

QUESTIONING VOICES: DISSENTION AND DIALOGUE IN THE POETRY OF

EMILY AND ANNE BRONTË

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My dissertation examines the roles of Emily and Anne Brontë as nineteenth-century women poets, composing in a literary form dominated by androcentric language and metaphor. The work of Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly concerning spoken and implied dialogue, and feminists who have pioneered an exploration of feminist dialogics provide crucial tools for examining the importance and uses of the dialogic form in the development of a powerful and creative feminine voice. As such, I propose to view Emily's Gondal poetry not as a series of loosely connected monologues, but as utterances in an inner dialogue between the dissenting and insistent female voice and the authoritative voice of the non-Gondal world. Emily's identification with her primary heroine, Augusta, enables her to challenge the controlling voice of the of the patriarchy that attempts to dictate and limit her creative and personal expression. The voice of Augusta in particular expresses the guilt, shame, and remorse that the woman-as-author must also experience when attempting to do battle with the patriarchy that attempts to restrict and reshape her utterances.

While Anne was a part of the creation of Gondal, using it to mask her emotions through sustained dialogue with those who enabled and inspired such feelings, her interest in the mythical kingdom soon waned. However, it is in the dungeons and prisons of Gondal and within these early poems that Anne's distinct voice emerges and enters into a dialogue with her readers, her sister, and herself. The interior dialogues that her

heroines engage in become explorations of the choices that Anne feels she must make as a woman within both society and the boundaries of her religious convictions. Through dialogue with the church, congregation, and religious doctrine, she attempts to relieve herself of the guilt of female creativity and justify herself and her creations through religious orthodoxy. Yet her seeming obedience belies the power of her voice that insists on being heard, even within the confines of androcentric social and religious power structures.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1826, the four Brontë children--Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne--were transformed into the chief Genii Talli, Brannii, Emmii, and Annii. While Chief Genius Brannii and the Terrible Chief Genius Talli took the lead in creating such plays as "The Young Men" and "The Islanders" and ruled over Glasstown and later Angria, it would be erroneous to believe that Emily and Anne were disinterested bystanders. On the contrary, in 1827, Charlotte and Emily, who shared a bedroom, established what Charlotte called their "secret bed plays" (Fraser 52). The power that the children exercised in creating and ruling their own world and the characters within it captivated Emily and Anne enough to cause them to create their private world of Gondal. It was perhaps here, in the minds of a nine-year-old girl and a seven-year-old girl who each found herself creating and ruling countries and deciding the fates of the inhabitants within, who owed their origins to a mixture of history, literature, and imagination, that the idea of the self as a godlike, creative force was born.

Though secluded, the Brontë siblings were not sheltered from the harsh realities of the outside world. The death of the children's mother, followed by the successive deaths of the two eldest sisters, the presence of an eccentric father and an unsympathetic aunt, and the shadows of poverty and disease always loomed in the background and served to introduce each of the children to a world that was unpredictable, untamed, and, much of the time, unkind. It was in these make believe worlds of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal that the children were able to confront and confound the restraints put on them by

the authorities and whims of the outside world. And it was in Gondal that Emily and Anne Brontë created an epic that launched an extended dialogue between themselves, their gods, and the rest of the world.

Despite some resemblances, it would be a mistake to consider the residents of Gondal as merely shadowy ancestors of Catherine Earnshaw, Heathcliff, and Edgar Linton.¹ Nor should Emily's poems in particular be dismissed as a late attempt at Romanticism. Emily is no Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, or Keats, despite her appreciation of some of them. As Nina Auerbach points out, Emily never collapses into the "self-luxuriance of Byronism, nor seeks the insurance of a stagnant, calm eternity of nature as does Wordsworth" (54). Rather, Auerbach points out that Gondal is a stormy, tempestuous place with changing seasons and political climates (54). Nor is Emily's muse the silent reflection of herself that Shelley's and Wordsworth's is, but a vocal presence that forces her into dialogue with both the masculine poetic tradition and herself as a socially gendered matrix of power. Likewise, Anne is not simply a formulaic Victorian moralist and devotional poet, nor an imitator of her favorite poet, Cowper. Rather, she engages Cowper's and the church's sentiments and teachings with her own voice, as she disputes her sister Emily's unorthodoxy and struggles to relieve herself of the guilt and uncertainty associated with feminine creativity amid conventional social and religious power structures.

The fact that the three sisters use Romantic, elegiac, and devotional devices to engender their dialogues should not necessarily be simplified and viewed as a source of disempowerment, a feeble attempt at imitation, but as a strategic re-appropriation of

traditionally masculine formulae that are reformed by multiple discourses that question, challenge, and reshape patriarchal conventions. As Patricia Yeager says, “A reinscription of phallogentrism may not be seen as a sign of weakness or plagiarism, but of a woman’s own ability to signify, that is, her ability to play with, to control, and to restructure patriarchal traditions.” (959). The use of dialogism and what Bakhtin deems polyphony, the “plurality of consciousness-centers that are not reduced to a common denominator” (7), initiates and carries on a contradictory, confrontational, and tension-filled exchange between cultures, ideologies, poets, and words and their meanings. Thus, just as words, formulae, and literature can be used to build and reinforce patriarchal structures, so too can they be used to question, deconstruct, and weaken these same structures.

Using a Bakhtinian/feminist analysis to discuss such methods of reconstruction requires the acknowledgements that Bakhtin initially believed most poetry to be monological in nature, and, secondly, that he never mentions feminine discourse specifically in his analyses.² Although he viewed poetry as the product of a single author’s thoughts in his early works, Bakhtin later found himself questioning whether or not all literature is in essence double-voiced. He writes, “To what degree are pure objective thoughts possible in literature? Is it possible for a word in which the author does not hear another’s voice, which includes only the author and all of the author, to become material for the construction of a literary work?” (qtd. in Morson and Emerson 25). Poetic forms such as the dramatic monologue in particular tend to lend themselves to the Bakhtinian requirements for dialogic expression. Indeed, the dramatic monologue is seemingly monological; however, Robert Langbaum asserts that the “style of the

dramatic monologue corresponds in its style to the dialogue rather than the monologue where each speaker is absorbed in his own strategy. In most dialogues, the speaker is contradicted by the other, so that no single perspective dominates” (55). Just as a seeming monologue can be double-voiced, so too can a seeming dialogue be monological, as in Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” which contains a seemingly direct address to the poet’s sister, Dorothy. Yet, as David Richter points out, Dorothy only exists for Wordsworth as a mirror: “Her presence in the poem is owing to her ability to recuperate for the poet the feelings and the language of adolescence” (17).³ Thus, Dorothy, like so many women before her, has not the freedom to speak or otherwise influence meaning. This realization leads to a second concern: what place, if any, does gender have in Bakhtin’s work?

While Bakhtin’s theories discuss a variety of dichotomized tensions between political, social, and philosophic factions, he does not mention gender as a category to which his ideas of struggle apply, as Wayne Booth has pointed out in “Freedom of Interpretation.” However, this dialogue concerning Bakhtin’s theories has been opened to matters of gender and extended to feminist criticism by those such as Dale Bauer, Diane Herndle, Patricia Yeager, and Mary Russo, among others. Booth has suggested that had Bakhtin lived today, he would have grown to accept feminism as a legitimate part of an ongoing social and political dialogue, demonstrating multi-voiced and polyphonic resistance to hierarchy and laughter at authority.

But what constitutes feminist dialogics? Karen Hohne and Helen Wussow propose that a feminist dialogic will “concern itself with points of view, with the interlocative

dialogical self, investigating both its own positions and those of others” (xiii). At the same time, it will include the idea of “a female chronotope” that would consist of “positing the female subject in the context of space and time . . . and emphasiz[ing] the relationships between race, class, and gender” (xiii-xv). Dialogism is not the final solution then, as there is no final word; it is not a release from conflict, but an instrument of struggle. If this is the case, then, the question of how one may find one’s voice through confrontation and exchange without silencing the other must be addressed, for it is only through sustained and continual dialogue that the multiplicity of voices can be heard, from both outside and within the self. I propose to study the interconnected voices of the two poets Emily and Anne Brontë from the perspective of Bakhtin’s theories of the dialogic and the resulting idea of a feminist dialogic. Both Emily’s and Anne’s personal and Gondal poems suggest that each sister sustained a complex dialogical relationship with their religious and social upbringing, each other, and their own personal creativity. It is through both externalized and internal dialogue that they engage and battle the dissenting voices and constant constraints put upon them as they force dialogical recognition of the heretofore silenced and marginalized “other.”

NOTES

¹ This is the opinion of several early critics, including Robin Grove, who says, “I myself would not make high claims for her [Emily Brontë’s] poetry” (39), and Barbara Hardy, who finds much of Emily’s Gondal poetry “weak” (97). See Grove’s “‘It Would not do’: Emily Brontë as Poet,” and Hardy’s “The Lyricism of Emily Brontë” in *The Art of Emily Brontë*. Ed. Anne Smith. New York: Vision Press, 1976. Even Margaret Homans ignores the Gondal poetry, relegating it to a “childish exercise in preparation for *Wuthering Heights* in her book *Women Writers and Poetic Identity: Dorothy Wordsworth, Emily Brontë, and Emily Dickinson*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1980.

² The most notable examples of this idea occur in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas Press, 1981.

³ For a differing view of dialogism in Romantic poetry, see Michael Micovski’s *Dialogue and Literature: Apostrophe, Auditors and the Collapse of Romantic Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.

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CHAPTER I
DIALOGUES OF AUTHORSHIP:
MULTIVOCALITY IN EMILY BRONTE'S GONDAL SAGA

Imagine a dialogue of two persons in which the statements of the second speaker are omitted, but in such a way that the general sense is not at all violated. The second speaker is present invisibly, his words are not there, but deep traces left by these words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker. We sense that this is a conversation, although only one person is speaking, and it is a conversation of the most intense kind, for each present, uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to the invisible speaker, points to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person. (Bakhtin 117)

Although Bakhtin's purpose in his study of Dostoevsky was to explore dialogics in Dostoevsky's novels, his ideas concerning the hidden dialogicity in Dostoevsky's texts accurately describe the relationship of Emily Brontë to her Gondal poems as she explores subject/object relationships through language and poetic expression. The problem of poetic identity and subjectivity becomes increasingly important under patriarchy,¹ and brings to mind the important question asked by Toril Moi concerning the woman writer:

If the author is defined as male, and she finds herself already defined by him, how can she venture to take up the pen at all? Although Bakhtin did not take gender into consideration in his analyses, his emphasis on inclusivity would seem to lead to the acknowledgment of the female writer's voice and offer her the chance to circumvent and challenge the cultural silence imposed upon women. The randomly ordered poems containing the cacophony of voices that comprise Gondal contain divergent, sometimes opposing, voices within the author and in answer to the dissenting voices without as well as within. Accordingly, the speaking "I" of the poem may even address a third party (the poet herself may sometimes act as this party) or enter into a dialogue with another poet, her sister Anne, who also participated in Gondal. Thus, within the Gondal saga, dialogue is both intertextual and intratextual. The purpose of this chapter, however, will be exclusively to examine Emily's Gondal poems and the hidden dialogicity arising from the characters' and author's conversations with the "unspoken words of another person."²

Interestingly, Emily is able to translate her surroundings and herself into a Gondolian context, as well as to blur the lines of distinction between her physical and imaginative existence (Chichester 3). In her essay on Gondal, Teddi Chichester notes the importance of one of Emily's "birthday letters" written in 1845, which was to be opened by herself and Anne at a later date:

Anne and I went on our first long journey by ourselves together And during our excursion we were, Ronald Macalgin, Henry Angora, Juliet Angusteena, Rosabella Esmalden, Ella and Julian Egremont, Catharine Navarre, and Cordelia

Fitzaphold, escaping from the palaces of instruction to join the Royalists who are hard driven at present by the victorious Republicans. The Gondals still flourish bright as ever We intend sticking firmly by the rascals as long as they delight us which I am glad to say they do at the present. (qtd. in Gerin 172)

Chichester observes that this birthday note, written roughly fourteen years after the creation of Gondal, is indicative not only of Emily's complete identification with her poetic creation, but of what Margaret Homans calls her "mobile adoption of fictive roles" (Homans 109).

The many masks, voices, and selves of Emily Brontë are expressed through the multiplicity of voices in Gondolian society, where every opinion becomes a living being and a distinct human voice. Within the Gondal poetry is a preoccupation not only with death, which many critics believe stems from Emily's personal loss of her mother and sisters,³ but with what Teddi Chichester calls "feminine multiplicity" or the refusal to become "fixed, immobilized" (3). Chichester views Emily Brontë's poetic strategy as one that will allow her to "elude or bravely embrace death by trying on different selves, different genders, different philosophies" (2). Much of Emily's personal poetry, however, dwells not on eluding death, but the wish to remove herself from the non-Gondolian world of folly and falsity that troubled her. Conversely, other personal poems, such as "Plead for Me" and "The Night-Wind" depict the author's anxiety and need to justify this alternate existence. In Brontë's personal poetry, particularly in "Plead for Me," we see Brontë oscillating between viewing herself and crediting her muse or "god" of Imagination as being the matrix of her poetic power. Her contradictory impulses between

both the desire for and scorn of poetic and personal recognition are illustrated by her anger at her sister's discovery of her poems and her initial refusal to allow their publication and her subsequent acquiescence to publish under a pseudonym, an "alternate" voice and persona, Ellis Bell, and willing authorship and publication of a novel that would be harshly condemned by its critics. Emily became enraged by Charlotte and Anne's revelation that the voice of Ellis Bell was that of Emily Brontë, again illustrating the extreme identification that Brontë had with her created voices and yet distance that she felt necessary to maintain between creation and creator. This duality may have engendered an internal conflict that allows us to view the Gondal saga not as a series of loosely related poems, but as utterances in an inner dialogue between the insistent female voice and the dissenting, authoritative voice of the perceived non-Gondal world. As Bakhtin tells us, language bequeaths to us several voices, and these voices construct both selves and characters-as-selves (4). Emily's identification with her heroine, Augusta (A.G.A.), as well as other Gondolian voices, enables her to challenge the dissenting voices of the non-Gondolian, patriarchal world that dictate and limit her creative and personal expression and whose Gondolian representatives are addressed from a distance after abandonment or death; however, even the silences of these characters offer a prompt for the characters' seemingly monological voices in the continuous inner dialogue. These dialogized monologues become what Bakhtin calls "micro-dialogues" in which every word is double-voiced and contains within it a conflict of voices (61). The voice of A.G.A. expresses the guilt, shame, and remorse in her defiance that the woman-as-author must also experience when doing battle with the

dominant patriarchy that attempts to restrict and shape her utterances, engendering a dialogical response and further setting the scene for communal heteroglossia.

In order to claim and reclaim the power of personal voice, Gondal's Queen, Augusta, is forced into conflict and situations that demand dialogical recognition from and exchange with other voices. Emily's choice of a woman to rule Gondal stands in stark contrast to the male-ruled and dominated land of Angaria, where Branwell's and Charlotte's characters dwelled. The name of Gondal's capital city, Regina, further illustrates female dominance and the secondary role of the male characters. As further testament to Emily's preoccupation with depicting feminine power in the midst of an androcentric society, it is interesting, though perhaps not surprising, that Emily watched the rise of Queen Victoria, who was her contemporary in age, with great interest (Fraser 199). Christine Gallant has described Emily's identification with the Gondal cycle and her heroine as a celebration of the "chthonic feminine." Certainly Brontë's, as well as Augusta's, proclaimed preference and identification with such traditionally feminine elements as the earth, the night, and the moon and stars in much of her poetry contrasts with the more fundamentally male elements of fire, sunlight, rulership, and action that also come to be associated with the Queen of Gondal and depicts the chasm and disruption felt between the feminine and masculine principles of the inner and outer worlds. It is not surprising, then, that the character that Emily primarily identifies with would possess what Auerbach calls, the gift of "perpetual change" (211). Like the moon and nature herself, Augusta is forever changing, continually moving, and often at odds with those who would have her remain static or constant. The dominant voice of Augusta seemingly silences all "other"

competing separative voices that rival her control of the interior landscape of Gondal, yet her voice triggers and gives rise to a multitude of dissenting utterances. Mikhail Bakhtin tells us that the very nature of language engenders several voices and that these voices construct both selves and characters-as-selves; within these "selves," then, we can find not only the voices of culture, but gender and other constructs which constitute the individual. The word is heard, understood, and answered by other voices from other positions, preventing one voice from becoming completely dominant. The characters of Gondal reappropriate the culturally-dominant androcentric voice with what Craig Owens calls the "insistent feminine voice," the voice of the marginalized "other" that demands to be heard and acknowledged (61). Augusta, as well as other marginalized voices, subverts the hierarchical order not only through words, but through the reappropriation of the objectifying gaze; she refuses to be a sign or symbol, becoming, rather a manipulator of signs and symbols. This reversal places not only Augusta, but her creator, into conflict with the existing social order, engendering a battle of voices. In this way, a feminist dialogic partakes of Bakhtin's notion of the "carnival attitude," which is hostile to definitive endings and finality (Bakhtin 138). Like Augusta and Gondal itself, the carnival attitude demands that the world is, or should be, "open and free, everything still in the future and always in the future and always requiring rebirth" (Bakhtin 139). Dialogue becomes a means, perhaps an end in itself, in creating and maintaining this continuous future and preventing the dominance of a silencing, finite, monological voice.

True to her carnivalesque nature, the future queen of Gondal is born during a raging storm, under the "aegis of perpetual flashes of change." Augusta's essential nature is

disruptive, and she is certainly disruptive to the hierarchy of Gondal as she ascends to the throne. Augusta gains strength through movement, through change, and with each death and act of nature, while men, static and often imprisoned in tombs and prison cells, are overpowered by her movement and progression. Even from the grave, however, the voices of these men "haunt" Augusta, as conscience awakens dialogic conflict. The first casualty of Augusta's need for vocative control is her first husband, Alexander, Lord of Elbë, whom she abandons for Lord Alfred, and who dies thereafter, possibly in banishment.⁴ At his gravesite, years later, Augusta speaks to him, attempting to explain herself not only to him, but perhaps to those who would accuse her of lacking in sentimentality, since her actions belie her words of remorse. Silence, however, would leave her actions, as well as the silence itself, to be inaccurately interpreted. Such self-consciousness in itself dialogizes Augusta's speech, which is directed toward herself, her object, and any listening third party (the reader), since confessional and self-justifying speech must anticipate and be directed towards another. Therefore, she must vocalize her motives:

But thou art now on a desolate sea--

Parted from Gondal and parted from me--

All my repining is hopeless and vain,

Death never yields back his victims again. (A.G.A to A.E. 16-20)

In her book *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan argues that the male is defined through separation, while the feminine is recognized through continuity; interestingly, death is depicted here as male-gendered and performs a separative function, removing the

dead from the living. Death's function is in opposition to the earth where the dead are laid; however, in Gondal, the Earth is personified as a mother taking her children back to her breast, emphasizing life rather than death and the act of reuniting rather than of severing.

Death never "yields back" his victims, indicating that the demise of Alexander is final, as there is no cessation or return. He is parted from both Augusta and the land of Gondal with which she is closely identified. The tone and rhythm of the poem are conversational and seemingly stand in stark contrast to Augusta's lament for the Emperor Julius Brenzaida in "Remembrance," which contains what C. D. Lewis calls the longest meter in English poetry and imitates the slow, dragging sound of a funeral procession (83). The last lines seem to answer any reproach not only to Alfred, but also to any observer who would condemn Augusta for refusing to stay herself in mourning. Chichester notes the seemingly sinister element in the poem and views it as the result of the inability to view women traditionally as the speaking subjects in an elegy, and, thereby, as "a reversal of the masculine/feminine dynamic" (6). Alfred indeed lies lifeless and seemingly voiceless, and, therefore, powerless; however, his silence is enough to provoke a response from Augusta. Physical separation from Alfred is not enough, for, as Chichester points out, "an absent lord traveling a 'desolate sea' would threaten Augusta's autonomy" (6). Alive, he would remain able to dispute and condemn Augusta's actions from afar, attempting to impose social mores and restrictions and attempting to further disempower her.

Augusta is again called upon to perform an elegy for her second husband, Lord Alfred, who dies of a broken heart after she deserts him for the Emperor Julius Brenzaida. Augusta's seeming unending succession of elegies is interesting in light of Elizabeth Bronfen's comment that death "produces a moment where everything is called into question" (291). With each death, Augusta's social position, future, and even safety is uncertain. The tradition of the elegy itself is undermined, as it is not the traditional female body that is absent in these elegies, but the male symbol of hierarchy, control and power that has alternately protected and imprisoned her. However, each death also renews dialogue, and, again, Augusta feels compelled to answer the voice of conscience and propriety, but cannot feel remorse for her actions. Her elegy to Alfred, "Holy be thy resting place" is immediately striking in its lack of knowledge or concern as to the placement of the gravesite: "Yes holy be thy resting place / Wherever thou may'st lie" (1-2). Augusta removes herself from the care and consignment of his memory by wishing for him heavenly "dreams" rather than immortality, but not assuring him of such, prefacing her suppositions with "And will not . . . ?" The silent, watchful, heavenly angel of the hierarchical and patriarchal heaven will relieve her of the wifely duty of watching over his child-like repose:

And will not guardian angels send
 Kind dreams and the thoughts of love
 Though I no more may watchful bend
 Thy repose above?

And will not heaven itself bestow
 A beam of glory there
 That summer's grass more green may grow
 And summer's flowers more fair? (5-12)

It is perhaps interesting here that although Augusta's point of view dominates the poem, the speaker cannot impose a resolution to the dilemma of death. The only inevitability is nature's role in his death, signaled by the growth of the grass and flowers over his grave. He is essentially reduced to fodder, as the grass and flowers that grow upon him will be grazed upon, and since his grave is seemingly unmarked, no voice will be heard but eternal nature's. There is again an ennui and a perfunctory tone in her final parting from him:

Farewell, farewell 'tis hard to part
 Yet loved one it must be
 I would not rend another heart
 Not even by blessing thee

Go we must break affection's chain
 Forget the hopes of years
 Nay not willest thou remain
 To waken wilder tears

This herald breeze with thee and me
 Roved in the dawning day
 And thou shouldest be where it shall be
 Ere evening far away (13-24)

The word "farewell" suggests formality, as does Augusta's failure to address Alfred as anything more than "loved one." The lack of punctuation likewise contributes to a want of emphasis or intonation, suggesting a hurried tone with little emotion. The double negative in line 19 is emphatic and serves to stress the fact that not only will he "not remain" physically, but that she wishes his spirit and memory soon to be far removed from her as well, and its resting place will be just as obscure. However, as one with the "herald breeze with thee and me" this seems improbable. Bronfen notes that the act of elegy precedes an act of removal in accordance with the christian notion of severance separating the dead from the living with finality. Here, Augusta cannot break the essential unity between life and death--the dead will still be heard through Mother Nature for eternity. Nor is there any clear marker, no gravestone, to signify division between the living and the dead. It is perhaps this recognition that prevents Augusta from joining the cult of mourning or performing a traditional elegy.

Although Alfred's memory "should" be far away, as Augusta expects (19), his memory, as well as Alexander's, not only haunts her, but forces her into authorship and into dialogue with an unknown other, whom I propose to identify as her creator, Emily. And it is Emily, in Gondolian disguise, who questions her queen's melancholy. In "To A.G.A.," the voice of the poet, in an attempt to probe not only her creation's but her own

psyche, questions Augusta's somber mood, which contrasts the surrounding setting of singing breezes and gleaming leaves. The poet's voice familiarly questions Augusta as to the whereabouts of her lover and suggests either absence or infidelity as the cause of her unhappy state of mind. The dialogue is designed to engender dialogue and to force an admission that would normally not be expressed by Augusta. Augusta answers that her lover is not absent, and his heart is "faithful as the grave" (19), equating not male faithfulness, but the expected reciprocal constancy that is expected from her, with stagnation and death. Brontë's request that her creation "Reply this once" as to whether she has been faithful indicates not only a respect for her character's autonomy, but a reluctance to too often breach the separative function of the characters in Gondal.

Augusta's reply is indirect, yet clear:

I gazed upon the cloudless moon
 And loved her all the night
 'Till morning came and ardent moon
 Then I forgot her light,--

No, --not forgot, eternally
 Remains its memory dear
 But could the day seem dark to me
 Because the night was fair? (26-33)

The conflict between the moon and sun and night and day is predominant in both Emily's Gondal and personal poetry, and Homans, as well as Tayler, thinks that it depicts the struggle to choose between the inner, feminine realm of poetic inspiration and the outer, patriarchal world of expression and action. It is within this dichotomy that the muse of poetry takes on its "masculine" aspect, the "otherness" that Homans believes troubles Brontë. Through Augusta, Emily expresses and questions her own dilemma, as she feels forced to choose between poetic inspiration and poetic expression. The choice is comparable and translated into Augusta's choice between the calm, doting, isolated Lord Alfred, and the ambitious, conquering, sun-like Julius Brenzaida. The final stanza indicates Augusta's choice to move into the next, brighter realm despite any losses or consequences of such a decision:

'I may well mourn that only one
 Can light my future sky
 Even though by such a radiant sun
 My moon of life must die' -- (34-37)

This choice, perhaps even indirect advice, renders the author strangely silent, as the dialogue ends abruptly. Brontë does not dispute her creation's choice, but seems willing to allow her to explore an option while she watches silently and safely from afar. The situation inspires a potential debate, but unlike her sister Anne's poetic dialogues, Emily does not dispute or advise the polyphonic voices of her creations; rather, she allows herself to experience the otherness of the text and of her own mind by allowing the competing voices to flourish without restricting or subverting them or their urges.

Augusta's desertion of Lord Alfred allows her to marry the Emperor Julius Brenzaida and finally become the queen of Gondal and to perform yet another elegy upon his demise. Julius is one of the few celebrated males in Gondal, yet he, too, must die to allow Augusta sole rulership of Gondal and to allow her voice to remain dominant. Fifteen years after Julius dies in battle, Augusta returns to his gravestone, apologetic for her ability to exist and even flourish without him in "Remembrance." Although C. D. Lewis notes the dragging rhythm and meter of the poem, the predominant focus of the poem is not Augusta's despair, but her self-justification. Within Augusta's speech, the personal pronoun "I" and its forms appear twelve times as opposed to the second person "thee" and its forms, which appears six times, indicating a preoccupation with the self rather than with the one in the grave. Most references to Julius appear in the first four stanzas, while the last four show a shift to the first person, as she learns to "check useless tears of passion" (25). Augusta's plea to Julius, "Sweet love of youth forgive me, if I forget thee, / While the world's tide is bearing me along" (13-14), is quickly replaced by the necessity of such forgetfulness if she is to flourish in the world, as she learns "how existence could be cherished / Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy" (23-24). The intended apology engenders a dialogic clash between the desire, even obligation, to resist time and the present and the desire for movement and to experience future possibilities. Irene Tayler notes that although the meter is dirge-like, the poem gathers speed through alliteration and internal rhyme, and that the language becomes almost orgasmic in such phrases as "rapturous pain" (Tayler 30). However, Tayler sees the poem as an unwilling adoption of life, while I would argue that the gathered speed and increasing "rapturous"

nature of the language indicate an impatience with the mourning process and the unspoken demands imposed upon her by the deceased. Her speech is, in essence, an apology that she feels will release her from her duties as mourner; so long as she continues to live in memory and regret, his tomb, she says, is "already more than mine" (28). Chichester says that the 5-6 beat line renders the tone of the poem not wild or despondent, but conversational (6). As conversational, the piece, I believe, becomes dialogic as well. Augusta must defend herself and her actions not only to her own conscience, but to the accusatory silence of Brenzaida. Chichester finds the tone of the piece incantatory, which perhaps deems it resurrectional, not for Julius, but for Augusta, as she "witches" herself back to life through created and sustained dialogue. Thus, the wished-for, mystical, Romantic union so desired is denied, as such a union would result in the subversion and silencing of Augusta's voice. To remain voiced means to insist on drawing a distinction between the woman/poet and the "source" of her inspiration. There must be no resolution or direct union with the object if the dialogic mode of self-expression is to remain operative, as unity and harmony may dissolve into monologue.

Augusta's voice, however, does not go unanswered in Gondal. As a re-visioning and perhaps even parody of the male/female, voiced/unvoiced dichotomy prevalent in society and that prevents the female author from joining in the creative brotherhood and dialogue, poet and musician Fernando D. Samara finds himself trapped within a womb of silence, struggling to be heard. Here, words, power and individuation are sharply and poignantly contrasted with silence, and solitude. One of the dissenting voices of Gondal, Fernando D. Samara is Augusta's lover for a short time, until she finds his voice too

"insistent" and, therefore, dangerous. Augusta perhaps finally finds it necessary to remove him and orders him to be chained in the caves of Gaaldine. Many of Samara's utterances are similar to those of Heathcliff in Emily's novel *Wuthering Heights*, and many critics have seen him as a forerunner of Heathcliff.⁵ As a musician and possible forefather of Heathcliff, Fernando is closely aligned with what Tayler calls Emily's "male muse" and her "god of Imagination" whose overwhelming presence Emily both longed for and felt the need to control. Both Brontë's and Augusta's apparent need to remove themselves from the suffocating intensity and possession of this voice leads to the subsequent "imprisonment" or submergence of it deep in the underground caverns of the mind. Though male-gendered, Fernando speaks with the "insistent female voice" as a marginalized and potentially silenced victim of hierarchical power structures. In her discussion of gendered perceptions of creativity, Susan Friedman finds the male identified with the creative process of birth, while woman is regulated to the bodily act of procreation: "*Procreation* is the act of the body that reproduces the species. A man *conceives* an idea in his brain, while a woman *conceives* a baby in her womb The pregnant body is necessarily female; the *pregnant* mind is the mental province of genius, most frequently understood to be inherently masculine" (373). In his role as the male-gendered seed of imagination, Fernando is dropped into the womblike caverns of Gondal and becomes symbolic of the active, creative pregnancy. In the context of such sexual dualism, the creative voice of the female poet is imprisoned within the body, trapped in an embryonic, conceptual stage, as it awaits its physical, worldly birth in what may be an attempt to reconcile creativity and procreativity and to become both textual mother and

father. Indeed, it is in another poem that words are inscribed upon the cavern walls at the expense of the body, or the feminine process of conception, that must give way to poetic birth and expression. Fernando's inscription, that is, defacement, of the womblike walls that enclose him enacts the trope of sexual violence that is related with conception and birth. Indeed, the trope of male sexual violence upon the female body has been viewed as the "poet's struggle for words" (Gibson 65). In the case of the female author, however, this violence is internalized and translated into the conception and expulsion of the carefully nurtured, painful, and potentially deadly process of childbirth that leads to vacancy and separation. In such a manner, the creativity of the woman author is "mothered" within the caverns of both her mind and body and fathered by her as it fights its way into written expression, demanding that she be prolific not only biologically, but creatively. As her progeny, this biological and creative doubling of the self through metaphor allows the female author to be present within the finished text as well as the creation thereof.

In the caves of Gaaldine, Fernando is accessible to Augusta, yet removed from her sight unless she chooses otherwise. Like the portrait in Browning's "My Last Duchess," Fernando is an object to be viewed or hidden at his possessor's will; however, he retains the power of speech, the ability to tell his story that Browning denies his Duchess. He remembers himself as the object of the gaze of Augusta's "bright eyes" and their "undimmed, dazzling shine" (7). Perhaps in answer to Irigaray's question of what would happen if the silenced object could speak, Fernando attempts to disrupt the objectifying gaze with his voice as he addresses his captor, translating her "dazzling shine" into a

"dark deadly ray" that threatens to drive him mad, a result of which would be loss of coherent speech. Fernando's pairing of opposing images throughout the poem, such as dark and light and fire and ice, creates not only an unresolved tension, but further emphasizes the struggle occurring between the opposing subject and object as each strives to overcome, and even negate, the other. To escape his imposed silence, Fernando attempts to force a dialogue between himself and his absent captor by resorting to suicide, an act that he feels will provoke a response from the silent queen:

There, go, Deceiver, go! My hand is streaming wet,
 My heart's blood flows to buy the blessing--To forget!
 Oh could that lost heart give back, back again to thine
 One tenth of the pain that clouds my dark decline! (21-24)

The addressee of this tirade, Augusta, is to be punished by experiencing the same fate that she condemned Fernando to: his action, suicide, and words will be unanswerable. He will be as insensible to her supposed grief and apologetic utterances as she is to his grief and longing. His last fancied image of her envisions her "answer" to his suicide as overwhelming grief at being unable to express her regret, her "lids weighted down in cheerless woe"; and, yet, there is another competing image of her response to his suicide: "And could she see me now, perchance her lip would smile / Would smile in careless pride and utter scorn the while!" (39-40). Thus, his suicide opens the answering dialogue to possibility. Because the "wild wind" that he consigns his last messages to is unreliable, and his "frantic curses" fall into the "vacant air," Fernando leaves a more concrete record of his suffering and hopes of infecting his captor with remorse. In the

following poem, "Written in the Gaaldine Prison Caves to A.G.A.," Fernando leaves not only his last thoughts, but recreates past dialogues with Augusta, forcing not only a response, but obligating her to speak the words he wishes to hear:

And while on that reflected face
 Her eyes intently dwell:
 'Fernando, sing tonight,' she says,
 'The lays I love so well.'

He smiles and sings, though every air
 Betrays the faith of yesterday:
 His soul is glad to cast for her
 Virtue and faith and heaven away.

Well hast thou paid me back my love!
 But, if there be a God above
 Whose arm is strong, whose word is true
 This hell shall wring thy spirit too! (65-76)

The last words written force Augusta to recall her feelings for him eternally, but also give him the opportunity to answer her fondness in the context of her future betrayal. In this way he writes himself back into the dialogue that has been denied to him. Fernando engages a form of feminine dialogics as he forces his language into the context and

contest of the dominant language. His suicide is a last resort to inject his voice back into the narrative that attempts to silence and exclude him.

As Adrienne Rich reminds us, "all silence has meaning" (308), and Bakhtin's principle of dialogics indicates that the suicidal voice compels a dialogue with those others who prefer to think that it does not exist. Through Fernando, the voice of the inner self, of Imagination, of the marginalized aspects of the self, resists its confinement and marginalization. Margaret Higonnet argues that suicide is a narrative and rhetorical strategy, as the suicide must be addressed by the other characters; thus, rather than concluding or finishing the "story," the dialogue remains unresolved. Likewise, Dale Bauer argues that the suicidal signature is not an act of finality, but "a decision not to let others finalize or deaden one's character into monologism" (682). Fernando recognizes the sterility and futility of the monologic voice as he says, "Vain words -- vain frenzied thoughts! No ear can hear me call-- / Lost in vacant air my frantic curses fall" (F.D. Samara to A.G.A. 38-39). In response, he offers his etchings on the stone walls and his suicide, creating dialogues with others that cannot be completed; thus, as Bakhtin says, the dialogue is not subject to closure, but is "forever dying, living, being reborn" (365).

As Fernando's utterances are representative of the repressed need for poetic expression and the anxiety such intense dedication created within Emily, so the anxiety of authorship is perhaps best represented by a voice that is immediately and guiltily silenced upon its birth. The voice belongs to Augusta's daughter, Alexandria. In "A Farewell to Alexandria," Augusta leaves her infant daughter, a "child of love," to perhaps die of exposure in a dell. Childbirth and labor have long been used as a metaphor for the

creative process and authorship, and, as Susan Friedman points out, the childbirth metaphor validates women's artistic efforts by unifying their mental and physical labor into pro/creativity (371). However, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have argued that the association of the pen with the phallic in the creative metaphors has caused the "anxiety of authorship" within women, as "to wield the pen" is to commit a masculine act that puts women at war with their bodies (49). Interestingly, Alexandria is "fatherless" in that she is perhaps the deceased Brenzaida's daughter, or even the product of an illicit romance, perhaps even the result of Augusta's passion for Fernando D. Samara (or Imagination). The questionable origin of such a child is certain to engender social disapproval and punishment for a woman, even (perhaps especially) for a queen. Similarly, Emily's own interaction with her muse also gives birth to textual children of "questionable" origin, which, when revealed to the public, were considered vile and reprehensible by many. As though anticipating such reactions to their labors, Augusta and Emily both made decisions to "hide" their creations-- Augusta in the "lone green dell" and Emily in her writing desk where they were discovered by Charlotte.

Alexandria is not only a physical representation of Augusta, her name even beginning with the seemingly preferred letter "A," but is also associated with the land that her mother rules, as she is named after a province of Gondal. Although Augusta does not attempt to prevent the child's birth, she finds it necessary to hide and abandon her creation in order to spare it the horrors that await her in an unsympathetic world, so that no "suffering shall charge that brow." The creation of both child and poem is a time of

great pleasure for the author, as represented by the initial fecundity and beauty of the green dell:

I've seen this dell in July's shine
 As lovely as an angel's dream;
 Above heaven's depth of blue divine;
 Around the evening's golden beam -- (1-4)

The beauty of the green, depicted in the patriarchal terms of heaven and angels, is, however, transitory and unavailable to the child, who is born against patriarchal "rules" and cannot participate in heavenly rewards.

But now, there is no wandering glow
 No gleam to say that God is nigh:
 And coldly spreads thy couch of snow
 And harshly sounds thy lullaby. (21-24)

The "heavenly father" is quick to desert the unfathered creation, because the idea of sole feminine pro/creation is threatening to all patriarchal order. Augusta has created and recreated herself, given birth to a purely feminine child/text that must be shamefully hidden and returned to the Mother/Creator:

Forests of heather dark and long,
 Wave their brown branching arms above
 And they must soothe thee with their song
 And they must shield my child of love! (25-29)

Both the act of feminine creation and the consignment of the child to a marginalized force of feminine power, Mother Earth, are what Dale Bauer would call "acts of disruptive power of the traditional codes" (676). With this childbirth comes the divestment of the monological selfhood, as well as the rebellion against the dominant social voice as multiple identities and multivocality may be explored.

The metaphor of authoring as childbirth requires, like childbirth itself, the cutting of the umbilical cord; this act of "letting go" encourages dialogism, according to Bauer, since it allows the child/text to speak for itself and to others and the mother/author to move on to another production (677). The progressive movement of the dominant pronoun "I" shifting to "thee" and back to "I" in the poem, as well as in her other elegies, would then identify Augusta as a mother/author who must let go of her creations in order to achieve such multivocality. As Augusta's act of abandonment of the "unblessed" and "unfriended" child is, like her abandonment of her husbands and their memories, felt to be "unnatural," for a woman, so is the act of authoring. However, the child/text must stand against outside elements without the continued assistance of the mother/author. Bakhtin stresses that if the "umbilical cord uniting the creator and the created is not cut, then what we have is not a work of art, but a personal document" (353). Even the implied deaths of Alexandria and other characters leaves them in a state of suspended animation rather than annihilating them, as their memories are addressed and discussed by other characters; others, such as Augusta herself, are resurrected from their graves in later poems, again illustrating Bakhtin's conceptualization of dialogue as an eternal, even

feminine circular or cyclic process where the "end" may be seen as a "final moment rather than as a final word" (365), and is always subject to rebirth.

It is, then, by harnessing the feminine aspect of the dialogic principle, the force that engenders and promotes the voices of the "other" and promotes multivocality, that Emily Brontë is able to create a utopian playground for the marginalized and subversive voices imprisoned within her. Even the silence or silencing of these voices becomes meaningful in that they encourage dialogic response from other voices, even as the interlocutor remains silent, and the divergent voices allow a new poetic subjectivity and oppose the speaking subject/silent object dichotomy. As the stratified voices compete and struggle to read themselves back into the text, it becomes clear that what is at stake in the creation and control of discourse is power, and it is through the pro/creative power of Augusta and the multivocality she engenders and encourages in Gondal that Brontë is able to recreate, confront, and challenge dominant social voices and hierarchies in her struggle to give birth and voice to her own "unfathered" child/texts.

NOTES

¹ In her article “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Toward a More Progressive Union,” (in Women and Revolution. Ed. Lydia Sargent. Boston: South End Press, 1981), Heidi Hartman defines patriarchy as “a set of social relations between men which have a material base and which through hierarchy, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women” (14). Thus, while men may inhabit varying social strata, they are always able to control at least some women through economical and sexual restrictions. Victorian society, with its views of women as moral gatekeepers (i.e., sexless), the cult of domesticity (i.e., unpaid laborers and child-bearers), and its laws treating of women as the property of either a father or husband or other male head of the household severely limited women’s ability to be successful economically and creatively. The Brontë sisters not only published only under pseudonyms, but did so in secret, not telling their father until long after *Jane Eyre* was published and successful. It is unknown whether Emily disclosed her authorship of the less well-received *Wuthering Heights* to him. It is suspected, however, that Branwell appropriated her creative property and attempted to read and pass off a chapter or two of her novel as his own work at his favorite tavern. Furthermore, most of the money for education was saved for and spent on Branwell and his unsuccessful bid to enter and study at the Royal Academy; the girls’ only schooling was the dreadful experience at Cowan Bridge where two of them died, and their preparation to become schoolteachers—one of the few possible professions for unmarried respectable women. Not a penny was spent on developing the girls’ artistic talents. Although the girls were able to read the

literature in the house, more from their father's neglect than tolerance, it is interesting to note that Charlotte's listing of the literature available to them in the home ranges from Shakespeare to Wordsworth, but includes not a single female author. Thus, the economic and creative worthlessness of women that society seemed to hold was echoed subtly but pointedly in the male-dominated and privileged household.

² Ratchford attempts to place all of Emily Brontë's poetry into the Gondal saga, despite the fact that the author herself divided the poetry into two separate notebooks, one entitled "Gondal poetry." In this chapter, I have considered only the poems from that notebook as true Gondal poems.

³ See Gerin, Taylor, and Homans in particular

⁴ Although the poems are presented here in a chronological fashion, the poems' exact order remains problematic in the absence of the lost prose accompaniment.

⁵ Irene Taylor in particular makes a convincing argument for Heathcliff as a "male muse" identifiable as "Imagination" and for Fernando and Brenzaida as Gondolian forerunners to his character. See also Juliet Barker's *The Brontës: Selected Poems*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1989) for connections and similarities between Emily's Gondal characters and those from *Wuthering Heights*.

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CHAPTER II

DIALOGUES OF DESIRE:

DIALOGIC YEARNING IN EMILY BRONTË'S PERSONAL POEMS

"Girls are rooted in nature which causes not only delightful blooming, but tendencies to fall. Men are chiseled and become chiselers"

--Ruskin, (*Sesames and Lilies*, 16)

"One's relationship to the self is inextricably intertwined to one's relationship with others."

--Mikhail Bakhtin, (*PDP*, 193)

In 1844, Emily Brontë copied her poems into two separate notebooks, one titled "Gondal Poetry" and another notebook that she left untitled, but filled with seemingly personal, conversational poems, now known as the Honresfeld manuscript. The dialogues within the poems tend to revolve primarily around two other conversants, Imagination and Nature, and the author's complex relationship with each. In her book *Women Writers and Poetic Identity*, Margret Homans asserts that in Emily's personal poems, Mother Nature is "prolific biologically but not linguistically" (13) and that those poems that deal with Emily's relationship with her creative power, the Romantic

"Imagination," dwell on "masculine figures of alien power, elevating them from the status of agency to that of major subject" (105). Homan's assertion that Brontë portrays nature "in place of or in competition with the poet's own speech" as a "force to be silenced in order for her to speak her own view" (107), as well as the dismissal of Emily as a late-blooming attempt at Victorian Romanticism are certainly arguable, however.

My response to the preceding allegations is twofold. First, I propose that in rendering Nature as a speaking subject rather than as an object of the poet's self-constitution, Emily subverts the Romantic patriarchy by decentering it and proposing other centers. Secondly, Brontë's poetry suggests that individual identity is tied to language and her presentation of both is bound in what Patrick Murphy calls "an unstable juncture/condition" with one another, with the ensuing dialogue underscoring the nature of personal identity (Murphy 49). For Emily Brontë, as for Bakhtin, the self is not constructed of "a single consciousness, which absorbs the consciousness of others, but of the interactions of many consciousnesses" (Bakhtin 14).

While Homans fears that women who "imagine themselves as subject must continually guard against being returned to the position of object" (Homans *Bearing The Word* 5), Emily Brontë fearlessly juxtaposes herself and the "other" voices which she both internalizes and externalizes until the positions of subject and object are no longer clearly defined. As Diane Herndle states, "In feminine texts, it is never clear who speaks, where the speaker is coming from, but it is clear that there is always more than one speaker more than one language, because it is always an-other's speech, an-other's language" (11). This method of allowing the traditional, "other," be it Nature or Muse, to

gain subjectivity and to mingle with her Self as creator and to dispose the center of subjectivity is made even more disturbing by Emily's method of achieving mutuality through the language of desire and confession. Bakhtin also emphasizes the novel's devices for representing an unsettling dialogue between ideals and voices along with a many-voiced dialogical consciousness (PDP 271). Emily's confessional tone, her forced admittance of desire through language, creates not only a dialogic link to both Nature and Imagination, but an amatory bond that creates a mutual and feminocentric dialogue that is both in conflict with and in dialogue and sympathy with the dominant ideologies it dislodges. Through mystical and physical experiences brought on by this relationship, Emily becomes transgressive, and through this breach of boundaries, brings both herself and the Romantic "other" into subjecthood.¹

In "High Waving Heather," one of Emily's earliest personal poems, she violently disrupts the imposed hierarchical order assigned to nature, as the traditionally masculine entities of Heaven and light (reason) are transposed with their "feminine" counterparts, the earth, night, and darkness:

High waving heather 'neath stormy blasts bending

Midnight and moonlight and bright shining stars

Darkness and glory rejoicingly blending

Earth rising to heaven and heaven descending (1-4).

The juxtaposition of the heavens and the earth in the poem, the masculine and feminine, some might argue, and the eternal and the mundane, deposes the hierarchy between opposites, but refuses to reestablish primacy in any form. That is, Emily does

not simply replace one with the other, but obliterates the boundaries between the two, as the dichotomies are seen "rejoicingly blending." The use of the present participle that permeates the poem suggests that this is not a finite act, but one that is in constant motion--any stability or totality temporarily created is immediately interrupted and razed:

Shining and lowering and swelling and dying
 Changing forever from midnight to noon
 Roaring like thunder like soft music sighing
 Shadows on shadows advancing and flying
 Lightning bright flashes the deep gloom defying
 Coming as swiftly and fading as soon (13-18).

Again, the change is "forever" (14), and the lack of punctuation in the poem visually supports the idea that there are no finite endings to the process. References to swelling and dying are indicative of the life cycles of pregnancy and death and, thus, humanity (not only woman) is involved in this process as well as nature; the dialogue between the two is continuous, often contentious, and ever-present.

Nature takes on a more disturbing role in its sexualization in poems such as "The Nightwind." As the speaker sits in an open window watching the moonlit night and rosetrees "wet with dew," the wind seduces her into dialogue. The setting is sexualized through images of the dew-covered trees and the moonlit night, certainly indicative of a lover's rendezvous. It is an exchange of voices, however, that consummates this relationship:

I needed not its breathing

To bring such thoughts to me
 But still it whispered lowly
 'How dark the woods will be!--

The thick leaves in my murmur
 Are rustling like a dream,
 And all their myriad voices
 Instinct with spirit seem' (5-12)

The wind recognizes her as a kindred spirit, part of the "myriad" of voices and as possessing a desire to explore the world beyond the parlour window, a world beyond the societal boundaries and roles that keep her inside. It is an identification that the speaker is initially reluctant to acknowledge, as she says, "Thy wooing voice is kind/ But do not think its music/ Has the power to reach my mind--" (18-21). The response of the wind is to become more eroticized and persistent, determined to break through her boundaries, threatening to dialogically "ravish" her, to force a verbal response; thus, she will penetrate Nature's secrets, and it will enter into a taboo relationship with her mind:

The wanderer would not leave me
 Its kiss grew warmer still--
 'O come' it sighed so sweetly
 'Till win thee 'gainst thy will--
 'Have we not been from childhood friends?

Have I not loved thee long?
 As long as thou hast loved the night
 Whose silence wakes my song?' (25-32)

It is of interest that the silence gives birth to its opposite, speech, and upon its awakening, it searches out a responsive voice. The sharing of language becomes an erotic bond between the two, binding the speaker and listener in mutual pleasure, and perpetuating itself.² The desire for speech becomes a physical sensation as the "kiss" grows warmer as the listener's desire to enter into discourse grows. The listener's initial response to the wind's entreaties is interesting in that it shows an attempt to maintain a boundary and prevent the spatial and temporal invasion that must occur in the wind's attempted dialogue: " And leave my human feelings / in their own course to flow" (23-24). The wind's permeation of the speaker's boundaries is expressed both dialogically and physically, as the wind's dialogic invasion translates into physical desire. The listener's seduction (the meaning of seduction is literally "to be led") is completed when she physically removes herself from the confines of the parlour window, symbolizing her entrance into a transgressive and invasive dialogue. A similar situation occurs with the spirit of Imagination in "I'll Come When Thou Art Saddest":

I'll come when thou art saddest
 Laid alone in the darkened room
 When mad day's mirth has vanished
 And the smile of joy is banished
 From evening's chilly gloom

I'll come when the heart's real feeling
 Has entire, unbiased sway,
 And my influence o'er thee stealing,
 Grief deepening and joy congealing,
 Shall bear thy soul away.

Listen, 'tis just the hour,
 The awful time for thee;
 Dost thou not feel upon thy soul
 A flood of strange sensation roll,
 Forerunners of a sterner power,
 Heralds of me? (6-18)

This poem contains a clear external personification of Emily's inner power and a clear fascination with the realm that lies beyond the boundaries of the personal "I." It is of interest that the act of saying or writing "I" has been important both thematically and formally in literature by women, for whom finding and using a voice has been difficult because of educational inadequacies, oppressive social strictures against voicing oneself in public as an author, and moral strictures against the egotism implied by literary self-expression. However, for Emily, drawing the boundary of self only reestablishes the subject and object dichotomy. Through the rhyme in the second and third stanzas, the personal "I" dissolves into the pronoun "thy" and the pronoun "me" into "thee," disrupting boundaries and mingling the two entities. Again, the body is used as a

physical barrier, as the power "steals" over her when she is "laid alone," suggesting an initial unwillingness before compliance, as in "The Nightwind." Such bodily invasion and sexualization recalls Gothic vampire imagery that Eugenia DeLamotte says represents the threat of violation, especially against the body, as it is "the last barrier protecting the self from the other" (21). Being alone is in itself a conscious act that implies separation and a desire to avoid contact that must be overcome before a mutual attainment of discursive pleasure can be achieved and the solipsistic Romantic desire for poetic solitude and exclusive subjectivity be avoided.

Both Imagination and Nature break through bounds of the hierarchical process of opposition through their self-constitution in a dialogic process marked by the truly feminine process of change and shifting multivoicedness. In *The Dialogic and Difference*, Anne Herrmann re-vision Bakhtin in terms of a feminine dialogic by defining such as "a process of self-constitution that, although arising from a reciprocal process, a dialogue, departs from the familiar hierarchized model of constructing the self/object as defined in opposition to an objectified other" (2). Imagination is more than simply a passive muse or conduit through which the poet exercises her poetic powers. By entering into a dialogue and acknowledgement of the powers of "an-Other," as Herrman deems the-object-turned subject, be the other a representation of Nature, Romanticism, or the ghost of the Romantic muse, Emily and Imagination are both creators and conduits for one another; they both yearn to speak through and with one another and wish to transgress boundaries of mundane knowledge--theirs is a spiritual

quest through language that can become sexually charged.³ In "Aye, There it is," the two discover and enact an intensely pervasive and amatory connection:

And thou art now a spirit pouring
 Thy presence into all--
 The essence of the Tempest's roaring
 And of the Tempest's fall (13-16).

The imaginative spirit embodies the paradox of life and death, and, like speech itself, is an essence that pervades all borders of the self, both deconstructing and reconstructing, impregnating and withdrawing. Again, Emily's technique of repeating yet varying and recreating creates what Bakhtin calls the double-voiced word that forever reanimates itself in a "carnavalesque attitude that is hostile to any final ending" (138). The subject/object boundaries that must be transgressed are similar to those in "I'll Come When Thou Art Saddest," as in order for the poet to open her mind to the "other" she must also allow the transgression of physical boundaries. Once the two are intertwined in a transgressive, sexualized, and spiritual mythos, they are outside the everyday, the ordinary, and beyond the margins of acceptable experience. Once they enter into this bond, speech is desired, and the production of poetic speech is the physical, mental, and spiritual result of the union.

In "Plead for Me" the dialogue takes on a confessional tone in that it binds the speaker and listener in a complex shifting of subject/object dichotomies. The title seemingly suggests that Imagination has a control of language, that it is not dependent upon Emily for its voice; however, she desires to hear that voice, to bond with it as a companion and

fortress. Her relationship with Imagination is a transgression, a relationship outside the norm, as the two indulge in the language of metaphysical discovery that pushes the limits of acceptable experience. It is not, however, the defense of the relationship that seems to be desired so much as the act of speech itself; dialogic reciprocity is the key to mutual satisfaction. She begs repeatedly for a listener as well as a speaker, her own speech revealing the intensity of her desire:

Oh, thy bright eyes must answer now,
 When Reason, with a scornful brow
 Is mocking at my overthrow!
 Oh, thy sweet tongue must plead for me
 And tell, why I have chosen thee!
 Stern Reason is to judgement come
 Arrayed in all her forms of gloom,
 Wilt thou my advocate, be dumb?
 No, radiant angel, speak and say,
 Why did I cast the world away? (1-10)

Unlike much of Emily's poetry, "Plead for Me" depends more upon the repetition of rhyme than upon alliteration for effect. The end rhyme follows a consistent pattern of "aaabb" in each of the eight five-line stanzas, though sight rhyme replaces end rhyme in line three of stanzas 1-3 and 7. The poem's first line contains a startling triple internal rhyme: "Oh thy bright eyes must answer now." The string of rhymes beginning with the unnamed "thy" and including "bright" and "eyes" is particularly strong and repeated

throughout the poem, creating the experience of continuity. This rhyme of [aI] provides the dominant rhyme for the speaker's personal "I." Thus, the differentiation between the addresser and addressee is phonetically non-existent, as the addresser's identity is engulfed by the addressee, causing a difficulty in differentiation of speech in the dialogue.

The pronouns "I" and "thee" dominate the poem. Various forms of the first and second person pronouns occur 23 times throughout the poem, while the third person occurs only four times. The references to others--"her," "these," "they," and "their" appear in stanzas two and four and are used to hold "other" entities apart from the indivisibility of the speaker and her identification with her creative spirit. The antecedents for the "others" are "Stern Reason" and the listing of earthly rewards to be claimed by the poet respectively. Stanzas two through four effectively describe her relationship with these "others" that comprise mundane existence. "Stern Reason" is capitalized as it exerts its tremendous power to divide the speaker and the Imagination through enforced silence. The traditionally masculine quality of Reason also appears as the feminine "she." It is notably silent, and therefore relegated to the continuous realm of the non-verbal. Curiously, Reason has attributed to it the power of separation, which Gardiner has described as a function of masculinity (8). It is interesting to note here that the powers of imagination and reason have been attributed to the realm of masculinity by male poets, Romantic and otherwise. The phoneme /ea/ embedded in the center of Reason becomes representative of this folly and its attraction. "Stern Reason," however, engulfs this phoneme and holds it within its control--thus, controlled fancy without the folly of

excess. This phoneme of folly is repeated at the center the gifts offered in following the dictates of worldly acclaim: wealth, glory's wreath, and Pleasure's flower. The strength of these pleasures is noticeably weaker than the dialogic interaction with an-Other, as the list is weakly held together by sight rather than exact rhyme. It is also notable that these "gifts" worshipped by others as "Beings Divine" have the ability to "hear" and "see" her offerings, in lines 16 and 17, yet remain mute; they do not seem to possess the gift of speech. This silence and the empty nature of the gifts are emphasized once again through a rhyme that may be seen, but not heard. Her "advocate," or Imagination, only has the power to speak.

In response to the silent disapproval of Stern reason comes the alliterative and exactly rhymed "The ever-present phantom thing; / My slave my comrade, and my king," (24-25). The force remains uncapitalized and unnamed until the end of the poem when it chooses to assert its power. The enjambment in lines three and four of stanza five do, however, force the capitalization of "Thee" at the entity's entrance, asserting the emergence of a power. The structure of the repeated "My slave, my comrade, and my king" is parallel, giving each of these functions equal importance and emphasizing the interchangeable nature of the hierarchy. The polyfunctionality of the creative spirit is transferred to the speaker through the line's pointed parallelism.

The last two lines of the poem use three commands: "Speak, God of visions, plead for me, / And tell Why I have chosen thee!" It is in these last lines that she finally names this entity as her "God of Visions" and for the first time reference to it is capitalized internally, giving it equal status with the force of reason, perhaps offering hope for the

assimilation and exchange between the two seemingly antithetical forces.

It is such dialogical speech, both confessional and erotic, that facilitates the self-constitution of the subject. Emily's sense of her own being is incomplete in this exchange. As Bakhtin tells us, "the word, the lie, the idea wants to be heard, understood, and answered" (122). There is a recognition of interdependence on the other as not master, servant or equal, but as all three--neither will be the voice of any of the three roles, but will share in a multivoicedness that allows each to be all to the other. Any unity in voice can only be temporal; any dominance will be eventually answered with usurpation, as at the end of the poem when Emily restates her authority, and any subservience will give way to a reaction against oppressive institutionalized, hierarchical power. In this way, the dialogue continues, the self is validated through mutual recognition in the an-other's response, and continued desire for the discursive bond is intensified and dialogue is "unhierarchized." Herrmann defines an "unhierarchized" dialogue in this manner: "The dialogic names the discursive relation between two subjects in which the subject constitutes itself without the annihilation or assimilation of the other." (6). This refusal to posit one as an object in any sense allows an escape from the binary oppositions of subject/object. Brontë's struggle with the development and attainment of subjecthood through a dialogic process is the central focus of her personal poetry. The need for a discursive bond, a verbal connection with an-other, shows a need for self-completion, as well as the will to acknowledge the self in an-other. Likewise, the need to discover, to transcend what is "known" or acceptable in both transcendental and erotic discourse is a desire to discover the other aspects and voices within the self through

the polyphonic carnival of voices. It is when the attempt to "unify" silences the conflict between voices, to silence the deafening dialogue that the self is nullified. When an-other is silenced, stripped of identity, so is the self. This becomes the central problem and message in a complex dialogic poem called "The Philosopher." In this poem, the variants of experience and expression are configured into unity by an unknown Blakean "seer," whose promise of unification is both colorless, "blinding" and annihilating:

"I saw a spirit, standing, man,
 Where thou doth stand--an hour ago,
 And round his feet three rivers ran,
 Of equal depth, and equal flow--
 A golden stream--and one like blood;
 And one like sapphire seemed to be;
 But where they joined their triple flood
 It tumbled in an inky sea.
 The spirit sent his dazzling gaze
 Down through that ocean's gloomy night
 Then, kindling all, with sudden blaze,
 The glad deep sparkled wide and bright
 White as the sun, far, far more fair
 Than its divided sources were!" (27-40).

The possibility of unity means verbal silence, the obliteration of an-other voice, and the dissolution of dialogue. Although the whiteness of the transformed river is

pronounced fair, the poem itself gives us a clue to the ensuing disjunction. The last four lines of the stanzas in the philosopher's speech all end with an abab rhyme scheme, with the exception of the stanza containing the disruptive transformation, where the rhyme changes to an awkward abcc rhyme, ending the voiced rhyme and replacing it with a silent sight rhyme.

The options presented by the poem initiate a comparison between the two versions of "heaven" discussed by the vivacious and verbal Catherine Linton and the silent, sickly Linton Heathcliff in Emily's novel *Wuthering Heights*. In this passage, Catherine explains the difference between her dialogic vision and Linton's monologic world:

One time, however, we were near quarrelling. He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying morning till evening in the middle of the moors, with the bees hanging drearily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. [M]ine was rocking in a rustling green tree with a west wind blowing, and bright, white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only the larks, but throstles, and blackbirds, and linnets and cuckoos pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool dusky dells, but close by, great dells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water and the whole world awake and wild with joy. He wanted to lie in an ecstasy of peace; I wanted all to sparkle, and dance in a glorious jubilee. (188-89)

For Linton, land and nature are not only silent, but "other," a separate existence, "high up" above him. Lying in a grave-like state, he is free from any spatial or dialogic

invasion. Cathy, however, wishes for all aspects of nature and herself to enter into an unceasing discourse characterized by movement and varied voices of the birds, wind, and water. The same sense of mingling and continuous discourse of elements is seen in "High Waving Heather" with each enactment of the present participle and the wind's mingling of elements and voices, again emphasizing the importance of decenterization and non-hierarchical dialogue. With this mingling and intertwining of existence and language, the self and the land becomes a shared, mutual event that does not participate in subject / object hierarchy, but polarizes it. Stevie Davies remarks on Emily's "consciousness of more personalities than a single self." (85). Davies likens the "The Philosopher" to a "nest of Chinese boxes so that one can hardly tell which interpretation of the event is intended to be inside and which is outside" (86). I would argue that although this poem tends to be read as the poet's wish for self-annihilation, it is a response to her own perhaps occasional wish for the silencing of voices, a warning reminder of the necessary alternative to the silencing of discourse that can become deafening and difficult. The mingling of the three rivers might be beautiful and peaceful, but is also "blinding," and the power possessed by each river must be given over to one being, the Seer, who will order and prioritize the deafening roar, the "inky sea" that is comprised of a cacophony of voices. These voices must be ordered into the restful silence of annihilation--the silence must then be the silence of the grave and the repose that of death. In this death, the philosopher is silenced, buried by the Romantic ideals of unity, natural order, and perfection. The erotic discourse becomes an erotic surrender to the grave, much like that of Linton Heathcliff's, an obsessive desire that does not

engender dialogue, but transforms the speaking subject into the unvoiced, the dead, the "other." It must also be noted also that there does not appear to be any transformation or mingling in this death, as the subject is finally "lost in one repose," again emphasizing the stillness and surrender to "unity," or oneness, and stagnation.

The dead, silent body in the grave becomes synonymous with the female in Romantic and other primarily androcentric writings, and feminine dead body becomes the focus of the male poet's elegy, or even as the earth itself--a silent inspiring muse, unable to enter into reciprocal dialogue or subjecthood. The female presence, an other's potential, is left undeveloped and as such, the possibility of dialogue and subjecthood is left unrealized; the dialogic circle is left incomplete. It is this frightening vision of the sovereign creative agent, this idea of the unanswerable voice, that is dangerous, this form of regulation and legislation of the word that disrupts unity between the self and an-other, the continuity between life and death and the destruction of the potential held within both.

NOTES

1. In addition to using Nature as a reflection of the mind, as in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," Anne Mellor points out in *Romanticism and Feminism* that the concept of the male "poet as savior" is central to Blake, Coleridge and Shelly. She states that in Blake the ultimate fourfold figure is male; Coleridge defined imagination as androgynous, but male as the source of divine creativity, and Shelley's "Essay on Love" defines men as the source of all that is lovely or excellent, while women are relegated to something akin to the "unattainable reflection of completion of the male ego" (30). Like nature, women become extensions of the poet or ideals to achieve. Furthermore, women were excluded from the conversant circle of poets--Mellor points out that when men needed a conversant, they turned to other men, not women, as Wordsworth did to Coleridge in The Prelude or Shelley to Byron (30). Both the woman and nature serve as conduits, are addressed as objects, and are denied any voice or perspective their own.
2. Compare this approach and relationship to nature to Shelley's in "Ode to the West Wind," as the speaker animates nature and allows a certain responsiveness not to acknowledge the wind's subjectivity, but in order to make the wind listen to him.
3. In Michael Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, he discusses the connection and transgressive link between the "will to knowledge" and sexuality. Although Foucault is primarily concerned with science, I believe seeking spiritual knowledge outside the norm of orthodox religion to be equally transgressive. Both Emily and Imagination desire to challenge all boundaries and enter into forbidden, unorthodox "knowledge."

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CHAPTER III
DIALOGUES OF FAITH
BELIEF AND DOUBT IN ANNE BRONTË'S POETRY

"[U]nfit for perusal . . . we will not believe any woman would have written such a work."

--*Sharpe's London Magazine*, on *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*¹

When Patrick Brontë wished to fathom the depths of his children's minds in 1823, he went about doing so in a typically eccentric way. The story is familiar: he handed around a mask to each of the children so that each could answer the question he put to her or him from behind its protective barrier. To the youngest, Anne, he asked what a child like her most wanted. She answered, "Age and experience" (Fraser 31). Experience, however, was not something easily attained by a cultivated woman of the time. Marginalized, middle- to upper-caste women inhabited the private sphere of home and hearth and functioned as childbearers and home decorations. If not married, they might be governesses or teachers, but they certainly did not write such works as *Tenant* or such poetry as penned by Acton Bell. Anne's presumably male pseudonym allowed a forceful and distinct voice to emerge, one that belies later critics' treatment of her as "gentle Anne." From behind the mask of Acton Bell, Anne is able to answer the voices of the

church, her siblings, and those who, like her, suffered from intense doubt and despair about their own worth and place in the world around them.

In Anne's semi-autobiographical novel *Agnes Grey*, Agnes relays her feelings about the function of poetry, as it comes to resemble "relics of past suffering and experience, pillars of witness set up in traveling through the vale of life to mark particular occurrences" (ch.17). From these "pillars of experience," the author is continually attempting to make sense of her own and others' existence and struggles. As Edward Chitham has pointed out, Anne Brontë's poetry is the poetry of search, not statement (30). Her poems are indeed poems of faith, but also of uncertainty, of hope, but also of despair. They are not the poems of a simplistic, unquestioning orthodoxy, but of someone wading through the mire of her insecurities and doubts about not only her own faith, but about her relationship with the world around her. Anne's deepest exploration of her fears and insecurities comes to us again from behind the cover of a mask: not only the mask of her poetry, but through the veil of multiple voices. In three of her long poems, "Views of Life," "The Three Guides," and "Self-Communion," Anne forces herself into self-confrontation through dialogue. Her poems take a confessional tone, one that, according to Bakhtin, demands a "direct attitude toward others, anticipation, and sharp refutations" (224). Every utterance becomes an anticipation and interaction with the broader context of society's norms, creating a social situation in which the utterance and dialogue ensue. Through this sustained dialogue and from behind her mask, she is perhaps also able to voice doubts and fears that she is reluctant to attribute to herself. Her masked self functions as a voice in itself, and, thus, the opinions expressed by can be attributed to a

distanced persona who is able to answer the dissenting voices and viewpoints of those around her without implicating her own voice in the opposition.

Anne's early recognition of her inadequacy, her lack of "age and experience," perhaps in comparison to her brother and sisters, was augmented by her early religious training. Her aunt, with whom she shared a room when young, and the fire-and-brimstone teachings of the church, instilled in her a religious fear of God and the consequences of sin that far surpassed that of her siblings. In 1837, when she suffered a severe, life-threatening intestinal disease, her agony was as much mental as physical. While the physician tended to her physical illness, she asked for a Merovian minister to aid her in the midst of her spiritual crisis. The Reverend James La Trobe belonged to a religious faction that countered the harsh Calvinist beliefs by focusing on peace and the possibility of doubt and failure even in the redeemed (Langland 13). La Trobe reports that although his patient was familiar with the truths of the Bible, she saw them "more as law than gospel . . . as a requirement than as a gift" (qtd. in Chitham 5). And that law was not only unalterable, but answerable. No doubt Anne had been struggling with a religious instruction and ministry that believed that women inherently had little to offer or say and certainly no place or right to say it. La Trobe's influence seems to have been lasting, however, and after her intense self-doubt and examination, Anne adopted an evangelical and reformational theology, one still based on androcentric gospel, but one that could be altered to be inclusive and non-hierarchical and that could listen to women's voices and life experiences. Not only did Anne know her scripture as well as the church fathers and was she able use it to defend her views if needed, but she was also the only one of the

Brontë sisters to have written and published hymns, hymns that can still be found in modern Methodist hymnals. Evangelicalism, which stressed literacy for all people and the importance and worth of the individual, gave Anne a particular opportunity to stress the moral and social autonomy of all people, including women. Many of her poems and hymns were written after hearing sermons in church at a time when women were no longer restricted from hearing sermons, but were still restricted from writing or commenting on them. Hymn writing was, however, an acceptable form of writing for women, and through such activity Anne was able to teach her beliefs publicly, hoping, no doubt, to carry her message not only to women, but to the entire congregation. A hymn is also a form of lyrical poetry, a tight form that lends itself to a narrative format, and it is not surprising that many of Anne's poems fall into this format. Through these poems, most notably "The Three Guides," Anne is able to voice her philosophies in a didactic, conversational way that suggests that she was quite aware of her audience and its probable responses. Through her hymns and personal poems, a complex dialectic comes to force, delivered through multiple personae, involving ethical and moral dilemmas and decisions, a task that women were thought to be ill-equipped for.

However, other voices also threatened to drown Anne. Anne was once called "nothing, absolutely nothing," by her brother, Branwell. Furthermore, when Anne's publisher, Newby, originally published *Agnes Grey*, he bound it to Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, causing unfair and unwarranted comparison. One of the few generally favorable, and anonymous, critics of *Wuthering Heights* said in *The Atlas* that *Agnes*

Grey "lacks the power and originality of *Wuthering Heights*," and that it "leaves no painful impression on the mind--some may think it leaves no impression at all" (qtd. in Allott 232). Such commentary is painfully reminiscent of her brother's words. Further comparison to Currer Bell's (Charlotte's) generally well-received *Jane Eyre* set a standard of comparison that continues to leave Anne's literary worth devalued.²

Often described as Emily's twin, or as the quiet one, Anne also had to distinguish her voice from Emily's, a voice that had a much different design and message. That Anne did feel the shadow of her sisters looming over her is evident in a surviving letter to Ellen Nussey, in which she describes herself as one who is "deficient" in her "organ of language" and that she is about to be "engulfed in a letter of Charlotte's" (Barker 175). The use of language is telling, and not only was Anne engulfed by one sister's literary worth, but by another's obsession and immersion in the land of Gondal, a land that Anne had helped create, but had perhaps eventually outgrown.

At home, Anne was living a double life. When at Haworth, she indulged Emily by participating in their childhood make-believe world of Gondal. Both the game and her sister's increasingly unorthodox ideas, however, came to disturb her and became incompatible with her own religious beliefs, perhaps causing not only religious guilt, but a sense of betrayal towards her sister. While away at school or while working as a governess, Anne wrote poems that were of a personal and spiritual nature; thus, it is not surprising that unlike Emily's poetry, which is dominated by Gondal themes, the bulk of Anne's poetry is personal. Anne's poetry also became increasingly devotional and concerned with re-visioning orthodox Christian views, rather than eradicating them, as

she became increasingly removed from her sister's ideology and began searching for her own voice.

Part of the function of Anne's poetry is, then, as Inga-Stina Ewbank points out, "to control and counteract the doubts of religious despair," and to find meaning in the experience of life" (53). It is also, however, Anne Brontë's attempt to find her own voice and worth in both her own and in her God's eyes. There is a pronounced struggle for individuation and recognition in many of her poems; her presence often makes itself felt through the prominent use of the first person "I" in her poetry. Both Chitham and Langland notice a predominant use of the first person pronoun in her poetry, adding to its confessional qualities; however, it is also indicative of poetry concerned with defining the self, its experience and its own voice, and engaging with voices of other selves and surroundings. Most interesting is the use and placement of the first person pronoun "I" in the poem preceding *Views of Life*, titled *Confidence*. The poem depicts the change in the speaker's perception of herself and of her own importance in her own and in her God's eyes. The first line of the poem places the personal pronoun "I" at the end of the sentence, forcing it to bear the weight of the sin and woe:

Oppressed with sin and woe,

A burdened heart I bear; (1-2)

In the next stanza, she dares to approach God and places herself, if not at the beginning of the line, at least at the beginning of the independent clause. As she dares to assert herself, she does not ask for pardon; she assumes it:

With this polluted heart

I dare to come to Thee,
 Holy and mighty as Thou art;
 For Thou wilt pardon me. (5-8)

Finally, in the third stanza, she places herself at the beginning of the stanza, as she discusses her own weakness: interestingly, after this admission, "I feel that I am weak," (9) the "I" disappears from that and the next stanza. Stanza four adds to the distance that she fears between herself and God, or meaning in her life:

Far as this earth may be
 From yonder starry skies;
 Remoter still am I from Thee:
 Yet Thou wilt not despise.

The reassurance of the last line of the stanza gives her courage to assert herself again after a wave of doubt and make a statement of personal power:

I need not fear my foes,
 I need not yield to care,
 I need not sink beneath my woes:
 For Thou wilt answer prayer. (17-20)

Interestingly, the emphasis is on what she need *not* do, rather than what she must do to achieve forgiveness. She is as assertive here as Emily is in her poem of personal empowerment, "Plead for Me," as she orders her "god of visions" to speak for her. Here, however, Anne assures herself of an orthodox deity's compliance. The next stanza returns her to a mixture of boldness and assurance and meekness, however:

In my Redeemer's name,
 I give myself to Thee,
 And all unworthy as I am
 My God will cherish me.

The personal "I" begins the second line and independent clause, yet follows the phrase containing "In my Redeemer's name," indicating his primacy and her actual subordination. The "I" again receives the weight of her unworthiness in the third line, yet she proclaims that *her* God will cherish her; this indicates her own vision of God as one whom she need not doubt or fear rejection from, as opposed to the harsh, unforgiving, Calvinist God. To this God, she submits as we see in the last stanza, and the feeling is one of unity rather than of hierarchy and exclusivity. The stanza itself is reminiscent of John Donne's religious verse, as she begs her God to overpower her and subdue her with his love:

O make me wholly Thine!
 Thy love to me impart,
 And let Thy holy spirit shine
 For ever on my heart. (25-28)

Anne is clearly not the meek, unquestioning, submissive girl she has been made to be by many of her biographers and critics. She doesn't plead, but states and even demands recognition from her God. She doesn't so much submit as insist on being joined in absolute unity and mutuality, despite her own sin, doubts, and unworthiness.

Of particular interest are three of Anne Brontë's poems written near the end of her life, all of which contain dialogue within: "Views of Life," "The Three Guides," and "Self-Communion." Bakhtin argues that language lies on the border between oneself and the other, and John Ferrell adds that one can only look into the self through the reflection of others, and that one can hear one's self only in the voices of others (50). Anne Brontë does not speak to an absent or mute other, but she enters into a full debate with one or more voices. These "other" voices created by Anne Brontë are, among other things, representative of her struggle with her own feelings of inadequacy and fear of rejection by the world, her siblings, and her God. The doubts and fears of her own limitations are not hers alone, but transcend the individual to include all of humankind, however; she speaks not only for herself, but for the congregation of humankind.

Anne's dialogism is also an instrument whereby she may confront her own doubts and insecurities without implicating herself in them. In "Views of Life," her fondness for inverted sentence structure and embedded subjects is immediately noticeable. The delayed subject shows constraint, yet through anticipation it provides an emphasis as well. Thus, she attempts restraint and reason in order to control and perhaps veil an overwrought, sensitive mind:

When sinks my heart in hopeless gloom,
 When life can shew no joy for me,
 And I behold a yawning tomb
 Where bowers and palaces should be, (1-4)

The stanza runs into the next, and the lack of end punctuation indicates a difficulty in controlling emotion. The next stanza confronts the unidentified "you" of the first stanza, which may be a reference to her sister Emily. Anne's fondness for parallelism, however, shows great control and awareness of her poetic language and provides stark contrast between the "morbid dreams" and "gay smiles" of the second stanza. She is clearly placing herself in contrast with the unidentified "you," yet there is some sameness hinted through the parallelism and her own admission in stanza three:

I too have smiled, and thought like you,
 But madly smiled, and falsely deemed:
 My present thoughts I know are true
 I'm waking now, 'twas then I dreamed. (9-12)

Anne again asserts similarity in having "smiled, and thought like you," yet differentiates herself by the knowledge that she "madly smiled, falsely deemed." The sudden movement to the sunset sky is made without any warning transition; the speaking turns into gazing, as the speaker identifies with the scene before her. She wonders at the glories of the sunset sky and the "glorious" colors, speechless, until overcome by a realization:

I cannot name each lovely shade
 I cannot say how bright they shone;
 But one by one I saw them fade,
 And what remained when they were gone?
 Dull clouds remained of sombre hue,

And when their borrowed charm was o'er,
 The sky grew dull and charmless too
 That smiled so softly bright before. (21-28)

Bakhtin suggests that our practice of language comes from the inherent tension of the mind confronting nature (43), and here we see the demise of the glories of nature diminished after their exaltation by a mind anticipating its own and others' decline. The failures of nature, namely its impermanence, become the failures of humankind. The adjective "glorious" is used often by Anne, as it is by Emily, but Anne seems to use it as a warning of vainglory and mortality, as opposed to Emily's use of it to depict a divine and life-giving quality. In Anne's poetry, "glorious" light is excessive and temporal and, therefore, false, as are the illusions of youth. Now experienced, she cannot ally herself with its folly and seeks to disassociate herself:

So gilded by the glow of youth
 Our varied life looks fair and gay,
 And so remains the naked truth
 When that false light is past away. (29-32)

The "glow of youth" gives way to the "naked truth," creating an almost Biblical view of result of experience, which strips one of all "golden" or "glorious" illusions. Her own thoughts are unspeakable, yet complex, as she struggles to disengage herself from the very natural state and process of nature that she identifies with. It is possible that those three lovely shades that burned so bright for so short a time are references to her brother and sisters, as well as the possibility that she is answering Emily's poem *The Philosopher*

and its reference to the three colored streams. If so, it is also possible that although she denounces the ideas in Emily's poetry, she is also dazzled by her sister's poetic expression enough to feel her own inadequacy in comparison. The hopelessness of being able to create such "glorious" poetry may have made her feel her own to be "dull and charmless," though safer and more enduring than Emily's unorthodoxy.

The stanzas preceding the dialogue in the poem set up the scenario of a new mother glorying in her child's company without a thought to the care and sorrow the child may bring, indirectly or directly, to each later. Anne often uses the child or childhood to intensify the sorrowful image of innocence brutally disillusioned and seasoned by harsh experience. Chitham sees the dialogue that follows as a debate between youth and experience; however, the participants in the dialogue, youth and experience, are more implicated in a discussion of a third entity, hope, than in their own properties and virtues. Interestingly, youth is not only voiceless, being only spoken to and of, but male, while experience and hope are female, the first voiced, the second less so:

O, youth may listen patiently,
 While sad experience tells her tale;
 But doubt sits smiling in his eye,
 For ardent hope will still prevail.
 He hears how feeble Pleasure dies,
 By guilt destroyed, and pain and woe;
 He turns to Hope--and she replies
 'Believe it not--it is not so!' (69-76)

Lines 75 and 76 are problematic in that there is an assumed action in a hypothetical situation concerning the entity, "youth," who is nonparticipatory. As youth turns to hope, he is unable to vocalize any pleas or sentiments by experience's rushed intervention. Hope utters her only line in the poem almost rhetorically, adding negative predication to Experience's accusations: "Believe it *not*--it is *not so*" (emphasis mine 76). Experience interrupts and continues to add negation to positive kernel sentences in his diatribe against hope's promises to youth:

'O, heed her not,' experience says,
 'For thus she whispered once to me;
 She told me in my youthful days
 How glorious manhood's prime would be.' (77-80)

Again, "glorious" is associated with the tempting falsehood of youth's visions of grandeur. Hope is also indicted without being allowed to speak for herself, but has her voice reappropriated by Experience. Experience puts Hope on trial, prosecuting her with the evidence of unfulfilled dreams that were spoon-fed to her at birth. Again, nature is implicated, as each passing season brings disillusionment, yet hope for fulfillment in the next season. The promise of spring ends in the decay and death of winter, as the impermanence of nature reveals the human condition. The glorious light of the sun only emphasizes the decay and dreariness through contrast when it departs. As Experience finishes presenting her case, Anne has been able not only to express her bitterness at the defeat of her youthful dreams, but to distance herself from that bitterness. In doing so, she has been able to give full vent to her feelings while stepping back to gain

an almost Wordsworthian perspective on her own disappointment with life and nature, and she is now able to answer Experience calmly and rationally:

Stern prophet! cease thy forebodings dire--

Thou canst not quench the ardent fire

That warms the breast of youth.

O! let it cheer him while it may,

And gently, gently, die away

Chilled by the damps of truth. (119-24)

Her strategy is almost Platonic, as she realizes the futility in blinding the uninitiated with glaring truth. She does not denounce Hope, but repositions it. She re-visions hope as a hope for transcendence rather than as a hope for pleasure or ease in the mundane world:

Tell him that earth is not our rest,

Its joys are empty, frail at best;

And point beyond the sky;

But gleams of light may reach us here,

And hope the *roughest* path can cheer:

Then do not bid it fly. (125-130)

Line 129 is interesting syntactically, as it could be that hope may cheer the roughest path, or it may be that we are to take cheer from taking the roughest path, a sentiment prominent in many of Anne's poems. It is also interesting that "hope" is not capitalized here, meaning either that entity was not being referred to, or that it is to be diminished

from its prior status as "Hope." Nevertheless, the language here and throughout the rest of the poem is tentative; her assertions are preceded by "may," "perchance," and other indications of uncertainty on the speaker's behalf. She says that "hope may promise" (131), "if they [joys] come at all" (133), "Hurtful perchance" (134), or "if they [ills] come" (143). Her uncertainty of either good or ill is emphasized, creating almost a medieval fear of the unpredictability of life in general. The beautiful, though transitory, joys of life are again likened to aspects of nature: the skylark's song, the flowers, and the sky. These are things to be appreciated on life's journey, as the memories of such may be a slight anodyne in more difficult times, but one must not be dazzled by them or treated with the worshipful reverence that Emily gives them in her verse. The third person pronoun used in the closing verses implicates not only all of mankind, but the opposing factions of the preceding dialogue: Experience, and youth:

No! While we journey on our way,
 We'll notice every lovely thing,
 And ever as they pass away,
 To memory and hope we'll cling. (158-161)

The transitory joys of life become sustaining forces to aid one through the bleak journey of life, useful only so long as they do not displace our faith in the permanent joy that lies beyond this realm; in the next realm, there is certainty, and the speaker is sure of a static existence, "where none shall suffer, none shall weep, / And bliss shall reign for evermore" (169-170). It is interesting that the emphasis is on the negative aspect of the afterlife, on the absence of suffering and weeping as leading to bliss; thus the absence of

extreme emotion as an indicator of peace seems to be Anne's goal, one that cannot be reached in an earthly existence that offers both soaring heights and dark depths.

Curiously, as much as she seems to wish to renounce the world, she is reluctant to do so completely, despite its impermanence and unreliability. Instead of absolute renunciation, she preaches temperance and allowances for youth until experience teaches it to seek a more reliable, permanent path.

In "The Three Guides," Anne communes with the Spirits of Earth, Pride, and Faith. The Spirit of Earth has been identified as Emily by Chitham and Muriel Sparks among others, as St. John Rivers from *Jane Eyre* (Langland), and as Arthur Huntingdon from Anne's novel, *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Again, there is a basis for comparison with Emily's "The Philosopher" as Anne enters into a dialogue with the three "warring entities" within her breast. While thoughts of her brother and sister may have been prominent in her mind, I believe her dialogism indicates that these representative ideas or entities were perhaps present in her own self-examination and cause for alarm in her own mind. It might also be of some importance to remember that at this time, August of 1847, Anne was engaged in correspondence with the Robinson girls, her former charges while she was a governess. Each girl was facing an engagement, one with giddy immaturity and one with reluctance, and turned to Anne for advice and encouragement; it is possible that the poem was written in reaction to and as a process by which Anne could sort her ideas and consider the advice to be passed to girls who could certainly be considered part of her congregation.

Interestingly, in her dialogue, both the spirits of earth and pride are given voice, while the preferred guide, faith, remains silent. It is notable that Anne, who allies herself with the spirit of faith, seems to have also remained silent in the face of her favorite sister's scornful unorthodoxy. The only place she seems to be able to give voice to her objections is in her verse. The spirits of earth and pride are able to speak freely, however, while her champion remains mute. The spirit of earth is portrayed not romantically or in a Wordsworthian manner, but as tomb-like, a favorite use of the earth in Emily's verse, though not as welcomed:

Spirit of Earth! thy hand is chill.
 I've felt its icy clasp;
 And shuddering I remember still
 That stony-hearted grasp.
 Thine eye bids love and joy depart,
 O turn its gaze from me!
 It presses down my sinking heart; --
 I will not walk with thee! (1-8)

Anne equates the earth with death; its "icy clasp" and "stony-hearted grasp" take away life and joy. Her remembrance of its heartless grasp is a possible reference to the losses of her mother, sisters, and friends, including William Weightman, at early ages. She finds its gaze watchful, omnipresent, and suffocating. Her argument in response to the Spirit of Earth's boasts is, interestingly, one of negation, followed by supposition, indicating a need to explore alternatives despite her denial of them:

'Firm is my tread, and sure, though slow:

My footsteps never slide;

And he that follows me shall know

I am the surest guide.'

Thy boast is vain; but were it true

That thou couldst safely steer

Life's rough and devious pathway through

Such guidance I should fear. (17-24)

Anne's negation of Earth's guidance is immediately followed by an exploration of that very possibility. The placement of "should" in line 24 is ambiguous, as she says, "such guidance I should fear." It is possible that "should" indicates "would," but it is also possibly "ought to fear." Apparently, the Spirit of Earth is not synonymous with her concept of the hope-sustaining nature presented in "Views of Life":

How could I bear to walk for aye,

With eyes to earthward prone,

O'er trampled weeds, and miry clay,

And sand, and flinty stone.

Never the glorious view to greet

Of hill and dale, and sky,

To see that Nature's charms are sweet

Or feel that Heaven is nigh? (25-32)

Nature would seem akin to God and Heaven, while the barren earth offers a fruitless, hopeless existence, with no hope for renewal once trapped within it. Again, in stanzas five and six, we see the repeated use of the subjunctive, as Anne puts herself in the place of one of earth's followers in order to experience vicariously that despair and thereby dissuade herself from following such a course. She prefaces her lines with "If in my heart arose a spring--" (33), "If glancing up, I sought to snatch / But one glimpse of the sky" (38), and "If to the breezes wandering near, / I listened eagerly / And deemed an Angel's tongue to hear" (41-43). The indications are that she has not actually completed these actions or heard the angel's tongue or music, only that if it were possible to hear, that possibility would be negated by her allegiance to earth. Thus, she is, in actuality, choosing to remain open to the possibility of hearing this divine voice, perhaps the voiceless faith, rather than asserting the certainty of its presence. Her upbraiding of the Spirit of Earth is possibly also an upbraiding of herself and all of humanity for her lack of faith that makes it possible to hear such voices:

Dull is thine ear; unheard by thee

The still small voice of Heaven.

Thine eyes are dim, and cannot see

The helps that God has given. (49-52)

Despite Chitham's claims that Anne's syntax is "traditional" (32), it is nevertheless problematic. The "still" small voice of heaven may mean that the voice remains small and scarcely audible, or it may refer to it as motionless, timeless, and intransient. "Thou" is presumably a reference to the Spirit of Earth, yet it may also be a chastisement to

herself for her own deficiencies and lack of faith. In such a context, the "poor reasoner" may be herself. While "poor" could be an expression of pity, it is more likely a pronouncement on her own judgment for her involvement with the "Spirit of Earth" and even her consideration of it at this time. After having attributed this dilemma to "poor reason," she is able to push this alternative aside and gather her strength to affirm, "I will not walk with thee" (70), ending that dialogue.

She next challenges the "Spirit of Pride," and again utilizes the adjective "glorious" to depict excess and pride. The Spirit of Pride has eyes that not only shine, but shine "like lightning," bring "ecstatic joys," and possess powers "almost divine." The statement that this Spirit's powers are "almost divine" gives an interesting indication of the strength of this particular power, especially if we remember that Anne has appropriated her sister Emily's favorite adjective to describe poetic experience. Charlotte said that Emily's poetry "had a peculiar music--wild, melancholy, elevating" (Gerin 181). Here, Anne may recognize the mesmerizing quality of Emily's poetry as "almost divine," indicating a recognition of its brilliance, and perhaps even comparing it to her own. Part of Emily's brilliance stems from her unorthodoxy, which Anne no longer feels she can participate in, although she recognizes the attractions it holds, as she says, "Turn hence their [eyes] fascinating gaze-- / I will not follow thee!" (79-80).

It is perhaps her own pride that causes her to compete with Emily; in any case, the speech of Pride is representative of Emily's distaste for weakness. It may also be Anne's own admonishment of herself for her own trepidation and inability to attempt the path of greatness:

'Coward and fool!' thou mayst reply;

 'Walk on the common sod;

Go trace, with timid foot and eye,

 The steps by others trod.

'Tis best the beaten path to keep,

 The ancient faith to hold,

To pasture with thy fellow sheep,

 And pasture with the fold. (81-88)

The foot, a traditionally spiritual appendage, is mentioned in conjunction with the sheep in the fold in a direct reference to the chosen path of Christianity. There is daring and vainglory in the divergence from Christianity and an indication that Christianity is a mundane form that must be transcended in order to free one to ascend to greater creative heights:

'Cling to the earth, poor grovelling worm,

 'Tis not for thee to soar

Against the fury of the storm,

 Amid the thunder's roar.

There's glory in that daring strife

 Unknown, undreamt of by thee;

There's speechless rapture in the life,

 Of those who follow me!

The overtones are not only Byronic, but Miltonic as well. The indication is that Christianity is too restrictive to allow greatness. The "poor grovelling worm" is earthbound and subservient. Those who follow the Spirit of Pride are presented in a Byronic image, atop a mountain with "lightning in their eye" (104). The eyes as traditional "windows of the soul" would be an indication of a satanic fury, or of the damned, that throws off all constraints and attempts personal greatness that cannot be achieved within the confines of Christian restraints and Anne's desired mutuality.

In stanza fifteen, Anne confesses that she has known this freedom and the "glory" that comes from following this path, as she waxes exuberant in remembrance, allowing herself a moment of ecstatic transportation that she dare not allow herself to indulge in except from behind her poetic mask. She abruptly brings herself out of her reverie, reminding herself that the heights that those who follow the Spirit of Pride aspire to are equal to the depths to which they plunge, as they are "downward dashed," much like Milton's Satan. It is seemingly only this fear of a greater fall, which is perhaps also indicative of the fall taken when one, such as Branwell, perhaps, tries and fails to achieve worldly aspirations, that leads her back to her "beaten path" of Christianity and humility.

The question of lines 135-36 seems rhetorical, but is, in fact, ominous, as she asks who will lead those who have attempted to soar beyond prescribed limits back to the track that they have been "taught to despise." In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Anne's protagonist expresses her doubt of the validity of a last-minute repentance for those who attempt to go beyond prescribed limits: "What is the use of a probationary existence, if a man may spend it as he pleases, just contrary to God's decrees, and then go to heaven

with the best?" (274). Thus, the answer to the question posed in the poem may be, "Nobody," in fear that there may not be a second chance for those who stray too far for redemption.

Finally, the speaker appeals to the Spirit of Faith, basing her comfort on the hope that it may provide reassurance and some sense of permanence, as opposed to the slow decay of the earth and the sudden reversals of pride:

Earth calls thee 'blind, misguided one,'

But who can show like thee

Past things that have been seen and done,

And things that are to be? (148-151)

The light given by the Spirit of Faith is "simple," not glorious, and the eye is "meek." The way is intentionally narrow and bypasses tempting alternatives. Interestingly, we once again find the closing stanzas that affirm her chosen path strewn with subjunctives. She says, "If thy hand conducts me" (195), "If but thy strength be mine" (209), and "If I hold thee fast" (210). There is uncertainty in both receiving the asked for guidance and in the ability to accept and retain it. Faith offers a permanent state of serenity only after a road of hardships, toil, and self-denial; the indication is, however, that faith, though the chosen road, offers no guarantee. She will gladly follow the path of faith only if it can deliver the promised peace. Even though she has chosen this path, she must contend with and answer the doubting voices of other, and sometimes more attractive, ideologies that vie for her allegiance. In the dialogue, she attempts to voice her dilemma, as well as to distance and differentiate herself from these doubting voices within as well as outside

herself. To combat her doubts, desires and fears, she creates the voice of Faith that speaks not to her, but through her. Inherent in the poem, however, is the idea that a choice must be made among the three options; otherwise, much like the three gods warring within the speaker's breast in Emily's "The Philosopher," they will tear her apart.

One of the two last poems that Anne wrote is entitled "Self-Communion." The title reflects her recognition of herself as the originator and as both participants in the ensuing dialogue, which is no longer embedded in a poem, but constitutes the entire piece. Chitham sees the poem as Anne's attempt to reconcile reason with feeling (194). It may, however, be best looked at in context of the dialogic poems as Anne's final attempt to end her fears, reluctance, and doubts, and to finally follow her path of unorthodoxy without question. The poem opens with an autumn landscape that gives what Duthie calls the feeling of an "arrested life" (86). In the opening lines, she bids herself into the persona of either Chitham's "reason" or, more likely, that of heavenly guidance, to reflect on her life and the decisions she has made:

The mist is resting on the hill;
 The smoke is hanging in the air;
 The very clouds are standing still;
 A breathless calm broods everywhere.
 Thou pilgrim through this vale of tears
 Thou, too, a little moment cease
 Thy anxious toil and fluttering fears,
 And rest thee, for a little while, in peace. (1-8)

Anne, or the addressee, however, is reluctant to tarry, feeling the passage of time pressing upon her, as she realizes that she has little time to meet temporal goals and to fix herself firmly on the correct spiritual path:

He [time] still keeps adding to my years

And stealing life away.

His footsteps in the ceaseless sound

Of yonder clock, I seem to hear,

That through this stillness so profound

Distinctly strikes the vacant ear.

For ever striding on and on

He pauses not by night or day;

And all my life will soon be gone

As these past years have slipped away. (11-21)

Anne's fondness for the ambiguity of "still" is again depicted, as Time is not just continuing to add years, but he, in an odd construct, "still keeps adding" them. There is no movement or progression on his part and perpetual stagnation on hers. The clock promotes the stillness of "ceaseless sound" as the quiet becomes a ceaseless noise that forever strides "on and on." The footfalls of the clock and time as indicated by the associated prepositional and participial phrases give the feeling of continuous progression, while she, like the mist, smoke, and clouds, is at a standstill. It is perhaps her perceived lack of worldly accomplishment that causes her feelings of inadequacy in the world's, her own, and God's eyes. She is told that the way to overcome her feelings of

alienation and to combat the "wasting power of Time" is to look to her past in order to find meaning in her present situation:

Nay, though he steals the years away,
 Their memory is left to thee still,
 And every month and every day
 Leaves some effect of good or ill.
 The wise will find in Memory's store
 A help for that which lies before
 To guide their course aright
 Then, hush thy plaints and fears;
 Look back on these departed years,
 And say what meets thy sight? (33-42)

Memory now takes on a function different from that of a deceiver or of a simple anodyne, as in "Views of Life." In the reverie that follows, the speaker returns to the scene of childhood, "helpless / Feeble and full of causeless fears / Simple and easily beguiled." She asks rhetorical questions as to where such a being may find protection and comfort in this world, to which the obvious response is negative; it cannot be done. Again, she implicates the landscape in the desolation and harshness that is experienced at the unexpected alteration of childhood expectations and experience:

O earth! a rocky breast is thine--
 A hard soil and a cruel clime,
 Where tender plants must droop and pine,

Or alter with transforming time. (75-78)

Enid Duthie sees Anne's use of nature here as allegorical, retracing the "first steps of her religious exposure and revealing how she acquired her stoicism" (17). Indeed, her memories do reveal the incentive that has caused her to develop a hard, protective exterior in order to protect the child within that she obviously identifies as herself. As she is pressed on in her remembrance, she continues to identify herself with a child, this time kneeling and pleading to a power that seems unresponsive and distant: "A young heart feeling after God, / Oft baffled, never backwards driven, / Mistaken oft and oft astray" (95-97). The indication is that the neglect and harshness of her chosen God/path has forced her into an unnatural stoicism. She comes to be grateful for this hardness, as it keeps her from feeling the pain she must endure:

Bless God for that divine decree!--

That hardness that comes with misery,

And suffering that deadens pain;

That at the frequent sight of woe

E'en pity's tears forget to flow,

If reason still remain! (143-148)

Reason is also an anodyne, as it disengages her from the burden of excessive feeling. Thus, time and memory become vehicles by which personal transformation may occur. The temporal joys of friendships and intimacy are also questioned in a passage that closely parallels her sister Emily's poem "Plead for Me":

What my soul worshipped, sought, and prized,

Were slighted, questioned, or despised;--

This pained me more than aught. (193-195)

These sentiments have been read as indicators of the growing chasm between Anne and Emily, as Emily's scorn for the traditional modes of worship differed sharply from Anne's orthodoxy, although, interestingly, both espouse stoicism in their philosophies. I would add that the chasm may be one between herself and her God, as she learned that the temporal joys and wishes of youth were to be scorned by traditional Christian ideology. The double life she was leading caused her to feel alienated not only from her sister, but from a part of herself, causing an internal schism that she illustrates using imagery similar to that found in *Jane Eyre*:

I saw that they were sundered now,

The trees that at the root were one:

They yet might mingle leaf and bough,

But still the stems stand alone. (204-207)

She is thus taught a philosophy of *contemptus mundi* in a medieval fashion and learns that the only permanence and unity may be found beyond an earthly realm:

So must it fare with all thy race,

Who seek in earthly things their joy;

So fading, lost hopes shall chase

Till Disappointment all destroy. (161-264)

She, in fact, becomes like a Christian knight in a crusading quest through life. The voice of orthodoxy speaks archaically, reinforcing the medieval ideology:

Could I but hear my saviour say,
 "I know thy patience and thy love;
 How thou has held the narrow way,
 For my sake laboured night and day,
 And watched, and striven with them that strove;
 And still hast borne, and didst not faint," --
 Oh, this would be reward indeed! (326-332)

She has, in essence, provided herself with the confirmation that she has chosen the correct path and that she will receive not only the rest she seeks, but recognition and thanks from her congregation and her God. By placing herself as His servant she is able to remain humble, yet she envisions God giving her his thanks for her work and endurance on His behalf.

Only weeks after this poem was written, Anne Brontë died. Of her last moments, Ada Harrison says, "Anne is almost awesomely in command. She rises supremely to her last occasion, and as long as she is conscious, she directs it" (qtd. in Chitham 186). Accordingly, she demonstrates the same self-control and command in her poetry as in her faith. Though reputed as the most "silent" of the Brontës, Anne uses her dialogic poetry as a form of self-communion and religious confirmation that leads her to the peace of mind and the spiritual reward she seeks, as well as paving the way for her sister searchers in the congregation.

NOTES

¹ Qtd. in Miriam Allott. *The Brontës: A Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1974. 223.

² Edward Chitham, one of Anne's primary biographers, says that she is "one who might have been able to contribute material of high value had she lived" (194). This would seem to say that she had not contributed anything of worth during her lifetime.

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CHAPTER IV

DIALOGUES OF CONCEALMENT: REPRESSION IN THE GONDAL POETRY OF ANNE BRONTË

"All of reality becomes an element of the hero's self-consciousness . . .
we see not who he is but how he perceives himself" (39).

--Bakhtin, PDP

"Pain is the space where words would be, the hole torn out of language."

--Sharon Cameron¹

When Anne Brontë's father offered each of his children a mask in order to enable each of them to speak freely, he was encouraging them to participate in a carnivalized discourse.² It would become an exercise that was particularly important to the three sisters when they attempted authorship from under the masks of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. The Bells, George Eliot, L.E.L., and George Sand are but a few women in the nineteenth-century who chose to write professionally under either male pseudonyms or anonymously. Elaine Showalter says, "the nineteenth-century generation in particular saw the will to write as vocation in direct conflict with status as woman appears in the form of the male pseudonym" (20). In this manner, the author's name itself becomes the locus of carnival, as it masks the author's identity, creating a facade that deceives the public and puts the woman as author on the same footing as her male counterparts who have been heretofore synonymous with the idea of the professional author. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have commented extensively on the anxiety that the women as authors felt by participating in an art dominated by male writers and male-

oriented metaphors.³ The mask of the pseudonym allows the woman writer to combat this anxiety, this state of exclusion and to assert her voice into the dialogue that she has been so often and carefully excluded from.

There is yet another type of mask that creative women must don, and that is the mask of domesticity that hides all trace of desire. A woman, as Hans Eichner once said, "has no story of her own" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 22), and John Ruskin asserts that woman's "intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet orderings of domesticity" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 24). With the rise of the cult of domesticity and the idealization of the domestic "angel" in the house, women developed a fear of unsexing themselves by entering any intellectual, creative, or patrilineal vocation. As Charlotte Brontë so contritely wrote to Southey in 1837, "[W]hen I'm teaching or sewing, I would rather be reading or writing. I try to deny myself; and my father's approbation amply reward[s] me for the privation" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 64). It is the mask of social acquiescence that defines the creative woman socially and yet hides the secrets she must keep if she is to be both a creative and social being. Whatever the real thoughts or feelings of women at the time, they must be suppressed in the name of social propriety; however, through writing, and through poetry in particular, Angela Leighton states that women might go in search of "a secret female self against any fixed or famished needs of the idealizing male gaze" (xxxvii). Certainly, it is poetry that gave Anne Brontë in particular a chance to voice hidden and even suppressed desires and conflict regarding her creative and social desires.

For Anne, one of the first releases poetry must have offered may have been from the presence of her older, more dominant sisters, however well-intentioned, and brother. Charlotte Brontë, Ellen Nussey, and Elizabeth Gaskell have all left us with portraits of Anne as mild, pious, and quiet, and fragile. And while Emily seems to have taken Anne into confidence and established Gondal with her, Emily's growing obsession with the fantasy and her own intractable nature seemed to make it difficult for Anne to break away from either Gondal or her sister, even when the game lost its charm for her. Long after she wrote that "The Gondals are in general not in first-rate playing condition. Will they improve?" (qtd in Chitham 180), she remained in the game when she was at home and in Emily's presence, though she would write personal, spiritual poetry otherwise. In contrast to Emily's body of poetry, we find that less than half of Anne's fifty-nine poems are Gondal related, and most of these occur in the early stages of her poetic endeavors. Despite her friendship and perhaps even early reliance on the more courageous Emily, Anne was far from being like "her twin" as Ellen Nussy declared (Chitham 32). If friends and observers mistook and misrepresented Anne, certainly her own indulged brother's derision must have been enough to make her doubt her self-worth: a telling passage occurs in an excerpt from the Angrian cycle, as one of Charlotte's characters named Lord Wellesly encounters one of Branwell's characters named Wiggins on the road to Verdopolis. In the ensuing conversation between alter egos, Wiggins' contempt echoes the self-important Branwell's contempt for his sisters, particularly Anne, as he answers Wellesly's questions about his family:

"In a way I may be said to have no relations I've some people who call

themselves akin to me in the shape of three girls, not that they aren't honored by possessing me as a brother, but I deny that they are my sisters. . . . "

"What are your sisters' names?"

"Charlotte Wiggins, Jane Wiggins, and Anne Wiggins."

"Are they as queer as you?"

"Oh they are miserable silly creatures not worth talking about. Charlotte's eighteen years old, a broad dumpy thing, whose head does not come higher than my elbow. Emily's sixteen, lean and scant, with a face about the size of a penny, and Anne is nothing, absolutely nothing."

"What! Is she an idiot?"

"Next door to it." (qtd. in Gerin 42).

It would be no wonder if Anne, seeing herself through others' eyes, felt herself "next door to an idiot" and, as she once told Ellen Nussey, "deficient" in her "organ of language" (Barker 175). Nor does Anne seem to have ever verbally disputed such depictions of her directly, or given any reason for any of her friends or siblings to regard her as other than what they supposed. From behind the masks that her Gondal characters wear, however, we see a prominent theme running throughout her heroines' utterances: the inability to voice desire and the dialogic unmasking that allows the self to emerge through confessional self-revelation.

Bakhtin says that one's relationship with the self is "intrinsically intertwined to one's relationship with others"(193), and Anne's crisis of language and subjectivity seems to have been exorcized dialogically. As the site of her earliest poetic attempts, Gondal

seems to have offered Anne a complex social environment in which to explore the variety of conflicting and disruptive voices within her, while the paradigm of confessional dialogue offers an opportunity for self-appraisal and self-projection. In this way, Anne creates characters that find a correlation between her own and her characters' emotions while at the same time disassociating herself from them. The ability to disassociate herself from and mask overpowering emotion, particularly desire, becomes increasingly important to Anne, and it is not surprising that her siblings would have found it difficult to believe her capable of such strong feeling. Charlotte, who allowed her passions full voice in *Jane Eyre*, wrote to Ellen Nussey with amusement of a scene that occurred between Anne and an admirer, the flirtatious curate William Weightman, in church:

"His 'young reverence,' as you tenderly call him, . . . sits opposite Anne in church sighing softly and looking out of his eyes to win her attention--and Anne is so quiet, her look so down-cast--they are a picture." (qtd. in Chitham 62-63).

It never seems to occur to Charlotte that Anne may be feeling anything other than quiet piety as she sits in church with her "downcast" looks, or the turbulence that such a show of composure might hide. Almost as if in response to such an observation, one of Anne's first poems is titled "Self-Congratulation"; in it we hear the voice of Olivia Vernon attempting to conceal her longing for a man she intensely desires. Olivia's desire is first read by others in her appearance, as she is questioned by her companions:

'Maiden, thou were thoughtless once
 Of beauty or of grace
 Simple and homely in attire

Careless of form and face

Then whence this change, and why so oft

Dost thou smooth thy hazel hair?

And wherefore deck thy youthful form,

With such unwearied care? (1-9)

It is interesting that the woman's dress and appearance should be regarded as evidence of an internal change. Ashleigh Leighton observes that women must make adjustments in their dress, appearance, and manner in order to create a public front (xxviii). Any change or alteration of such seems to be cause for speculation by the observer. The questioning voices reflect an image of appearance and behavior back to the speaker, who must now attempt to conceal the private self from the public. The question and answer session at the beginning of the poem also encourages the readers' and perhaps even the author's participation in unraveling the speaker's behavior and discerning what remains unvoiced in the dialogue. The speaker's explanation of her repetition of the "simple tunes" she plays repeatedly also aids in the concealment of emotion:

'And for those simple little airs,

I love to play them o'er--

So much I dare not promise now

To play them never more.'

I answered and it was enough;

They turned them to depart;

They could not read my secret thoughts

Nor see my throbbing heart. (17-24)

Her heart is "unreadable," and her desire remains unvoiced, but is evinced by the "throbbing" heart. Yet the inner dialogue engenders the ensuing confessional manner that the poem now takes. The interior language becomes more romantic and conversational, a stark contrast from the formal public tone and language used in the opening dialogue. The secret held in Olivia's "throbbing heart" is revealed, as well as her relief in concealing that which a *lady* must keep concealed:

The innermost workings of the soul

The gazer's eye might trace.

The speaking eye, the changing lip,

The ready blushing cheek,

The smiling or beclouded brow

Their different feelings speak.

But, thank God! you might gaze upon mine

For hours and never know

The secret changes of my soul

From joy to bitter woe. (27-36)

The body betrays; the eyes speak, the brow smiles, the cheek blushes. The body, particularly the face, speaks its desire, initiating a forbidden and dangerous dialogue. Theatricality, masks, and role-playing are all essential parts of Bakhtin's carnival; however, instead of the freedom of expression that the mask usually offers, the speaker finds that the mask of femininity demands repression and marginalization. It is through

the thematization of such "masking" and multiple roles and disguises that the difficulty of obtaining female subjectivity is explored in Gondal.

The reference to the "gazer's eye" is of interest because not only is the speaker resolute in keeping her self from becoming the object of the gaze, but she is afraid that her own gaze may become the "speaking eye." To confess or assert oneself outwardly is to risk censure, and a woman's virtue depended upon silence. Naomi Jacobs asserts that such secretiveness becomes a survival skill for women, as women's reality must be concealed beyond a layer of conventionality (211). Although the speaker does not wish to attract the unwanted subjugating male gaze, she places herself, perhaps a bit guiltily, in the traditionally feminine roles of passive object and exhibitionist. Olivia's dress is such that she displays herself, and her appearance is encoded for a strong visual impact. She is, however, careful not to let her own gaze speak--particularly to the object of her affection, as not only do men prefer not to be placed in a traditionally submissive role of the gazed-upon, but to be the one looking or gazing coincides with the initial inklings of self-awareness, and hence the birth of subjectivity or the "I." As with many Victorian heroines, including Jane Eyre, Agnes Grey, and Helen Huntingdon, Olivia Vernon experiences her own mind as a prison in which not only desire, but also voice and subjectivity must be confined. As her beloved passes silently by, Olivia is careful that her voice does not "tremble," her cheek does not "blush," and that the "sparkle" in her eye does not "speak." Her desire and the expression of such is confined within her own thought:

But O my spirit burned within,

My heart beat thick and fast.
 He came not nigh--he went away
 And then my joy was past.
 And yet my comrades marked it not,
 My voice was still the same;
 They saw me smile, and o'er my face--
 Not signs of sadness came;
 They little knew my hidden thoughts
 And they will never know
 The anguish of my drooping heart,
 The bitter aching woe! (45-56)

The Romantic language of the internal, the subjective self, is strongly reminiscent of Emily's poetry; there is clearly a need to express desire as well as subjectivity; however, there is also a wish for the "other" to initiate and reciprocate speech. Noticeably, Olivia uses the "O" of the pure vocative, or the pure presencing of another person rather than the "Oh" of subjectivity, or presencing of the first person. Olivia clearly needs the presence and voice of the absent other to give expression to her thoughts and desires. As the object of her desire fades, so does her hope of self-expression and of achieving subjectivity.

Like the relationship between the mask and the self that is veiled by it, the distance between the word and desire forms a distance between the self and one's image of the self. Mary Anne Doan theorizes that the "masquerade is in control since it works to effect distance between the cause of desire and oneself" (82). Hence, in the poem one

must question not only the relationship between truth and language but between dialogue and subjectivity. Bakhtin states that "the consciousness of the self is perceived against others' consciousness of [the self]" (171). That is, one's perception and pronouncement about oneself is under the constant shaping and influence of others' words. Here it is not only the questions and ensuing dialogue of Olivia's companions, but the socially prescribed words and oppressive gauges of the self that initiate dialogical self-consciousness. Olivia's dissembling dialogue masks both desire and a need for responsive self-expression, lest she finally become deadened to her own subjectivity. In this way, Olivia's dialogue is double-voiced and subversive as she enters into a dialogue with the self/reader that overlays the dissembling dialogue she carries on with her unsuspecting "comrades," as it adds some form of self-assertion or resistance to her apparent submission to both their and society's restrictions and demands.

Another "masking," albeit one with a bit less clarity in motive, occurs in "The Lady of Alzerno's Hall." The poem is centered on Alexandria Zenobia's attempts to console Lady Alzerno, whose husband has been away and missing for three years. The poem initially contains a sympathetic identification between the two women, as Alexandria seems empathetic to her Lady's sorrow. She says of the winter sun's effect upon them, "It does not warm, it does not cheer / It makes us sigh for summer days" (24-25). It is at the end of the stanza and the repeated use of the conditional that we suspect her sympathy is more personal than empathetic:

But vainly she may hope and fear
And vainly watch and weep and mourn;

She may wait for him till her hairs are grey,
 And she may wear her life away,
 But to his lady and his home
 Her noble lord will never come. (31-36)

Lady Alzerno's suffering touches Alexandria, but we must now wonder if her expression of suffering has provoked Alexandria's conscience more than her sympathy. As Lady Alzerno expresses her wish to know her husband's whereabouts in order to ease her continual suffering, Alexandria's response is designed for concealment as much as for comfort:

'I wish I knew the worst,' she said,
 'I wish I *could* despair.
 These fruitless hopes, this constant dread,
 Are more than I can bear!--
 'Then do not hope and do not weep,
 He loved thee faithfully,
 And nothing short of death could keep
 So true a heart from thee;
 Eliza, he would never go,
 And leave thee thus to mourn,
 He must be dead, for death alone
 Could hinder his return.' (37-47)

Alexandria's address to Eliza simulates the sun's lack of warmth and deadening influence in the winter. Despite seemingly comforting assurances of Lord Alzerno's affection, Alexandria's address is not designed to initiate responsiveness from Eliza, just as it is not intended to give hope for Lord Alzerno's return, despite having briefly animated him through assurances of his undying love, for Eliza's comfort. The continual use of the subjunctive leaves the conversation in a sort of state of suspended animation, with no real closure to the mystery of Lord Alzerno's whereabouts; thus, he himself is left in a state of suspended animation, as well. Conditional language, then, has the power to reanimate the absent subject as well as to conceal or distract.

Alexandria's double-voiced words assume a mask of truth; however, the short dialogue brings about a confession:

But more than that I would not tell,
 Though all the while I knew so well
 The time and nature of his death.
 For when he drew his parting breath
 His head was pillowed on my knee,
 And his dark eyes were turned to me
 With an agonised heart-breaking glance,
 Until they saw me not--
 O, the look of a dying man
 Can never be forgot --! (53-63)

The stanza's sudden shift into rhymed couplets at this point is interesting, as it seems to give a sense of the submerged meaning or pattern that has been evaded during the dialogue and its emphasis on the conditional that flows freely in the confession.

Whether Alexandria was romantically or politically involved with Lord Alzerno is unclear (the two are usually intertwined in Gondal), but it is clear that the revelation of the relationship is not desirable, despite the fact that it would give closure and finality to Eliza Alzerno's mourning. Concerning the nature of confession, Michel Foucault writes that "the nineteenth-century altered the scope of confession; it tended to be no longer concerned solely with the subject it wished to hide, but with what was hidden from oneself"(66). As such, Alexandria's confession is not voiced to Eliza, but within her own mind (and to the reader) and therefore does not end in any sort of absolution or forgiveness, but sets the stage for further provocation from dialogic encounters with both Eliza and further self-exposure. Foucault further states that dialogue "exhumes past characters and gives voice to silent history, allowing for its reinterpretation" (144). Again, there is no final word on the events surrounding Lord Alzerno's death or his relationship with Alexandria. Lord Alzerno is exhumed in the dialogue between Alexandria and Eliza, and the interpretation of unexplained events is left to the reader, with few clues provided by Alexandria herself. There is a kind of moral torture inflicted upon Alexandria as the dialogue and her duplicity ferret out her "voice of self-consciousness to both reveal and explain her self dialogically and to find truth in the form of confessional self-utterance" (Bakhtin 153). Alexandria sympathizes, dissembles, justifies, and confesses (internally), yet is afraid to voice what her conscience conceals: in

this case, her seemingly hidden desire for Lord Alzerno, who dies with his head “pillowed” on her knee. Thus the confession does not purge her of her sin, but provides an ongoing means of seeing and confronting it.

The imprisonment of desire is often literalized in Gondal, as characters find themselves in the enclosed space of a dark prison cell, grave, or cavern. Derrida recognizes the crypt as a forum “like a closed rostrum or speaker’s box, a safe sealed and thus internal, a secret interior in a public square” (qtd. in Russo 165). The underground cavern or prison seems to function in a similar manner, aiding the speaker in public confessions of desire and conscience. In Anne’s Gondal, however, the prisoners often find that their physical imprisonment corresponds with verbal bondage, and the struggle to voice personal desire is often suppressed at great expense. In “A Captive’s Dream,” we once again encounter Alexandria Zenobia, now imprisoned and receiving a “vision” of her beloved, who she is sure must long for her as much as she does for him. As she envisions him, she attempts to speak, but cannot:

And O I thought he clasped his wasted hands,
 And raised he haggard eyes to Heaven, and prayed
 That he might die –I had no power to speak,
 I thought I was allowed to see him thus;
 And yet I might not speak a single word; (7-11)

And again, in Romantic language that echoes Emily’s, she asserts her lack of verbal ability:

I struggled wildly but it was in vain

I could not rise from my dark dungeon floor,
 And the dear name I vainly strove to speak
 Died in a voiceless whisper on my tongue. (18-22)

Similarly, in “A Voice from the Dungeon” the captive Maria Sabina is plagued by a vision of her beloved and of her child, both of whom she wishes to contact and call out to, but she is unable to speak.

Methought a little lovely child
 Looked up into my face and smiled.
 My heart was full, I wept for joy,
 It was my own, my darling boy;
 I clasped him to my breast and he
 Kissed and laughed in childish glee.
 Just then I heard in whisper sweet
 A well known voice my name repeat.
 His father stood before my eyes;
 I gazed at him in mute surprise. (35-50)

Not surprisingly, the mother/child relationship occurs in silent recognition through visual and physical cognizance.⁴ The man initiates speech; however, Maria’s attempt to engage him in dialogue fails:

I thought he smiled and spoke to me,
 But still in silent ecstasy
 I gazed at him; I could not speak;

I uttered one long piercing shriek.
 Alas! Alas! That cursed scream
 Aroused me from my heavenly dream
 I looked around in wild despair
 I called them but they were not there
 The father and the child are gone,
 And I must live and die alone. (45-55)

The shriek or “cursed scream” is indicative of frustrated, unspeakable desire, and the
 dungeon that marginalizes and provides what Mary Russo calls “a womblike, regressive
 stage in the psyche” bears a strong similarity to the metaphor of the asylum. Screams,
 incoherent mutterings, and silence are the primary voices associated with asylums, rather
 than coherent utterances; the screams and other “babble” created by the inhabitants of
 such subterranean places are unlikely to free them from the bondage of the walls,
 however. Only language and the ability to verbally express and explain oneself to others
 dialogically hold the key to their freedom. Anne must have certainly felt a prisoner
 herself as she struggled with the contradictory and almost taboo nature of women’s
 verbal and written self-expression. It is certainly of interest that her mental and physical
 collapse and religious crisis comes shortly after the composition of these poems. The
 ability to express oneself freely comes at a great price, as, according to Gilbert and
 Gubar, wielding a pen puts a woman at great odds with her body and her culture (2). In
 terms of the struggle between the creative and procreative nature of women, we see a
 very different use of the childbirth metaphor and children in Anne’s work than in

Emily's. The seemingly callous infanticide of Augusta Alameda is contrasted with the warmth and intense desire to nurture her child as expressed by Maria Sabina. In Anne's poetry, the cave or prison itself may be seen as a womblike area where the creative ability is imprisoned and left speechless, as opposed to Emily's use of the same that depicts the seed of such expression as gestating. Both, however, use the cave in particular as a metaphor for the womb where creativity and speech are imprisoned. Indeed, Mary Russo sees the grotto-esque as associated with the grotesque, and, therefore, the "cavernous female body" (6). Furthermore, Susan Friedman finds that the confinement of women alludes to the final stages of pregnancy, before "delivery into the bonds of patriarchy" (373). Anne's confusion between desire and duty seems evident; it is also interesting to note that at this time Anne was not only falling ill with an intestinal disorder that was exacerbated by a religious crisis that Reverend La Trobe was called to minister, but she was also drawing pictures of cherubic children with curly hair during these months (Chitham 53). Anne seems to have been terrified by the thought of punishment of a wrathful god, as Minister La Trobe states that although she was familiar with the biblical texts, she was more concerned with the requirements demanded for salvation and of her consciousness of "not loving the lord her god" enough (qtd. in Chitham 54-55). As Chitham notes, she seemed both "attracted to and paralyzed by her role as a producer of children" (53). Awareness of such a role seems to be further complicated by her role as a producer of poetry and texts, and in neither role does she seem to feel able to flourish.

As a woman in a patriarchal society, religion, and household where the authoritative word is decidedly masculine and given by the male of the household (her situation would

have been compounded by her father's position in the church), Anne seems woefully conscious of her dilemma and breach of what Victorian society and christianity expected from women. Friedman says that "linguistically inscribed separations echo religious ones, which in turn resonate through the childbirth metaphor, just as God's punishment to Adam and Eve was a sexual division of labor which appropriated the power of the Word for the masculine deity and his son" (374). Thus, states Friedman, the Word, spoken and written, is reserved for men, leaving women speechless and thoughtless (374). This thought is further compounded by nineteenth-century celebration of the female body for its thoughtless reproductive power that could be tainted by too much mental exertion. Language is the male birthright, confinement the woman's. Entering the masculine realm of male intellect and creation interfered with a woman's desire to do her womanly procreative duty toward men, society, and god. In his book concerning women and education, Dr. Edward Clarke expressed his concern that "catamenial functions could not be properly established if their [girl's] teachers diverted force to the brain that was needed elsewhere The system never does two things well at once, and as her education continues, the girl must use a large part of the nerve force which should be directed to the genital organs, and she is exhausted by carrying on two processes at once" (qtd. in Fellman and Fellman 67). Anita and Michael Fellman see this diagnosis as embodying the fear that young women were being diverted from their real work as mothers, particularly the women among the well-educated classes (67). Reproduction was a duty by which all women were bound to men, and those who didn't marry and have their own children were subjected to the same inescapable slavery as governesses, one of

the only respectable, if despised, positions opened to women. Such medical and social admonitions certainly denied women the authority to create art as well as babies and demanded a sacrifice of one in favor of the other: a choice must be made between children and language. Friedman says that the woman's metaphoric use of childbirth and children, "originates with a conflict to confront the patriarchally imposed dilemma of their artistic identity; the binary system that conceives women and writer, motherhood and authorhood, and babies and books as mutually exclusive" (383). The paralyzing nature of such a dichotomy is evident in the opening lines of Maria's lament:

I'm buried now; I've done with life;
 I've done with hate, revenge and strife;
 I've done with joy, and hope and love
 And all the bustling world above.
 Long have I dwelt forgotten here
 This place of solitude and gloom
 Must be my dungeon and my tomb. (1-10)

The images of being buried and laid in a tomb while alive correspond to carnivalesque images where "death itself gives birth, and the mother's womb in giving birth becomes a grave" (Bakhtin 164). Similarly, Maria's almost elegiac vision of her child "rebirths" her son, only to lose both him and her cultural and reproductive identity provided by motherhood as she attempts dialogic (creative) speech and awakens to the possibility of being imprisoned in an essentially dead (childless) womb forever. As the vision of a child

fades, she must transform the birthing and loss of a child into the permanent domain of literature and language in order to attain subjectivity.

Faced with such a dichotomy, Anne seems to choose creativity over procreativity to achieve poetic subjectivity. Likewise, she seems to have channeled her urges toward the creation of children into the exploration of more enlightened spiritual paths. In “The North Wind” Alexandria is once again imprisoned, but finds the ability to converse with the wind, as she says, “I know its language; thus it speaks to me--” (6). The wind continues its admonishment:

The sweet world is not changed, but thou
 Art pining in a dungeon now
 Where thou must ever be;
 No voice but mine can reach thine ear,
 And Heaven has kindly sent me here,
 To mourn and sigh with thee. (21-26)

Alexandria finds the words of the wind, if not ideal, at least an alternative to the silence and the loss of language and self-expression she has had to endure. There seems to be little alternative at this point, as the wind is decidedly the *only* voice that can now engage her dialogically and allow her verbal self-expression:

Blow on, wild wind, thy solemn voice,
 However sad and drear,
 Is nothing to the gloomy silence
 I have had to bear, (29-32)

The wind's statement that "heaven" has sent it indicates that it carries a spiritual quality, and a patriarchal/hierarchical one. The indication is that only through a spiritual calling and by following an orthodox religious path can she find a socially acceptable way to enter into both a poetic and religious dialogue within the patriarchy. By following this path, she becomes a sort of literary Virgin Mary, who can give birth to the word in order to author herself into subjectivity and become the "birth, word, and flesh by divine and poetic authority" (Friedman 391). However, from the "hot tears" (33) that Alexandria sheds, the tone of decided resignation, and the admittance that following this path is "far better than the dull gnawing stupor of despair" (35), one must wonder how satisfactory both Alexandria and Anne's choices truly were.

In Anne's Gondal, then, dialogue rips the masks away and compels self-revelation and the admission of desire. For Anne Brontë, who calls herself a "master dissembler" through her semi-autobiographical character Agnes Grey, it also gives rise to what Bakhtin called a "micro-dialogue" in which all words spoken are double-voiced and in conflict with the voice of her own desire, the voices of her family, her religious training, and her culture. It is through the development of dialogic language that Anne seeks to attain subjectivity and creativity. Dialogic language allows her to express her spiritual, creative, and even frustrated romantic and procreative desires, while the expression of these desires through Gondal makes it possible to reorder experience and make it comprehensible and bearable. At times the mask of Gondal serves as an expression or confession of desire, while at others it seems to exorcize or provide a lament for those otherwise unexpressed desires that must be left unfulfilled. Throughout this process,

Anne gains the ability to balance and reconcile the desire to conform and the urge to resist the existing social and religious taboos placed on women of the time and to explore her own ideas and truths through process, absence, dialogue, and shifting multi-voicedness.

NOTES

1. Quote taken from Lyric Time: Dickinson and the Limits of Genre in Bakhtin. Baltimore: John's Hopkins UP, 1979.
2. Dale Bauer contrasts carnivalized discourse with authoritative discourse, which demands conformity. The carnivalized discourse, however, "renders invalid any codes, conventions, or laws which govern or reduce the individual to an object of control," ("Gender in Bakhtin's Carnival" 679).
3. See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.
4. For Lacan's theory on mirroring and the gaze, see Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: W.W. Norton, 1973. For my purposes the most interesting aspect of Lacan's theory is that the individual leaves the infant/mirroring stage and moves toward subjectivity with the acquisition of language: Thus the dissipation of Maria's vision of the silently shared mutuality of the infant/mother relationship as the entrance of the male and Maria's attempt at speech. According to Lacan, however, language can never fully express exactly what it is one wants, hence the gap known as desire. Desire becomes the motivation for all language as one attempts to fill this gap or find what one lacks. For Lacan this "lack" is symbolized by the phallus, but it is also put in more positive terms by Diane Herndl, who defines it as a woman's wish "for the chance to do something with what she already has." ("Desire" in *Feminisms* 399).

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CONCLUSION

In *Women Writers and Poetic Identity*, Margaret Homans writes, “When we say women authors, we mean novelists” (6). Poetry is a literary tradition that depends on and rewards male-dominated metaphor and language. This is not to say, of course, that women cannot or never have written poetry; however, the experience of the poet who is a woman as she attempts to explore her own subjectivity and experience through verse is vastly different and more problematic than that of the poet who is male.

In answer to their brother and sister’s male-dominated world of Angria, Emily and Anne Brontë created the realm of Gondal, where women reigned and were free to behave as bravely, cowardly, admirably, despicably, amorously, or callously as men. Although most of these poems were not made available to the public in Emily and Anne’s lifetimes, they were quiet but powerful pockets of resistance to both societal and family restrictions¹. The Gondal saga began quietly and exclusively, but it was enough to allow Emily and Anne to begin to manipulate and negotiate the systems of male domination both at home, as Branwell was the center of monetary and scholarly focus, and as part of a society that worshipped at the altars of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Spenser, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Southey, and Byron, rather than those of Sappho, Pisan, Wroth, Behn, Baille, Mott, Lanyer, or Landon, and where even an acknowledged female poet of the time such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning had to face medical opposition to her occupation.²

Perhaps most importantly, Emily and Anne’s pursuit of poetic self-expression allowed them to explore their own subjectivity through both private and public discourse. It is

here that Bakhtin's theories of discourse and carnival are particularly helpful in estimating the importance of resisting and multiple voices, both private and public. The social nature of utterance, both inner and outer, allows not only dialogue and exchange to occur, but aids in recognizing the perhaps heretofore unnoticed moments of thoughtless acquiescence and subtle resistance to patriarchal thought and exclusivity. To Bakhtin's theories, I add feminist thought and recognition of a dialogic in which disrupting voices from the margin are heard and enter into the cultural and literary dialogue, moving toward inclusiveness rather than striving for domination. Just as Bakhtin believed that any attempt at a pure unalloyed dominant cultural voice would result in conflict with other voices it sought to marginalize, a study in feminist dialogics becomes a way of recognizing and validating other existing and competing voices both within and outside of the self.

It is the interaction between these competing voices that creates meaning whether the dissenting voices originate from within, from other people, from social codes and ideologies, or even from a narrator and other characters' voices. This multiplicity marks the feminine dialogic and contrasts sharply with the androcentric rules of imposed order, hierarchal structure, definitive meaning and authorization. The speaking subject is no longer surrounded by objects that meaning is imposed upon or that reflect the speaker's state of mind and, in addition, the feminine language is marked by change, process, and the plurality of the subject.

Although Bakhtin's theory of carnival has been criticized for its binarism, several ideas are worth salvaging.³ The ideas of masking, carnivalesque laughter, and the lack of

boundaries and endings, are all components of Gondal and the dialogues that compose it. All of the Brontë sisters participated in a public masquerade, as did many of their female peers who wrote, as they adopted male (or at least ambiguous) pseudonyms in order to encourage dialogue with the reading public and peers. The importance of the name and of the masquerade required by women who would enter public literary dialogue is great. Foucault has examined the power of the author's name and its importance in the act of limiting "dangerous and cancerous proliferations of significations" (158). Herndl uses the metaphor of "cancer to sexuality" to show that the feminine text which embraces plurality is a threat to meaning:

The feminine text was caught in the phallogocentric double-bind of criticism: without an author-function, it would not be read; but with an author-function it could not be read. The author's name was a facade, a means to limit the reproduction, proliferation, and meaning and to deny that (false) meaning any important position. (14)

If the masking of the author-function aided Emily and Anne in reaching an outer audience, Emily in particular took pleasure in the laughter of the resistant voice in the form of Augusta, the queen of Gondal, who distracts, disturbs, and undermines male authority by embracing her desires—her ambition, her sexuality, and her creativity. She in particular is immune to monologism and embraces the wide-open sea of possibility, rejecting all boundaries and endings, causing Auerback to deem her "queen of the perpetual present." Augusta, as well as other Gondolian characters, are effective in aiding Emily and Anne combat what Gilbert and Gubar call the "anxiety of authorship"

arising from the lack of societal precedent and encouragement of the creative and dialogic female voice.

If Gondal was an anodyne or release for some of the feelings of frustration, guilt, fear, or need accompanying authorship and creativity, Anne's and Emily's personal poems show a surprising divergence of resolution. Even in Emily's Gondal poetry, there is a lack of authorial voice or control that defines an epic and rests upon traditional literary structures. The author's lack of presence has disturbed some and led to a devaluation of her poetry by those uncomfortable with the authority given to both character and reader.⁴ The continual shift in Emily's poetry from speaking subject to speaking subject and from "what is" to "what was" and "what will be" refuses semantic fixage and indicates her uneasiness with monologue. In her quest for subjectivity, Emily's personal poems contain a world of full-fledged speaking subjects. As opposed to the male Romantic Poets, she does not create a self that absorbs or marginalizes nature, women, or other consciousnesses. As in Gondal, and even her poetic novel, *Wuthering Heights*, the ideal is to create a forum where all voices enter the dialogue, acknowledging, answering, inspiring, and altering one another. Nature, often treated along with women as a muse or mirror by male poets, is given a subjectivity equal to her own, and she creates a blending of voices that refuses the idea of one identity or voice as authorial or authoritative. As in Bakhtin's idea of carnival, multivocality erases authority, creating a multiple subjectivity that refuses to silence the other as object.

In Anne's Gondal, masking is literalized by some characters, but always the dialogue is dissembling, concealing, and often ambiguous. The social mask is always present, as

she more than Emily seems aware of and experienced in the social role she is to play as a woman of the time. Through the Gondal saga, she displays the anxiety of authorship and the agony of the loss of the creative/procreative dichotomy she feels caught in.

Accepting herself in the role of a creative dialogic self comes at the expense of the predetermined procreative role demanded of her by society and Christianity, causing great mental and physical anguish that can only be alleviated by entering into the same social dialogue that threatens to silence her. Although Bakhtin saw the language of religion as monologic, Anne is able to enter into a dialogue with church ideologies through reformative and dialogic forms. She uses an acceptable form of expression for women in the church, hymns, to reshape the authoritative and exclusive doctrines of the church, particularly Methodist beliefs, into a more fluid and inclusive doctrine. The dialogues of her personal poems further this cause, opening a forum to her own doubts and fears as well as opening the dialogue and exchange of thought to other conflicting voices, such as those of her siblings. Anne's hymns are still included in the Methodist hymnal, signifying the effectiveness that her subtly disruptive and reformational offering to the dialogue of religious thought continues to have.

While critics, particularly feminists, have explored the many facets of Emily's poetry in the past two decades, far fewer have entered into critical dialogue with Anne's work. Perhaps poems of an orthodox religious nature continue under the label of "women's writing," and, therefore, unworthy of serious exploration, or perhaps patriarchal religious thought remains viewed, as Bakhtin thought, as a closed monologue. Whatever the reason, it will not be until the term "poet" is indistinguishable from that of "female poet"

that we can transverse boundaries of authorship, genre, and assigned meaning and be able to recognize the contributions of and influence offered by the private and public resistance of such marginalized voices.

NOTES

1. Some of the Gondal poems were later edited of their Gondal references and published in a collection of poetry that featured poems by all of the sisters and sold a mere two copies, but was apparently successful enough to spur on the sisters to write their subsequent novels.
2. Elizabeth Barrett Browning ignored doctors telling her that she suffered from "fungus of the brain" afflicting women who wrote poetry.
3. Hohne and Winslow note that carnival supports binarism in that it reinforces a "tendency to invert--top/bottom, death/life, high/low" (x), and Herndl points out that carnival was "allowed (if not sanctioned) by institutional authority which served that institution by providing an outlet for the oppressed to prevent any *real* insurrection (19-20).
4. Anne Smith finds the lack of the personal "I," despite the appearance of the pronoun, in Emily's poetry disturbing and refuses to "make high claims" for the poetry on such a basis.

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