience and mature expression given in retrospect. But perhaps more importantly, it is Edward Rochester who must become sensitized to Jane's sympathy with nature, as well as its ^{sympathy} with her, before he has the right to claim spiritual equality with her. At this point in his life he is too caught up in the constraints of his past and the physical requirements of his present existence to be more than marginally aware of the natural world and its power. He, too, has to undergo a process of spiritual maturation before reaching fulfilment.

As the relationship between Jane and Rochester develops they are seen more and more together out of doors; it is the house and its representative social constraints that separates them. As usual, the spatial aspect of the novel becomes more and more important in the light of both Jane's and Rochester's development :

Crossing thresholds, descending stairs, opening windows, become therefore extraordinarily resonant acts; one never knows when the threshold will turn out to be social, the stair psychological, the window spatial ²⁶.

It is outside -- both in the literal sense of being out-of-doors, and in the metaphorical sense of being removed from social stricture and regard -- that Jane and Rochester can come together as equals.

Outside, nature, not social convention, is the mediator and it is on this level that Jane needs Rochester. It is for Jane to revive Rochester's belief in the power of the natural world, of which there remains only the bitter knowledge that

Nature meant me to be, on the whole, a good man...
 one of the better kind, and you can see that I
 am not so... I have been green, too... grass green...
 My spring is gone (166; 171).

~~Inasmuch~~ as Jane needs to develop the strength and authority of her voice, so must Rochester forsake the bitterness of social convention and experience and be 'reborn' into the natural and spiritual world. Jane's words in the sequestered orchard are exceedingly prophetic when she says:

it is my spirit that addresses your spirit;
 just as if both had passed through the grave,
 and we stood at God's feet equal -- as we are (281).

It will be only then that each will be sensitive to the other's voice calling and answering across the wilderness.

The garden at Thornfield, for Jane, is a "leafy enclosure" where everything is "real, sweet and pure" (p244). ~~It~~ echoes the sequestered rock in the woods at Lowood, in which she can seek safety and solitude away from the hazardous nature of the house, in which the threat of Bertha is becoming more apparent. She notes that "no nook in the grounds [was] more sheltered and more Eden-like" (276) than the orchard where Rochester eventually proposes to her. The symbolic implication is that it signifies a pre-lapsarian stage of existence. The very real threat of Bertha's existence is at this point unknown to Jane, and thus she is 'innocent', and has not yet been tempted by

Rochester. In retrospect, the narrator-Jane remembers the perfect evening immediately prior to the proposal, which ultimately precipitates Jane headlong into spiritual chaos and physically threatening circumstances. Before this 'fall', Jane is like the figure in her second painting: surrounded by twilight:

The east had its own charm of fine, deep blue, and its own modest gem, a rising and solitary star: soon it would boast the moon; but she was yet beneath the horizon (276).

She is seen as completely submerged in the natural world, and ultra-sensitive to its mood.

The acceptance of Rochester's proposal alerts her to the sudden and ominous change in the weather. Jane is like a "wild, frantic bird" (282) as she asserts her spiritual freedom to Rochester, and, as if in sympathy, the wind starts rushing wildly, bringing with it a tremendous and passionate storm. The child's wish for a storm to match her turbulent emotions is again fulfilled, but nature's sympathy with Jane is also an adumbrage of the chaos about to befall her. Unaware of this, she asks

But what had befallen the night? The moon was not yet set and we were all in shadow... And what ailed the chestnut tree? It writhed and groaned; while wind roared in the laurel walk and came sweeping over us... the rain rushed down... the thunder crashed fierce and frequent as the lightning gleamed (284-285).

It is truly as if judgement had been passed on the couple, and nature is in accord with this. Only the adult and mature Jane is able to give this event its true significance as a

"presentiment" and as an occurrence of nature's sympathies with the human world.

The consequence of this storm is that the tree is split in two by lightning. The symbolic importance lies in the implication that it is Rochester and Jane that are to be driven apart -- although, ironically, it is social convention that demands this and not the natural forces at work. However, it is possible to say that Rochester has not yet fully accepted Jane as an equal, or that spiritually, he is not her equal, and thus separation is necessary to that end. Jane as protagonist is as yet unaware of such forces, but being sensitive to nature addresses the tree, now cleft in two, as if it were able to heed her advice:

You did right to hold fast to each other...
I think, scathed as you look, and charred and scorched, there must be a little sense of life in you yet, rising out of that adhesion at the faithful honest roots : you will never have green leaves more -- never more see birds making nests and singing idylls in your boughs; the time of pleasure and love is over with you; but you are not desolate; each of you has a comrade to sympathise with him in his decay (304).

Again Jane's sympathies with nature act as an adumbrage of her own fate, and consequently are seen as one of the "presentiments" that the adult-narrator Jane speaks of. The moon that is present as Jane surveys the ruined tree was "blood-red and overcast". In retrospect, the adult Jane comments that "she seemed to throw on me one bewildered, dreary glance, and buried herself again instantly in the deep drift of cloud" (304). Gone are the balmy summer nights and clear twilight evenings of earlier days; it is as if the spirit of the natural world is again warning Jane of danger. It is not a physical danger, but

one of a spiritual nature. Above everything Jane has to be true to herself, and a union with Rochester based on spiritual inequality would compromise Jane to the severest degree.

The "blood-red" of the moon is also symbolic of the mad, passionate Bertha, and the blood she spills. The first time Jane sees Bertha, she recalls "a discoloured face -- it was a savage face." She says, "I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments" (311). Bertha, for Jane, is a vampire, a thing of monstrous evil. It is Bertha, incarcerated on the third floor of Thornfield, who is associated with fire and blood, in her attempts to destroy Mason, Rochester, and Jane. Ultimately it is Bertha who ~~causes~~ the fire that cripples and blinds Rochester, fulfilling the "presentiment" of Jane's dream of the ruined Hall, and corroborating the omen of the burnt and blackened chestnut tree.

Some critics have seen Bertha as an "avatar" of Jane; her "truest and darkest double" ²⁷. In Jane's quest for self-actualization, Bertha has been seen as representing the fragmentation of personality. When Jane wakes to see the madwoman wearing her wedding veil, staring at herself in the mirror, there is a parallel to the terror of the red-room incident. Gilbert and Gubar see this as Jane witnessing a "frightening series of separations within the self" -- Jane Eyre from Jane Rochester, the child Jane from the adult Jane ²⁸. Bertha is the ghost of the "red-room" made concrete -- a distorted and alien 'reflection' of Jane, who, in retrospect, comments, "I lost consciousness: for the second time in my life -- only the second time -- I became insensible from terror" (p311). It is significant, however, that this time Jane does not scream. That earlier pouring forth of raw emotion, her scream

for release from the "red-room", now takes form; Jane uses her 'voice' constructively to tell Rochester that she cannot be "his". The earlier scream was to reject the image of the child frozen in terror, and powerless; in this later episode it is important that Jane's 'voice' rejects Rochester, not Bertha. Bertha is like the burned ridge of heath -- she will consume herself in her own fire. For Jane, she is the catalyst that propels her into the next arena of her life, and, as in the earlier incident, Jane again chooses action over frozen stillness. In running away, Jane comes one step closer to self-fulfilment.

Jane's last hours at Thornfield are vividly recalled by the adult Jane : "Jane Eyre, who had been an ardent expectant woman -- almost a bride -- was a cold, solitary girl again : her life was pale; her prospects were desolate" (323). The discrepancy between the actual summer season and her own bleak emotional state is implied in her words:

A Christmas frost had come at midsummer; a white December storm had whirled over June; ice glazed the ripe apples, drifts crushed the blowing roses; on hayfield and cornfield lay a frozen shroud : lanes which last night blushed full of flowers, today were pathless with untrodden snow; and the woods, which twelve hours since waved leafy and fragrant as groves between the tropics, now spread waste, wild and white as pine forests in wintry Norway (323).

Jane imposes her own deadening pain onto the landscape and finds no beauty there to comfort her.

The warmth and emotion of this 'summer' period in her life is soon to be replaced by the cold and emotionless world of St John Rivers. Once again Jane asks, "What am I to do?" (325), only this time she knows the answer: "Leave Thornfield at once"

(325). Unlike in childhood, the maturing Jane now has a choice: to stay would be to answer to 'passion'; to leave is to obey her moral conscience,

and Conscience, turned tyrant, held Passion by the throat; told her tauntingly, she had yet but dipped her dainty feet in the slough, and swore that with that arm of iron he would thrust her down to unsounded depths of agony" (325).

Ultimately it is neither Rochester nor Bertha who pushes Jane out of Thornfield Hall -- it is Jane's choice whether to leave. Her final dream gives her the answer to her question, "what shall I do?", left unanswered since childhood: "My daughter, flee temptation" (346).

The supernatural undertone of certain events in the Thornfield episode of Jane's narrative are more than elements of "gothic" horror. According to Robert Heilman, the device is a "plumbing of the psyche" ²⁹, in which the supernatural elements act as symbols informing Jane's relationship -- on a real and passionate level -- with reality. It also part of the interdependent sympathies between the natural and the human world, that reaches its climax in the voices (or spirits) of Jane and Rochester calling to one another across the wilderness. It is during her time at Moor House that Jane comes to true spiritual fulfilment, from where she can return to Rochester a complete and whole being, with a family pride and loving relations. It is at Moor House that she finds out just who Jane Eyre is.

The time that Jane spends out on the wild moors is, in many ways, the culmination of all her desires to be free: the child who was once imprisoned, the lonely schoolgirl who gazed with

longing at the distant mountains, and the sequestered governess hidden in Rochester's garden. Jane's 'outward and upward' movement results in her voluntary precipitation into the natural world, free from the constraints previously encountered. Desperately, she makes this choice, allying herself not to any human but to nature:

I have no relative but the universal mother,
Nature : I will seek her breast and ask repose...
Tonight, at least, I would be her guest, as I
was her child (349;350).

There is in Jane, as there has always been, a desire to be hidden, to divert the gaze of others. She says, "I wish no eye to see me now" (349), and moves to submerge herself completely in the heath, finding refuge in a "moss-blackened granite crag in a hidden angle... High banks of moor were about me; the crag protected my head: the sky was over that" (349). Once again Jane has sought out a 'window-seat of power'; a refuge from the hostile forces of the human world. The vista open to her is the sky, symbolic of the untrammelled freedom she so desperately seeks. In having rejected the conditional life offered her by Edward Rochester, Jane has chosen instead the natural world as her benefactress, and significantly her description of her immediate environment reflects this:

I touched the heath: it was dry, and yet warm with the heat of the summer day. I looked at the sky; it was pure: a kindly star twinkled just above the chasm ridge. The dew fell, but with propitious softness; no breeze whispered. Nature seemed to me benign and good; I thought she loved me, outcast as I was; and I, who from man could anticipate only mistrust, rejection, insult, clung to her with filial fondness (350).

Significantly, however, it is the narrator-Jane who uses the words "seemed" and "thought", for, in retrospect, the natural world is indifferent to the focalizer-Jane's plight³⁰. Despite her desire to immerse herself completely in the natural world, to become "a bee or a lizard, that I might have found fitting nutriment, permanent shelter there" (351), Jane's quest is not to become something else, but to discover who Jane Eyre is. Thus she is driven to abandon her temporary refuge within nature and seek her permanent place within the human and social order. Whilst 'Mother Nature' may be an inspiration for her, and a source of 'sympathies' and 'signs', Jane comes to realize that she must depend on herself, and not anyone, or anything, else. Jane's first night in the open reflected her sense of comfort and freedom; significantly, the second night proffers little comfort, physically or spiritually: "the ground was damp, the air cold... no sense of safety or tranquility befriended me" (p355). Her desire, even prayer, for release in death is only overridden by her desire for Edward Rochester. She cross-examines herself, asking, "Why do I struggle to retain a valueless life? Because I know, or believe, Mr Rochester is living" (356).

Despite having defied the orthodoxy of female subservience to the male will³¹, in refusing to be Rochester's mistress, however discreet, Jane is consumed by her longing for him. But she is no longer the child who gave way to pure emotion, "Eros"; the maturer Jane now imposes rationality and form, "Psyche", on her wants and desires, tempering them with reason, and refuses to compromise or be weak. Foster makes the important observation that Jane is precipitated into the various arenas of her life because of circumstances, in a

defence against self-extinction or threatening and compromising situations ³², and in her quest for freedom and self-actualization, Jane has to be strong in order to ~~gain~~ ultimately the untempered happiness she seeks. But it is a desperate figure who ~~finally~~ arrives at Moor House, one seemingly devoid of hope, let alone happiness.

Jane's stay at Moor House spans a year, during which time she passes from being the outcast and friendless 'Jane Elliott' to being a confident, empowered woman, fully in control of her own destiny. The disguising of her name is the culminating act of wishing to divert the scrutinizing gaze of others, for it is at this point that she is completely subject to the compassion or rejection of those others; she is dependent on them for her very life. For a woman as proud as Jane, the experience is indeed humiliating. Flashes, however, of her former 'fire' are seen as she reprimands Hannah for assuming that because she is penniless she is of low character, and when she scorns St. John's paltry marriage proposal. In Diana and Mary Rivers, however, Jane finds not only 'kindred spirits' but loving relatives, who more than make-up for the insipid Georgiana and the cold Eliza Reed. It is in them that Jane finds examples of womanhood who are "almost wholly acceptable" ³³, not examples of women for Jane to evaluate and reject, like Blanche Ingram or Bertha Mason. Jane remarks that "thought fitted thought, opinion met opinion. We coincided, in short, perfectly" (376).

It is in St. John Rivers, however, that Jane meets her last opponent in her quest for self-actualization. To Jane he is "a statue", "colourless as ivory", the "colder and sterner brother" (371-372). Whilst Jane may admire, and even stand in awe of him, for, as she says, he is "pure-lived, conscientious, zealous"

(378), she says that with him "I felt under a freezing spell" (423). As much as Aunt Reed and Mr Brocklehurst attempted to 'freeze' Jane's fiery and passionate nature, so too does St. John. Diana says that "in some things he is as inexorable as death" (p383), and by his own admission he is "cold: no fervour infects me" (409). Just as the other houses of Jane's experience reflect their occupants, so too does Moor House reflect St. John's nature. It is a

gray, small, antique structure -- with its low roof, its latticed casements, its mouldering walls, its avenue of aged firs, all grown aslant under the stress of mountain winds; its garden, dark with yew and holly, and where no flowers but the hardiest species would bloom" (376).

The physical attributes of the landscape seem, in retrospect, to be symbolic of what would become of Jane were she to accept the vocational marriage offered her by her cousin. She says to him, "If I were to marry you, you would kill me. You are killing me now" (438). Despite St. John's cruel assertion that Jane is "formed for labour, not for love" (428), it is this, the love, that Jane wants, with Rochester, and instinctively knows that if India's harsh climate did not destroy her physically, St. John would unnaturally distort and destroy her mentally and spiritually. The "yew and holly" of his garden are symbolic, in that they are attractive, and yet deadly poisonous, paralleling Jane's attraction to her cousin's religious devotion to duty, but which she knows would be hazardous to her very existence. Initially, Jane warns St. John that her "fire dissolves ice" (409), but soon discovers that were she to marry him, as a wife she would be

forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry, though the imprisoned flame consumed vital after vital -- this would be unendurable (433).

In rejecting St. John, Jane feels that she will truly be alone. Once revelling in being alone, Jane now seems sensitized to it in her little cottage at Morton. The terrain over which she and St. John walk on the day he 'proposes' to her is no longer a reflection of Jane's earlier joy and sympathy with nature; now it reflects her emotional hesitancy at the prospect of isolation. Earlier, at Lowood, mountains had been symbolic of her desire for independence; now, at Morton the mountains seem threatening:

the mountain shook off turf and flower, had only heath for raiment and crag for gem -- where it exaggerated the wild to the savage, and exchanged the fresh for the frowning -- where it guarded the forlorn hope of solitude, and a last refuge for silence (426).

As much as Jane could not compromise herself in a purely physical union without its spiritual counterpart with Rochester, she rejects a purely coldly spiritual and formal union with St. John. The fact that she rejects him is important as it "affirms her belief that love and religion are compatible", and as Linder posits, "it is when Jane has reached this state of human wisdom that she hears Rochester calling her name" ³⁴. Yet, weakened under St. John's constant pressurizing of her to go as his wife to India, Jane is "tempted to cease struggling with him -- to rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence and there lose my own" (443). This crisis now facing her is as important as the crisis the child Jane faced in the red-room at Gateshead. As in all important moments for Jane "the dim room

was full of visions... the room was full of moonlight" (443). It is then that she hears Rochester's voice: "Jane! Jane! Jane!" (444).

Once, in the garden at Thornfield, Jane, in searching desperately for a suitable response to Rochester's impassioned speech, mentally turned to the spirit of nature for guidance:

Oh, for some good spirit to suggest a judicious and satisfactory response! Vain aspiration! The west wind whispered in the ivy round me; but no gentle Ariel borrowed its breath as a medium of speech (247).

It is in the same garden that Jane asserts that it is "my spirit that addresses your spirit" (281). Now, at Morton, Jane hears Rochester calling her, if not through the grave, at least across the miles that separate them. She does not hesitate, she does not seek explanation, nor does she turn to anyone or anything else for guidance -- Jane has reached a state of harmony within herself, and knows "It was my time to assume ascendancy. My powers were in play and force" (445). Her own wild cry is almost an echo of her scream in the red-room, only now the once formless, impassioned torrent of sound is articulated in the words: "I am coming! Wait for me! Oh, I will come!" (445). It is these words that Rochester hears. It is the second time that Jane answers a disembodied voice, only this time it is Jane who is assertive, stating what she will do instead of complying with the order of someone or something else.

Bellis ascertains that Rochester's cry is "not essentially linguistic at all. It is the sound of Rochester's voice, the 'pain and woe' that it 'wildly, eerily, urgently' conveys, that is crucial for Jane". The use of this supernatural element,

according to him, undercuts the "power of Rochester's summons from the masculine order of written language" ³⁵. Jane is not being ordered by the male, authoritarian voice -- as St. John, and even Rochester in former times, were wont to use -- it is a plea to an equal, a helpmeet, a partner. It is as such that Jane willingly returns to Rochester. Her discovery of her relations and her inheritance from John Eyre have rendered her an independent woman of good social standing, but it is the spiritual equality between Rochester and Jane that is more important. Her last evening at Moor House, St. John banished, is symbolic of a type of spiritual rebirth:

I mounted to my chamber; locked myself in; fell on my knees; and prayed in my way -- a different way to St. John's, but effective in its own fashion. I seemed to penetrate very near a Mighty Spirit; and my soul rushed out in gratitude at His feet. I rose from the thanksgiving -- took a resolve -- and lay down, unscared, enlightened - eager but for the day (445).

Jane likens her return to Thornfield to "the messenger-pigeon flying home" (447) -- she is truly free, flying unconstrained to Rochester. This stands in sharp contrast to the description of her heart on leaving him : "impotent as a bird with both wings broken, it still quivered its shattered pinions in vain attempts to seek him" (350). Jane's joy in anticipating a reunion with her beloved Rochester is projected onto the landscape -- a summer scenery of "green hedges and large fields and low pastoral hills (how mild of feature and verdant of hue compared with the stern North-Midland moors of Morton!)" (447). Thornfield, itself, however, presents to Jane a "blackened ruin" (449); a veritable scene of death and destruction to her as she assumes that the fire that consumed the house had also destroyed

Rochester. It is, however, the means by which Jane's last obstacle to obtaining fulfilment with him is removed -- Bertha perished in the fire.

Rochester had once remarked to Jane that to him Thornfield was a place of extreme ugliness. Jane at the time does not fully comprehend the meaning of his words, for he is speaking, albeit obliquely, about his loathing for mad Bertha and the circumstances of his marriage. He says that:

the gilding is slime and the silk draperies
cobwebs; ... the marble is sordid slate, and the
polished floors mere refuse chips and scaly bark (244).

At the time of this speech Rochester is projecting his own repugnance onto the house, but his words are prophetic. Jane is now faced with a similar wreck as envisioned by Rochester:

The lawn, the grounds were trodden and waste : the
portal yawned void. The front was, as I had once
seen in a dream, but a shell-like wall, very high
and very fragile looking, perforated with paneless
windows: no roof, no battlements, no chimneys --
all had crashed in (449-450).

So, too, does this sight fulfil Jane's own prophetic dreams. The "phantom baby" of her dreams could be seen as a symbol of her own, immature self -- in her dream it rolls away, and she wakes, unenlightened. Jane, in reality, now stands looking at the symbolic ruins of her former, unfulfilled involvement in Rochester's life, and symbolically, too, it represents the death of the former poor, plain and obscure governess. With the knowledge that Bertha Mason is dead, and Rochester alive, only maimed, Jane can symbolically, like the phoenix, rise up out of the ashes and claim her place by Rochester's side.

Rochester may be blind and a cripple, but he and Jane are equals. Hidden away from society at Ferndean, Rochester is likened to a

wronged and fettered wild beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe. The caged eagle, whose gold-ringed eyes cruelty had extinguished, might look as looked that sightless Samson (456),

but as the name of his 'cage', Ferndean, suggests, it is green and suggestive of regenerative natural forces. Rochester's injuries are paralleled by the house "deep buried in a wood... so thick and dark grew the timber of the gloomy mood around it... all was interwoven stem, columnar trunk, dense summer foliage -- no opening anywhere" (455). But it is Jane who assures Rochester that he will become green and ferny again, fertilized by soft rains ³⁶, just as the lightning-blighted chestnut tree he likens himself to. In this fecund setting, full of trees and dark hidden places, that "suggest fulfilment and unification of sexual opposites" ³⁷, Jane becomes Rochester's helpmeet, wife, mother of his son and a complete woman.

Reader, I married him (474).

This statement sees the culmination of Jane's narrative -- the protagonist Jane blends with the narrator-Jane, with a mature and unified consciousness. The ten years that separate the end of her narrative and her position as narrator are summed up by her words:

I was his vision, as I am still his right hand... He saw nature -- he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing on his behalf, and of putting into words the effect of field, tree, town, river cloud, sunbeam -- of the landscape before us; of the

weather around us (476).

Jane has achieved the ultimate window-seat of power, from where not only can she see without being seen, but where she is also the 'eye' that sees all for someone else. Before the fire, Rochester is marked "by an excessive and alienating reliance on the visual" , constantly forcing Jane to look at him, and in turn, continuously fixing her with his gaze. Now blinded, "he must recenter his relationship with the world" ³⁸, and especially with Jane. This he does, and gives himself up to Jane, a humbled, but spiritually strengthened, man. Rochester's returning sight, however, is not a threat, as it is no longer relationship based on power, but one of equality: "to be together is for us to be at once as in solitude, as gay as in company" (476). The reconciliation of 'little Jane' with 'adult Jane' is complete.

It is right that Jane should marry Edward Rochester -- for, in the words of Chitham and Winnifrith, "how wrong it would be if she had let her fierce flame be crushed by the cold marble of St. John Rivers" ³⁹. But it is also right that Jane immerses herself with him in the very bosom of the natural world, for it is nature which is always the source of 'presentiments, sympathies and signs' for Jane -- and the three combined at Ferndean may just allow Jane the key to that "one mystery".

3 Villette

Charlotte Brontë's Villette, as a later and therefore more mature novel than Jane Eyre, offers a wider and more complex series of events and characters. Robert Keefe sees in the novel the "Arnoldian hallmarks of modernity: emotion which finds no release in action, and a mind in constant dialogue with itself" ¹. Consequently, an appraisal of the natural symbolism evident within the text is rendered a more complex task. The protagonist of the novel, Lucy Snowe, proffers an 'inward' journey into her own soul and mind, that of an already mature woman ², although inexperienced, unlike the 'upward and outward' growth-progress witnessed in the younger and less mature Jane Eyre. One has to be constantly aware of the undercurrents of meaning within her narrative, of the opposition between the 'real' and the 'romantic', and of the external reality and the profound effect this has on the inner turmoil of the protagonist. Robert Heilman, in describing Charlotte Brontë's style as "realistic-romantic", defines 'realistic' as "achieving, through specifics, the solid palpable presence of things", and 'romantic' as the "language of confidence in the subjective, the emotional and the intuitive" ³. Lucy Snowe, as both narrator and protagonist, utilizes both these poles to describe her own maturation process in an alien environment.

Much of the natural symbolism evident in the text is a product of Lucy's own descriptions as she attempts to give inner form and expression to the emotions she tries so hard to suppress outwardly. In contrast to the landscapes traversed by

Jane Eyre, it is now a type of 'mindscape' that one is privy to with Lucy, as one breaks through surfaces to see what is buried underneath. Villette is a novel that depends on oppositions of surface and depth, illusion and reality, false and true consciousness, and on fragmentation and illusion. According to Christina Crosby,

Lucy's story is enacted through a play of doublings, mirrors and reversals which never entirely come to rest in the text; it is the story of a journey toward enlightenment and consciousness, and, at the same time, a play of oppositions without resolutions, of antithesis without synthesis⁴.

Much of this is made clearer if one studies Lucy Snowe, and her relationship with both the physical, exterior world she inhabits, and the private emotional world that she tries so hard to suppress.

Whilst, obviously, Lucy must co-exist with tangible landscapes, these, for the most part, exist as 'back-drops' to the real drama evolving within Lucy's own mind. Their symbolic importance is only achieved by Lucy's comment upon them, and then only to clarify the way she responds to the emotional climate within them. It is in the Bretton days with the Grahams that many of the themes and symbols of the text are established, gaining their greater significance in Lucy's adult experiences in Villette. Themes of isolation, both mentally and spiritually, self-imposed and enforced, are recurrent throughout the text, which in turn reinforce the motif of burial and of suppression. This motif, like so much else in Lucy's narrative, operates on two levels : the objective, or 'tangible' level, and on the subjective level where things gain their significance through Lucy's own emotions⁵. This division between what is

ostensibly objective and that which is openly subjective can be again seen in the light of the division between what is romantic and what is reality. Donald Stone sees Charlotte Brontë attempting to write the 'truth' about the real circumstances in which her protagonists find themselves, and the limitations and frustrations of real life. Her heroines have to fight for every "scrap of the sustenance that their world delights in withholding from them" ⁶. Yet Charlotte is equally unable to eschew the Romantic world altogether, and thus one finds characters like Lucy Snowe trapped within the polarity of a Romantic will for power and a proto-Victorian desire for acceptance and accommodation.

Lucy can be seen as a Romantic figure in that she is "an individual existing in a largely hostile world, and her standards are those of the individual and not society", but similarly she is not fully a Romantic because of her "gloomy sense of human nature and her religious doubts concerning the unaided individual's ability to achieve truth or happiness or salvation" ⁷. Thus one is privy simultaneously to the cold, unobtrusive and unresponsive exterior that Lucy presents to those around her and the turmoil of her emotions below, as Lucy herself attempts to integrate the demands of the external, real world, and her own private vision of herself. As Barbara Hardy states: characters such as Lucy Snowe "contain and are defined by the polarity of reason and passion", but they are also placed securely within a moral paradigm that works toward "balance and approval" ⁸.

Lucy Snowe's narrative begins with her childhood in Bretton, but one is constantly aware of the adult 'voice' that recounts the events that she experiences. There is not the same device of

the extradiagetic narrator and focalizer ⁹, as utilized in Jane Eyre. Even as a child, Lucy comments on events with a maturity beyond her years, sensitive to "signs and tokens" (2) proffered by her surroundings. She is aware of the change in the atmosphere at the Brettons, when a letter announces Paulina's imminent arrival, and suspects the worst. Only when she realizes that she is not directly involved, can she say that "the cloud seemed to pass" (2). Much has been made about Lucy's supposed 'unreliability' as a narrator, constantly withholding information; what Syd Thomas calls the "misrepresentations or countercommunications" within the text ¹⁰. ^{however,} Much of Lucy's narrative hinges on different levels of meaning, appearance and reality, ^{which} is in keeping with Lucy's own exploration of herself, her emotions, and her very identity. For example, Lucy withholds the identity of Dr John for some time, even though she recognised him very soon after meeting him in the Pensionnate. In her defence, so much is 'buried' within her own consciousness, that she has to 'dig' down to discover the essential truths about herself and her world. Simultaneously, she is very wary of what she reveals to anyone, believing that to volunteer information about herself makes her emotionally vulnerable. According to Craik, one has the sense that "events are not important in themselves, but only for the effects they have on the mind and soul...we hear of events only as they impinge on Lucy's consciousness as significant" ¹¹. As Brian Wilks observes:

It [Villette] is a mature exploration of loneliness, depression and suffering, and its success is attributable to its depth of insight and psychological truth ¹².

It is also for the reader of Villette, however, to plumb the depths of Lucy's narrative, reading the symbols in evidence to gain a greater understanding of Lucy Snowe and her existence.

In Bretton life is tranquil; so is Lucy, showing only a brief disturbance with the advent of Polly's stay. Lucy, like the "angry and restless" (3) wind on the night of Polly's arrival, is oddly affected by the girl's obvious emotional stress, commenting "I wished she would utter some hysterical cry so that I might get relief and be at ease" (8). Even someone's own overt display makes Lucy uncomfortable. It is in Bretton that Lucy is first seen as marginalized; whilst never being the centre of attention, the advent of Paulina Home in the Bretton household definitely displaces Lucy from the affections of both her godmother and John. This early childhood event soon is seemingly forgotten by Lucy, who has to deal with more serious implications of exile from the family as a whole, and find a new safe haven in which to submerge herself. However, Paulina is to reappear in Lucy's narrative several years later, and still in the role of the usurper of affections Lucy sees as rightfully hers.

The dichotomy of 'romance' and 'reality' is also implemented early on in Lucy's childhood. Paulina is "quintessentially feeling and imagination" but Lucy is quick to notice, from her position of quiet observer, that this open emotion leaves Polly exquisitely vulnerable¹³. Later on Lucy will observe Polly attract and win the affections of John Graham, again illustrating, at least to herself, that the trappings of the romantic world are not for her, and again she will resolve not to allow herself to hope for them. Instead, Lucy constantly

strives, at least externally, to merge into the 'real' world of toil.

Lucy learns a similar lesson during her sojourn at Miss Marchmont's, where she is again exposed to the dangers of romantic love, through the tragic tale of Miss Marchmont's own history. Here Lucy is confined to "two hot close rooms" that "became my world" (31), foreshadowing her 'burial' in the alien world of Villette. The very stasis of life in such an environment serves as a preparation time for Lucy, who openly acknowledges that she is "tame and still by habit" (31), however not by nature, and, perhaps more importantly, "disciplined by destiny" (31). Impoverished and stultified, Lucy is adept at denying her own emotions, and stifling them under layers of protective inaction and a seemingly implacable exterior:

All within me became narrowed to my lot... I demanded no walks in the fresh air; my appetite needed no more than the tiny messes served for the invalid (31).

If Lucy is exiled from the Grahams' affections by Polly, then she is exiled from the safe, though stifling, haven of Miss Marchmont's by a seemingly cruel destiny. As Lucy herself admits, "It seemed I must be stimulated into action. I must be goaded, driven, stung, forced to energy" (31) and destiny provides this goad in Miss Marchmont's death. The "storms ushering in the spring" (32) excite in Lucy, as they will again in Villette, an empathy with her natural surroundings, and in the wind she 'translates' "an accent keen, piercing, almost articulate to the ear; a plaint, piteous and disconsolate to the nerves" (32). She is sensitive to the change in the weather, noting in retrospect that:

Three times in the course of my life, events had taught me that these strange accents in the storm -- this restless, hopeless cry -- denote a coming state of the atmosphere unpropitious to life (32).

Over the mourning tones of the wind outside, Miss Marchmont reveals her life's tragedy to Lucy, and it is as if having relieved herself of the terrible burden of emotion, the old woman is found the next day "without life, nearly cold, but all calm and undisturbed" (36). Lucy takes the lesson to heart, strengthening her resolve to stifle emotion, and she herself, like the dead Miss Marchmont, becomes "all calm and undisturbed" on the outside, at the expense of her own emotions.

In London, Lucy is excited by the teeming city-life, and in shaking off the fetters of her stoic and suppressed existence with Miss Marchmont, is seen mirrored in the

risen sun struggling through the fog... while I looked, my inner self moved; my spirit shook its always-fettered wings half loose; I had a sudden feeling as if I, who never yet truly lived, were at last about to taste life. In that morning my soul grew as fast as Jonah's gourd (41).

In leaving "this wilderness" (37), Lucy follows an inversion of the Biblical exile of the Chosen People. Lucy almost feels that she is a 'chosen' person, but not one in favour. Keefe sees Lucy relishing her self-imposed exile from the "country parish in that flat, rich middle of England" (37) and her move to foreign captivity, as the "exile from the chosen land which is the result of divine anger" ¹⁴. Lucy herself obstinately refuses to allow herself any romantic imaginings of the events awaiting her in Europe, and instead contents herself with the realities

of sea-sickness.

It is in Villette that the distinction between what is 'landscape' and what is 'mindscape' becomes the most complex. Jane Eyre moved outward, from the confines of family houses and schools and eventually onto the wild moors; Lucy moves inward. The moves from parish to city, thence into the secret garden and "allée défendue" buried deep within the walls of the once-convent, now single-sex school, offer the symbols of being 'buried'. The legend of the buried nun becomes a surrealistic blend of 'reality' and 'romance' for Lucy. The legend of the nun serves, like Miss Marchmont's tragic testimony of the perils of love, to warn Lucy -- the nun died for some sexual misdemeanour. Later in the text, the giddy, over-romanticized Genevieve and her equally giddy lover, de Hamal, utilize this legend to effect an illicit love affair. For Lucy, however, the moral lesson is apparent, and, as Keefe says, she goes one better -- Lucy buries herself before she can sin ¹⁵. She is virtually buried alive within the walls of the garden, in a school, in a city, in a strange country. Lucy later will bury the letters, which are her own testimony to the dangers of love, at the foot of the pear tree, symbolically aligning herself with the buried nun.

The inward progression does not, however, halt there; one moves deeper into Lucy herself, as she herself retreats from everyday life, and has, like the garden, two separate existences: "the life of thought, and that of reality" (70). By day Lucy sees the garden as a "trite, trodden down place"; by evening, "pleasant was it then to stray down the peaceful alleys" (100). Lucy finds communion with the natural world in this little patch of garden while the rest of the world -- so it seems to Lucy -- "gathered to evening prayer" (100). Lucy's

sufferings are the product of the "individual woman's relation to her own life and her God" ¹⁶. Not only has Lucy to deal with the everyday pressures of an existence in a foreign land, but so too must she avoid entanglement with a different religion. The Roman Catholic Church, with its emotional confessions and rigmarole, is as alien to Lucy's Puritan soul, as are the foreign land and people of Villette, and as a Protestant, English woman she is truly an outsider. To add to the entanglement, Lucy is divided from the man she comes to love, Paul Emmanuel, not only by the jealous machinations of those who surround her, but by his very religion. As Lucy Snowe's own name is symbolic, so is Paul's -- Emmanuel being "God is always with us". Lucy cannot escape Paul's Jesuit upbringing.

The rhythm of Lucy's narrative follows the surge and ebb of the sea, and the basic rhythm of storm and calm ¹⁷. Lucy employs such terminology to signify symbolically her own mental states. She is also sensitive to the changes in the natural environment, especially the weather, reading into it a mirror of her own emotions. However, it is important to note that:

weather is not a mere reflection or projection of human emotion... it is a medium for a reality outside the individual consciousness which, if properly interpreted, can furnish information about events-in-the-making ¹⁸.

Even in the pre-Villette chapters, Lucy displays a strong sympathy with the natural world. As a child she remarks that "time flowed smoothly... not with tumultous swiftness, but blandly, like the gliding of a full river through a plain" (2), but when tragedy strikes, she is no longer a "bark slumbering

through halcyon weather, in a harbour still as glass" (29), but is instead "fallen overboard" or a "wreck" (29). In her claustrophobic nightmares she experiences "the rush and saltiness of briny waves in my throat, and their icy pressure on my lungs" (30).

The symbolic importance of these observations lies in their reference to the way in which Lucy sees and conducts herself. As her narrative progresses, Lucy has to face and confront the polar opposites of 'romance' and 'reality', between which she constantly oscillates, refusing to choose either extreme. According to Johnson, it is in the 'gap' between these two poles that Lucy will find her own voice, and her own identity¹⁹. The narrative constantly proffers Lucy oscillating between the calm but marginalised position of "mere onlooker of life", engaged in "cool observation" (8); and the threat of tumultuous emotions that threaten to engulf her,

like a tiger crouched in a jungle... The breathing of that beast of prey was in my ear always; his fierce heart panted close against mine; he never stirred in his lair but I felt him, I knew he waited only for sundown to bound ravenous from his ambush (53).

The Bretton home was "so quiet... so clean... these things pleased me" (1), for Lucy observes of herself, "I liked peace so well, and sought stimulus so little, that when the latter came I almost felt it a disturbance, and wished rather it had still held aloof" (2). If Jane Eyre, in her growth-progress, had to learn to wed Psyche/form to her outpourings of amorphous energy, Eros/emotion, then Lucy Snowe has to learn very much the opposite. For Lucy, that which "Eros" signifies -- "love, desire, need or mere objectless yearning, in so far as they

involve impulses towards emotional expression" ²⁰ -- is buried deep beneath the calm, cool and ostensibly implacable exterior that she presents to the real world, eschewing emotion as rendering her vulnerable to the trials and tribulations of life's experiences.

Much of the emphasis in Villette is ^{on} loneliness, aloneness, isolation, and the repression of the self ²¹. Linked to this are the themes of seeing and vision, and the power gained through this activity; power over oneself and over others. Being alone in an enclosed space has a two-fold purpose in the narrative: it is simultaneously a "prison for the self, and [the] staging area for the unfolding of the protagonist's identity", allowing the protagonist to "look in-look out from her isolated point of vantage" ²². Lucy's first encounters in Villette, and especially at the Rue Fossette, highlight this aspect of the narrative. Her following of the nameless stranger -- who turns out to be Graham Bretton, Dr John -- becomes symbolically important as it amalgamates these aspects into one event. She is told that it was "too late and too dark for a woman to go through the park alone" (56), the suggestion being that as a woman to be alone, outside, was to be in inherent danger. But for Lucy, being alone, and outside, is the essence of freedom. On the boat-trip to the Continent Lucy silently admonishes the gregarious Ginevre for her lack of understanding of the "dignity of solitude" (46). Even earlier, before leaving London, Lucy is inspired by the "moving mystery" of the outside night world, as she witnesses the "Aurora Borealis", saying "some new power it seemed to bring. I drew in energy with the keen, low breeze that blew on its path" (p37). Thus, despite the deserted Boulevard, and the park that was "as black as midnight" (56), Lucy is

technically alone, but unafraid: "In the double gloom of trees and fog, I could not see my guide; I could only follow his tread" (56).

The importance of this passage is in the fact that Lucy cannot see and cannot, in turn, be seen. Symbolically translated, she is powerless to act independently, having to doggedly follow another's path. Only much later will Lucy be able to venture out into the night of Villette with all her faculties, indeed heightened artificially, aware of her surroundings. On the night of the Fete, Lucy will be in the privileged position of being able to see, without being seen. For Lucy, the power of vision is the power of knowledge, and knowledge gives her the power to choose her own course of action. At Madame Beck's, Lucy is at first openly scrutinized, by Paul Emmanuel, and subsequently, and consistently, covertly spied on by Madame Beck, in her "souliers de silence" (66).

According to Gilbert and Gubar, Madame Beck's house is the house of Lucy's own self, and she herself is

one of the many voices inhabiting and haunting Lucy's mind... Madame Beck is a symbol of repression, the projection and embodiment of Lucy's own commitment to self-control²³.

Lucy notes that "surveillance and espionage" (66) were Madame Beck's watchwords, but she, herself, adept at 'seeing without being seen' gains the advantage in the game of 'spy-vs-spy'. Many times one is aware of Lucy watching Madame Beck watching Lucy. Madame Beck is indeed more the 'ghost' of the house than is the legendary and ill-fated nun, as she glides "ghost-like through the house, watching and spying everywhere, peering through every keyhole, listening behind every door" (66). But

Lucy knows the rules of the espionage game: that should the watcher know that she is in turn the watched, then "I should have looked into her eyes, and she into mine -- we should have known that we could work together no more, and parted in this life forever" (112). Ultimately, as Karl states, Lucy will have to "forsake observation and enclosure for involvement", and learn to "stop being 'an eye' and become 'I'" 24.

Lucy describes Madame Beck in opposites : "wise, firm, faithless; secret, crafty, passionateless; watchful and inscrutable; acute and insensate -- withal perfectly decorous -- what more could be desired?" (67) But if Madame Beck is to be one of Lucy's avatars, Lucy has to learn how to find the 'gap' between the opposites, learning that to be "dead and impotent" (67) is as painful as being emotionally vulnerable. Lucy has to choose between the Romantic "uncensored outpouring of emotion" and the Victorian "public presentation" 25. Yet whilst Lucy scoffs at the "romantic rubbish" (99) of the buried-nun legend, and formally promotes good sense and 'reality', she keeps, in Heilman's words, "escaping to glorify 'feeling' and 'imagination'" 26.

It is only in the "allée défendue", hidden away in the garden, buried beneath its "roof of branch and leaf" (100) that Lucy dares dig down and face the emotions hidden in her selfhood. Her activity in the 'real' allée becomes symbolic of the gentle and, importantly, unseen probings of her soul. What Madame Beck searched for in the tangible and material world of Lucy's belongings, that is, proof of her love for Dr John, is buried as securely as the hapless nun. Lucy becomes the "gardener of some tintless flowers", clearing away "the relics of past autumns, choking up a rustic seat" (101). Translated

symbolically, Lucy has now to face "past days". The sensitivity to nature that was apparent in childhood, and buried in tragedy, is awakened again by the solitude of the natural world :

A moon was in the sky, not a full moon, but a young crescent... She and the stars, visible beside her, were no strangers where all else was strange : my childhood knew them... Oh, my childhood! I had feelings: passive as I lived, little as I spoke, cold as I looked, when I thought of past days, I could feel (102).

Assiduously, she holds "the quick of [her] nature" (102), fighting against its gaining the upperhand over the implacable exterior.

At this time she remarks that her present situation is approached in "catalepsy and a dead trance" (102), and yet she comments, in a strangely antithetical way:

At that time, I well remember whatever could excite -- certain accidents of the weather, for instance, were almost dreaded by me, because they woke the being I was always lulling, and stirred up a craving cry I could not satisfy (102).

Lucy, at this point, cannot own the emotions she sometimes experiences as herself; it is the "tiger" (53) waiting to pounce in a moment of weakness; it is a "being" (102) held prisoner by herself, released by the magnetic energy of the storm. For her, the weather "functions as a connector/conduit between the material and spiritual, between nature and human beings, and between external and internal realities" ²⁷.

Lucy, sequestered in the school, and frustrated by the seeming nothingness of her existence and the prospect of an equally bleak future, reacts to the particular thunderstorm in a passionate way, despite her dread of such arousal. The storm is

not to be seen as a 'mirror' of her emotions, but almost as a symbolic manifestation of what she is unable to express at that time. It connects the reader simultaneously with the elemental turmoil of the physical world, and with the turmoil experienced by Lucy in her inner self. Whereas for Jane Eyre the elements were a 'mirror' of her emotional state, "servants of her imagination", for Lucy, they "are sometimes almost her masters" ²⁸. Lucy says of the thunderstorm:

the tempest took hold of me with tyranny;
I was roughly roused and obliged to live...
It was wet, it was wild, it was pitch-dark (102).

At this point, Lucy, whilst not actively rejoicing in the elemental passion of the storm, cannot however tear herself away from its spectacle. Unlike the others indoors for whom the storm only arouses fear, Lucy seats herself in a important position; in the window seat -- she is yet an observer. Symbolically on the threshold of emotional rebirth and sexual awakening, Lucy is unable to control herself:

I could not go in: too resistless was the delight
of staying with the wild hour, black and full of
thunder, pealing out such an ode as language
never delivered to man -- too terribly glorious
the spectacle of clouds, split and pierced
by white and blinding bolts (102).

Just as Lucy drew strength and courage from the Aurora Borealis, the natural world, even in storm, does not pose a threat to Lucy, but instead seems to heighten her sensitivity to her existence and identity: after the storm she says,

I did long, achingly, then and for four-and-twenty
hours afterwards, for something to fetch me out

of my present existence, and lead me upwards and onwards (102).

This fluttering of trapped 'feeling' to escape its rigid prison, Lucy feels obliged to "knock on the head" (102), as she says,

figuratively, after the manner of Jael to Sisera, driving a nail through their temples. Unlike Sisera, they did not die: they were but transiently stunned, and at intervals would turn on the nail with a rebellious wrench: then did the temples bleed, and the brain thrill to its core (102).

Lucy dares not allow such romantic feelings and emotions to escape, fearing they would make her too vulnerable in the world of other people.

In the secluded garden Lucy is first drawn into the secret machinations of the Pensionnate. Hitherto, Lucy has, true to her own description, been a mere "on-looker" on life, watching and aware of being watched in return. It is this transition from passivity to action that ultimately leads to the unleashing of her emotions from their 'grave', buried within her subconscious, and which ultimately leads her to that 'gap', the stasis of emotion and identity.

Of the three people who hold prime importance in Lucy's disclosure of herself and narrative -- Dr John, Madame Beck and Paul Emmanuel -- each is involved on differing levels, and to differing degrees, with Lucy. Madame Beck and Lucy keep one another at arms' length, each in her own way avoiding whenever possible any form of touch. Lucy wants to avoid any disturbance of her seemingly emotionless exterior, and Madame Beck avoids any "inconvenient concussion" (86) that might literally knock her

off her course of plotting and self-seeking. Lucy, because she so often occupies that privileged position of "on-looker", realizes its potential in her own observations of others. Whilst deliberately withholding Dr John's identity, only saying that it was he "who had been my guide through the dark wet park" (89), she nonetheless is privy to Madame Beck's own plotting to ensnare the eligible bachelor doctor: "Destiny and Madame Beck seemed in league" (90). So, too, is John unaware of this silent scrutiny: "He laid himself open to my observation. He, I believe, never remembered that I had eyes in my head, much less a brain behind them" (91).

Madame Beck is for Lucy both an oppressor and, according to Eagleton, a model for "icy rational power... a curious mixture of rational benevolence and oppressive restraint". She is the representative of the reactionary, conservative realism of the world, in the triadic power-relation of protagonist, autocratic conservative and 'Romantic-radical', who is seen in Paul Emmanuel ²⁹. Lucy is again caught between opposing poles: energy and discipline; freedom and obedience; conformity and individualism. It is for Lucy to find her place in that gap between them, so that they cease to be "antithetical and merge into mythical unity" ³⁰. Lucy has to experience for herself, and not through the tales and lessons of others, the perils and the joys of mutual love, as well as the value of personal restraint, without entirely foregoing secret dreams. If Madame Beck, in her unemotional and rigidly self-controlled role, is the representative of reality/reason, then Paul Emmanuel, in the role of slightly eccentric, individualistic, hot-tempered professor, can be seen in the light of a Romantic-rebel. It is he who is the goad, the sting that literally forces Lucy out of

the shadows to act. In forcing her to take part in the school play, Paul succeeds in arousing Lucy's spirit, much in the same way that the wind and the equinoctial storms do. Dressed in her "gown of shadow", Lucy is "glad to be quiet" (123); or at least so she tells herself, as a panacea to her exclusion from the bustle of the Fête. She equates herself as "a mere shadowy spot on a field of light" (124), her dress being "the colour, in short, of dun mist, lying on a moor in bloom" (124). The image of the outside, undisturbed world of nature seems indicative of Lucy's desire to rid herself of the frenetic energies of the heavy Labascouriennes, decking themselves in finery.

In keeping with her desire to suppress emotion, she secretes herself away in the deserted school-room. Paul is not openly described; instead, "a paletôt and a bonnet grec filled the void; also two eyes first vaguely struck upon, and then hungrily dived into me" (126). Paul is described later as a "fiery and grasping little man" who "fumed like a bottled storm" (147). It is he who solely recognises in Lucy a type of kindred spirit; those penetrating eyes are not fooled by the cold exterior of Lucy; instead they mirror the energy and fire of Lucy's own turbulent soul. It is he who says to her:

You are one of those beings who must be kept down.
I know you! I know you! other people in this house
see you pass, and think that a colourless shadow
has gone by. As for me, I scrutinized your face
once, and it sufficed (149).

He recognises in Lucy "the passionate ardour for triumph", and teases her about the "fire shot into the glance! Not mere light, but flame" (149). The romantic fire, passion and imagination that Lucy has suppressed since childhood is mirrored in Paul

Emmanuel, the discovery of which causes her no end of turmoil as she tries to re-assert rigid control over herself. After any outbreak of emotion, no matter how small the crack in her façade, Lucy must struggle for supremacy, but once the turmoil has subsided, she is legitimately allowed to say, "next day I was again Lucy Snowe" (112); cool, calm and collected.

The ebb and surge of Lucy's emotions, and constant vigil to keep them in check takes its toll on her, seen most openly in her nervous and physical break-down during the long vacation. The self-imposed exile to Villette, and the isolation imposed upon her shows Lucy the seemingly real desert of the outcast:

When I had full leisure to look at life as life
must be looked on by such as me, I found it but
hopeless desert: tawny sands, with no green fields,
no palm-tree, no well in view (150).

Not required to spend hours at work, Lucy's emotions and imagination come surging to the fore, and reality, as such, only provokes her exhausted mind to even wilder mirages.

Oppressed by the alternating arid and sultry weather, with only the cretin for company, Lucy starts to degenerate mentally and emotionally: "the raging storm and beating rain crushed me with a deadlier paralysis than I had experienced while the air remained serene" (151). Of the retarded girl, she states that "it was more like being prisoned with some strange tameless animal, than associating with a human being" (152). Indeed, Lucy later likens herself to a caged animal, ravenously waiting the 'nourishment' that John's letter will be to her, and dislikes the equation. It is perhaps the cretin's dependence on her than Lucy so dislikes -- for she herself says that for her own self, everything must be voluntary, and in all things she must have a

choice. The constant surveillance of the cretin, for "I could not leave her a minute alone: for her poor mind, like her body, was warped: its propensity was for evil" (151), takes its toll on Lucy. Gilbert and Gubar suggest that the cretin is "a last nightmarish version of herself -- unwanted, lethargic, silent, warped in mind and body, slothful, indolent, and angry" ³¹. The fact that ~~Lucy is later~~ worried that her sightings of the nun are only the projections of an overexcited mind and imagination suggests, too, that Lucy herself is revulsed more by what the cretin stands for than the hapless creature's actuality.

Once alone, Lucy is free to leave the stultifying confines of the Pensionnate, and her frenetic walks do nothing to improve her already fragile state:

A goad thrust me on, a fever forbade me to
rest, a want of companionship maintained in
my soul the cravings of a most deadly famine (p152).

Neither as an adult nor as a child has Lucy ever had to deal with enforced solitude; the solitude she had previously sought was voluntary until this point. But Lucy is also discovering things about herself, and the need for companionship is one of those things. Driven out of the grave-like school, her walks take on a quest-like aspect, sapping her physical strength, and deadening her emotional inquietude, but constantly seeking human kindness. More and more Lucy speaks of such human contact as assuaging a type of hunger or thirst: Dr John's letters will be food; later she talks of having sipped at the water his kindness represents for her.

"A strange fever of nerves and blood" (152) forces Lucy to

bed, and nine "dark and wet days, of which the hours rushed on all turbulent, deaf, dishevelled" (152) mirror Lucy's tumultuous emotions and tormented dreams. The desire to escape the confines of the house, "which was crushing as the slab of a tomb" (154) again drive her out into the storm; and into the Catholic church to confession. Johnson sees this nervous illness as a "heretical refusal to choose between the given alternatives" ³², again reiterating that Lucy must have a choice in what she wants from life. It is the refusal to be placed or to be absorbed into any system but that of her own. This also corresponds to her confession to writing "this heretic narrative" (157) instead of having allowed herself to be pulled into the 'sanctuary' of the Catholic Church, which she feels would have been the outcome of a second meeting with the priest. It is, however, the priest's kindness that helps to calm Lucy ~~into a state~~ "with which Reason could cope" (157), but on leaving the church the storm outside arouses Lucy again to emotional heights. Instead of the panic and emotional chaos of before, Lucy is filled only with the desire to be at one with the storm, to immerse herself in its strength and lose herself in its power:

My heart did not fail at all in this conflict;
I only wished I had wings and could ascend the
gale, spread and repose my pinions on its strength,
career in its course, sweep where swept (157).

What Lucy is expressing is the desire to let go of reason and allow emotion and feeling to sweep her away -- something that, at this point, is beyond her, and as she faints it is as if she pitches "headlong down an abyss" (157) -- to that place of torment for those who are ruled by their passions.

Lucy's collapse precipitates her into another arena of

action within Villette, and is instrumental in the surfacing of more of Lucy's emotions in her journey towards self-discovery. Not only does it reunite her with the Brettons of her childhood, but also allows her close contact with Dr John, whom she now admits to having previously recognised as her childhood friend, Graham Bretton. Formerly she has only enjoyed observing him unseen and had remained unnoticed by him. Her stay at La Terrace affords her the opportunity of conversation with him, and the developing friendship does much to heal her previously over-excited emotions. However, whilst she may recognise her growing attachment to Dr John, she never betrays herself to anyone, and only allows herself the "selfish" pleasure of indulging him: "I had learned how severe for me was the pain of crossing, or grieving, or disappointing him" (185). As before, Lucy's own emotions are hidden, buried away, and only ever indulged vicariously, as they are projected outward, on to external objects or beings. To feel openly, and have the courage to admit as much, is a lesson Lucy still has to learn.

Both the events of the "Cleopatra" and "Vashti" are rendered possible by Dr John, but it is Lucy's reaction to both that is symbolically important in the understanding of Lucy's struggle between imagination and feeling, and reason and reality. Lucy herself states that "I never had a head for science, but an ignorant, blind, fond instinct inclined me to art" (190). If one views art as the subjective or personal representation of an entity, based on the emotions; and science as the reverse pole, the arena of mechanical and precise responses, then it is telling that, whilst "ignorant", Lucy feels more inclined to the former. It is an adumbrage of the time when she secretly, and perhaps guiltily, admits to herself that instead of Reason, whom

she obeys out of fear and not love, it is a "kinder Power who holds my secret and sworn allegiance" (221). Yet in the art gallery Lucy still cannot admit her own feelings, and instead projects them onto the world around her. Quite alone, she is not compelled to conform in admiring what is "considered orthodox to admire" (191), but can engage in active responses of her own: "I was happy... examining, questioning, forming conclusions" (191).

That the painting of Cleopatra does not please Lucy is hardly surprising; nevertheless she spends some time describing it minutely. Its open sensuality simultaneously repels and fascinates her; the "huge, dark-complexioned gipsy-queen" (193) is the very antithesis of what, externally, Lucy herself is, and her Puritan soul demands work and modesty, not sensual idleness nor complacency. Lucy intuitively perceives the 'artificiality' of the scene depicted, and ridicules it by "remarking on its incongruity with the time of day depicted, and the lack of any evidence of the subject's physical debility"³³, highlighting her refusal to accept 'romance' or 'imagination' without its mediating counterpart, reality. She concludes that "it was on the whole an enormous piece of claptrap" (192), preferring to gaze on "exquisite little pictures of still-life: wild flowers, wild fruit, mossy wood-nests, casketing eggs that looked like pearls seen through clear green water" (193), which, while beautiful, do have a place in the 'real' world. It is to the beauty of Nature that Lucy can respond imaginatively, and not to some over-blown romantic ideal.

If Lucy openly rejects, through her rejection of the Cleopatra, the life of indolent self-indulgence, then so, too, is her rejection of the four paintings to which M. Paul directs

her attention revealing. "La Vie d'une Femme" she rejects as "grim and grey as burglars, and cold and vapid as ghosts" (194). What she is symbolically rejecting is the proposed, and ostensibly proper, stages of a woman's life: prim youth; pious marriage; sanctimonious motherhood; and finally widow-hood. Lucy openly rejects them as "insincere, ill-humoured, bloodless, brainless nonentities" (195). What Lucy wants -- and has yet to find -- is the place between the two representations; that place where passion and dreams are not banished, but where work and dignity also have their place. It is the 'gap' between romance and reality.

The reaction of the various men Lucy knows to the "Cleopatra" is also significant in understanding their role in Lucy's life. Paul Emmanuel is shocked at Lucy's "audacity" (194) in gazing so openly at it, but admits that she is a fine woman, although not one he would choose for a wife, daughter or sister. For a man who is so obviously passionate, however, it is curious that he finds much in the "La Vie d'une Femme"; although it is possible his choice was more to chasten and vex Lucy, than to praise such a work. By contrast, de Hamal is very taken with the "Cleopatra", and it is obvious that a life of sensual pleasure is for him. Dr John dismisses the painting without much more than derision, saying she is a "mulatto" and "nothing" (199) next to Ginevre, proving that he is more concerned with external appearances than with moral strength, for it is Ginevre who elopes with de Hamal!

Whilst in the gallery, Lucy, alone and unattended, is afforded the opportunity of seeing the two men directly influencing her life together. That John is still to her the "fruit of Hesperides" and Paul "the sloe in the wild thicket"

(199) is significant. As Lucy will later discover, John is a man of good intention, but essentially self-indulgent and living only for the present enjoyment; he is beautiful and golden, but to all intents and purposes unattainable. He has the grace and beauty of the "Arabian" horse and its same tameable nature; there is nothing wild about him. Conversely, Paul is small, wild and dark; stubborn and yet proffering respite in the arid wilderness. For it is Paul who is truly a friend to Lucy; she only has to learn, and does successfully, to avoid the thorns in the thicket.

It is also significant that when Lucy describes Paul Emmanuel, it is only fragments of him that one sees: his lunettes, paletot, or bonnet grec. Even at the end of her narrative, she fails to pull into focus a complete image of Paul, as he seems to merge with the evening scenery. Kazan calls this the "aniconic image", which traditionally is the "suppression of the human image in religious movements" ³⁴, and can obviously be seen to have roots in Lucy's doubts as to the compatibility of Protestantism and Catholicism; but more so, it is, in Kazan's words, "exotically, erotically energetic". For Paul is a force in Lucy's life, much more than any ~~other~~ protagonist in her narrative, and it is Lucy's reaction to him that pushes her true nature to the fore. Her refusal to 'see' him as a complete entity allows her, nevertheless, a power over him in her narrative; a power to maintain the energy and eroticism that he brings to her life.

It is at the theatre that Lucy is so irresistibly drawn to the eroticism of "Vashti"; the energy and fire displayed by the exotic dancer can hardly be more than the fire that Paul saw in Lucy's eyes; the "mixture of fire and fear" (223) he reads in

her when surprising her reverie. "Vashti" remains singularly important in this 'projection' of Lucy's own inner self -- one she perhaps never truly admits to owning. Whilst Lucy may own that "this hag, Reason would not let me look up, or smile, or hope: she could not rest unless I were altogether crushed, cowed, broken-in, and broken-down" (221) yet still she is "glad at times to defy her, to rush from under her rod and give truant hour to Imagination" (221). Lucy does not identify as such with "Vashti"; it is what she symbolizes, that draws Lucy to her -- the outsider that refuses to fail or to compromise. Lucy observes that, "Wicked, perhaps, she is, but also she is strong" and is virtually transfixed by the "rushing, red, cometary light -- hot on vision and to sensation" (250). The spectacle, like the "Cleopatra", simultaneously enthralls and appalls Lucy: "Hate and Murder and Madness incarnate she stood... It was a marvellous sight: a mighty revelation... It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral" (249). The voices of both unbridled passion and unrelieved reason cry out to Lucy's senses, confusing her, and she turns to Dr John for corroboration -- only to find he is unmoved.

Lucy is essentially a person of emotion, despite the degree to which she may deny it. She constantly oscillates between the extremes, swinging swiftly from joy to depression, drawing on the natural world for imagery to describe those feelings. Dr John's earlier promise to write produces within her a tempest of conflicting emotions, the allegorical figures of Reason and Imagination each fighting for supremacy over Lucy herself. Reason is allied with winter, the dark and the cold, laying on her a "withered hand, and frostily touching my ear with chill blue lips of eld" (221), and whispering death to Lucy's hopes

and dreams of love and fulfilment. Whilst Reason's "soft, bright foe" (221), Imagination, may not call forth the fire and passion akin to that of "Vashti", she nevertheless brings "all around her a sphere of air borrowed of eternal summer" (222). Lucy's growing love for Dr John is revealed in the description of herself during the period in which she receives not one, but five, of his letters: she likens herself to

a dell, deep-hollowed in forest secrecy; it lies in dimness and mist: its turf is dank, its herbage pale and humid. A storm or axe makes a wide gap amongst the oak-trees; the breeze sweeps in; the sun looks down; the sad, cold dell becomes a deep cup of lustre; a high summer pours her blue glory and her golden light out of that beauteous sky, which till now the starved hollow never saw (244).

In loving John, Lucy says that "I served two masters" (245), and in attempting to answer his letters, stating that while Imagination may have written them, Reason tears them up. Lucy says, "She did right" (245). Such outpourings of emotion that Lucy may have uttered on paper never reach Dr John, and her cryptic remark gains significance the night she watches him watch "Vashti". As Lucy is swept away with "the power like a deep, swollen winter river thundering in cataract, and bearing the soul, like a leaf, on the steep and steely sweep of its decent" (251), she realizes that Dr John is "dimpling water -- unimpressible... for what belonged to storm, what was wild and intense, dangerous, sudden, and flaming, he had no sympathy, and held with it no communion" (251). He is the "cool young Briton" (251), and he is not the man for Lucy, for she, like the dying "Vashti", must fight so that she "would see, would hear, would breathe, would live" (252). The sexual and erotic arouse no greater emotion than curiosity in him, for the wild he has no

sympathy, and instead is drawn to the "softness and beauty" (272), "like the petals of a flower" (255), of Polly de Bassompierre, who possesses "the velvet grace of a kitten" (270). Lucy cannot compete; she is like "animals in cages" (257): confined, angry and neglected.

Lucy's burial of John Bretton's letters becomes one of the most important turning points in her narrative. Stolen and perused by the spying and jealous Mme Beck, Lucy deems the letters to be sullied, and like the legendary nun, they are incarcerated in the earth, beyond human comfort or contamination. Lucy admits to "going to hide a treasure" as well as "to bury a grief" (286). Technically, the letters are a treasure, ~~not so much because of~~ their having being penned by John, but because they symbolically represent Lucy's first sexual awakenings, and in a small part, the first interest she has raised in a man. It is a double-edged sword; the letters also signify Lucy's first failed love, and like Miss Marchmont's choice of spinsterhood, the act of 'burial' means closure. Nevertheless, Lucy lingers "like any other mourner, beside a newly-sodded grave" (287). Whilst lingering in the "allée défendue", at the grave of the nun and her letters, Lucy sees the nun again. Resolute and strengthened by her completed mission, Lucy "neither fled nor shrieked" (287), but instead demands of the nun to reveal her identity. Whilst no information is forthcoming from the supposed apparition, the event illustrates Lucy's growing fascination with it and in her hesitant attempt to touch the nun Lucy demonstrates a desire for knowledge. Lucy is also testing herself.

Symbolically, the nun is a complex entity. Not only is she a fateful reminder of the wages of sin, she is also a

representative of Catholicism, the one thing that becomes a seemingly insurmountable obstacle in Lucy's growing attachment for Paul Emmanuel. As the relationship between Paul and Lucy grows, the ghostly reminder of Paul's nun rises up in front of Lucy to haunt and drive her away. From first having fled the nun in terror, Lucy moves to attempting to touch her. Later, in the same secret garden both Lucy and Paul see her, and finally, Lucy vents her anger on the nun's clothing left on her bed. This progression reveals two things, the one being that Lucy rejects her former 'buried' existence in her desire for choice and life, and secondly, reveals her acknowledgement of her true love for Paul.

It is through the development of the relationship between Paul and Lucy, that more and more of Lucy's true nature is revealed. In the earlier parts of her narrative, and during her attachment to Dr John, Lucy remained in the shadows, hiding herself and her feelings. Paul is the "goat" that forces Lucy into action and revelation, sometimes surprising even herself. Paul had always maintained that Lucy was his double, that his 'fire' mirrored hers. ~~Lucy~~ He now ruffles that implacable exterior, in a way that John Bretton would never have been able to do. In answer to Ginevra's truly puzzled question, "Who are you, Miss Snowe?" (297), Lucy truthfully answers, "Who am I indeed? Perhaps a person in disguise" (297). Ironically, it is only Paul who realizes quite how good the disguise really is. He refuses to accept Lucy as the "inoffensive shadow" (306) and instead taunts her with accusations of being a "sauvage!", having "la flamme à l'âme" (308). In response Lucy says "I again surpassed my usual self, and achieved a neat frosty falsehood" (310). It is indicative that Lucy's "usual" self is anything but

"frosty", and instead moments later reveals a glimpse of that "usual self", saying she "caught fire... [and an] explosion ensued: for I could be passionate too" (311). Where once the only entity to reveal Lucy's true inner self had been the storms of the natural world, now Paul is that medium.

Initially Paul attempts to warn Lucy that he has no "passion", saying that it "died in the past -- in the present it lies buried -- its grave is deep-dug, well-heaped, and many winters old" (334), but nevertheless like Lucy, his naturally emotional being is not completely 'buried'. His constant pushing of Lucy to reveal her own strengths ~~simultaneously reveals~~ his own. To Lucy he is at once "all cold, all indurated, all granite, a dark Baal with carven lips and blank eyeballs, and breast like the stone face of a tomb", and then suddenly an "irrational demon... a perturbed dragon, calling to its votary for a sacrifice" (346). According to Chase, Paul and Lucy do not come together

on the basis of passionate attachment, nor even on the ground of mutual affection, but on the more formidable terrain of intellectual severity and moral constraint ³⁵.

It is not as though through her relationship with Paul that Lucy grows or changes, but more that she "comes into being" ³⁶.

The ramifications of Lucy's growing attachment to Paul are seen in the ways in which those who surround Paul attempt to put Lucy off, in both overt and covert ways. In Madame Walravens's house Lucy first comes face to face with Paul's 'buried passion', in the portrait of the late Justine Marie. Sent to the Rue de Magi ostensibly to deliver a basket at the request of Madame Beck, the mission has an ulterior, and malign,

motive. Jealousy primarily motivates Madame Beck's desire to keep Paul from Lucy; greed is the motivation for the evil Madame Walravens. The evening sky, as Lucy approaches the old and decaying part of the city, acts as an adumbrage of the 'fate' intended by these scheming women, not for Lucy but for Paul. The storm brewing, "settling into a mass of blue-black metal, heated at the rim, and inflaming slowly to a heavy red" (375) becomes a foreshadowing of the storm in which Paul will perish. It is the plottings and the evil machinations of Mesdames Walravens and Beck that hound Paul to his death.

For Lucy, however, the storm only heightens her sensitivity to her surroundings, acting not as a mirror but as another "goad" to her emotions, a reminder of her own fate. She states that, "I fear a high wind, because storm demands that exertion of strength and use of action I always yield with pain" (375). For, as with the whole of her life, the storms and winds of the natural world indicated Lucy's precipitation, like a ship tossed on the sea, into alien and unchartered waters. Without consciously knowing the full extent of Madame Walravens' interest in Paul, Lucy recognises that "hoar enchantment here prevailed" (377). Lucy is thrust from the real world into "elfland", "a fairytale" (377), complete with an ancient maid, a withered old priest, and ultimately "the sorceress! Malevola, the evil fairy" (377). It is she who casts the 'spell' on Lucy, depriving her of Paul for the rest of her life. It is she who taunts Lucy, through Pere Silas, with tales of Paul's great love and devotion to the dead nun. Only later does Lucy realize that Madame Walravens is nothing more than a greedy, selfish old woman, living on Paul "like an old fungus" (448), but at the Rue de Magi, the supernatural presence of the hunchback woman is

emphasised, to the extent that when she turns to go, nature seems to mirror her evil: "a peal of thunder broke, and a flash of lightning blazed broad over salon and boudoir" (378).

In true Gothic fashion Lucy is left alone and in the dark as the storm rages outside in full fury. Robert Heilman sees this type of "high romantic mystery and sensation" as a kind of deliberate suspension of reality, one in which the link between romance and delusion is apparent. Furthermore, he goes on to state that:

It is as if here, for Charlotte Brontë, the worlds of Roman Catholicism and Gothic romance become organically related as subject-matter and style³⁷.

This brings back the question of the nun. After the interview with Pere Silas, Lucy erroneously concludes that Paul is committed to celibacy in remembrance of Justine Marie, that "Lasting anguish, it seems, had taken possession of the faithful heart which worshipped her" (381). Lucy continues this self-delusion by believing that the living Justine Marie is the intended wife for Paul. Yet despite Lucy's romantic imaginings in this respect, she is practical enough to suspect the reality of the situation, that she is enmeshed in the plottings of others: "I saw or felt union, but could not yet find the spot, or detect the means of connection" (382).

Madame Beck's attempts to isolate Paul from Lucy are more practical. At first she merely imposes herself between them physically, as on the day Paul takes his formal leave of the school. She "eclipses" Lucy so that "I was hid" (431) from his sight, but failing that she resorts to drugging Lucy in her attempts to incarcerate her forcibly. By bringing Madame Beck

and Lucy into direct confrontation for the first time, Charlotte Brontë reveals the true enmity of the two women. Up to this point Lucy had always acquiesced to Madame Beck, or at least not revealed her emotions, which she would have perceived as weakness. Over-stimulated, however, by her fruitless wait for Paul, Lucy refuses to submit to the ministrations of the older woman. In her own words, "This was the sole flash-eliciting, truth-exhorting rencontre which ever occurred between me and Madame Beck: this short night scene was never repeated" (435). It is one in which Madame Beck's own desires for Paul are revealed, as well as the very real possibility of Lucy's marrying Paul, which up to this time, Lucy has never consciously imagined. In this passage, Lucy shakes off the last of the shadows, and speaks out directly, very much like Jane Eyre confronting Mrs Reed. Lucy has learned to speak with her own voice ³⁸, which is very different from her 'inner' confrontations and imaginings to which only the reader is privy. The day on which Paul is destined to sail, Lucy perceives herself in the mirror, acknowledging that "I was changed: my cheeks and lips were sodden white, my eyes were glassy, and my eyelids swollen and purple" (435). Lucy's appearance has taken on the appearance of a drowned corpse; symbolically a fearful foreshadowing of Paul's death. That evening Lucy paces like a caged animal: "untamed, tortured, again pacing a solitary room in an unalterable passion of silent desolation" (436). Drugged by Madame Beck, Lucy's pent-up passion finds release in her nocturnal wanderings, which bring her face to face ~~not only with~~ her greatest rivals, but also with Paul.

"Imagination", always kept down by Lucy in her conscious state, now "roused from her rest, and she came forth impetuous

and venturous". Constantly being checked and kept down by "Reason", "Imagination" demands "this night I will have my will" (437), and Lucy ventures forth into the night. The realm of the imagination is one which "draws upon the passionate side of experience; and the feelings it indulges and releases -- feelings of hope, expectancy, fulfillment" ³⁹. Whilst Lucy believes, at this point, that there is no hope of seeing Paul again, the drug seems to stimulate the desire within her to escape the narrow confines of her bed, or symbolically, of her life. It engenders the desire to escape all parameters and constraints, and initially to find a place of shelter beyond the machinations of others. Believing that she is heading towards the deserted park, "all silent, lone and safe" (437), Lucy inadvertently stumbles upon the Midsummer Fête. The surrealism begun at the Rue de Magi is reiterated here, but without Lucy's constant vigil over her emotions. Midsummer is a magical time, when things are revealed to those who would know, and Lucy is no exception. In her drugged state, the noises and lights of the carnival are exaggerated and Lucy is plunged "with the suddenness of magic... amidst a gay, living, joyous crowd" (439).

The park seems to Lucy's heightened senses a magical place:

a land of enchantment, a garden most gorgeous
a plain sprinkled with coloured meteors,
a forest with sparks of purple and ruby and
golden fire gemming the foliage; a region,
not of trees and shadow, but of strangest
architectural wealth (440),

and Lucy seems to be the one who haunts this surrealistic landscape. Simultaneously, this nocturnal adventure is Lucy's most daring escape, an external quest for inner peace of mind,

as well as being an inward journey into her very mind and soul. Whilst she immediately recognizes the Fête for what it is, as she flits among the thronging crowd, the external scene takes on the images of her own imaginings. Lucy and the midnight scene mirror each other:

I took a revel of the scene; I drank the
elastic night-air -- the swell of sound,
the dubious light, now flashing, now
fading (441).

Lucy, caught up in the "swaying crowd", is "guideless and reckless, urged and drugged to the brink of frenzy" (444). She is able to "follow friends viewlessly" (440), and see without being seen, the ultimate power. She states that "I would not be known" (442), choosing instead to follow and watch.

It is Lucy's finest hour. In Robert Keefe's words, the scene in the midnight park offers a "mixture of levels of vision" -- reality, gothic and romantic. It affords reality in that Lucy at last comes to realize exactly what has been plotted, and why, and it also affords her the knowledge that people like John Bretton and Mr Bassompierre are true friends. The gothic vision that is engendered by this scene is the one that Lucy has to vanquish should she wish to triumph with Paul. The ghostly vision of the nun immediately precedes her recognition of the young Justine Marie, and although the 'gothicism' is undercut by impinging reason, Lucy cannot "erase the impression that the homely web of realistic truth is merely a thin veil covering a more frightening, surrealist vision of experience" ⁴⁰. It also reveals to Lucy the strength of her own love and longing for Paul, and for that love to be returned.

In her anguish, Lucy deludes herself about the 'truth' of

Justine Marie. Believing her to be the 'reward' for Paul's self-sacrificing trip to the tropics, Lucy renounces her notions of romantic love, saying "Truth stripped away Falsehood, and Flattery, and Expectancy, and here I stand -- free" (455). Nevertheless, Lucy allows herself to be deceived again, despite her assertion that she "liked to penetrate to the real truth" (448). The 'truth', however, is revealed to Lucy at no small cost -- her jealousy, to which she does not admit, "tore me so cruelly... a vulture so strong in beak and talon, I must be alone to grapple with it" (455). Lucy only later admits to such an emotion, and yet her destruction of the nun's habit is very revealing of its desire for recognition. Left in the wake of this "outrage" (455) Lucy follows the "ebb" of the crowd on its way home. Symbolically, the tide of passion is on the wane, and Lucy follows the moon, which by contrast to the movement and excitement of the Fete, is "calm and stainless". Lucy allies herself with the moon at this point: once lost in the park, "outshone" (456) by other lesser lights, but ultimately triumphant in her "glory and her silence... the rival lamps were dying. She held her course like a white fate" (456).

Once at home in the Rue Fossette, this martyred stoicism, something Lucy has always been able to sustain, can no longer withhold the flood of anger and pain Lucy feels. Where once Lucy's anguish drove her to nervous prostration, now she allows the waves of emotion to break over her normally implacable exterior. The catalyst of this outpouring is her discovery of the nun's habit on her bed. Whilst claiming that "my nerves disdained hysteria" (457), Lucy's subsequent actions serve to signify simultaneously her rejection of her former self as well as her confrontation with her own sexuality. As previously in

Lucy's narrative, the nun motif is a complex extended metaphor. In saying that "I defied spectra" (457) Lucy defies the ghost of the dead nun, the ghost of the dead Justine Marie, and she defies the living Justine Marie as well. It is as if Lucy relives the anger and pain of 'Vashti', re-enacting her dance of defiance:

all the moment was mine, so was all the life,
the reality, the substance, the force; as my
instinct felt. I tore her up -- the incubus!
I held her on high -- the goblin! I shook her
loose -- the mystery! and down she fell -- down
all around me -- down in shreds and fragments --
and I trod upon her (457).

That the nun Lucy saw on several occasions turns out to be nothing more than the disguise for de Hamal's secret rendez-vous' with Ginevre does not in any way diminish the psychological effects 'she' had on Lucy, nor does it lessen the symbolic implications the extended metaphor brings to bear on Lucy's narrative. The very artificiality of the nun increases its symbolic value, illustrating the extent to which Lucy deludes herself. Ultimately, Lucy's 'vanquishing' the nun signifies the events of the following day, in which Paul reveals to Lucy his love, and later when he urges her by letter to maintain her Protestant faith, for he states "My little English Puritan, I love Protestantism in you... it is the sole creed for 'Lucy'" (479).

Lucy and Paul are last seen together at the cottage in Faubourg Clotilde. Madame Beck's last attempts to separate them are consumed in Paul's wrath, in the "light and fire" of his anger, and in a "flash of passion" (468). Lucy openly admits to loving him when he is "roused" like this. Having removed all the

obstacles between them, however, Lucy suddenly fails in her narrative. Having been able to reveal the minutest details of all her trials and tribulations, she cannot recall clearly what she felt on discovering that Paul was responsible for the little school and cottage. She admits that,

Certain junctures of our lives must always be difficult of recall to memory. Certain points, crises, certain feelings, joys, griefs and amazements, when reviewed, must strike us as things wildered and whirling, dim as a wheel spun fast (472).

The event is not the first time Lucy has felt overcome by her emotions, but significantly, it is the first time that her true emotions are witnessed by anyone. She no longer has to store up the details; she is free to release them, and hence is excused from having to recall them. What Paul has given Lucy is more than a home and means of survival: he has helped her come into being. In offering her both love and the means to self-sufficiency he provides her with that gap between self-deprivation and self-indulgence; and this time Lucy accepts it.

Unlike the cloistered and haunted atmosphere of the Pensionnate, Faubourg Clotilde allows Lucy a prospect; in both senses of the word. The natural surroundings proffer both refuge and open space:

the gardens at the faubourg were around us, fields extended beyond. The air was still, mild and fresh. Above the poplars, the laurels, the cypresses, and the roses, looked up a moon so lovely and so halcyon, the heart trembled under her smile (473 - 474).

In such an idyllic setting, under such "moonlight as fell on

Eden" (477), Lucy likens herself and Paul to Adam and Eve.

Ironically, she gets to maintain her Eden, for she and Paul are never afforded the chance to 'sin'. Their awkward touches and embraces are the only physical loving Lucy experiences, but more importantly she has his pledge. Even at this point Paul is fading into the night:

His voice was so modulated that it mixed
harmonious with the silver whisper, the
gush, the musical sigh, in which light
breeze, fountain and foliage intoned their
lulling vesper (474).

Absent for three years, Paul's arrival is eagerly awaited, but Lucy declares, " I know some signs of the skies; I have noted them ever since childhood" (480), and the autumn "mists" , and the "full and dark" (480) skies do not bode well. This time the cloud does not pass, as it did in her childhood. The "Banshee" that has haunted Lucy throughout her narrative returns to claim its last victim. The portent of death is clear, and whilst Lucy never reveals precisely what happens to Paul, the cyclical nature of the symbolism and the recurrent wind and sea motifs of the text all signify Paul's perishing on the storm-swept Atlantic Ocean. Paul does not perish in order to satisfy some fate, he is sacrificed to the greed and jealousy of other people:

The metaphorical storms which began before
the novel's opening and which will end only
when the novel ends, have been tracked to
their source in the malign magic of an ugly
old woman who lurks behind the image of a
dead young girl⁴¹.

In a narrative centered on storm and calm, the ending seems

to signify at last a stasis for Lucy. It is not the choiceless, stultifying stasis experienced with Miss Marchmont, nor is it the self-imposed menial obscurity of the Rue Fossette. Instead Lucy finds balance: the entire range of opposites between which Lucy has constantly oscillated are at last brought together. The surfaces that initially appeared to be 'reality' give way to the truths hidden in the depths, the illusions are dispelled in the face of truths, and ~~what is~~ was fragmented is brought in to unity through the surfacing of Lucy's true consciousness.

Karen Chase sees Lucy poised "on the verge of self-sufficiency and the verge of romance" ⁴², and yet the ending seems more satisfying than that. Lucy is at last free; free of her implacable exterior, she has become a complete person, with both the dignity of work, the Victorian realist ethic, as well as the knowledge that a man loved her for whom and what she was, satisfying her desire for romantic love. Lucy triumphs in that she is spared the type of lives subsequently led by her two female companions -- the 'sunny' but essentially unstimulating marriage of Paulina and John, and the giddy, uncertain marriage of Ginevre and de Hamal, with its trials of financial embarrassment and romance-shattering child-rearing. In many ways, Lucy has at last attained her own ideal -- aloneness without the counterswing of loneliness. At last she has the true power of choice.

Villette is for Charlotte Brontë a much more complex project than Jane Eyre, although no less effective. Lucy's 'inner journeys', as opposed to Jane's external ones, offer a chance to explore new territories, those of the psychological realm. Her use of weather and nature in Villette differs from that of the earlier novel in that they are used less as 'object

correlatives' and more as a recurrent motif that "goes beyond the recognisable experiential events of human existence, and is used as an expression of the eternal pattern of the universe as it affects human beings" ⁴³. Lucy's narrative is a powerful testament to Charlotte Brontë's belief that romance and reality can co-exist.

4 Agnes Grey

That Anne Brontë's first novel, Agnes Grey, was written before Jane Eyre is now generally accepted, but nevertheless, criticism in the past century and a half has conveniently blurred this distinction resulting in the widely believed view, however erroneous, that Agnes Grey is nothing more than a weaker shadow of the magnitude of Charlotte's first resounding success. Current criticism now looks to Anne, not to seek the same range and power of either another Wuthering Heights or Jane Eyre, but to address Anne as an authoress worthy of the same critical appreciation ¹. There is the definite need, as Elizabeth Langland states, to correct the balance: "We shall do most justice to each sister if we acknowledge the differences rather than persist in the romantic myth of oneness". It is the "romantic myth" that constantly precipitates the unfair classification of the sisters as "visionary Emily, passionate Charlotte, and subdued Anne" ².

Nevertheless, despite the very real differences in the writings of the three sisters, it would be impossible to say that there are no similarities between their novels. These similarities go beyond the same usage of first-person female narrators -- although Anne was the first to utilize this concept. The inception of Agnes Grey telling her own story came at a time when Charlotte was struggling for verisimilitude in using Crimsworth, her male narrator in The Professor. What is held in common between the sisters is the deep and abiding love of the natural world, from which, albeit in varying forms, they

drew inspiration and the many recurring symbols of their work. The natural world for Anne, however, does not take the precedence it enjoys in Wuthering Heights nor the immense range of symbolic importance witnessed in Charlotte's novels. Like everything else in Anne's novels, the natural world is utilized to explain and support her one major theme, that of the development and fulfilment of spiritual and mental life. To this end, the natural world is subordinate; however, nature is beautiful because it is of God's creation³. Anne's own intense religious beliefs determine those of her protagonists, and Agnes is portrayed, like Helen Huntingdon in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, as having the same unshakeable faith in the goodness of God, to whom she can turn for guidance and strength in the face of adversity. The natural world thus provides tangible proof of God's powers of creation, and is worshipped as such. That Agnes is confronted with humans who abuse the gifts of the natural world -- its plants, flowers and creatures -- is proof of their moral and spiritual failings. The physical world of other humans is described predominantly for the lessons both her protagonists and her readers can draw from them, and the natural world is introduced for the most part only where important. The natural world provides the framework onto which her moral lessons are built. This is what Langland calls a "constantly informing reciprocity of subject and form"⁴, and what Winifred Gérin has noted as "appropriateness", with no "writing for the sake of writing"⁵. Agnes, in recounting her experiences, is never tempted from the path of truth, nor does she lapse into romantic imaginings that would cloud the lesson at hand.

Hence, Anne Brontë has been seen to be "nearer to the

Eighteenth Century than either of her sisters", owing to her emphasis on "feeling and reflection" ⁶, and her constant striving for verisimilitude with no colouring of affectation or exaggeration. Agnes Grey's opening sentence, "All true histories contain instruction" (1) denotes simultaneously Anne's intention in the novel, as well as the inherent promise to tell with Truth, or "candidly lay before the public" (1) ~~What~~ Agnes herself tells as her own story. One implicitly believes that both Anne and Agnes are telling the truth. This quest for realism rather than the romantic emphasis utilized by her two sisters sets Anne apart, and although the ending to her first novel is "unfailingly idyllic" ⁷, it is important to remember that it comes after Agnes has fulfilled her own quest. It comes after Agnes' own "instruction" and spiritual fulfilment.

As Agnes herself matures, both spiritually and mentally, so does the way in which she utilizes the natural world to signify, and give form to, her feelings. When she first leaves home, she is naïvely sure of herself, and has yet to learn that not all persons are as self-controlled and moral as she is. Feeling in control, the images she draws from the natural world are external to her own feelings, and instead, reflect the shortcomings of those around her. These imagistic references do, however, signify the onset of Agnes' feelings of loss of control. At Wellwood, there is a symbolic connection between the children's misuse and abuse of the natural world and the way in which Agnes, as governess, is ridiculed and tormented. As she, herself, develops and matures, so she moves from external references to nature to the symbolic utilization of nature to give coherence to her growing doubts and confusions. ~~At~~ At Horton Lodge ¹ this is most effectively used, as it is here that

Agnes faces both emotional and spiritual challenges. Her loss of control over things external to herself results in a growing understanding of herself, and is an important step towards maturity.

Agnes sets out into the world from an upbringing which she openly admits to be one of "the strictest seclusion" (2), of which her happiest childhood memories are of

sitting at our work by the fire, or wandering on the heath-clad hills, or idling under the weeping birch (4).

Despite its seclusion, it is a life divided between devotion to duty and amiable companionship, one of few constraints, and one in which Agnes is able to enjoy the privacy and beauty of the outside world, through which she can worship God.

Agnes' "vague and secret wish to see a little more of the world" (2) results in her applying to be a governess, and this is compounded by the necessity of helping the family finances. It is covertly implied, however, that she wishes to escape, as do both Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, an environment that, whilst safe and secure, can only be described as mentally stultifying. Agnes' mother had chosen love over riches and had "buried herself in the homely village parsonage" (2); ironically Agnes' desire to see more of the world results in her being 'buried' in upstairs rooms and nurseries, hidden from sight under a suffocating heritage of snobbery and hypocrisy that deemed governesses unfit for high society. But at home where she is the "pet" (2), and denied real work, told to "play with the kitten", where she is "not many degrees more useful than the kitten", the prospect of going

out into the world; to enter upon a new life;
to act for myself; to exercise my unused
faculties; to try my unknown powers; to earn
my own maintenance (9)

can only be exciting. Moral strength comes from overcoming adversity, and Agnes sets out, albeit unwittingly, to pit her beliefs against a hypocritical and cruel world. It is her first step towards self-knowledge.

Agnes' own 'education' is dealt with predominantly in two different arenas, firstly at Wellwood where she is governess to three wild and intractable children and then at Horton Lodge where she has the responsibility of educating two young girls, one on the brink of womanhood. Although there is a significant difference in length between the two sections, this does not detract from the novel's integrity as a unified entity. In fact the two sections cohere as the first six chapters can be seen as an adumbrage of the Horton Lodge section. The basic trials that Agnes must initially endure are honed and refined in the second post as governess. The movement of the action from one section of the novel to the other is, however, from the physical hardships suffered at Wellwood, to the mental and spiritual conflict she must endure with the Murrays. From thence, as her 'education' is completed, and fulfilment achieved, she moves to unified happiness with a man worthy of herself.

Because of Agnes' commitment to honesty, there is markedly absent in her narrative any romanticizing of her position in the Bloomfield household. She is also truthful enough to point out her own somewhat naïve expectations of being a governess, and her idealistic plans to guide her charges:

how to win their confidence and affections;
 how to waken the contrition of the erring;
 how to embolden the timid, and console the
 afflicted; how to make Virtue practicable,
 Instruction desirable, and Religion lovely
 and comprehensible (9).

If this were to be the result of her post, then one could accuse Anne Brontë of gross sentimentality. That this hope of hers is rapidly and decisively challenged gives credence to Agnes' narrative. Agnes is quick to elucidate her inferior position at Wellwood, the Bloomfield's scarcely civil treatment of her and the servants' sneering attitude, to say nothing of the children's total disregard for her and their very real cruelty towards her and anything else they can bully.

Like both Charlotte and Emily, Anne's choice of scenery and setting, as well as features of the weather, are important in enhancing what she describes. They are "plainly elements of situation" ⁸, and, as in her sisters' novels, much is to be learned in such descriptions. Nevertheless, as Duthie is careful to point out, Anne "makes no attempt to mould the reality to correspond to her wishes" ⁹, and thus when Agnes describes Wellwood for the first time, it must be taken as a veritable portrait of the house, and not overly coloured by hindsight. That her arrival at Wellwood is accompanied by "heavy clouds and strong north-easterly wind [that] combined to render the day extremely cold and dreary" (13), whilst not overtly symbolic, nevertheless does not augur well for Agnes. The "lofty iron gateway... [and] smooth, well-rolled carriage road, with the green lawn on either side, studded with young trees" (13) suggest a type of order that Agnes does not find within the house. Simultaneously, there is a suggestion of imprisonment in such order, and Agnes is only once seen without the gates, when

she escapes to her family for a short vacation. Agnes' frozen hands and numbed face at her first meal indicate the 'frozen-out' position she will have to endure at the Bloomfields, where, despite her best intentions, her seeming failure with the children is witnessed by their mother's "cold grey eyes" (14).

The natural symbolism utilized most effectively in this section of the narrative is in the Bloomfield children. Tom's description by his mother as "the flower of the flock" (15) could not be more ironic. Perhaps the cleverest and the most astute of the three children in Agnes' care, he is nevertheless the most cruel, his cleverness chiefly utilized in devising ingeniously cruel tortures for animals, governesses and servants alike. Even his sister and partner in crime is not safe from his flailing fists and feet. Initially his cruelty is only in play on the rocking horse where he displays "how manfully he used his whip and spurs" shouting out "I'll cut into him like smoke! Eeh! my word! but he shall sweat for it" (17). But it is soon apparent that Agnes must suffer equally. Even outdoors there is little for Agnes to admire, for in a "remote, sequestered corner" (18) is Tom's garden. This is not described, for Agnes focuses on the "certain apparatus of sticks and cord" (18) which are his bird-traps, and certainly the garden is little more than camouflage for his fiendish pursuits. The victims of his traps suffer untold torment:

sometimes I give them to the cat; sometimes
I cut them in pieces with my penknife; but
the next, I mean to roast alive (18).

It is a garden where God's creation is overshadowed by mankind's

cruelty, and Tom's small garden becomes a microcosm of the entire Wellwood grounds for Agnes, in which she is the hapless victim caught in the children's traps. Whilst it is "tastefully laid out" (17) with pleasing flowers, Nature's beauties are eschewed by the children for the more primitive pleasures of getting as wet and dirty as possibly, chiefly at the well at the end of the garden. And as Agnes must "run, walk, or stand exactly as suited their fancy" (21), she is little more than a "pet" to them; only tormented this time, and not cosseted, by a child who has his father's sanction, even approbation, to pull off the wings, heads and legs of swallow fledglings.

Mary Ann seems lumpish next to her scheming brother, and whilst underplayed in the Wellwood section, she is important as a forerunner of Rosalie at Horton Lodge. Her obsession with external finery and her own appearance are made concrete in Rosalie's superficial nature and obsession with wealth and class. Agnes has physically to impel Mary Ann to do her lessons for "she apparently preferred rolling on the floor to any other amusement" (26). She is intractable, stubborn and wilful, delighting in harassing Agnes and her screaming to worsen Agnes' headache is a strong foreshadowing of Rosalie's flirtation with Edward Weston in order to hurt Agnes. Even the baby Fanny has no redeeming features, utilizing "her two favourite weapons of offence and defence: that of spitting in the faces of those who incurred her displeasure, and bellowing like a bull when her/unreasonable desires were not gratified" (30). In this, Fanny is seen as pure animal, with no resort to reason. Tom's reasoning only goes so far as to please himself, and Mary Ann is depicted as existing at a horrible stage between her two siblings.

After Agnes' return to the Bloomfields, following her short vacation, her ideals of being a governess are strongly tempered by previous experience. There is a pleasing cyclical nature to this section as Agnes sets forth again into the world, and it is in this second part of the Wellwood section that Agnes comments on the effects of her experiences:

I can conceive few situations more harassing than that wherein, however you may long for success, however you may labour to fulfill your duty, your efforts are baffled and set at nought by those beneath you, and unjustly censured and misjudged by those above (33).

Trapped in a place where her very beliefs and standards are challenged, where she has little time to be alone, Agnes begins to feel the strain of her efforts. It is only late at night, alone in bed, that she can "in all the bliss of solitude... [give herself] up to the luxury of an unrestricted burst of weeping" (34). The physical world, both within and without doors, offers no escape for Agnes and thus her only 'solitude' is to escape into the private world of her mind and soul, something that Lucy Snowe practises in Villette.

In the second part of her stay at Wellwood, Agnes broadens her comments on the family to include the adults. The incident in the snow, where the children refuse to obey Agnes, shows Mr Bloomfield as bullying and uncouth, and whilst the children obey him out of fear, the role-model he is to his son is apparent. For Agnes there is no escape within indoors either, for inside there is the grandmother, a false and spying traitor, whose self-satisfied religious beliefs, "misquoted or misapplied" (37) destroy Agnes' hopes of an ally. Agnes' refusal to use flattery and falsity to win friendship and gain favour

illustrates the moral rectitude of her bearing ~~and also~~ serves to alienate her completely. The Bloomfield children's uncle is another role-model, one whom Agnes thoroughly disapproves of. It is his visit that precipitates the termination of Agnes' post in the household.

Up to this point, the natural world has offered little comfort to Agnes, for it has also the means to an end for the children to defy both herself and their parents. In the garden the children have access to "sticks, stones, stubble, leaves, and other rubbish" (40) which they bring into the house, or revel in outside. The result of this is to show Agnes in a constantly poor light in the eyes of her employers. The children delight in the prohibited activities: "dabbling in the forbidden well, talking to the coachmen in the stables, or revelling in the filth of the farm-yard" (38), or they bring the dirt inside, such as the egg-shells they grind into the carpet. Agnes's use of natural imagery to describe her charges heightens her disgust with their lack of self-control, and their uncivilized behaviour. She says that they fall on their food and eat like "a set of tiger's cubs" (38), and even their father recognises, although does not try to rectify, that they are "worse than a litter of pigs" (40). However, it is only when the Uncle comes that Agnes is brought into direct confrontation with both her employers and the natural world, forcing her to make a terrible choice.

Besides encouraging Mary Ann's vanity and self-preoccupation, Uncle Robson actively aids and abets Tom's cruelty as well as teaching him to participate in the vices of the adult world:

He taught his nephew to imitate him in this to the utmost of his ability, and to believe that the more wine and spirits he could take, the more he manifested his bold and manly spirit, and rose superior to his sisters... Mr Robson likewise encouraged Tom's propensity to persecute the lower creation, both by precept and example (43).

Anne Brontë goes on to develop fully this theme of the adult deliberately misleading the child in her portrayal of Arthur Huntingdon and his son in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, but in Agnes Grey the small sketch is sufficient to portray Agnes' horror and disapproval. The "instruction" is quite clear.

Uncle Robson's gift of the "brood of callow nestlings" (43) to Tom forces Agnes' hand. Previously Agnes has been seen very much as the outsider, seldom acting other than in self-defence. This incident presents a strong moral choice for Agnes; ~~not to~~ act would be connivance on her part of Tom's planned "rare sport" (44) of torturing the birds. To act means that she must execute the birds herself. The end is the same, but it is the means and the intention that is of vital importance to her. Failing in her attempt to force Tom to return the nest to its original place, she, "at the risk of both making myself sick, and incurring the wrath of my employers", drops "a large flat stone... upon his intended victims, and crushed them flat beneath it" (44). For her it is "daring", for the rest of the family it is "outrage" (45), and the difference in reaction is precisely what both terminates Agnes' post and highlights the intention of the novel. The open confrontation comes with Mrs Bloomfield, whose "aspect and demeanor were doubly dark and chill" (45). The older woman's attitude is starkly contrasted with Agnes'. For Agnes, killing the birds was a "duty" (45); for Mrs Bloomfield it was the interference with her child's

"amusements" (45). The belief that "the creatures were all created for our convenience" (45) illustrates Mrs Bloomfield's totally shallow character and self-indulgence, and Agnes' "unusual pertinacity" (46) in attempting, albeit "meekly" (46), to correct her shows Agnes' own developing strength of character, and preparedness to defend her beliefs.

The contrast is between "disciplined individuals with those whose passions are indulged and unregulated" ¹⁰, and Agnes, as well as her readers, learns from the incident. As well as practising self-control, Agnes moves towards self-knowledge¹¹, which, begun in the Wellwood chapters is continued at greater length at Horton Lodge. But at this point Agnes' return to her home is tempered by her feeling of failure in her appointed duty toward the Bloomfield children. Nevertheless, she is honest enough to state that for her, too, the time at Wellwood was a learning experience: "I had been seasoned by adversity, and tutored by experience" (48). In order to "redeem [her] lost honour" (48) Agnes is ready to go back into society illustrating her commitment to duty and her struggle for self-sufficiency.

The move from the Parsonage to Horton Lodge echoes Agnes' move to Wellwood, only this time Agnes moves further away, to a place about "seventy miles from our village -- a formidable distance to me, as I had never been above twenty miles from home in all the course of my twenty years sojourn on earth" (53). The cyclical nature of Agnes' narrative shows Agnes herself symbolically moving in ever-increasing circles away from home, both on a mental and a physical level. The smallest circle depicts her first physical removal from the family home to an arena where she struggles on a physical, tangible level. The next circle in the cycle of her development illustrates a

geographical removal greater than the previous one, into an arena where she is mentally further away from the indulged child she is at home, and one where she is mentally and spiritually challenged, but also one in which she comes to know herself fully.

Once again, Agnes's description of the day of her departure is not overtly symbolic. Nevertheless, the "wild, tempestuous day... [and the] strong north wind, with a continual storm of snow drifting on the ground, and whirling through the air" (56) serve to blind Agnes so that nothing is recognisable, ~~and even~~ normally recognisable objects are rendered nothing more than a "huge, hoary mass gleaming through the darkness" (56). The external elements are perfectly normal for January in Britain, and Agnes does not colour her description with any exaggeration, nor does she imply that there is any omen in the fact that it was storming. What, however, is significant is that Agnes is unable to distinguish her surroundings, having to rely on reason to make them out. ~~Her statement,~~ "I took [the hoary mass] to be a portion of a snow-clad tree" (56) implies that Agnes has to rely only on previous knowledge and beliefs to determine her environment. On a symbolic level this ~~...~~ *adumbrates* her stay at Horton Lodge, which is not only alien to her geographically, but an environment in which she has to deal with attitudes and beliefs that are equally alien. ~~...~~ *Just* as she has to rely on previous knowledge and reason to distinguish the tree from the snowy heap, so at Horton Lodge she must rely solely on her inner strengths and moral instincts to guide her. Her first morning at the Lodge is accompanied by the feeling that she is like one who had been

whirled away by enchantment, and suddenly dropped from the clouds into a remote and unknown land, widely and completely isolated from all he had ever seen or known before; or like a thistle-seed borne on the wind to some strange nook of uncongenial soil, where it must lie long enough before it can take root and germinate, extracting nourishment from what appears so alien to its nature, if indeed it ever can (58).

For the first time, Agnes makes a direct reference to her feelings in an imaginative way. This loss of control over her external situation, like one in "a remote and unknown land" (58), forces Agnes to draw on her own instincts in order to guide her, and like the seed on "uncongenial soil" (58), it is only her inner strength that can ensure survival, as no external aid is at hand. In order to give form to these feelings of alienation, Agnes draws on nature to provide the symbols.

At Wellwood the privacy of her intimate thoughts was strictly maintained, and although she does admit to weeping sometimes, she was more concerned with the descriptions of her physical trials. Significantly, at Horton Lodge, Agnes allows the reader more insight into her mental and spiritual life, for it is here during her post as governess that she first questions both herself, and the effect that her charges may have on her. Agnes soon realizes that she is "the only person in the house who steadily professed good principles, habitually spoke the truth, and generally endeavoured to make inclination bow to duty" (62). Her experiences at Wellwood had taught Agnes the dangers of following the wrong example, and at Horton Lodge, in the company of "ignorant, wrong-headed girls" (97), Agnes fears that

as I could not make my young companions better,

feared exceedingly that they would make me worse -- would gradually bring my feelings, habits, capacities to the level of their own, without however, imparting to me their light-headedness and cheerful vivacity (97).

Thus Agnes is careful ~~not to~~ follow the wrong example, as did the Bloomfield children, and consequently, this entails an alienation that Agnes has to endure if she is to maintain her own morals and beliefs, for, as when she was blinded in the storm coming to the Lodge, she has only her own principles and experience to guide her. Agnes learns to define herself by what is within her and not by what is without: a lesson that Rosalie learns too late in the day.

Without being rendered as stereotypes of uncontrolled passions, the two Murray girls are nevertheless examples of young adults who have never been curbed in childhood. The many ugly traits in the Bloomfield children are seen in the portraits of Rosalie and Matilda, only now honed by the onset of adulthood, and perhaps more repugnant because of it. Of Rosalie, Agnes says, "She had not been taught to moderate her desires, to control her temper or bridle her will, or to sacrifice her own pleasure for the good of others" (62), a girl whose "ruling passion... [and] all absorbing ambition [was] to attract and dazzle the opposite sex" (62). Whilst it cannot be said that Rosalie is merely a maturer, feminine version of Tom Bloomfield, his cruelty is mirrored in Rosalie's toying with the affections of men for her own amusement, and her "love of display" (62) is just a more sophisticated trap than Tom's childish versions in the garden. The human attitudes toward and treatment of other creatures is continued throughout Agnes' narrative, and serves as a reliable indicator of those persons' inner moral stance.

Agnes employs natural imagery to describe Matilda, "a veritable hoyden" (64), who prefers "riding her spirited pony, or romping with the dogs" (64) to intellectual pursuits, saying that "as an animal, Matilda was all right, full of life, vigour, and activity; as an intelligent being, she was barbarously ignorant, indocile, careless and irrational" (64). She is like the baby, Fanny, at Wellwood, driven by instinct with no recourse to reason or self-control. It is important to note that Agnes does not dislike the animal world, or any part of God's creation, but as Agnes's concerns are more with the spiritual and mental instruction of both her charges and of herself, this is criticism indeed. Although Matilda's role in Agnes's narrative is frequently over-shadowed by that of Rosalie, she serves an important foil to her sister, and to Agnes herself. Symbolically, Agnes is the mediator between uncontrolled, untempered nature, represented by Matilda, and over-refined, hypocritical, and yet still uncontrolled, culture, of which Rosalie is the proponent. Agnes represents the balance between the two, in which self-control and moderation are seen as praiseworthy; where there is harmony between physical, mental, spiritual and emotional development.

Matilda, preferring "the companionship of dogs and horses, and grooms" (113), is seen immersed in the rough, uncultivated world of nature, whilst Rosalie is seen in the political intrigue of drawing-rooms and ball-rooms. Matilda delights in shocking her affected sister by talking of her new "fine blood mare" (74), the healthy sexuality of which offends the girl who does not realize until it is too late that she herself is betrothed to Sir Thomas Ashby on a similar criterion. It is for Agnes to show that matrimony is most blessed when it is between

individuals who are spiritually and mentally equals, born out of mutual love and respect.

Hunting is an important theme in the Horton Lodge section, both in terms of animals and people. Whereas in the Wellwood section the emphasis was on direct physical cruelty, at the Lodge this is refined, the emphasis being on the sport of the hunt. For Matilda this is illustrated in one particular scene, where she allows her dog to hunt down and kill a leveret out of season, saying, "I pretended to want to save it... but I was better pleased to see it killed" (155). The "noble chase" (155) for Matilda is all-important; she scarcely glances at "the lacerated body of the young hare" (154) which is summarily disposed of at the cottages. Her total disregard for anything or anyone but herself -- she is scared of being scolded by her father for the deed -- illustrates yet another of Agnes' "instructions". Significantly, Edward Weston's sarcasm and disgust match Agnes', as he shares her joy in, and worship of, nature as God's creation.

For Rosalie, however, the hunt is a very different one, her quarry being any young man whose eye she can catch and whose heart she can break. She is obsessed with her "conquests" (74) at her coming-out ball; her ensnaring of Mr Hatfield and her crushing rejection of his affections are as cruel as Tom Bloomfield's torturing of baby birds. The natural world itself offers no joy to Rosalie, who utilizes it only to serve her own ends. The wooded parks and secluded lanes proffer convenient camouflage for illicit meetings with the Rector, and -- unlike Agnes, for whom the wild flowers give joy in their reminder of home -- for Rosalie a "sprig of myrtle" is nothing more than "a pretty plaything" (114) soon to be discarded, as is

the terrier, Snap, that is given to a cruel rat-catcher, and only later rescued by Weston, whose love for all creatures is the same as Agnes'.

Before Lucy gets to know Edward Weston, Horton Lodge offers her no comfort, nor any equable companion. She has little time to enjoy the beauties of the outside world, as most of her time is spent with the girls, and in attempting to instil in them some gentleness and propriety. Whilst the grounds are beautiful, "to one born and nurtured among the rugged hills" (66), they are "depressingly flat" (66), and Agnes is constantly reminded of the unfamiliarity of her surroundings. Even the trips to Church afford her no luxury of a change as Agnes must either walk alone and ignored, or ride in the carriage, which makes her sick, at the dictates of her pupils. Agnes has as little freedom at Horton Lodge as she had at Wellwood. Weston's arrival as Curate of the Church precipitates several incidents that have a strong bearing on Agnes' life.

Edward Weston plays a complex role in Agnes' narrative: he is a spiritual guide for both Agnes and the cottagers he counsels; he acts as a foil to the other males she meets in her two posts; and he is finally a man worthy of Agnes. However, to say that he "functions always as a moral force", as Craik states ¹², is to diminish the small but important things that he does. ~~These~~ result in his being as fully developed character as anyone else in the novel. If Uncle Robson's depravity is credible, then so too is Edward Weston's goodness. Thematically, he stands counterpoised to Mr Hatfield, illustrated in the episodes in which Hatfield kicks Nancy Brown's cat and hits Snap with his cane; in contrast, Weston rescues both animals from a cruel fate. The two men's different attitudes to the Gospel and

their subsequent treatment of the cottagers also serve to illustrate Weston's love for all of creation and thus ally him with Agnes.

For Agnes, Weston comes as a guide in an alien and potentially threatening environment. It is in her contemplation of him that she reveals her deepest thoughts, and it is in their developing friendship that she becomes the most introspective. For Agnes, Weston is "something to think about, something to dwell on as a relief from the weary monotony, the lonely drudgery of my present life -- for I was lonely" (96). She becomes eloquent in his favour:

The gross vapours of earth were gathering round me, and closing in upon my inward heaven; and thus it was that Mr Weston rose at length upon me, appearing like the morning star in my horizon, to save me from the fear of utter darkness (98).

The power of this passage is equal to anything that either Emily or Charlotte wrote, in its use of natural imagery and poetic quality. Anne again relies on the natural world, like her sisters, to provide the symbols and images that give form to her feelings. In describing her growing attachment to Edward Weston, and the role he comes to occupy in her life, the play of light and shadow is important. Trapped within a situation where Agnes is surrounded by ignorant minds and immoral behaviour, Weston's goodness is truly a light in the darkness.

Agnes and Weston share a deep love for the natural world, and discover a mutual pleasure in the "particular associations connected with" (108) certain wild flowers. Weston's procuring the wild primroses for Agnes demonstrates his empathy with her loneliness and sensitivity to her desire for a reminder of home,

and the small gift of the flowers increases in importance when symbolically interpreted. The flowers are part of nature, and nature is part of God's creation, thus the gift to Agnes is a tacit message from Weston that he not only shares her love of nature, but that he also shares her religious faith. In the country lane Agnes can "botanize and entomologize along the green banks and budding hedges" (106), and it is in these lanes that her friendship and attraction for Weston develops. Significantly, their friendship grows out-of-doors, away from the corrupting influences of human intrigues and petty jealousies.

Agnes' growing attachment for Weston, however, makes her vulnerable, and Rosalie is quick to find a target for her cruelty. Rosalie, by her own admission, is "bound hand and foot" (116) by her betrothal to Sir Thomas Ashby. In a world where value is placed on social status and material possessions, Rosalie is symbolically hunted down and presented as the prize to a man whose bad reputation is well known. She has no more chance of escape than the leveret, but it is her worldly assertion, "I must have Ashby Park" (117), that nullifies all sympathy that Agnes has for her. Notwithstanding her betrothal, Rosalie sets out to ensnare all the young men she can before her marriage, and in a deeply disturbing way, Rosalie precipitates the same cruelty of which she is a victim. In a particularly sadistic way she sets out to entrap Edward Weston, knowing full well that Agnes has a high regard for him. She plans to "fix that man" and not rest until "I have shot him through the heart" (132).

It is in the face of such brewing heart-ache that one

witnesses Agnes' most private thoughts, as she agonises over her own destiny, both physically and spiritually. The fear of losing him to the unworthy Rosalie makes her realize how much she loves him, but simultaneously she fears "mocking God with the service of a heart more bent upon the creature than the creator" (134), *yet* reasons that "we do well to worship God in his works" (134). This purity of mind and spirit is starkly contrasted with Rosalie's heartless intention "to do what execution she could among the gentlemen of her acquaintance before she was incapacitated from further mischief of the kind" (140). For Agnes, Weston is a "bright object" without whom she can only envisage a "dull, grey, desolate prospect around, the joyless, hopeless solitary path that lay before me" (147). Again, Agnes uses light and shadow to represent her feelings for Weston.

Agnes's analogy of the little bird and the toad tells a great deal about how she perceives herself in comparison to the beautiful Rosalie. Although she believes that she is morally and mentally superior to Rosalie, she feels herself to be inadequate to compete with her where physical beauty is concerned. Just as the little girl loves her little bird "because it lives and feels, because it is helpless and harmless" (138), *Agnes* feels that it is more because of its "graceful form, soft feathers, and bright, speaking eyes" (138) that this love comes easily. As for the toad, whilst it "likewise lives and feels, and is equally helpless and harmless" (138), its lack of physical beauty denies it the easy-given love, for "we are naturally disposed to love what gives us pleasure, and what more pleasing than a beautiful face" (138). This agonized soul-searching of Agnes's renders her a more fully developed character than the one first seen at the beginning of the novel. However, that Agnes

refuses to enter into open competition with Rosalie for Weston's attention confirms the high moral stance she has maintained throughout her narrative.

Like the "humble glow-worm" who might "despise that power of giving light" (139), Agnes states that it is nevertheless a gift from God, without which "the roving fly might pass her and repass her a thousand times, and never light beside her" (139). Her choice of natural imagery illustrates that Agnes believes that one should appreciate all gifts from God, for each serves an important function, and one concludes that if Agnes does not have physical prowess, then her gifts must lie in a different direction, but be equally as important. For, whilst the glow-worm has "no power to make her presence known, no voice to call him, no wings to follow his flight" (139), her little light at least gives her a chance to be the chosen one. The symbolic references to the toad, the bird and the glow-worm mark the final transition in Agnes's narrative. The move from external references to nature for the sake of instruction, to internal, symbolic ones, designed to illustrate clearly her own emotional and moral stance, indicate in Agnes a deeper perception of herself, and of the world around her.

Agnes's time at Horton Lodge draws to a close at the same time as these unhappy thoughts. She says that "I seemed to see the black clouds gathering round my native hills, and to hear the angry muttering of a storm that was about to burst, and desolate our hearth" (148). The symbolic storm of her description is the fulfilment of the scene Agnes described when first leaving home for Wellwood, when she looked back at the "old grey parsonage... basking in a slanting beam of sunshine -- it was but a sickly ray, but the village and surrounding hills

were all in sombre shade" (12). The "propitious ray" (12) has now vanished, and Agnes's fears of looking back "lest I should see it in gloomy shadow like the rest of the landscape" (12) are realized. The play of light and shadow are very important in Agnes's descriptions at this point, as she prepares to leave Horton Lodge, and with it Edward Weston. She asks if it is possible that God will "disperse these gloomy shadows, and grant me some beams of heaven's sunshine yet" (167).

The opening of the school in a new town, following the death of her father, offers Agnes a chance to start a new life. However, the constant thoughts of Edward Weston keep her mind on her previous one. Rosalie's invitation to Ashby Park offers her a chance to revisit it and perhaps to lay to rest its disturbing effects on her. The visit also acts to show Rosalie's reward for her folly. Ashby Park is stately, but Agnes observes that it had "no broken ground to give variety to the landscape" (175), signifying Rosalie's boredom and frustration at being trapped within a marriage to a man she loathes. Rosalie admits that she is a "prisoner and a slave" (184), as much as were the men she previously ensnared with her worldly charms.

For Agnes, too, Ashby Park offers a representative picture of her life as she imagines it to be without Weston. The narrow view from her window of "a corner of the park, a clump of trees, whose topmost branches had been colonized by an innumerable company of noisy rooks" (181) does not suggest any prospects for Agnes, and as the sun sets, the shadows that seem to engulf the view threaten to swamp Agnes at the same time. Believing that she will never see Weston again, Agnes envisages her "quiet drab-colour life" (181) offering "no alternative between positive rainy days, and days of dull, grey clouds without

downfall" (181).

Yet back at home Agnes finds peace of mind in her contemplation of the sea and the surrounding landscape:

no language can describe the effect of the deep azure of the sky and ocean, the bright morning sunshine on the semi-circular barrier of craggy cliffs surmounted by green swelling hills, and on the smooth, wide sands, and the low rocks out at sea... the unspeakable purity and freshness of the air" (188).

The harmony of the landscape is real, not symbolic; nevertheless it does mirror Agnes's own sense of peace and point of self-knowledge. There is a sense of her oneness with the landscape as her "footsteps were the first to press the firm, unbroken sands" (188). It is only at this point that Edward Weston reappears in Agnes's life, at a point when she has "physical health, mental equanimity, and the personal fulfilment of financial and emotional independence" ¹³.

Agnes and Weston are united in marriage as equal partners, which is a strong contrast to the failed marriage of Rosalie and the dissipated Thomas Ashby. To the very end of her narrative, Agnes never stops making her moral observations, and the "instruction" in this ending is very clear. The beauty of her final description brings together in a unified picture the spiritual and the physical worlds, signified in the "splendid sunset mirrored on the restless world of waters at our feet" (198). At least in their marriage, both realms are of equal importance.

Anne Brontë's Agnes Grey is much more than a "pastoral cameo" ¹⁴. It is as much the story of a woman's struggle for self-knowledge, and a place in the world, as is Lucy Snowe's or

Jane Eyre's. The narrative technique employed by Anne results in the novel being a tightly constructed entity, with skilfully crafted links and associations weaving the two sections together, so that one never has the sense of reading anything but a unified tale of physical and mental trials followed by the triumph of a strongly determined woman. The strong sense of realism in Agnes Grey is tempered, especially in the later section, by Agnes' use of more and more natural imagery to describe her own mental and spiritual conflict, giving a poetic quality to the novel as a whole. Nevertheless, she keeps a tight rein on herself, and never escapes into overblown sentimentality or high romance.

Whilst the novel may lack the emotional range and intensity of those of Anne's two sisters, one must never lose sight of the fact that its intentions are different. Stating at the beginning that "all true histories contain instruction" (1), Anne, and Agnes, bear this in mind in the choice of words, descriptions and sketches. The novel never lapses into didacticism, but nevertheless, the growth progress of Agnes masterfully illustrates the pitfalls in the human being's passage through the physical world. Agnes always has her eye on the spiritual life promised after physical death, and consequently there is always a religious essence to her narrative. It is the cultivation of this spiritual life that leads Agnes to self-knowledge and self-command, rather than self-suppression like so many other nineteenth-century female characters ¹⁵, and this in turn gives Anne Brontë a credibility as an authoress, and one deserving of critical acclaim as much as either Charlotte or Emily.

5 The Tenant of Wildfell Hall

Published two years after her first novel, Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall demonstrates Anne's increased maturity as a writer, and a perception of human nature not previously witnessed. Her later novel illustrates a greater "depth of insight... an awareness of the shabbiness and shadiness in human relationships" ¹, which she utilizes effectively by showing its corrupting influence on the unity she believes must exist between God, humankind and nature in order for true fulfilment to be obtained. Thematically there are similarities between her two novels, as Anne again presents the spiritual and mental development of her protagonists in the face of adversity, and in which the moral didacticism is inherent. There is, however, a new power and range to Anne's writing, in which she develops her narrative technique and her utilization of natural imagery and symbols to enhance her themes.

The thematic dichotomies on which The Tenant of Wildfell Hall pivots are all based on the inherent moral structure of the novel. The polarities of freedom and imprisonment, and unity and fragmentation, are supported by those of indoors versus outdoors, and country-life versus city-life. In order to illustrate these thematic concerns, nature is used in the novel as an "analogical framework as well as for its own sake" ². As itself, nature exists as a canvas over which the protagonists move, but its importance lies in the symbolic resonance attributed to it. The differing attitudes of the protagonists to the natural world act as a barometer of their emotional, mental and spiritual states,

whilst the tangible landscape in which the protagonists are immersed mirrors these states. The analogy implied is that of the protagonists' own inner moral strength. The unity that can exist between God, nature and humankind can also be destroyed by sin, corruption and the baser human instincts. It is away from this possible fragmentation that Helen Graham moves, towards wholeness with God the Creator, and nature, His creation.

The narrative technique of the novel shifts from the one retrospective female voice of Agnes Grey to an enclosed, or layered, narrative utilizing both a female and a male protagonist. Whereas Agnes recounts her past experiences in a chronological order, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall proffers a variety of viewpoints delivered from differing times and geographical positions. The text is what Langland calls "doubly retrospective" ³, in which Gilbert Markham's enclosing narrative comprises his attempts to discover more about the mysterious "tenant" with whom he is falling in love, whilst Helen Huntingdon's diary proffers the answers to the mystery. That Helen Graham's diary is positioned between both sections of Gilbert's narrative reinforces the theme of imprisonment, for even as he reads it, Helen is still mentally and emotionally ensnared by her bond to Arthur. Ironically, it is a type of bondage, and not a bond of mutual love and respect.

In her new narrative technique Anne Brontë's faithfulness to 'truth' is also developed from the earlier work as she shows the complexities of illustrating 'truth' coloured by different perspectives; what Langland calls "Brontë's own sophisticated appreciation of context and 'truth'" ⁴. For it is these different contexts that proffer the different symbols and images that enhance the themes of the novel. Similarly, what is

heard and seen in one context, gains its significance by being tested within other contexts, and only then can the 'truth' be established. The fragments of gossip, overheard conversations, and spied-on meetings build^{up} a completely different picture in the first section of the narrative ~~(from what)~~ is revealed in the diary section. It is in the third section of the novel that these 'truths' are tested for their strength and durability.

As with her earlier novel, Anne's intention in this second novel is instruction. Stated in her preface to the second edition of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Anne's goal is to

reveal the snares and pitfalls of life to the young and thoughtless traveller... [and] I wished to tell the truth, for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it⁵.

By using hunting imagery, the "snares and pitfalls", to signify those things that lead to fragmentation and ultimately death in the human world, that is sin, corruption, and moral laxity, Anne demonstrates how the natural world provides the framework for the didactic intention of the novel. Read symbolically, the descriptions of the surrounding landscape in the three sections of the novel proffer a profound insight into the emotional and moral climate of the context in which the protagonists are immersed.

Gilbert's description of the landscape at the beginning of his extended letter to Halford sets the tone for the entire section preceding the perusal of Helen's diary. In this section the theme of imprisonment, mental, emotional, and in part physical, is foregrounded. The narrative begins "one cold, damp, cloudy evening towards the close of October" (35) as Gilbert

plods his way home, seeking the comfort of indoors signified by "the gleam of a bright red fire through the parlour window" (35). The oppressive and forbidding weather symbolises the air of brooding and mystery surrounding the arrival of Mrs Graham at Wildfell Hall. At twenty-four, Gilbert Markham is the spoilt, indulged eldest son of a deceased gentleman farmer, but despite his inherited farm, his chief delight is entertaining in the cosy parlours of the surrounding village of Linden-Carr. At this point he is emotionally immature and has as yet to face real adversity. As Terry Eagleton states, he is "more gentleman than farmer" ⁶, and the wild, rugged beauty of the surrounding landscape does little to excite any other emotion in him other than the desire to escape it. Thematically, the opposition of indoors versus outdoors is extended throughout the novel, but in Gilbert's opening section, it is well that he prefers the comforts of the hearth, for it is in the idle family chatter that he learns of the presence of a new tenant at Wildfell Hall.

The mysterious Mrs Graham's presence at the long-abandoned Hall precipitates the mystery which Gilbert is at pains to solve. The neighbourhood becomes rife with rumours as to her background, emphasising the difference between gossip and truth, as Gilbert is to discover. Her arrival disrupts the community as much as Heathcliff's arrival disrupted the family at Wuthering Heights, and she is perceived as subversive by the community who cannot relate to her singular lifestyle. Gilbert's descriptions of both the ruined Hall and its tenant suggest that there is more to Mrs Graham than she reveals. Gilbert's hopes for a "romantic young widow" (39) are countered by his younger brother's equally romantic, "I'd hoped she was a witch" (40). Fergus's comment is, however, probably closer to the truth than

is Gilbert's. Helen Graham is subversive, like a witch, in refusing to be part of the community, but also in that she is an outcast and hunted down. Her refusing Arthur his conjugal rights, her running away with her son, and her novel ideas of child-rearing all point to her being very different ~~from~~ the inhabitants of the Victorian farming community in which she hides. The "tall, lady-like figure clad in black" with her "raven black" hair and "clear and pale" (40) but unemotional face seems a fitting occupant for the supposedly haunted Wildfell Hall. Her inhospitable demeanour and her lack of observance of the "ritual images of Victorian order... all serve to establish Mrs Graham's subversiveness in Linden-Carr" ⁷. The gossip and speculation about the new tenant is rife in the community, and taken as truth by those who hear it. Nevertheless, the 'truth' is reliant on authority, and it remains elusive until Gilbert reads the diary, of which the author is Mrs Graham.

Whilst Gilbert enjoys life in the "wooded valleys, the cornfields, and the meadow land" (45) of Linden-Carr, a controlled, limited landscape, Helen's abode is "the steep acclivity of Wildfell, the wildest and the loftiest eminence in our neighbourhood" (45). This serves to emphasise the difference between them from the start. The ruggedness of the landscape surrounding Wildfell Hall symbolically implies a hardness of character, one wrought by adversity, whilst the domesticated landscape of Gilbert's home signifies his own emotional immaturity that has yet to face hardship.

Gilbert's long descriptive passage of the geography of the area is more than informative; it implies a significant relationship between the environment and its inhabitant. Long

before anything concrete is known about Helen, the landscape in which she buries herself simultaneously attests to her desire for a bolthole from the world, as well as the mental and emotional prison in which she is trapped. Her physical escape has nothing to do with the self-imposed moral code that dictates her continued bond with the dissolute Arthur. According to Winifred Gérin, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall is a simultaneous demonstration of

the corroding effect on character not only of self-indulgence, vice and profligacy, but of virtue itself if too long and too painfully exposed to a consciousness of superiority over hostile and degrading influences⁸.

Thus the "scanty and stunted [trees and]... rough stone fences, partly greened over with ivy and moss" (45) proffer little comfort for Helen, and symbolically mirror the emotional wreck of her life, for she, too, is stunted by her experience of hardship. Both Helen's "virtue" and the "rough stone fences" have been battered and partially damaged, but do, however, continue to do their duty as far as possible to keep intruders out. The stone walls may now be obscured, but Helen's moral rigidity is her only weapon against corruption of the soul. Wildfell Hall is, for Helen, an "enclosure", one that provides

calm, retreat from life, passivity, acceptance of one's fate; and yet, simultaneously, it entices with a false image of oneself⁹.

The land on which Wildfell Hall is situated offers little hope for its future prosperity:

The fields, being rough and stony and wholly unfit for the plough, were mostly devoted to the pasturing of sheep and cattle; the soil was thin and poor: bits of grey rock here and there peeped out from the grassy hillocks bilberry plants and heather -- relics of more savage wildness -- grew under the walls; and in many of the enclosures, ragweeds and rushes usurped supremacy over the scanty herbage (45).

Helen's present home is a far cry from the former material comforts of Grass-dale, and significantly, as long as the 'tenant' of Grass-dale survives, Helen has to endure an equally bleak future at the Hall. She, too, is "thin and poor"; her severe black frame stands in stark contrast to the plump and blooming Rose, and the vivacious, "pretty, playful kitten" (42), Eliza Millward. Helen's poverty springs from her quest for freedom, and her painting offers her only the sparest of earnings. Her asperity and bitterness are also the "relics of more savage wildness" than any of Linden-Carr's maidens could dream of, and for her there is none of the lush growth of the valley, only the sparse vegetation that has survived despite the inhospitable climate. Helen is introspective and singular, and as deserted as the Hall. Her paintings of the surrounding landscape attest to her reluctance to stray from her prison-fortress.

Anne Brontë's choice of natural symbolism in these opening descriptions demonstrates the increased maturity of her writing. The progression from Agnes Grey is marked, and serves to bring Anne into line with her sisters, through her selection and control of selected images and symbols. The symbolism acts to adumbrate the revelation of the treatment that Helen suffered from her husband, and excites the reader, like Gilbert, to discover the 'truth' about Helen. Initially Gilbert's distaste

at the "superannuated mansion of the Elizabethan era" -- "cold and gloomy enough to inhabit" (45), echoes his distaste for Helen's severe aspect, which is "too hard, too sharp, too bitter for my taste" (65): "I would rather admire you from this distance, fair lady, than be the partner of your home" (40). Both Helen and Wildfell Hall have a cold and forbidding exterior and a "time-eaten" (45) air.

The ravages perpetrated by nature on the Hall -- "the war of wind and weather" (45) -- symbolically represent the emotional war waged on Helen by Arthur, until both are "abandoned to the weeds and the grass, to the frost and the wind, the rain and the drought" (46). Both Helen and the Hall lurk, half fierce and forbidding, half afraid and cowering, behind the "stone walls" and the "group of Scotch firs, themselves half blighted with storms" (45-46). Simultaneously, however, there is the suggestion that although rendered physically unattractive by hardship, both Helen and the Hall have a strength and a durability that enables them to survive. It is possible to read such descriptions in both a positive and a negative light, which renders the inherent symbolism doubly effective. Thus from the beginning of the novel, and of Gilbert's letter to Halford, everything associated with Helen is fraught with mystery, decay and ruin; even "nature itself is part of the imperfection of the fragmented, fallen world" ¹⁰. It is for Gilbert to seek out the answers and endeavour to make whole again what Arthur Huntingdon's dissipation had torn asunder.

As the friendship between Helen and Gilbert develops, it is significant that their meetings are most often outside, for Helen enjoys a complex relationship with the house she inhabits. It is simultaneously her prison and her refuge. Having been the

place of her birth and early childhood -- of which she has no recollection -- her return to it renders it a constant reminder of her failed marriage. But it is also a treasure-chest of her secrets; in it she secretes her son, her diary, and her paintings, all of which she endeavours to hide from the world's prying eyes, including Gilbert's. It is only on chance meetings out-of-doors that their friendship slowly develops, and whilst Gilbert feels that

she was desirous of throwing cold water on this growing intimacy -- to quench, as it were, the kindling flame of our friendship (72),

Gilbert himself re-evaluates his former opinion of the supposed widow, not once suspecting that her coolness towards himself springs from Helen's own moral standards, and not from any distaste of his presence.

Gilbert's growing infatuation is seen mirrored in the way he describes the external features of the landscape. It acts as a barometer to the way in which he feels the relationship is progressing. The day the young folk plan the excursion to the coast is described in terms of new growth:

the young primroses were peeping from among their moist, dark foliage, and the lark above was singing of summer, and hope, and love, and every heavenly thing (80).

The lark could very well be Gilbert himself as he contemplates a day spent with Helen. This description is a reflection of the scene Helen paints at the beginning of her relationship with Arthur, where everything suggests a potential for fulfilment, just as Gilbert anticipates an opportunity to realize the

potential of his growing attachment to Helen. Yet when he suspects that he may lose Helen to Lawrence, he finds life

blank, and worse than a blank -- teeming with torment and misery -- not a mere barren wilderness, but full of thorns and briars (126).

The morning after this supposed revelation, Gilbert describes the day as "a dull gloomy morning, the weather had changed like my prospects" (127). These two passages illustrate both a symbolic and an imagistic use of nature. In the first passage, the landscape is simultaneously itself, and a symbol of Gilbert's growing love for Helen, and the potential he sees in their friendship. In the second passage, there is no tangible "barren wilderness", instead here nature exists on a purely referential basis, providing only the terms of description for Gilbert's emotions. Anne is clearly in control of both these types of usage, and again demonstrates her power as a writer.

Helen's relationship to the natural world is equally as complicated as that between herself and Wildfell Hall. On a physical level she is seldom seen beyond the perimeter of its grounds, eschewing for the most part the social circle of Linden-Carr. Instead, she spends her leisure time painting -- not the wild, rugged scenery proffered by nature around Linden-Carr, but one portrait after another of the ruined house, capturing it in all its aspects. There is something obsessive in her behaviour, as if she must know thoroughly this prison-refuge that she inhabits. Gilbert and Gubar see Helen's painting as a woman's move towards independence, but also as a means of expression. But in spite of this, the paintings are her means of livelihood, and she must initial them falsely to prevent

detection, thus Helen uses her art "both to express and to camouflage herself" ¹¹. It is again a kind of subversiveness in Helen that she is not only a professional artist, using the lady-like accomplishment of painting as a means to an economic end, but also that it is a duplicitous act. Helen hides behind her falsely-initialled paintings, which she feels to be artistically inadequate, and can only reveal the truth about herself in writing her secret diary.

It is while looking at Helen's paintings that Gilbert discovers the portrait of Arthur Huntingdon. Unlike the paintings executed at Wildfell Hall, Helen's earlier paintings are ingenuous, and the portrait is a clue to the mystery for Gilbert, especially as Helen is less than gracious about his discovery and completely mute to his questions. However, the reader remembers the portrait turned to the wall when Helen's diary reveals her first secret, infatuated drawings of the then beloved subject, on the backs of perfectly fitting paintings. The hidden sketches reveal the potential for duplicity in Helen even as a young girl, as she secretly expresses her desires behind the camouflage of accepted subjects. Helen describes one of these paintings, having "intended it to be my masterpiece" (174). It focuses on what Duthie calls "archetypal symbols"¹², here represented as the "amorous pair of turtle-doves" (175). However Arthur Huntingdon's worldly experience gives him insight into the painting that Helen herself lacks, or hides, for in it he sees ~~not~~ sweetness and innocence but

Spring just opening into summer -- morning just approaching noon -- girlhood just ripening into womanhood -- and hope just verging on fruition (175).

It is at this moment of climax that Helen is precipitated into the world of Arthur's vices and it seems fitting that Arthur's portraits are forever turned away from sight. This duplicity in Helen's art is symbolic of the duplicity of Arthur during his marriage to Helen, as well as her own in hiding from him at Wildfell Hall. The girl who painted turtle-doves is a very different person from the bitter woman who compulsively paints the ruins of her family home.

As Gilbert's narrative gives way to Helen's, so the mystery of the earlier section is slowly unravelled. The importance of the diary section lies in its authority about Helen's life, and the way in which it counteracts the rumours and gossip about her that are so prevalent in Linden-Carr. Helen is as insistent on truth as was Agnes Grey and she is neither hysterical nor melodramatic in her descriptions of her failing marriage; instead she focuses on the moral issue at stake: the "horrors of drink and debauchery in all their possible private and domestic manifestations" ¹³. There is also an immediacy to Helen's diary, which is not the same as Gilbert's account of events recollected nearly twenty years after their occurrence, nor, as McMaster states, to be found in any other Brontë novel ¹⁴.

The theme of imprisonment found in Gilbert's narrative is explained in Helen's diary. It reveals the mental, moral and physical confinement that Helen endures at Grass-dale, and explains the origins of her situation at Wildfell Hall. It is also in this section that Helen's moral and religious beliefs are explained. As most of the events occur indoors in this section, much of the natural symbolism is utilized on a referential basis, where Helen draws on images of the natural world to provide the framework for, and to enhance, the moral lesson at

stake. This also contrasts with the out-of-doors relationship that exists between Gilbert and Helen. The fact that Arthur Huntingdon prefers the saloons and clubs of the city to the healthy air of the country is a further development of this particular theme. The consistency and the beauty of nature, and its serenity stand in opposition to the disorder perpetrated by humans in their lives ¹⁵, and it is in this conflict that Helen writes her diary.

Initially for Helen, Arthur Huntingdon is the centre of her life. She frequently refers to him as the "sun", drawing on the archetypal associations of warmth and life-giving powers of the sun itself to describe him, and like the sun does the earth, he dictates her every mood:

every vestige of displeasure soon melted
away... like morning clouds before the
summer sun (174).

His smile is "like gleams of sunshine on an April day" (181) and Helen is captivated. Ironically, she ignores the other side of her symbolic association between Arthur and the sun, forgetting that the sun can also burn and destroy. It is significant, however, that one of her first thoughts about him acts as a dire prediction of her future with him:

It may be only an ignis fatuus, after all, but
it can do no harm to follow it with my eyes and
rejoice in its lustre, as long as it does not
lure me from the path I ought to keep (168).

But despite this prophetic first impression, even the "hovering cloud" (187) of her aunt's disapproval cannot diminish Helen's attraction to Arthur's charm. Helen's innocent faith in the

essential goodness of mankind and the world is seen in her worship of the glory of nature:

It was a splendid morning... the dew was on the grass, and ten thousand gossamers were waving in the breeze; the happy redbreast was pouring out its little soul in song, and my heart overflowed with silent hymns of gratitude and praise to Heaven (187).

Like Agnes Grey before her, Helen worships nature because it is God's creation, and as yet, Arthur's dissipation has not soured her beliefs in human nature. For Helen, God, nature and humankind exist together as a holy and essentially harmonious entity, but she has yet to learn that mankind can be cruel and immoral, nature forbidding and even God angry and exacting. When this occurs, then the unified triad fragments, resulting in misery and pain for the human counterpart, and it is this fragmentation that Helen strives to avoid, but is inexorably drawn into by her marriage to Arthur. Her break from him is more than the desire to free her son of his corrupting influence, it is an attempt to re-establish the unity of the triad, which gives as its reward inner peace and tranquility.

Arthur's true colours soon reveal themselves. His essential weaknesses become apparent to Helen early in their marriage, who likens his love for her to

a fire of dry twigs and branches compared with one of solid coal -- very bright and hot, but if it should burn itself out and leave nothing but ashes behind, what shall I do? (215)

Symbolically, the warmth that once drew her to him becomes a quick, blazing fire that threatens to destroy their union completely, instead of offering the comfort and endurance that a

coal-fire on the hearth would signify. Later it is not surprising, either, that after this experience she should desire to "quench... the kindling flame" (72) of Gilbert's growing attachment for her. Yet at this stage, Helen persists in the belief that she can 'save' Arthur, without once realizing that he has neither the desire nor intention of reforming his dissipated lifestyle. Bored and frustrated by the sedentary life at Grass-dale, Arthur spends his time "watching the clouds, cursing the rain, alternately petting, and teasing, and abusing his dogs" (224). Helen's growing uneasiness is seen mirrored in the miserable weather outside where everything is obscured by "sullen, grey clouds, streaming rain, soaking lawn, and dripping, leafless trees" (223), and she is trapped indoors by the bad weather outside, making it impossible for her to escape Arthur's ill-temper. Even when the weather brightens, Arthur has long fled to the city, and Helen can find no joy in the beauty of nature without Arthur there to share it: "All the sweet summer is passing away without one breath of pleasure to me or benefit to him" (236). For Helen, the whole of the natural world is subordinate to her "moral world" ¹⁶, acting as a framework and provider of symbols for her religious and moral beliefs.

For Arthur himself, the beauties of the natural world hold no attraction. As with everything in his life, he treats nature as a means to his own pleasure. Creatures that annoy him are tormented, be they people or animals, and the wild creatures are only there to be shot for entertainment. When anything vexes him, as Helen did by destroying her portrait of him, his response is, "Humph! I'll go and shoot now" (177). The beauty of the grounds at Grass-dale go unnoticed by him, and the shrubs and plants are only appreciated for their convenient camouflage

for his illicit dalliances. Arthur is the representative of the one extreme in the thematic polarities of the novel, being associated with immorality and fragmentation. He is drawn to the vices proffered by the city and is most often seen indoors, and is even jealous of Helen's religious observance, claiming it occupies too much of her time. He sets himself up as a 'god' for Helen but fails because ~~she~~ can only serve one God. ~~Thus~~ Arthur precipitates the fragmentation that Helen strives to overcome.

As Arthur's habits become increasingly worse Helen withdraws from the outside world, hiding herself in the library or in her private room to escape the sin and chaos of her homelife. Her husband's jealousy over her -- despite his own infidelities -- is described by Helen in similar imagery ~~to~~ her first appraisals of him:

he knows he is my sun, but when he chooses to withhold his light, he would have my sky to be all darkness; he cannot bear that I should have a moon to mitigate the deprivation (243).

It is with the birth of their son that the real differences between Helen and Arthur are seen. For him the child is initially an object of jealousy, but later, a protégé in his world of vice. Helen, on the other hand, sees him as a "soul to educate for heaven" (252). The conflict precipitated by these differing opinions eventually leads Helen to flee Grass-dale, and bury herself at Wildfell Hall.

Helen draws on Biblical and natural imagery to describe her son: he is a "guileless, unpolluted lamb", and "stainless yet as that pure snow, new-fallen from heaven" (253), and she feels her vocation is to save him from the evils of the world. Fearing for

his life while he is still an infant, she nevertheless believes implicitly that should he die:

the bud, though plucked, would not be withered,
only transplanted to a fitter soil to ripen
and blow beneath a brighter sun (252).

Helen is determined that her son will grow up in harmony with the natural world and with God, and not follow his father down the path of sin and corruption, and again nature provides the framework for her moral intentions. These descriptions echo both Anne Brontë's 'Preface' to the text, as well as Helen's sharp words to Mrs Markham on the subject of child-rearing. In attempting to smooth over the pathway of his life, Helen hopes to instruct her son against the vices so enjoyed by his father: "I will clear as many stones from his path as I can, and teach him to avoid the rest" (54). Despite Arthur Huntingdon's attempts at turning the child away from his mother's teachings, Helen has confidence that her efforts to "eradicate the weeds that had been fostered in his infant mind, and sow again the good seed" (375) will be productive. What she could not achieve in her husband can at least be attempted successfully with her son. The hunting imagery of the 'Preface', the "pitfalls" and "snares" which lead to death, are replaced by farming imagery that promotes life and healthy growth.

Just as Agnes Grey feared being wrongly influenced by her charges, so the unhealthy atmosphere inside Grass-dale changes Helen from an innocent and infatuated girl to a hardened and desperate woman. But instead of weakening her moral standards, the more she is exposed to vice, the more her religion proffers comfort and solace:

it is wrong to despair; I will remember the counsel of the inspired writer to him 'that feareth the Lord and obeyeth the voice of His servant, that sitteth in darkness and hath no light;- let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God' (333).

On the night that she witnesses the lovers' scene in the "shadowy walk" (p305), Helen turns not to despair but to Heaven,

I saw the eternal stars twinkling down upon me; I knew their God was mine, and He was strong to save and swift to hear (313).

As her world threatens to fragment, so Helen turns to God to find the strength to flee the corrupting influences, and to find an inner unity with Him. There is an echo here of Jane Eyre's darkest hours as she leaves Thornfield, ~~yet~~ Helen does not draw inspiration from the spirit of the natural world, but instead from her own faith. It is this faith that prevents her from sinning, even in her weakest hour.

Helen's escape from Grass-dale, "that place, the scene of so much guilt and misery" (394), emphasizes the themes of freedom and imprisonment. Whilst Helen escapes the physical imprisonment she has suffered, she has in no way left behind the mental or emotional bonds that tie her to Arthur. Her delight at being "free and safe at last" (394) as she leaves the grounds is mitigated by the fact she is merely in transit to another prison-like environment. Ironically, she must dissolve an earthly union -- even if in name only -- in order to preserve her own inner moral integrity and union with God. Nevertheless, she sees her escape as complete as "the round, red sun arose to welcome our deliverance" (394), and her depressed mood is lifted

by the freshness of the untainted outside world:

Oh, what delight it was to be thus seated aloft
rumbling along the broad, sunshiny road, with
the fresh morning breeze in my face, surrounded
by an unknown country all smiling -- cheerfully,
gloriously smiling in the yellow lustre of
those early beams (395).

Helen's quest for anonymity has begun, as she rejoices in being free from the debauchery, deceit and betrayal of her former home, and immersed in the constancy of God's creation. Nevertheless, Helen is struck by the "desolate wilderness" (397) of Wildfell Hall, whose aspect "was not remarkably cheerful in itself, either within or without" (397). Her first impressions of the Hall are as bleak as were Gilbert's and there is no romanticising of the ruined house on her part. One sees Helen moving from one prison to another with only the briefest of interludes enjoyed outside.

Thus end those sections of Helen's diary permitted to Gilbert's scrutiny. As the text moves into its third and final context, so the mystery begun in the earlier sections is resolved, and instead the text focuses on the consequences of the earlier narratives. Gilbert, now armed with knowledge of the 'truth', seeks to further his relationship with Helen. Helen's diary serves an interesting dual function. According to Gordon, Helen gives Gilbert the diary to "make present her past", for she still sees herself morally bound to another man in a paradoxically fragmented union, thus rendering another union with Gilbert impossible. ^{on the other hand,} Gilbert interprets it as evidence that "her past [is] definitely past, so that he might marry her" ¹⁷, and thus create a new union. Hence, another conflict arises; Gilbert's passion is counteracted by Helen's

morality in much the same way that her morality stood in sharp relief to Huntingdon's dissipation. This time, Helen's growing love for Gilbert makes the cost of her morality higher, and yet she remains steadfast to her faith in Heaven. She again draws on natural imagery to explain her reason for ending all contact with Gilbert, believing that earthly trials are rewarded in Heaven:

I do know that to regret the exchange of earthly pleasures for the joys of Heaven, is as if the grovelling caterpillar should lament that it must one day quit the nibbled leaf to soar aloft and flutter through the air, moving at will from flower to flower, sipping sweet honey from their cups or basking in their sunny petals (410).

Arthur's approaching death, and Helen's return to him fully illustrate both her faith in God and her loyalty to duty. In eschewing all romantic notions she binds herself to saving a man she detests, but for whom she wishes no eternal punishment. The belief that his "poor trembling soul" may be "hurried away to everlasting torment" (452) fills her with dread, and her faith that "God, who hateth nothing that He hath made, will bless it in the end" (452) is ~~the~~ the crowning testimony to her religious beliefs. The constancy of nature that gives Helen so much joy is merely a symbol of the constancy she believes is in God's love.

Meanwhile, back at Linden-Carr, Gilbert is yet again tormented by rumours as to Helen's whereabouts and when he hears the rumour that she is to marry Walter Hargrave, he is spurred into action. For him, now, the truth is important, and he actively seeks it out. It occurs on a wintry day in December, "when the first fall of snow lay thinly scattered over the

blighted fields and frozen roads" (462). Believing that his hopes for a life with Helen are also "blighted", Gilbert is nevertheless stunned by the news. Because he has no diary now to differentiate the truth from the rumours, Gilbert must act on his own. His quest sends him flying first to Woodford to seek out Lawrence, and failing that, to Grass-dale itself. His first sight of the park and house at Grass-dale echoes Helen's final glance of it the morning of her escape. Whereas Helen left the house still, dark and brooding, now it is frozen and waiting. Its "wintry garb... that robe of dazzling purity, stainless and printless" (472), augurs well for both the dead Arthur's soul and his son's future. The beauty of the scene signifies that Arthur's reckless life had no permanent stamp on the house or its inhabitants, and its purity suggests that no damned soul haunts it. It may be frozen but it is not lifeless; the house stands, like nature, on the brink of spring, the archetypal symbol for hope and rebirth ¹⁸.

If the intention of the novel is to instruct, through the trials of the protagonists, then one has also to pay attention to the maturing of Gilbert Markham. Through his association with Helen he is changed from a spoilt and self-indulgent boy to a mature and sensitive man. His earlier complacency about her, seen in his "I can crush that bold spirit" (143) and "But while I secretly exulted in my power, I felt disposed to dally with my victim like a cat" (143), is changed to a humbled

though I might disclaim all idea of ever aspiring to her hand, or even of soliciting a place in her friendly regard, her peace should not be broken by my presence, nor her heart afflicted by the

sight of my fidelity (477).

It is with these intentions that he plans to leave Staningley, believing that Helen, now an heiress, will be socially above him, and therefore not a suitable marriage partner. It is a coincidental meeting, again out of doors, that brings them finally together. This final meeting brings them together as equals, with no duplicity or mysteries to hide from one another. A new wholeness is achieved for Helen in her union with Gilbert, and once again the unified triad of God, nature and themselves, as representatives of mankind, is achieved.

It takes Helen's gift of the rose to bring Gilbert to his senses and realize that ~~she~~ she loves him as much as he loves her. In the whole text, Helen gives Gilbert two gifts, and they are both products of the natural world. The first rose she offers in friendship, but one which is over-shadowed by "a painful recollection... a cloud of anguish" (110). The second rose she offers with a clear conscience and as a supreme symbol of herself:

This rose is not so fragrant as a summer flower, but it has stood through hardships none of them could bear: the cold rain of winter has sufficed to nourish it, and its faint sun to warm it; the bleak winds have not blanched it, nor broken its stem, and the keen frost has not blighted it. Look, Gilbert, it is still fresh and blooming as a flower can be, with the cold snow even now on its petals -- will you have it? (484).

It is the honesty and the simplicity of the proposal that gives it its authority and beauty. There is no need at this point for grandiose passion or over-blown romantic sentiment.

Helen and Gilbert are united as mental and spiritual equals, content in their fruitful lives in the clean country of

Staningley. It is significant that Gilbert's letter ends extolling the virtues of nature over the city:

you must leave your dusty, smoky, noisy, boiling striving city for a season of invigorating relaxation and social retirement with us (490).

This theme of the superiority of country over town is intricately woven throughout the text, supporting the novel's moral considerations, and that the country triumphs in the end is a victory for morality, even in the face of so much adversity. In the words of Terry Eagleton:

Anne Brontë's novels find the world morally mixed, but they do not find morality in the least problematical; Agnes Grey and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall work on the simple assumption that love, earnestness and evangelical truth are preferable to social achievement and can, with sufficient long-suffering, be attained¹⁹.

Anne's faithfulness to reality in her writing makes her two novels different from those of her sisters. She is more concerned with the moral lesson they portray than the more romantic inner struggles of Charlottes's protagonists or even the elemental passions of Emily's Wuthering Heights. Anne's protagonists mature through the adversities they face, but they are never melodramatic nor exaggerated. It is, instead,

in the act of growth; in the act ... of becoming responsible, moral, and adult; of being weaned from illusion and dream, and adapting [themselves] to reality²⁰,

that they achieve fulfilment and success. Through honest description and faithfulness to the truth, Anne Brontë succeeds in revealing "the snares and pitfalls of life", and it is in her

skilful utilization of natural symbols and imagery that they are presented so effectively. Over-arching all of this is the unshakeable belief in God, and the joy that unity with Him brings, and the knowledge that sin only leads to pain and suffering. In the end, Anne does not offer a compromise between the polarities presented by her novel, and even after Helen and Gilbert are happily united, there is still the understanding that evil and corruption continue to exist. Nevertheless, Anne does achieve her goal by highlighting the areas where mankind can stray from the path of devotion and duty to God.

Conclusion

That the natural world held a special place in the hearts of all three of the Brontë sisters is evident by the wealth of references to it in their novels. That it provides the structural principle for their work proves that their relationship to nature was more than merely a pleasureable one -- it is, for them, the essence of freedom, an escape from the constant pressures of society and the demands of the human world. In varying forms within their work, the natural world provides the key to understanding their protagonists' relationships to the world in general. This study has delved into the dynamics of each of the five novels chosen, illustrating how nature provides the basic structure for each text, and how the relevant symbols and images drawn from nature occupy a position of prime importance.

The emphasis of this thesis ~~is also~~ on the individual integrity of Anne, Charlotte, and Emily's work, for they themselves were strongly individualistic. Despite their identical upbringing at Haworth Parsonage, and their shared love of the surrounding moors, in adulthood all three sisters developed a unique relationship with the world around them, and this uniqueness is strongly evident in their novels. What is common in their work is the use of nature, and its related symbols and imagery, to explain and give coherence to their separate themes. Each of their novels, however, has a different intention, and the natural world is drawn accordingly. The scrutiny of this different usage of the same structural

principle is to make explicit in each novel what is implicit, and to show that Anne, Charlotte and Emily used nature in their own unique way. In Michael Irwin's words:

To investigate the descriptive habits of... [the Brontës]... is greatly to enhance one's own understanding of the workings of their fiction ¹.

This thesis has taken each of the five novels as an individual entity, and has examined in detail the status and application of natural imagery and symbols within that particular text.

Emily's Wuthering Heights gives prime importance to the natural world and its referents. The intensely private, closed geographical setting of her novel validates the novel's thematic intentions, illustrated by the emphasis on Catherine and Heathcliff's constant desire to escape back into the natural world, away from the divisions and classifications of the human world. The desolation of the untamed moors does not frighten her protagonists, and instead it becomes the very essence of physical freedom. In her novel, the natural world is ultimately superseded by the supernatural, a realm of spiritual freedom above and beyond the tangible, physical world. It is this realm that Catherine and Heathcliff strive to gain, in an attempt to regain their childhood unity. In the survivors of the third generation, Catherine II and Hareton, there is little of the tumultuous passion of the second generation, and the natural world reflects this. By the end of the novel, nature is tamed and domesticated, and whilst Catherine II and Hareton still find pleasure in rambling over the moors, their lives are to be firmly rooted within the order of Thrushcross Grange with its cultivated garden.

For Charlotte's protagonists, Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, the dichotomy between the will to fulfilment and self-expression, and the desire for acceptance within the societal sphere, is most obvious. Each has to find the balance between her inner feelings and the demands of society; and ultimately, both are successful, after having negotiated the trials and tribulations set before them. The natural world is embodied in the landscapes over which they pass, and is most closely allied to their own personal emotions, reflecting and giving coherence to ~~what~~ they cannot as yet express. The five geographical loci of Jane Eyre are read as a reflection of her developing mental and emotional strength, and immersed within them, Jane seeks comfort and guidance from 'the spirit of nature'. It is this supernatural force that goads Jane on, 'upwards and outwards' to fulfilment. In Villette, the natural world is read as reflection of Lucy Snowe's private, mental world, and her tumultuous emotions are reflected in the fury of nature's storms. Charlotte Brontë's protagonists are most frequently seen involved in a type of 'emotional reciprocity' with the landscape. Outside, immersed in nature, they are free, even if momentarily, from the demands of society that threaten to crush them and break their spirits.

It is Anne who is the most different in her treatment of nature, although she is no less successful than her sisters. In her novels she is not only concerned with the natural world, but with humankind's relationship to it, and hence with God, as nature is part of His creation. Both Agnes Grey and The Tenant of Wildfell Hall demonstrate Anne's personal religious intensity, and her thematic intention of instruction is realized through her usage of natural imagery and symbols. The narrators

of the two novels comment not only on the natural world that surrounds them, but also on the other characters' attitude to it, for this attitude is significant in comprehending the moral stance of each character described. Anne's use of nature may lack the range and intensity of that of her sisters, but she is successful nevertheless in drawing symbols and images from the natural world to emphasize, and realize, her novels' thematic intentions. This thesis has shown that Anne's descriptions are as powerful and as pertinent, within their own context, as those of her sisters, and that she should be evaluated on individual merit, and not as an emulator of Emily's or Charlotte's work.

That all three sisters placed so much emphasis on personal freedom cautions one not to place too rigid a classification on their work. Nevertheless, the importance given to the natural world, and the symbols and images they drew from it, does ally them with the Romantic movement, and like the Romantic poets, their individuality is not to be ignored. This thesis has shown in detail that nature forms ^{crucial} to a structural principle of each of the novels, the study of which leads to a deeper level of understanding of each of the works studied. Whilst this allies the sisters with one another, their unique usage of natural symbols and imagery maintains and upholds their individuality, both as novelists and as sisters.

Notes

Introduction

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5 Tzvetan Todorov, Theories of the Symbol, pp. 203-10.

6 Ferdinand de Saussure, "The Object of Study", p. 12.

7 M. H. Abrams, Preface, The Mirror and the Lamp, vi.

8 This interpretation is derived from Northrop Frye, "Symbol as Image", in his Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 85-6.

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10 David Lodge, "Fire and Eyre: Charlotte Brontë's War of Earthly Elements", p. 114.

11 Melvin R. Watson, "Form and Substance in the Brontë Novels", p. 108.

12 See Lucy Poate Stebbins, A Victorian Album: Some Lady Novelists of the Period, pp. 65, 73, and Enid L. Duthie, Introduction, The Brontës and Nature, ix.

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2 Duthie, p. 236.

3 Raymond Williams, The English Novel From Dickens to Lawrence, p. 64.

4 Joseph Natoli, Mots D'Ordre: Disorder in Literary Worlds, p. 37.

5 Natoli, p. 33.

6 M. H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 66. Abrams uses this in a specifically Christian interpretation of the Romantic movement, following the rationalism and decorum of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, its use in this thesis is important for an understanding of the Catherine-Heathcliff union, and its subsequent fragmentation and ultimate reunion through death.

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9 Lilian R. Furst, Romanticism in Perspective, p. 129.

10 Karen Chase, Eros and Psyche: The Representation of Personality in Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens and George Eliot, p. 4.

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- 13 Carole Gerster, "The Reality of Fantasy: Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights", p. 75.
- 14 Malcolm Bowie, Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction, p. 115.
- 15 Michael Wheeler, English Fiction of the Victorian Period 1830 - 1890, p. 65.
- 16 Marjorie Burns, "'This Shattered Prison': Versions of Eden in Wuthering Heights", p. 42.
- 17 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic, pp. 273-4.
- 18 Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 275-6.
- 19 Thomas Moser, "What's the Matter with Emily Jane? Conflicting Impulses in Wuthering Heights", pp. 184-6.
- 20 Elisabeth Th. M. Van de Laar, The Inner Structure of Wuthering Heights, p. 242.
- 21 Bersani, p. 197.
- 22 Gerster, pp. 76-7.
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- 26 Van de Laar, p. 259.
- 27 Robert Kiely, The Romantic Novel in England, p. 251.
- 28 Moser, p. 197.

Chapter 2: Jane Eyre

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