

379
N81
NO. 692

WUTHERING HEIGHTS: A PROTO-DARWINIAN NOVEL

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Sumangala Bhattacharya, A.B.

Denton, Texas

August 1993

21

Bhattacharya, Sumangala, Wuthering Heights: A Proto-Darwinian Novel. Master of Arts (English), August 1993, 62 pp., Works Cited, 63 titles.

Wuthering Heights was significantly shaped by the pre-Darwinian scientific debate in ways that look ahead to Darwin's evolutionary theory more than a decade later. Wuthering Heights represents a cultural response to new and disturbing ideas. Darwin's enterprise was scientific; Emily Brontë's poetic. Both, however, were seeking to find ways to express their vision of the nature of human beings. The language and metaphors of Wuthering Heights suggest that Emily Brontë's vision was, in many ways, similar to Darwin's.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank those who have helped me with this study, its conception and gestation: Dr. J. D. Vann, for his unflagging support throughout this project; Dr. L. R. Stevens, for showing me a polymath in action; and Dr. A. Pettit for his profuse and cheerfully critical comments. I also wish to thank a dear friend, S. Nakata, whose persistent optimism about my work was infectious.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE HUMAN ANIMAL IN <u>WUTHERING HEIGHTS</u>	12
III. SHAPED BY THE ENVIRONMENT	24
IV. <u>WUTHERING HEIGHTS</u> AND THE DARWINIAN VISION	33
V. NATURAL SELECTION IN <u>WUTHERING HEIGHTS</u>	42
VI. CONCLUSION	52
WORKS CITED	58

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth century witnessed two devastating blows to the established thought about man's position in a divinely-ordered universe from the theories of Charles Darwin and, later, Freud. In 1859, when Origin of Species appeared, the storm of controversy over the implications of its theories began what is generally called the Darwinian revolution. Darwin's concern in The Origin of Species was not with men and women--he undertook that aspect of his task in the Descent of Man--but with the mechanism of natural selection in producing new species. However, the Victorian culture at large, as well as the scientific community more particularly, was quick to grasp the gravity of the implications of The Origin of Species--that what was true about animals could very well be true for men and women.¹ Darwin's theory did not appear out of a vacuum. The rapid and forceful reception of The Origin of Species shows that Darwin's readers were already prepared, to some degree, for what he had to say. Discoveries in various scientific disciplines--primarily geology and comparative anatomy--in the first half of the century had been leading up to evolution theory. Evolution theory--under the name "development hypothesis"--had been "in the air" for some time, and, in a sense, the Darwinian revolution began before Darwin ever published The Origin of Species.

In the pre-Darwinian world view, the universe was governed by divine providence; mankind was the supreme creation for whose benefit the universe was designed. Science and theology were allies in the search to uncover evidence of the workings of providence in the universe. By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, scientific evidence disrupting the

centripetal view of the universe was becoming too insistent to be ignored or incorporated. Although The Origin of Species provided the first reasonable formulation of the theory of survival of species by natural selection, the bogeys of natural selection and evolution had already been raised.² The Origin of Species, then, was Darwin's contribution to a revolution already well in progress. The revolution affected almost every aspect of life: religious and moral beliefs, social and economic theories, and issues of self-identity. The entire Victorian culture, not just the scientific community, was involved in the debate over the implications of evolution theory. Robert Young argues that Victorians viewed new ideas and discoveries as culturally interlinked, instead of fragmented into separate academic disciplines. Thus, discoveries in geology, paleontology, natural history, comparative anatomy all contributed to the development of evolution theory. Evolution theory, in turn, embroiled the culture as a whole, and contributed to the development of new social and economic theories. Alvar Ellegard points out that the term "Darwinism" had several levels of meaning, from the simplistic question of whether man was descended from apes to the highly complex social and moral implications of the theory (332-33).³

Leo Henkin describes the Victorian dilemma succinctly: "It was a question of God or no God. Evolution in science meant revolution in religion" (10). Darwin's contemporaries could reject or challenge, but not ignore his theories. The literature of the period, not surprisingly, felt the repercussions. Many studies trace the impact of evolution theory on late nineteenth-century novels: Gillian Beer looks at the ways in which the act of reading Darwin's works influenced authors as diverse as Kingsley, George Eliot, and Hardy, all of whom had read Darwin's books (Darwin's Plots); Roger Ebbatson shows how Darwinian theory links the works of Forster, Lawrence, and Hardy; Redmond O'Hanlon discusses the impact of Darwinian theory on Lord Jim and other novels by Conrad; George Levine looks at the indirect influences of Darwinian theory on Dickens and Trollope (Darwin and the Novelists); and Sally Shuttleworth discusses George

Eliot's selective use of evolution theory. Such studies usually take as their starting points the period after Darwin's work had survived the initial battering and had begun to receive acceptance.⁴ Little attention has been paid, however, to the impact of the pre-Darwinian scientific debate on the literature of the early nineteenth-century. Popular interest in science and scientific ideas began early in the century. In this study, I shall explore the ways in which scientific ideas--specifically, ideas relating to evolution theory--shaped Wuthering Heights.

According to Lance Schachterle, studies that trace the influence of contemporary science in literary works should demonstrate "that the author's consciousness as a writer is affected by contact with ideas from science" (81). Schachterle's position assumes an unidirectional flow of "influence" from science to literature. This was certainly not the case in Victorian England, and it is arguably not the case even now.⁵ In Victorian England, science was not yet a distinct field of study, and the boundary between scientists and lay persons was blurred. This was still the period of the gentleman scientist; geology and natural history were popular hobbies, and valuable scientific discoveries were often made by amateurs.⁶ In this study, I shall begin with the premise that science and literature arise from and are integral parts of the same culture, or, as Katherine Hayles puts it (author's italics), "*both literature and science are cultural products, at once expressing and helping to form the cultural matrix from which they emerge*" (120). This eliminates the issue of direction of flow of "influence" and renders immaterial the question of an author's conscious knowledge of scientific ideas. The two-cultures debate is now a hoary topic, and I touch on it only to indicate my own position at the outset.⁷

In his discussion of the preliminary stages by which a scientific theory is absorbed by the culture, Kuhn writes: "Assimilating a new sort of fact demands a more than additive adjustment of theory and until that adjustment is completed--until the scientist has learned to see nature in a different way--the new fact is not a fact at all" (52). Although ideas of natural selection and

evolution were "in the air" before 1859, they had not been assimilated. In 1847, when Wuthering Heights was published, Lyell's theory of the antiquity of the earth was still in the preliminary stages of absorption by society and was "not a fact at all."⁸ Darwin's Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs, published in 1842, presented the idea of natural selection, but it was still only a tentative attempt. Although the notion of immutable species had faced several challenges, most people, including many scientists--Lyell, for instance--were energetically defending the theory of fixed species.⁹ In this study, I will show that Emily Brontë's vision in Wuthering Heights was significantly shaped by the pre-Darwinian scientific debate in ways that look ahead to Darwin's evolutionary theory more than a decade later. This is not a study of the influence on Emily Brontë of a particular scientist or writer. Instead, I intend to explore the ways in which Wuthering Heights represents a cultural response to new and disturbing scientific ideas.

In focusing on the presence of pre-Darwinian elements in Wuthering Heights I am not presuming extensive or conscious knowledge of science on Emily Brontë's part. However, Emily Brontë was at least as aware of the debate as many other educated persons living at the time. Moreover, she was deeply interested in the workings of the natural world, and was a natural historian herself. Emily Brontë's appreciation of the beauties of the Yorkshire moors was not merely mystical; in her reminiscences, Charlotte Brontë writes that her sister took a "gleesome delight" in the minutiae of the ecology of the moors: "every moss, every flower, every tint and form, were noted and enjoyed" (qtd. in Gérin 29). The Brontës were members of the Keighley Mechanics Institute Library--Mr. Brontë was a founder-member--which contained, among three hundred titles, books on natural history, explorations, chemistry, biology, and botany.¹⁰ In 1841, the library subscribed to several dozen magazines, including Edinburgh Review, Chambers Edinburgh Journal, Manual of Science and Literature, and the London Mechanics' Magazine. In addition to the resources of the library at Keighley and their own library at Haworth, the Brontës

subscribed to Blackwood's Magazine, which published essays on a wide range of current literary, political, and critical topics. In his biography of Emily Brontë, Edward Chitham attacks the popular notion of Emily Brontë as a mystic figure wrapped up in the moors around the parsonage. Both Chitham and Gérin show that the Brontës kept abreast of current news, using all the means at their disposal.¹¹

Like evolution theory when it first appeared, Wuthering Heights rebuffs common sense, tantalizes the reader into a frustrating search for a hidden moral or meaning, and consistently disconcerts ordinary intuition. Nancy Armstrong finds the novel "essentially disjunctive" since it combines literary conventions of both Romantic and Realist literature, posing problems and asking questions "in one set of literary conventions that cannot be answered by the other" (371). But the novel's disjunctive quality goes beyond its use of literary conventions; in Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë explores as well the intersection of two world views—one that sees mankind as the focus of the universe, and one that is less certain of mankind's central position in the universe. Using premises grounded in the scientific and theological debate of her time, Emily Brontë questions the nature and position of man. Using her own observation and experience, she extrapolates the premises and looks ahead, in many ways, to Darwin's work more than a decade later. Thus the correlation between Wuthering Heights and the cultural concerns of the early nineteenth century simultaneously marks the novel a product of its time and sets it apart from its contemporary culture. Other elements point to the novel's disjunctive quality. Although the novel is set in a small, closed community, the multiplicity of characters, generations, and narrators creates a sense of chaos. Charles Sanger notes that the novel is, in fact, very tightly organized and ordered.¹² However, the structural ordering of the novel does not dispel its appearance of narrative anarchy. The characters are recognizably human, but their actions and emotions make them appear larger-than-life. The conventional Victorian ending is achieved with the marriage

of Hareton and Cathy II¹³, but there is little sense that this is the end toward which the novel has been tending. Heathcliff is not punished in any conventional way for his cruelty; he welcomes death as a possible means of uniting with Cathy I, and the novel suggests that he may have achieved the desired supernatural union. The "good" are not necessarily rewarded, the "bad" not necessarily punished at the end of the novel; in fact, the distinctions between the "good" and the "bad" characters are extremely problematic.

Perhaps the adjective most frequently applied to Wuthering Heights is "strange." Richard J. Dunn, in the preface to Wuthering Heights, describes the novel as "Emily Brontë's strange work" (vii); and criticism tends to focus on what Carol Jacobs terms the "fundamental estrangement that Wuthering Heights imposes on narrator and characters alike" (359). Jacobs finds the estrangement linguistic, "an impasse of interpretation" (359). Scholars have tried various approaches to pinpoint the central idea of Wuthering Heights, the theme of the novel, as it were, as though by doing so, the novel's alienness can somehow be dispelled. For Eric Solomon and other scholars, the estrangement is the result of the possibility of an incestuous relationship between Heathcliff and Cathy I. Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., finds Lockwood's dream a representation in miniature of the passions governing the other characters in the novel. In an engaging acknowledgement of scholarly frustration, J. Hillis Miller argues that "Wuthering Heights produces its effect on its reader through the way it is made up of repetitions of the same in the other which permanently resist rational reduction to some satisfying principle of explanation" (Repetition 53).¹⁴

Contemporary reviewers were both less sophisticated and more direct in their approach to the novel. Most reviews were negative; yet even the negative reviews acknowledge (if only unconsciously) the power of the novel's alien vision. Many were repelled because the novel does not disguise or dismiss man's capabilities for ferocity, cruelty, "animalistic" behavior, or pettiness.

Male and female characters display these traits, and the locus of these traits is both the Heights and the Grange. One reviewer writes that the novel portrays only "the shocking pictures of the worst forms of humanity" (Atlas 1848).¹⁵ Yet what most found shocking, perhaps, was that even the civilized Lintons, with whom most readers might be expected to identify, are also portrayed in animalistic terms. The novel extolls strength, apparently even if accompanied by brutality and destructive energy (as in Heathcliff's case), rather than gentler, tamer, blessings of civilization. Elizabeth Rigby, for instance, has this to say about the novel: "There can be no interest attached to the writer of Wuthering Heights. . . For though there is a decided family likeness between [Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights], yet the aspect of the Jane and Rochester animals in their native state, as Catherine and Heathfield [sic] is too odiously and abominably pagan to be palatable even to the most vitiated class of English readers" (O'Neill 49, my emphasis). Sidney Dobell's enthusiastic review calls the novel "the unformed writing of a giant's hand: the 'large utterance' of a baby god" (Athenaeum, 1846). In their reviews, both Dobell and Rigby recognize that Wuthering Heights is addressing a theological issue in a new way; while Dobell finds Brontë's approach exciting, Rigby finds it threatening. G. H. Lewes' review probably comes closest to identifying a potent source of discomfort in Wuthering Heights: "Although there is a want of air and light in the picture we cannot deny its truth . . . such brutes we should all be, or the most of us, were our lives as insubordinate to law; were our affections and sympathies as little cultivated, our imagination as undirected" (The Leader 1850). Like Rigby, Lewes sees the characters in Wuthering Heights as "animals"; unlike Rigby, he acknowledges that the vision is a recognizable one.

In speaking of ways in which Wuthering Heights looks ahead to evolutionary theory, I am focusing on Darwin's work because he has become, in a sense, synonymous with the revolution caused by his theory of the process by which species change, develop, or become

extinct. As Beer writes, Darwin's books have changed our perception of the world, so that everyone "found themselves living in a Darwinian world in which old assumptions had ceased to *be* assumptions, could at best be beliefs" (6). I shall limit my discussion of Darwinism to the broad ideas that delineate Darwin's theories, rather than focus on the complexities of the theories themselves. I shall refer primarily to Origin of Species, as it is of Darwin's major works the closest in time to Wuthering Heights, although the same basic principles underlie all Darwin's work.

Notes

1. For the reception history of Darwin's work, see Ellegard.
2. For a discussion of the historical development of Darwinian evolution theory, Bowler, Eiseley, and Gould. For a collection of essays dealing with the works of pre-Darwinian evolutionists, see Bentley Glass, et al., ed. Gillispie discusses the impact of evolution theory on theology.
3. "Social Darwinism," generally a term of opprobrium, refers to ideologies which translates Darwin's theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest into social and economic contexts. In his biography of Darwin, L. R. Stevens points out that social Darwinism is not inherent in the text of Darwin's works and that "Darwin himself never gave the 'survival of the fittest' either an economic, a moral, or a political application" (139). Margot Norris argues that although Darwin's work was often used to support existing ideologies, Darwinism was, in fact, profoundly disruptive to all teleological thought.
4. Henkin's work is an exception. Henkin catalogues specific and explicit reactions to evolution theory in the English novel.
5. See for instance Beer, Levine (Darwin), Levine (One Culture), and Young.
6. Lyn Merrill points out that while the scientific community in the nineteenth century sought to specialize and impose proper research methods, geology and natural history remained the hobby of amateurs. Among the ardent natural historians were Philip Gosse, G. H. Lewes, Kingsley, and Tennyson. Fashionable scientific entertainments include the fern craze of the 1830's, natural history museums (which were often expanded from collections of individual enthusiasts) and evening sessions with microscopes.
7. For an engaging presentation of the "two cultures" position, see Snow. Recent scholarship generally rejects Snow's dichotomous model. See, for instance: Chapple, Gould,

Jordanova, and Levine (One Culture).

8. According to prevailing geological theory prior to Lyell's work, the earth had suffered several major catastrophes--either floods or volcanic eruptions--which destroyed all life-forms existing at the time, and produced the geological strata. New species were created after each catastrophe. The destruction and creation of species accounted for the fossil records. Although Lyell argued convincingly against this view in his Principles of Geology (1830), the catastrophist school of geology persisted well into the middle of the nineteenth century. For studies of the impact of Lyell on contemporary science, see Bowler, Eiseley, and Gillispie.

9. See Glass for a collection of essays on pre-Darwinian evolutionists, such as Maupertuis, Buffon, and Lamarck. Although other theories dealt with evolving species, only Darwin's work elicited the consent of the most powerful opinion makers. The originality of Darwin's theory lay in his understanding that new species were created by the gradual accumulations of small variations. For the distinction between Darwin and the early evolutionists, see Stevens, Bowler, and Eiseley.

10. For a list of items in the Keighley Mechanics' Library catalogue in 1841, see "Where the Brontës Borrowed Books". Gérin states that Bewick's and Audubon's books on birds, available at Keighley, was one of the Brontë children's favorite titles (Brontës 1:17).

11. The following studies discuss the education of the Brontë children: Chitham; Fraser, Gérin. The a list of the books in the Keighley Mechanics Institute library, see "Where the Brontës Borrowed Books."

12. Stuart Daley's corrections of Sanger's chronology of events in Wuthering Heights further supports the idea that the novel is very tightly organized.

13. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the Cathy Earnshaw Linton, the mother, as Cathy I and to Cathy Linton Heathcliff, the daughter, as Cathy II.

14. The question of incest in Wuthering Heights has attracted many scholars; see for instance Eugene Goodheart, Kathryn McGuire, William Goetz.

15. The reviews quoted here are excerpted from Judith O'Neill collection of critical essays on Charlotte and Emily Brontë, and from the Norton Critical Edition of Wuthering Heights.

CHAPTER II

THE HUMAN ANIMAL IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS

In Wuthering Heights human beings are divided into two varieties: the civilized, urban Lintons, and the wild, natural Earnshaws. Although the Lintons and the Earnshaws are neighbors, the two families effectively belong to separate, opposed worlds. The two houses--the Heights and the Grange--are more than the residences of the two families; the houses are metaphors for the character of their inhabitants. The Heights is weather-proofed without concessions to the comfort of its inhabitants; the inhabitants, in turn, are strong, fierce, and wild. The Grange is beautiful and luxurious, built for the protection and comfort of its inhabitants, who are comfort-loving, civilized, and genteel. However, the sharp and facile contrast between the two worlds is misleading. The differences between the Earnshaws (and Heathcliff)¹ and the Lintons are superficial and reflect their different environments. Both families are part of the ecology of the moor; both are breeds of the human animal.

Life at the Heights is more obviously "animalistic," since the inhabitants are so clearly territorial, aggressive, and driven by instincts and passions they cannot explain; but the Lintons too are territorial and aggressive, given the proper circumstances. The Earnshaws are proud of their natural strength and vigor, and unashamed of their strong emotions. The Lintons, on the other hand, are proud of their gentility, cultivating courtesy and civilized restraint, and denying their passions. Both families are contemptuous of the values of the other.

Critics have commented that Emily Brontë preferred the dangerous but wild variety of human beings over the civilized, weakened variety.² In "The Cat," one of the devoirs she wrote

for Heger during her stay at the Pensionnat Heger at Brussels, Emily Brontë satirizes civilized attitudes by comparing polite behavior to feline misanthropy:

. . . A cat, for his own interest, sometimes hides his misanthropy under an appearance of most endearing gentleness; instead of snatching what he desires from his master's hand, he approaches in a caressing manner, rubs his pretty little head against him and sticks out his paw with a touch as soft as down. This act finished, he resumes the character of Timon. Such finesse in him we call hypocrisy, but in ourselves we give it another name, politeness, and any person not using it to disguise his true feelings would soon be driven from society.
(339)

Civilization necessitates self-imposed restraints on real emotions and on the use of accepted modes of conduct in interactions between individuals. Politeness is not intrinsically hypocritical unless it is used to exploit others. Worse than self-serving hypocrisy, according to Emily Brontë, is the insistence that man is superior to the animals because he is incapable of cruelty:

"But," says some delicate lady who has murdered a half-dozen lap dogs by sheer affection, "the cat is such a cruel beast he is not content to kill his prey, but torments it before its death; you cannot bring this accusation against us." Pretty near, madam. . . . You yourself avoid a bloody spectacle, because it wounds your weak nerves, but I have seen you embrace your child rapturously when he came to show you a beautiful butterfly crushed between his cruel little fingers; and at that moment I wished very much that I had a cat, with the half-swallowed tail of a rat hanging from his mouth, to present as the image, the true copy, of your angel. ("The Cat" 339)

The purposeless cruelty of man's actions is part of the violence of nature itself. Animals kill

weaker animals for food, and are themselves consumed by stronger predators. Among those predators is man. Civilized man kills not for his needs, but for amusement. The little boy who crushes the wing of a butterfly is unconscious of the pain he inflicts; but his mother, who applauds his action, is guilty of sadism. Emily Brontë's satiric portrayal of civilized life does not imply an endorsement of the destructive savagery of nature.

The defenses of the Heights are immediately visible. The windows are narrow and set deep in the walls. The corners of the house are "defended with large jutting stones" (4). The defenses of the house include the wildness and savagery of its inhabitants. After Frances' death, Hindley's reputation for alcoholism and bad conduct repels visitors. Even the curate stops visiting the Heights. The isolation of the Heights becomes even more pronounced after Heathcliff becomes master of the house. When Nelly pays a visit to the Heights after Catherine's marriage to Edgar, Hareton, a child at the time, greets her by pelting her with stones and curses. Hareton also tells Nelly that Heathcliff had promised that the curate "should have his--teeth dashed down his--throat, if he stepped over the threshold" (84). The inhabitants try actively to fend off external intrusions into their world; Nelly admits her xenophobia frankly: "We don't in general take to foreigners here, Mr. Lockwood, unless they take to us first" (35).

Heathcliff, however, is an intruder who flourishes in the fierce environment. Nelly says that Heathcliff's history is that of a "cuckoo's"--a dark stranger and a potential usurper. The conflict between Hindley and Heathcliff is, from the beginning, a matter of territoriality; Hindley suspects the intruder of usurping his position as the heir of the Earnshaws. Heathcliff and Hindley struggle, first as children, and later as adults, for the possession of the hearth in the family sitting-room.³ Heathcliff ultimately wins, owning the Heights and the Grange. He is quick to resent any inference that his ownership is less than complete. Lockwood's innocuous, but annoying, social overtures are promptly and rudely rebuffed when he seems to suggest Heathcliff may have

been coerced into leasing the Grange:

"Mr. Lockwood, your new tenant, sir. I do myself the honour of calling as soon as possible after my arrival, to express the hope that I have not inconvenienced you by my presence in soliciting the occupation of Thrushcross Grange: I heard, yesterday, you had had some thoughts--"

"Thrushcross Grange is my own, sir," he [Heathcliff] interrupted, wincing,

"I should not allow any one to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it--walk in!"

(3)

Lockwood is permitted to enter the house, but he is regarded as an object of suspicion. The dogs, which are kept as herders and guard dogs, are suspicious of Lockwood; when the dogs attack Lockwood--provoked by his grimaces towards them--Heathcliff calmly states that the dogs "do right to be vigilant" (6). When Lockwood is caught by the snowfall, Heathcliff refuses him a guide across the moor to the Grange, or even a bed to spend the night. When Lockwood offers to sleep on a chair in the drawing room, Heathcliff bluntly refuses to allow that either: "No, no! A stranger is a stranger, be he rich or poor--it will not suit me to permit any one the range of the place while I am off guard" (13). The precautions are unnecessary; the inhabitants of the Heights are fully able to defend themselves against intruders even without the vigilance of the dogs or the help of their servants.

Dogs and servants are necessary parts of the defenses of the Grange. Like the Earnshaws, the Lintons are suspicious of intruders. When Cathy I and Heathcliff trespass on the Grange grounds, the Lintons, afraid of burglars, loose the bull-dog. The two children's experience on their first visit to the Grange resembles Lockwood's first visit to the Heights. Cathy I and Heathcliff are caught by the Linton's bull-dog while engaged in making frightening noises at the Linton children. The Lintons assume at first that the two children are accomplices of burglars and

want to execute summary justice. Both the servant and Mr. Linton appear to think that trespassing on a magistrate's property on rent-day is a crime punishable by death, especially when the offender is dark complexioned and uses bad language. "You'll go to the gallows for this," the servant threatens Heathcliff (38). Mr. Linton asks his wife if "it would not be a kindness to the country to hang him [Heathcliff] at once, before he shows his nature in acts, as well as features?" While Mr. Linton is unlikely to be in earnest here, he does appear to be considering serious punishment for the two children. When the adult Heathcliff threatens the security of the Grange, after his return to the Heights, Edgar Linton, now the master of the Grange, summons gardeners and coachmen to eject Heathcliff. In both cases, the Lintons use the defenses of civilization--dogs, servants, and the legal system--to protect themselves from a potential threat.

Heathcliff tells Nelly that his first glimpse of the Grange drawing-room, with its chandeliers and carpet, made it seem like heaven (37). However, the Grange is paradisaical in appearance only. The "good children" (37) of the Grange are spoiled rather than angelic. Instead of sharing their possessions and enjoying their good fortune, Edgar and Isabella quarrel with each other. Heathcliff and Cathy I look in scornfully on what appears to be a typical scene at the Grange:

Isabella . . . lay screaming at the farther end of the room, shrieking as if witches were running red hot needles into her. Edgar stood on the hearth weeping silently, and in the middle of the table sat a little dog shaking its paw and yelping, which, from their mutual accusations, we understood they had nearly pulled in two between them. . . . (37)

In this incident, the Linton children show that they can be cruel, if only unconsciously. Once Edgar and Isabella decide to sulk, they do not concern themselves with the yelping puppy which they may have hurt. The adult Lintons are cruel too; although Cathy I is severely bitten by the

bull-dog, the Lintons express no concern for her bleeding foot until they discover that she is an Earnshaw.

The comfortable and genteel environment of the Grange is no guarantee of the gentleness of the inhabitants. Although the Lintons avoid physical confrontations, when threatened or provoked, the civilized men and women of the Grange resort to physical violence, just like their wild counterparts at the Heights. Edgar, when provoked sufficiently by Cathy I and Heathcliff, hits Heathcliff with a blow "that would have levelled a slighter man" (90). Isabella, when teased by Cathy I in Heathcliff's presence, scratches Cathy I severely enough to draw blood. The urbane Lockwood, when frightened by his nightmare of the spectre of the child at the window, dreams that he rubs the child's wrist against the broken glass pane until "the blood ran down and soaked the bed-clothes" (20). However, at the Grange, savagery and physical violence are kept in check by rules designed to promote social intercourse and meet the needs of all of the inhabitants with some measure of fairness. The Lintons are social organisms. They maintain hierarchical differences and rely upon social systems of justice, such as courts and laws, to settle disputes. This entails some voluntary sacrifices, but interactions between the inhabitants of the Grange are, in general, rational, restrained, and marked by courtesy and consideration for each other.

The qualities of restraint, courtesy, and consideration are absent from life at the Heights. The Earnshaws are fiercely individualistic, each preferring the immediate gratification of his or her whim to the long-term benefits of a peaceful communal life. Social hierarchies are irrelevant at the Heights; Joseph and Nelly have much the same privileges as the members of the family, as long as they obey the master of the house. Instead of relying on courts and laws to settle disputes, the Earnshaws mediate conflicts through the use of force. When Hindley is in power at the Heights, Heathcliff is beaten and subdued. When Heathcliff wins the Heights from Hindley, the situation is reversed. The stronger man oppresses the weaker; the oppressed persons plot

violent revenge against the oppressor. Justice is synonymous with revenge. Safety lies in strength and vigilance against enemies. When Heathcliff is powerless, he dreams of "flinging Joseph off the highest gable, and painting the house-front with Hindley's blood" (38). When the situation is reversed, Hindley fantasizes about murdering Heathcliff when the latter is asleep:

"Look here!" he [Hindley] replied, pulling from his waistcoat a curiously constructed pistol, having a double-edged spring knife attached to the barrel. "That's a great tempter to a desperate man, is it not? I cannot resist going up with this, every night, and trying his door. If once I find it open, he's done for! . . ." (109)

Hindley justifies himself by claiming that he is only repaying Heathcliff in kind: "Treachery and violence are a just return for treachery and violence" (135), he tells Isabella before his attempt to ambush Heathcliff. The code of revenge and retaliation escalates the violence at the Heights until Hindley dies and Heathcliff becomes the master.

The inhabitants of the two houses are most different in their reaction to violence. The Earnshaws and their servants are inured to the random acts of violence. When Hindley forces a kitchen knife between Nelly's teeth and threatens to make her swallow it, Nelly laughs at him and quips that she doesn't care for the taste of herrings lingering on the blade (57). Heathcliff and Hindley readily attack and maul each other. When Isabella informs Heathcliff that Hindley, armed with a gun and a knife, is waiting to ambush him, Heathcliff promptly forces his way in and attacks Hindley. The next day, the beaten and bruised Hindley recommences his attack on Heathcliff by trying to strangle him. The Earnshaws enjoy the physicality of their violent conflicts. The Lintons, on the other hand, shrink from violent confrontations; they are, in fact, unable to cope with violence. Mrs. Linton allows her children to visit the Heights only on the condition that "her darlings might be kept carefully apart from that 'naughty, swearing boy'"

Heathcliff (42). It is well that she makes that condition, for Edgar is no match for Heathcliff, as is evident from their brief encounter on that occasion. When Edgar courts Cathy I, he tries to avoid Hindley, who is prone to severe alcoholism. When physical violence seems inevitable--for instance, when Cathy I forces Edgar into a duel with Heathcliff (88-90)--Edgar becomes pale and succumbs to a fit of "nervous trembling" (89). Edgar's reaction is not so much cowardice or fear, as Heathcliff and Cathy I assume, as distaste for the situation forced on him. Edgar shrinks from the thought of any form of aggression, being mentally unfitted to settle disputes through violence: "For his life he could not avert that access [sic] of emotion: mingled anguish and humiliation overcame him completely" (89).

Edgar's nervous reaction on this occasion is easier to understand if we recognize the value he places on self-control. Self-control is the foundation of civilized behavior. Edgar's inability to control his rage and fear shows his affinity with the wild, an affinity which he denies and despises. The Lintons are ashamed of strong emotions, since strong emotions reinforce their affinity with the wild. At the start of the confrontation with Heathcliff, Edgar speaks quietly and unemotionally. When Heathcliff refuses to respond as Edgar had expected, and indeed, as civilized behavior would dictate, Edgar realizes that physical aggression is unavoidable. The realization paralyzes him. Having recovered some measure of control by hitting Heathcliff, Edgar regains his habitual calm and walks out of the room to summon assistance in evicting Heathcliff. Lockwood's summer romance illustrates the paralyzing effects of strong emotions on the civilized man. While his affection is not acknowledged, Lockwood can indulge his romance from a distance. However, when "the real goddess" (5) gives signs of falling in love with him, Lockwood is paralysed by the show of emotion and retreats into himself "like a snail" (5). Both Edgar and Lockwood appear ridiculous on these occasions, while Heathcliff, however forceful and passionate his emotional outburst may be, appears magnificent in comparison. Uncontrolled

emotions may be dangerous, as the life at the Heights proves, but for Emily Brontë, the artificial restraints placed on emotions by civilization are debilitating, unhealthy, and, in their own way, destructive.

Emily Brontë shows that the two varieties of human beings--the "domesticated" inhabitants of the Grange, and the "wild" inhabitants of the Heights--in Wuthering Heights are essentially the same by showing the changes the inhabitants undergo when they move from one environment to the other. Gentility and polish can be acquired and lost. After her stay at the Grange as a child, Cathy I becomes lady-like. Her speech, mannerisms, and dress reflect her new learning, although, as Nelly remarks, the changes are superficial. Since Cathy I

had no temptation to show her rough side in their [the Lintons'] company, and had the sense to be ashamed of being rude where she experienced such invariable courtesy, she imposed unwittingly on the old lady and gentleman, by her ingenious cordiality (52)

For a while, Cathy I maintains a double existence as a member of the civilized and the wild worlds. The double existence is precarious and necessarily duplicitous. Nelly unsympathetically outlines Cathy I's dilemma:

In the place where she heard Heathcliff termed a "vulgar young ruffian," and "worse than a brute," she took care not to act like him; but at home she had small inclination to practise politeness that would only be laughed at, and restrain an unruly nature when it would bring her neither credit nor praise. (52)

Cathy I resolves her dilemma by marrying Edgar and abandoning the wild in favor of civilization. However, in doing so, she sacrifices her strength, becoming subject to hysterical fits and nervous disorders.⁴ Isabella's marriage to Heathcliff shows the results of a movement in the reverse direction. Brutalized by Heathcliff after her marriage, Isabella, like the other inhabitants of the

Heights, accepts scenes of violence as part of her daily life. In her letter to Nelly, Isabella asks Nelly how she managed to "preserve the common sympathies of human nature" when she resided at the Heights (105). In the beginning, Isabella is shocked by the change she perceives in herself.⁵ Isabella describes to Nelly her horrified fascination with Hindley's specially constructed pistol with a bayonet, the weapon with which Hindley plans to kill Heathcliff when the latter is asleep:

I surveyed the weapon inquisitively; a hideous notion struck me. How powerful I should be possessing such an instrument! I took it from his hand, and touched the blade. He looked astonished at the expression my face assumed during a brief second. It was not horror, it was covetousness. (109)

At the Heights, Isabella realizes that she can escape Heathcliff only by direct, violent action. She can survive the savagery of the Heights only by becoming savage herself. Physically no match for Heathcliff, Isabella torments him verbally after Cathy I's death. She savors the pain her words inflict as sadistically as Heathcliff had enjoyed humiliating her (139-40). When Heathcliff is provoked into throwing a dinner knife at her, she promptly throws it back at him:

. . . he snatched a dinner knife from the table and flung it at my head. It struck beneath my ear, and stopped the sentence I was uttering; but, pulling it out, I sprang to the door and delivered another which I hope went a little deeper than his missile. (140)

Isabella is liberated by her own actions. In her escape from the Heights, she is filled with a sense of elation rather than dread of pursuit: ". . . I bounded, leaped, flew down the steep road; then, quitting its windings, shot direct across the moor, rolling over banks, and wading through marshes" (140). Neither her cut ear--which the cold prevents from bleeding--nor the falls and injuries she sustains in her breathless journey across the moor dampen her elation. No longer a

dainty, lady-like creature "smothered in cloaks and furs" (45), Isabella gains strength, courage, and decisiveness, at least temporarily, by reclaiming her place in nature.

Notes

1. Since Heathcliff was adopted by Mr. Earnshaw, I shall include Heathcliff among the Earnshaws whenever I'm referring to the latter collectively.

2. See, for instance, Miller (Disappearance 208), and Barbara Munson Goff (481).

3. Elliot B. Gose, Jr., compares relationship of Heathcliff and Cathy I to the fairy-tale of the frog prince. Cathy I's choice between Edgar and Heathcliff is the choice between the domesticity of the hearth and the wildness of the heath. Gose also sees the hearth in the Heights' hall as the focus for the conflicts between the Earnshaws.

4. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar see Cathy I's decision in lapsarian terms.

5. David Galef points out that as Isabella is increasingly brutalized, she loses her power of using irony as a defense against the indignities and torments of her situation. In contrast, Lockwood, who comes into brief contact with the life at the Heights, retains an ironic tone throughout the novel.

CHAPTER III

SHAPED BY THE ENVIRONMENT

Among the books in the Keighley Mechanics Institute Library--where the Brontës were members--was Lyell's Principles of Geology.¹ Lyell found himself confronting the problem of fossil records of the earth's history. Fossil records indicated that species had been created sequentially, with new species created as older ones became extinct. In his search for naturalistic explanations (rather than explanations which relied on repeated divine intervention in the creation process), Lyell found two choices: spontaneous generation, and Lamarck's theory of transformisme. Lyell rejects both explanations. The former he dismisses "as a fanciful notion left over from Aristotle" (Lyell 1 :59), but the latter he treats with respect, devoting a significant section of his second volume to the discussion--and refutation--of the theory of transformisme.²

Lamarck hypothesized that "environment affects the shape and organization of animals" (Lamarck 107). The environment of an organism dictates its needs and habits; needs and habits dictate which organs are used and which have no function. The former become more developed; the latter atrophy. New species are formed when an animal's environment changes drastically and permanently:

. . . when the environment becomes very different, it produces in course of time corresponding modifications in the shape and organisation of animals. . . . great alterations in the environment of animals led to great alterations in their needs, and these alterations in their needs necessarily lead to others in their activities.

Now, if the new needs become permanent, the animals then adopt new habits which last as long as the needs that evoked them. (Lamarck 107)

Environmental changes cause existing species to adapt, producing new species. Thus habits, the result of external influences, cause changes in instinctive behavior and physical form.

Lamarck's hypothesis brought him ridicule from his contemporaries. But Lamarck was as much a victim of poor word choice as poor methodology. His contemporaries--notably Cuvier--seized on terms such as voulant and besoins to exaggerate greatly the volitional aspect of Lamarck's hypothesis. Even the examples Lamarck provides as support for his hypothesis are worded in a way that implies that the animal somehow desires to change its form: "We note again that this same bird wants to fish without wetting its body and is thus obliged to make continual efforts to lengthen its neck" (my emphasis, 120). Lamarck, of course, was referring to the instinctive responses of animals and was not claiming any exercise of conscious willpower in the process of adaptation. However, most scientists agreed with Lyell's negative verdict on Lamarck's hypothesis, and many followed Cuvier's more cutting attack.³ For some, however, transformisme had its attractions. Herbert Spencer, after reading Lyell's discussion of the matter, decided that he was inclined to believe Lamarck (Burkhardt xxxvi). I believe that Emily Brontë, too, found Lamarck's hypothesis attractive, although her approach to his hypothesis would be philosophical rather than scientific. In Wuthering Heights, she examines the relationship between environment and character, exploring the validity and limit of Lamarck's hypothesis.

In Wuthering Heights, character and dwelling-place are peculiarly consonant. Jacques Blondel, in his discussion of the significance of imagery in the novel, remarks that "Heathcliff is, so to say, the house itself which becomes his mirror as if he had been fated to live in it" (2). Heathcliff's eyes, like the narrow, deep-set windows of the Heights, "withdraw . . . suspiciously under their brows" (Wuthering Heights 3). Like the house, he is physically tough. Like the

jutting corner stones of the house, he is suspicious of and ready to defend himself against a hostile world. The "rapprochement between setting and character" (Blondel 2) is not only metaphoric. Like the stunted firs and gaunt thorns (4), Heathcliff has been physically and mentally shaped by the Heights.

The adult Heathcliff, consumed by rage and grief, and sustained only by thoughts of revenge, seems almost inhuman. He is easily provoked to violence, even enjoying inflicting pain on those whom he perceives as his enemies. He is relentless in his pursuit of vengeance, his rage encompassing everyone except Nelly and the servants. In a picturesque but appropriate image, Nelly compares the Lintons and Hindley to sheep and Heathcliff to a beast of prey: "I felt that God had forsaken the stray sheep there to its own wicked wanderings, and an evil beast prowled between it and the fold, waiting his time to spring and destroy" (84). Yet, as a child Heathcliff commands our respect, admiration, and sympathy. We identify with him against his enemies and detractors. Nelly, who admits that she was biased against Heathcliff from the start, tells Lockwood that Heathcliff "bred bad feeling" (30) in the family from the day that he was adopted by Mr. Earnshaw. She implies that Heathcliff's conduct, from the very beginning, foreshadowed his later behavior. But her narrative clearly shows that Heathcliff changes gradually and progressively, from a well-behaved, intelligent child who is surprisingly mature for his age, to an uncouth yokel, to a polished, superficially civilized gentleman, and finally to a brutal, vindictive man. These changes coincide with, and are caused by, changes in Heathcliff's environment.

While Mr. Earnshaw is master of the Heights, Heathcliff enjoys a brief but relatively pleasant childhood. As a child Heathcliff is uncomplaining, truthful, and grateful. However, only Mr. Earnshaw recognizes Heathcliff's virtues, and only Cathy I and Mr. Earnshaw show any affection toward him. Hindley and Nelly beat and torment Heathcliff whenever they can do so without attracting Mr. Earnshaw's wrath, and Mrs. Earnshaw complies with their behavior by her

silence. Heathcliff endures the treatment without complaint; but he is intensely grateful for any affection shown him. Cathy I receives absolute devotion from him. Heathcliff shows his gratitude towards Mr. Earnshaw silently, by never abusing the old man's partiality for him, and by rarely complaining of the treatment he received from Hindley. He is grateful to Nelly for her reluctant ministrations during his illness: "I suppose he felt I did a good deal for him, and he hadn't wit to guess that I was compelled to do it" (30). But to Nelly he seemed a "sullen, patient child" (30), hardened to ill-usage, and "insensible" (30) toward Mr. Earnshaw.

In childhood, Hindley was a bully. As master of the Heights, he shows himself a tyrant. Hindley's three years in college and his marriage taught him notions of gentility. One of his first actions after his return is to banish the servants and Heathcliff to the kitchen. Hindley had suspected, from the start, that Heathcliff was an usurper, and revelled in his power to demote Heathcliff to the level of a servant. Heathcliff is denied education and is made to work long hours in the field. While Cathy I and Heathcliff are inseparable, Heathcliff clings as well as he is able to his dignity and former status as adopted son of the family. However, when Cathy I learns gentility at the Lintons, Heathcliff, at the Heights, becomes "a forbidding young blackguard" (41). When Mr. Earnshaw was alive, encounters between Heathcliff and Hindley were conducted fairly; Heathcliff generally won encounters with Hindley by exploiting the latter's pettiness. But as master of the Heights, Hindley can degrade Heathcliff with impunity. Since Heathcliff is not a servant, he is not paid wages. Instead, he is kept dependent on Hindley's charity and deprived of the power to control his life. The sense of the hopelessness of his situation overwhelms Heathcliff, and begins to change him:

His [Heathcliff's] childhood sense of superiority, instilled into him by the favours of Mr. Earnshaw, was faded away. He struggled long to keep up an equality with Catherine in her studies and yielded with poignant though silent regret: but he

yielded completely; and there was no prevailing on him to take a step in the way of moving upward, when he found he must, necessarily, sink beneath his former level. . . . he acquired a slouching gait, and ignoble look; his naturally reserved disposition was exaggerated into an almost idiotic excess of unsociable moroseness; and he took a grim pleasure, apparently, in exciting aversion rather than the esteem of his few acquaintance [sic]. (53)

Thus, Heathcliff is physically and mentally transformed by the demands of his environment and station in life. Instead of being the promising adopted son of a respectable farmer, he becomes what Edgar scornfully calls a "plough-boy" (73). Neither education nor social graces are of use to him, so he abandons attempts to pursue either. His "slouching gait and ignoble look" (53) are also suited to his position. He is habitually dirty and taciturn.

When Heathcliff returns to Gimmerton, he has cured himself of the habits of his servitude. He has transformed himself once again, this time into a "tall, athletic, well-formed man" with a military air and a dignified manner (74). As he had done in childhood, Heathcliff exploits Hindley's vices to his own advantage; Hindley's weakness for gambling gives Heathcliff the opportunity to establish himself at the Heights. Although Heathcliff changes during his absence from the Heights, he retains his hatred for Hindley, as well as for Edgar and Isabella Linton. Superficially, the adult Heathcliff whom Lockwood encounters is "as much a gentleman as many a country squire" (5). However, the damage done by Hindley's petty brutality is permanent; Heathcliff, like Hindley, is single-minded in his pursuit of revenge, even when revenge is masochistic and self-destructive. Heathcliff's plans for revenge do not compensate him for the loss of Cathy I or for his painful childhood. Instead, his degradation of Hareton evokes painful memories, and the continual presence of Cathy II in the Heights only reminds him of the absence of Cathy I. The pursuit of revenge makes existence more painful for Heathcliff and makes him

more violent towards others. However, shaped as he has been by Hindley's hatred for him, Heathcliff is trapped into living only for revenge.

Heathcliff, like Hindley, understands the effect that environment has on a person's character. In describing his plans for Hareton, Heathcliff uses a metaphor which evokes the image of the stunted and deformed trees around the Heights: "'Now my bonny lad, you are mine! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another with the same wind to twist it!'" (144). Hareton grows up dependent on Heathcliff, forced to work in the fields and deprived of education, as Heathcliff had been. Heathcliff teaches Hareton "to scorn everything extra-animal as silly and weak" (168) and to take "a pride in his brutishness" (168). While Hindley had merely enjoyed the reversal of power after Mr. Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff's vengeance is far more calculated. He is, in fact, conducting an experiment designed to see if by carefully manipulating Hareton's environment, he can distort Hareton's character exactly as his own had been distorted. Heathcliff states that Hareton satisfies his desire for revenge on Hindley:

"I've a pleasure in him," he [Heathcliff] continued reflecting aloud. "He has satisfied my expectations. If he were a born fool I should not enjoy it so much. But he's no fool; and I can sympathise with all his feelings, having felt them myself. I know what he suffers now, for instance, exactly . . . he'll never be able to emerge from his bathos of coarseness and ignorance. I've got him faster than his scoundrel of a father secured me, and lower; (168)

But Heathcliff's exultation is empty. Hareton is too much like himself for Heathcliff to enjoy the boy's humiliation. Heathcliff despises Linton, but finds the qualities he admires--strength, courage, honesty--in Hindley's son:

. . . one is gold put to the use of paving stones, and the other is tin polished to ape a service of silver. Mine has nothing valuable about it; yet I shall have the

merit of making it of as far as such poor stuff can go. His had first-rate qualities, and they are lost--rendered worse than useless. (168)

Heathcliff claims that he derives pleasure from watching Hareton become tongue-tied and shy in the presence of Cathy II. Indeed, during Cathy II's first visit to the Heights, Heathcliff contributes to Hareton's discomfiture by instructing him to "behave like a gentleman," (167) refrain from swearing or staring, and "entertain her as nicely" (167) as he is able--instructions which effectively cripple whatever social skills Hareton possesses. Hareton's humiliation on this occasion resembles Heathcliff's own humiliation at being unable to compete with Edgar's cultured and courteous behavior. Superficially, Heathcliff's experiments appears to be successful. But Hareton's upbringing also reinforces his innate qualities. The active farm life makes him physically strong and athletic. He is naturally honest and courageous. These are qualities Heathcliff values and rewards. Hareton is not made to feel like a servant of the household, even if his duties involve working outside in the farm. Between Heathcliff and Hindley there was mutual hatred; between Heathcliff and Hareton there is mutual respect, and even affection. Heathcliff clearly prefers Hareton to Linton; he confesses to Nelly that he wishes Hareton and not Linton, were his heir: ". . . do you know that twenty times a day, I covet Hareton, with all his degradation? I'd have loved the lad had he been some one else" (166). Instead of regarding Heathcliff as his oppressor, Hareton loves him as a father. Heathcliff was shaped by Hindley's tyranny. Heathcliff's plans for revenge on Hareton is tempered by respect and reluctant affection. Thus, Hareton's childhood is more pleasant than Heathcliff's, and Hareton grows up a rough, but good-natured youth.

Brontë believed that gentility is an acquired characteristic, a matter of wealth, education, and environment, rather than birth. Despite his gypsy blood and his rough upbringing, Heathcliff attains the superficial appearance of a gentleman. Hareton, too, is able to reclaim his station as an Earnshaw through Cathy II's tutoring and his own desire to learn. Hindley learns to be a

gentleman while at college. Nelly reproves Cathy II when the latter mocks Hareton: "Had you been brought up in his circumstances, would you be less rude?" (190). The experiments of successive generations of Earnshaws indicate that circumstances and habits, not innate qualities, dictate exterior appearances; had Cathy II been brought up at the Heights, she would indeed have been as rude and untutored.

Notes

1. The book is listed in the library catalogue in 1841 ("Where the Brontës Borrowed Books").

2. Until the late nineteenth century, Lamarck's work was known in England mainly through two secondary sources: the second volume of Lyell's Principles of Geology and Cuvier's Éloge. Lyell's treatment of Lamarck's work is more balanced than Cuvier's, but both contributed to Lamarck's disrepute. See Hull for a discussion of Lamarck's reputation in England.

3. Darwin was particularly irritated by the similarities Lyell perceived between his work and Lamarck's. In an exasperated letter to Lyell, Darwin complained:

Lastly, you refer repeatedly to my view as a modification of Lamarck's doctrine of development and progression. If that is your deliberate opinion, there is nothing more to be said, but it does not seem so to me. . . . I believe this way [Lamarck's theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics] of putting the case is very injurious to its acceptance, as it implies necessary progression . . . (qtd. in Hull xlvii)

Despite the impatient tone Darwin takes towards Lamarck's works in this letter, as Darwin's own work progressed, he seemed to be moving towards a Lamarckian view of adaptation (Stevens 70).

CHAPTER IV

WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND THE DARWINIAN VISION

Published twelve years before The Origin of Species, Wuthering Heights presents some similar perspectives on nature and human beings. That is not entirely surprising. Emily Brontë drew her ideas about human beings from her own observation of nature, her knowledge of farm life and breeding practices, and her reading of works of exploration and natural history. In The Origin of Species, Darwin drew on the work of horticulturalists, natural historians, animal breeders, and pigeon fanciers to supplement his first-hand observations. Darwin's enterprise was scientific; Emily Brontë's poetic. Both however, were seeking to find ways to express their vision of the nature of human beings.

Before discussing the extent to which the Darwinian and Brontëan visions coincide, I must define my terms. "Darwinism" is an inexact term with multiple associations, some derived from late nineteenth-century attempts to transpose evolutionary metaphors such as "natural selection" into social contexts. I shall use Stevens' definition of "Darwinism," since it is broad enough to accommodate the associations of the term while maintaining its focus on the biological implications of Darwin's work: "In its broadest sense 'Darwinism' refers to any ideological considerations which may rest upon the belief that man is an evolving animal" (139). There are two parts to Stevens' definition: first, that man is an animal essentially like any other; and second, that the human species is evolving. Although Darwin drew his evidence from his observations of plants and animals, the focus of his work is the human subject.

As a novelist, Emily Brontë, too, is concerned with the human subject. The narrative focus of Wuthering Heights rarely diverges from the scrutiny of the actions and intense emotions of the novel's characters. David Cecil points out that Wuthering Heights does not have "a single set-piece of landscape painting" (183), even though the background of the heath and the moor pervades the entire novel. Descriptions of the Heights and the Grange are descriptions of the nature of the inhabitants of the two houses. The descriptions of stormy weather are descriptions of emotional tempests. Metaphors drawn from nature elucidate human beings and their actions. The world external to Gimmerton rarely intrudes upon the novel's study of its human characters.

Darwin's work depended to a great extent on the disciplined scientific methodology proposed by Lyell. Lyell insisted that scientists should be objective and abandon speculative hypotheses which were not founded upon facts.¹ Scientists, of course, are not interested only in discovering individual facts, but in interpreting facts to form general laws to explain the universe. Such interpretation, however, must be the result of close, objective observation. Wuthering Heights places the reader in the position of the scientific observer. Neither Nelly nor Lockwood is an objective, scientific observer. They are clearly unreliable as narrators and incapable of interpreting their observations correctly. Emily Brontë does not impose her authorial voice to clarify their narrative. Nelly, who narrates most of the story, is part of the story herself. She weaves her narrative with that of other characters to create the appearance of omniscience. Lockwood, ostensibly her audience, is actually the editor of her story. Although he filters Nelly's story for us, he does not draw attention to his role of editor. Instead, he seems detached and objective, presenting Nelly's story just as Nelly tells it. However, when he narrates events in which he is personally involved, he is fanciful and unreliable. In the absence of the authorial voice, each reader must individually interpret the facts of the story, sift through interpretations provided by Nelly and Lockwood, and decide what should be accepted or rejected; essentially,

each reader must formulate a hypothesis based on the conflicting mass of evidence--such too is the job of the scientific observer.

In laying out the methodology that Lyell believed geologists--and scientists in general--should follow, Lyell argued against hypotheses which relied on divine intervention in explaining natural phenomena. An observer can explain all natural events through natural laws once all of the information becomes available. Mystery is the temporary condition of ignorance, rather than the result of an encounter with the supernatural or the unknowable. Wuthering Heights abounds with superficial evidence of supernatural elements. However, most of the events which are explained through supernaturalism can also be explained rationally. Using a facade of sturdy common sense, Nelly deliberately evokes the supernatural on several occasions--in her description of Heathcliff's death:

His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started, and then, he seemed to smile. . . . I combed his black long hair from his forehead; I tried to close his eyes--to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation, before anyone else beheld it. They would not shut; they seemed to sneer at my attempts, and his parted lips and sharp white teeth sneered too! Taken with a fit of cowardice, I cried out for Joseph. (254)

From the beginning of her narrative, Nelly hints that Heathcliff is supernatural by reiterating that she knew nothing of his birth, origin, or the source of his affluence. Heathcliff admitted to Nelly that he believed in ghosts and hoped to be united with Cathy I after death. The local people believe that the ghosts of Cathy I and Heathcliff haunt the moors. She does not believe in ghosts herself, Nelly claims, but she avoids going outside after dark and doesn't like being left alone in the Heights. Yet supernatural explanations are not necessary to explain Heathcliff's origin, background, behavior, or death. The mystery surrounding his parentage and background is the

result of the difficulty of obtaining accurate information about a homeless gypsy boy in Liverpool. Heathcliff does not explain his sudden acquisition of wealth and polish, yet this lack of information need not suggest supernatural intervention--his military air suggests a possible career, while his knowledge of cards suggests how he may have come by his wealth. In the days before his death, Heathcliff starves himself--as Cathy I had done--and begins hallucinating. Nelly, having nursed Cathy I through her period of self-starvation, knows that hallucinations result from starvation. The circumstances of Heathcliff's death can be explained by his self-abuse, which takes its toll even on his tough constitution. Given all the rational possibilities, why does Nelly insist on the supernatural?

To answer the question, we need to look at Nelly herself. At the start of the novel, Lockwood refers to Nelly as his "human fixture" (25), having no more personality or power than the furnishings of the Grange. When the peculiarities he encounters at the Heights pique Lockwood's curiosity regarding his neighbors, Nelly, as a source of information, gains in importance. Lockwood begins referring to her as Mrs. Dean and courting her for her narrative. Lockwood is correct in his judgment of Nelly's character--she eagerly agrees to tell him the history of his strange neighbors. Lockwood hopes that she will prove to be a "regular gossip" whose narrative will rouse him to animation or lull him to sleep (26). Nelly shows that she is more than a mere gossip--she is a story-teller. Her narrative of events is ordered, consistent, and rousing. She presents the story artistically, inserting pauses at critical moments in the story; the pauses supposedly allow Lockwood to rest and recuperate, but actually whet his appetite for the next installment of her narrative. In her narrative, Nelly relates how she gained power by being an audience for passions and narratives that were not her own. Lockwood, however, gives her the opportunity to tell a story and gain power through narrating rather than listening. Nelly uses the literary conventions with which she, as a country woman, is familiar: the conventions of fairy

tales, and ghost stories. We owe the much of the supernatural effects in the novel to Nelly's determination, on the only chance she has had to tell a story, to tell a good one.²

Darwin's famous concluding metaphor describes nature as a chaotically interdependent world:

It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. . . . There is grandeur in this view of life (Darwin 45)

Connectivity and interdependence are important ingredients in the narrative structure of Wuthering Heights as well. Wuthering Heights has only a limited cast of characters, yet these characters are intricately related to each other. Heathcliff is Cathy I's foster brother and her lover. Hindley is, successively, Heathcliff's foster brother, guardian, tyrannical master, debtor, and poor relation. Cathy I's sister-in-law, Isabella, marries Heathcliff. Cathy II marries both of her cousins--Linton and Hareton--in succession. Forward movements of the narrative chart the changing relationships between Cathy I and Heathcliff, Heathcliff and Hindley, Cathy II and Heathcliff, and Cathy II and Hareton. Edgar and Isabella Linton weave their way into these complicated relationships, as do Frances, Linton, Nelly and Joseph. Connectivity and interdependence also blur boundaries. The Darwinian view of nature is not hierarchical: except in the interests of classification, birds are not superior to insects or worms. An ecologist, Darwin argued that birds, insects, and worms are all equally necessary parts of the nature. In Wuthering Heights, the price of interconnectivity is the violation of social boundaries. Cathy I's choice is a choice between the comfortable bourgeois life at the Grange and the wild, free life of the Heights. The conflict between Heathcliff and

Hindley arises from Hindley's determination to keep Heathcliff in a position of servitude. Nelly and Joseph are not servile as servants. Nelly, in particular, will not allow Cathy I to "act the little mistress" (33) with her. The Earnshaws despise the value placed by the Lintons on traditional social hierarchies; instead, the outcome of struggles between the Earnshaws determine the hierarchy at the Heights.

Darwin sees interconnectivity in nature as the result of the struggle for existence. Birds, insects, and worms are interdependent because of their relationship of predator and prey; the prey must die so that the predator can live. "The Butterfly" (1842) is Emily Brontë's attempt to understand the workings of the struggle for existence in nature. All of creation appears either suicidal or murderous:

. . . There are those flies playing above the stream, swallows and fish diminishing their number each minute: these will become, in their turn, the prey of some tyrant of air or water and man for his amusement or for his needs will kill their murderers. (340)

For Darwin, the struggle for existence and natural selection works toward the improvement of species, so that the destructiveness of nature is actually a beneficent force. For Emily Brontë, however, the destructiveness of nature seems senseless: "All creation is equally insane" ("The Butterfly" 340), she writes hopelessly. Human beings, too, are part of the insane destructiveness of nature, so that "Life exists on a principle of destruction" and "every creature must be the relentless instrument of death to others, or himself cease to live" ("The Butterfly" 340). Where Darwin sees a pattern of gradual, irregular evolution as the result of destruction, Emily Brontë sees the endless, apparently purposeless cycle of destruction and generation as a puzzle that defies explanation ("The Butterfly" 340). Darwin too confesses that the idea of nature locked in a perpetual struggle is daunting:

Nothing is easier than to admit in words the truth of the universal struggle for life, or more difficult--at least I have found it so--than constantly to bear this conclusion in mind. . . . We behold the face of nature bright with gladness, we often see superabundance of food; we do not see, or we forget, that the birds which are idly singing round us mostly live on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life; or we forget how largely these songsters, or their eggs, or their nestlings, are destroyed by birds and beasts of prey. . . . (The Origin of Species 116)

However, for Darwin, natural selection has its consolations. The struggle ensures that nature strives towards improvement:

When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief, that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply. (The Origin of Species 129)

This is precisely the vision in Wuthering Heights. The weak and the feeble characters die unregretted, as do those who are overly violent. Frances, who is consumptive, does not last long in the harsh climate of the Heights. At her childbirth, the doctor tells Hindley that he does not expect her to live through the winter. The doctor speaks of Frances as if she were part of the farm livestock:

. . . Earnshaw, it's a blessing your wife has been spared to leave you this son. When she came, I felt convinced we shouldn't keep her long; and now, I must tell you, the winter will probably finish her. Don't take on, and fret about it too much, it can't be helped. And besides, you should have known better than to choose such a rush of a lass! (50)

Linton, who combines feebleness of body with pettiness of mind, dies soon after his marriage, unmourned and unregretted. Cathy II attends him out of a sense of duty, but Heathcliff, who is contemptuous of his son's feeble constitution, refuses to pay for a doctor's visit, even when he knows that Linton is dying. If the weak die, so do those whose strong wills turn to destruction. Hindley is killed in a brawl with Heathcliff. Cathy II starves herself to death. Even Heathcliff's tough frame finally succumbs to years of self-inflicted abuse and days of starvation. The marriage of Cathy II and Hareton succeeds because both are vigorous, healthy, and happy.

Notes

1. One of the primary premises of Lyell's theory is that the geological history of the earth can be explained through causes still in operation at intensities close to their present intensities. In other words, geological changes are variations about a mean. Bowler notes that Lyell's methodology implies a steady-state earth which is "a self-regulating system that has been able to maintain itself indefinitely throughout all of the time period into which it is meaningful for us to enquire" (136). Several studies discuss Lyell's influence on Darwin; see for instance, Bowler, Eisley, and Stevens. Here, I am concerned with Lyell's insistence that the scientific observer maintain an objective stance.

2. See Hafley and Mathison for other interpretations of Nelly's motivations and role in the novel. Hafley sees Nelly as the cause of the tragic action of the novel. Mathison sees her as unable to be sympathetic towards anyone less wholesome and sturdy than her.

CHAPTER V

NATURAL SELECTION IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Long before Darwin tackled the issue of changing species, horticulturalists, animal breeders, and pigeon fanciers were creating new breeds by selecting certain characteristics, and rejecting others. Although the laws of Mendelism were unknown, skilled breeders had reached empirical conclusions that were similar to Mendelism.¹ For instance, breeders agreed that cross-breeding strengthens and inbreeding vitiates breeds:

. . . I have collected so large a body of facts, showing, in accordance with the almost universal belief of breeders, that with animals and plants a cross between different varieties, or between individuals of the same variety but of another strain, gives vigour and fertility to the offspring; and on the other hand, that close interbreeding diminished vigour and fertility. . . (Darwin 143)

Darwin called the efforts of breeders unconscious or artificial selection, as opposed to natural selection, which refers to the changes produced by natural processes. According to Darwin, natural selection worked continually for the good of each being, and for the good of the species in general:

It may be said that natural selection is daily and hourly scrutinising, throughout the world, every variation, even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up all that is good (Darwin 133)

Isolation leads to extinction, since the chances of survival for a species are improved by combining in the offspring the strengths of different strains. In nature, there is a tendency towards

eliminating isolation by cross-breeding and cross-pollination. Human breeders, however, are more likely to value the purity of a strain. Purity, which implies inbreeding, enhances the animal's pedigree, to the detriment of its chances of survival outside of the sheltered environment in which it is bred.

In Wuthering Heights, the civilized and the wild varieties of the human animals appear determined to isolate themselves. The Lintons value pedigree and despise the coarseness of the Earnshaws' peasant background. The Earnshaws value sturdiness and suspect that the Lintons' need for comfortable, civilized surroundings is an indication of weakness. Despite the antipathy between the two families, members of one family find the other sexually attractive. Edgar falls in love with Cathy I from their first encounter. Cathy I is charmed by Edgar's beauty and gracefulness, though she loves Heathcliff. Isabella is attracted to Heathcliff's vigorous masculinity. Cathy II and Hareton find each other mutually attractive. In isolation, the genteel Lintons fade away; the wild Earnshaws tear each other apart. The end result is annihilation for both. From the perspective of a horticulturalist or an animal breeder, the solution is obvious: the Lintons and the Earnshaws need to mate and reproduce, so that the offspring can be gentle and strong, social and natural. The attractions that spring up between the Lintons and Earnshaws are the natural tendency toward the goal of producing a new, viable community.

Of the four marriages in Wuthering Heights between the Lintons and Earnshaws, two produce children. Cathy I and Edgar's marriage, according to Nelly, promised, at least in the beginning, a "deep and growing happiness" (70). Their daughter, Cathy II, combines the best traits of her parents:

She was the most winning thing that brought sunshine into a desolate house--a real beauty in face, with Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin, and small features, and yellow, curling hair. Her spirit was high, though not

rough, and qualified by a heart sensitive and lively to excess in its affections. That capacity for intense attachments reminded me of her mother; still she did not resemble her, for she could be soft and mild as a dove, and she had a gentle voice, and pensive expression: her anger was never furious; her love never fierce; it was deep and tender. (145)

From her mother, too, Cathy II inherits her determination, a quality that enables her to survive the enforced move to the Heights. Thus, the marriage of Cathy I and Edgar is successful from a biological, if not a spiritual, perspective. Isabella and Heathcliff's marriage, however, fails biologically and spiritually. Isabella's misguided infatuation for Heathcliff (which turns to hatred soon after their marriage) and his implacable hatred towards all Lintons, give their relationship a nightmarish quality. Their son, Linton, inherits the worst traits of both parents. In infancy, Linton Heathcliff is "an ailing, peevish creature" (141). As an adolescent, he is feeble, malicious, and self-absorbed. Linton Heathcliff is a superficially attractive but unpleasant youth. He makes spiteful remarks about Hareton's illiteracy, betrays Cathy II into Heathcliff's trap, enjoys watching Heathcliff beat Cathy II; even in his death, rapid as it is, he torments his nurse, Cathy II, by his incessant demands.

For the formation of a new viable community of human beings, Cathy II needs a male counterpart. Linton is clearly an unsatisfactory candidate. The only other male of Cathy II's generation is Hareton. Hareton, like the Earnshaws, is strong, vigorous, and healthy. Heathcliff, determined to impose on Hindley's son the same degradation that Hindley had imposed on him, withholds education from Hareton while supplying Linton with a tutor. Heathcliff also encourages Hareton to be rough and uncouth in his manners, and slovenly in his appearance. Unlike Heathcliff, Hareton is indeed a "rough diamond" and "a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic" (80).² Despite his rough exterior, he is essentially good-natured and kind. He is loyal and sincere in his

affections. Like Cathy II, his love is deep and tender, rather than fierce, and his anger is short-lived. He forgives Cathy II her initial snobbery and hostility toward him, and defends her against Heathcliff, and Heathcliff against her reproaches. Cathy II gradually falls in love with Hareton, in spite of herself. The union of Cathy II and Hareton combines the best of the two worlds and gives rise to a new, viable variety of human beings.³ To this end, the competitive forces of nature--interrupted occasionally by human interference--in the novel have been tending.

For Emily Brontë the ability of human beings to love distinguishes them from other animals. According to Emily Brontë, love is not only a sexual and reproductive drive, but also a powerful, radical emotion which defines the character of the person. The lover and the loved one form an inseparable, indistinguishable whole. Trying to justify her reasons for choosing Edgar over Heathcliff, Cathy I confesses that she loves Heathcliff: "not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" (62). Our understanding of this definition of love is critical to our understanding the events of the novel. Love is not a mild, gentle emotion; it is an intense, potentially destructive, unavoidable force of nature.

The intensity of Cathy I's love for Heathcliff seems perverse to Lockwood and Nelly. Cathy I's impassioned attempt to make Nelly understand is also Emily Brontë's attempt to make her readers acknowledge the attraction of a love that is a fusion of the identities of two beings:

What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here? . . . If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and, if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem a part of it. (64)

When Nelly stubbornly refuses to understand, Cathy I employs a horticultural metaphor to illustrate the difference between the conventional mild emotion she feels for Edgar and her

passionate love for Heathcliff:

My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath--a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff-- (64)

This intense, spiritual love is missing from all of the failed unions. Edgar's love for Cathy I is genuine and enduring, but Cathy I's marriage to Edgar cannot compensate her for her separation from Heathcliff. Compare, for instance, the impassioned statement above with Cathy I's response to Nelly's question of why she loves Edgar in particular:

"But there are several other handsome, rich young men in the world; handsomer, possibly, and richer than he is. What should hinder you from loving them?"

"If there be any, they are out of my way. I've seen none like Edgar."

"You may see some; and he won't always be handsome, and young, and may not always be rich."

"He is now; and I have only to do with the present. I wish you would speak rationally." (61)

Sexuality is immediate, while love is eternal. Cathy I finds Edgar physically attractive, congenial, and courteous; but he does not satisfy her need for wholeness. Isabella's imprudent marriage to Heathcliff has little to do with love on either side; she is infatuated with him, and he hates her but takes advantage of her infatuation. Cathy II's marriage to Linton is a shot-gun wedding arranged by Heathcliff for the purpose of obtaining control over the Linton lands. Only Cathy II and Hareton's union is based on mutual attraction--both sexual and spiritual--and mutual honesty; in all of the other unions, there is deception on at least one side.

Horticultural metaphors, it turns out, are useful in describing romantic or sexual interactions between the Lintons and the Earnshaws. In contrast to the powerful symbiotic love between Heathcliff and Cathy I, Edgar's gentle, generous cherishing of his wife is described by Nelly as a honeysuckle embracing a thorn (71). Heathcliff, who understands that Edgar's affection is inadequate sustenance for Cathy I, evokes an incongruous image: "He [Edgar] might as well plant an oak in a flowerpot, and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigour in the soil of his shallow cares!" (119). Towards Isabella, Heathcliff feels only hatred and is indeed "an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone" (79). Their courtship--if Heathcliff's perverse pursuit of Isabella and Isabella's misguided attraction towards Heathcliff can be described by the term--and marriage takes place in winter and ends in the spring. Cathy II and Linton's marriage takes place in autumn and lasts barely a month; Linton is dead before the winter.⁴ During the winter following Linton's death, Cathy II withdraws from the society around her, as "chill as an icicle, and high as a princess" (224).

The movement of Cathy II and Hareton's courtship begins in the spring with Hareton's shooting accident. From his first encounter with Cathy II, Hareton shows his attraction toward her; initially, however, Cathy II does not reciprocate the feeling. Before her forced marriage to Linton, Cathy II belongs to the civilized world of courtesy, learning, and politeness, all qualities Linton possesses and Hareton lacks. She is fastidious and class-conscious, judging Hareton and Linton by their appearances, rather than striving to determine the worth of each. Cathy II's fondness for Linton is asexual; she wants him as a pet (185). Cathy II and Hareton's romance is both congenial and sexual. Her attraction to Hareton is physical, but not wholly so. Cathy II mercilessly teases and torments Hareton, all the while watching closely his facial expression and physical reactions:

... after a while, she changed her behaviour, and became incapable of letting him

alone: talking at him; commenting on his stupidity and idleness; expressing her wonder how he could endure the life he lived--how he could sit a whole evening staring into the fire, and dozing.

"He's just like a dog, is he not, Ellen?" she once observed, "or a cart-horse? He does his work, eats his food, and sleeps, eternally! What a blank, dreary mind he must have! Do you ever dream, Hareton? And if you do, what is it about? But you can't speak to me!"

Then she looked at him; but he would neither open his mouth nor look again.

"He's perhaps dreaming now," she continued. "He twitched his shoulder as Juno twitches hers. Ask him, Ellen." (235)

But she woos him with books and the chance to improve himself. Although Hareton is in awe of Cathy II's learning--he is deeply self-conscious of his own ignorance--he does not elevate her to the status of a goddess, as Heathcliff had done with Cathy I. For Heathcliff, Cathy I is "immeasurably superior" not only to himself and the Lintons, but to "everybody on earth" (40). Hareton, however, does not deceive himself about his love; Cathy II is undoubtedly beautiful and clever, but she is full of "mucky pride" and "damned, mocking tricks" (237). In loving her, he takes the risk of being repulsed and despised, as indeed he is at first.

To mark the start of their alliance, Cathy II persuades Hareton to uproot some bushes and clear a space in the garden so that she can plant flowers. Cathy II and Hareton's gardening plans--Grange flowers replacing the thorny shrubs of the Heights--are a metaphor for their romance. Their romance receives two setbacks. The first occurs when Heathcliff threatens Cathy II: "Your love will make him an outcast, and a beggar" (243). The setback is necessary. At first, Cathy II wants to change Hareton completely--replacing with Grange values the sturdy, natural qualities

his Heights upbringing. Although Heathcliff's threat to Cathy II echoes Hindley's threat to dismiss Heathcliff (40), Heathcliff is, to some extent, concerned more for Hareton than for a chance of frustrating Cathy II's romance. A change of the sort Cathy II proposes would diminish Hareton, making him, like Linton, "tin polished to ape silver" (169). Even if Cathy II were successful in her attempt to transform Hareton, her efforts would destroy their personal happiness and ruin the chances of forming a viable human community. The second setback comes from Hareton himself, and shows Cathy II that her efforts are neither desirable nor likely to succeed. When Cathy II maligns Heathcliff, Hareton rebels against her, asking her (author's emphasis) "how she would like him to speak ill of her father" (243). The incident teaches Cathy II a crucial lesson: her preference for Grange values do not make them superior. Cathy II values Hareton's ruggedness, his loyalty to those he loves, and his natural intelligence. Had Hareton been inane, insincere, and feeble like Linton, Cathy II could not have loved him. Cathy II learns that both the Grange and the Heights have qualities that are admirable and qualities that are hateful.

Once Cathy II abandons her prejudice against the Heights, the romance can once again flourish. As a gesture of peace, Hareton replaces Joseph's shrubs in their corner of the garden, while he helps Cathy II start her flower garden in another corner of the garden. Thus the utilitarian character of the Heights remains but is softened by the gentleness and beauty of the Grange. By the time Lockwood returns to Gimmerton, the merger of the two worlds is complete:

I had neither to climb the gate, nor to knock--it yielded to my hand.

That is an improvement! I thought. And I noticed another, by the aid of my nostrils; a fragrance of stocks, and wall flowers, wafted on the air, from amongst homely fruit trees.

Both doors and lattices were open; and yet, as is usually the case in a coal district, a fine, red fire illuminated the chimney; the comfort which the eye

derives from it, renders the extra heat endurable. . . . (232)

Fruit trees and flowering plants mingle in the garden. The useless, but comforting fire warms and lights the house. Doors and windows are open and welcoming. The inmates, Cathy II and Hareton, spend a quiet, harmonious afternoon engaged in reading, then go out hand in hand for an evening stroll across the moors. Cathy II and Hareton's love reconciles the foliage with the rocks, the changeable with the eternal, necessity with visible delight.

Notes

1. In 1865, Gregor Mendel presented his theory of genetic transmission, based on his breeding experiments with peas and snapdragons. However, Mendel's work remained unknown to the scientific community until 1900. The Origin of Species is particularly weak in its explanation of how acquired characteristics are transmitted from generation to generation, since Darwin relied heavily on the pre-Mendelian genetic theory (Eiseley 213).

2. David Cecil points out that Cathy II and Hareton are children of marriages that are based on love (129). Hindley and Frances clearly loved each other. Cathy I and Edgar's marriage is more problematic. Edgar loved Cathy I sincerely; Cathy I loved Edgar in her own way, even if she felt that Heathcliff was spiritually closer to her.

3. Goff argues that the union of Cathy II and Hareton ruins Heathcliff's breeding experiment, and is likely to produce a degenerate community instead of a viable one.

4. See Daley for the chronology of events in the novel.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Elizabeth Rigby was correct in perceiving Wuthering Heights as a pagan novel. Wuthering Heights pays no homage to Christian orthodoxy. Except for Joseph's narrow-minded sermonizing, and Nelly's inadequate pieties, formal religion is absent from the novel. When Heathcliff tells Nelly that he cannot leave vengeance to God, because "God won't have the satisfaction" (47) that he can derive, Heathcliff is expressing his sense of a world in which there is no divine ordering force. God will not have the same satisfaction that Heathcliff will because God does not exist. Heathcliff sees the world as ordered by competitive forces, where strength, not goodness, is rewarded. Heathcliff takes to heart Hindley's advice to Edgar to "take the law into your own fists" (46), and explicitly rejects the Lintons' world of civilized and Christian values: "I'd not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here, for Edgar Linton's at Thrushcross Grange" (38).

In Heathcliff's world, power, through strength, is the ultimate good, and weakness the ultimate evil. Thus, Heathcliff's hatred of the Lintons (including his own son) is not just an adult response to humiliating childhood memories, but rather the hatred for a community based on what Heathcliff perceives as ethically and morally wrong. In what is regarded as one of the most problematic statements in the novel, Heathcliff tries to explain his behavior towards those who are weak: "The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething, and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain" (118). The sadism inherent in Heathcliff's statement is indisputable; however, his dominant emotion is one of disgust,

not enjoyment. Worms, according to Heathcliff, deserve to be punished; the weak and the feeble corrupt the strong and the healthy.

In the Darwinian world view, the meek do not inherit the world; the strong, the vigorous, and the adaptable do. Darwin's theory of natural selection did not merely replace the theological time scale with a longer, geological one. The displacement of the historical authority of the story of Adam and Eve implied a fundamental reinterpretation of the basis for all theological doctrine. If man was created, not by a divine fiat, but countless ages of gradual accumulations of adaptations and mutations, questions of mind, free will, and divine justice become irrelevant. Heathcliff's ethical code of power through strength as the ultimate good appears realistic, whereas the traditional theological values appear pointless. For Darwinians, the result of life is the continuation of the species through the survival of individuals; the focus of life is on the present existence rather than a possible eternal one.

Darwinian theory radically revises the Miltonic myth of creation. Instead of the grand and ordered structure of the Miltonic myth, evolution provides the chaotic, insensate force of natural selection. But the seeds of doubts about the workings of a benevolent deity had been sown long before Darwin formulated his ideas of man's position in nature. The work of the early evolutionists shows a continual struggle to reconcile fresh discoveries of scientific facts with theology. In his Natural Theology, William Paley sets out to prove the existence of Providence, based on the evidence of nature. The difficulties of Paley's task lead him to develop some ingenious logical twists, such as the notion that complicated processes like vision, for instance, were God's way of indicating his existence. The Bridgewater Treatises, the first of which appeared in 1833, are an organized attempt to show that science supports, not opposes, theology--that each new scientific discovery provides further proof of the existence of a benevolent deity.¹ Thomas Chalmers wrote the first of the series; the title of his volume indicates the enterprise of

the series as a whole: On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man. Chalmers, a professor of divinity at the University of Edinburgh and a Scottish evangelical preacher, was concerned with showing that the social and physical worlds proved divine benevolence. William Whewell in his treatise, which dealt with astronomy and physics, argued that it is "impossible to exclude from our conception of this wonderful system, the idea of a harmonizing, a preserving, a contriving, an intending Mind; of a Wisdom, Power, and Goodness far exceeding the limits of our thoughts" (qtd. in Gillispie 211). In the 1820s and 1830s, geological and paleontological discoveries intensified and polarized the evolutionary debate. Perhaps the scandalized reactions to Robert Chambers in The Vestiges of Creation (1844), show that the two sides of the debate had become irreconcilable by the 1840's. On the evolutionary side, Chambers had this to say:

The idea, then, which I form of the progress of organic life upon the globe--and the hypothesis is applicable to all similar theatres of vital being--is that the simplest and most primitive type, under a law to which that of life-production is subordinate, gave birth to the type next above it, that this again produced the next higher, and so on to the very highest, the stages of the advance being in all cases very small--namely, from one species only to another; so that the phenomenon has always been of a simple and modest character. (qtd. in Gillispie 149, author's emphasis)

This sounds remarkably similar to the theory of evolution as a gradual and accumulative changing of species. But Chambers confuses his own argument by his commitment to showing that ultimately, "the idea of an Almighty Author becomes irresistible, for the creation of a law for an endless series of phenomena--an act of intelligence above all else that we can conceive--could have no other imaginable source" (qtd. in Gillispie 159). Yet, Chambers had opened Pandora's

box--"development hypothesis," as evolution theory was called at the time, could no longer be regarded as a scientific issue alone; evolutionists and natural theologians were forced to take up adversarial stances in the recognition that social, moral, and ethical issues were at stake.²

Was Emily Brontë a natural theologian? Was she a pre-Darwinian evolutionist? I believe that she was, like many of her contemporaries, an eager and interested audience for both sides of the debate. But Emily Brontë was not a scientist. She was unconcerned with the details of evolution theory--the paleontological and geological discoveries, classification of species, and issues of phylogeny. Her enterprise, a poetic as well as a novelistic one, was to find a way of reading the universe around her. Her vision in Wuthering Heights seeks to integrate meaningfully nature and humanity. Instead of retreating from the savagery of nature, she boldly admits that humanity mirrors nature, in all its savagery, its force, and its powers of regeneration. In this, Emily Brontë was a Darwinian evolutionist. The conclusion of Wuthering Heights is benevolent--not because divine design makes it so, but because of an inchoate natural tendency toward regeneration and improvement. Lockwood's parting image evokes an atmosphere of tranquil renewal, amid which the graves of Edgar, Heathcliff, and Cathy I are reclaimed by nature:

I sought, and soon discovered, the three head-stones on the slope next the moor--the middle one, grey, and half-buried in heath--Edgar Linton's only harmonized by the turf, and moss creeping up its foot--Heathcliff's still bare.

I lingered round them, under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells; listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth. (256)

Notwithstanding Joseph's claims, the old order is not restored at the end of Wuthering Heights--it is replaced by a new one, one that has been shaped and changed by Heathcliff, Edgar, and Cathy

I. Hareton and Cathy II, in their turn, will shape the next. If annihilation can be avoided, the forces of nature will continually strive so that "the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply" (Darwin 129).

Notes

1. For a discussion of the Bridgewater Treatises, see Gillispie (184-228).
2. For discussions of the theological and scientific debate about evolution, see Bowler, Gillispie, and Young. The collection of essays edited by Glass gives a good sense of the scientific trends that shaped the debate.

WORKS CITED

- Armstrong, Nancy. "Emily Brontë In and Out of Her Time." Genre 15 (1982): 234-64.
- Beer, Gillian. Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction. London: Routledge, 1983.
- Blondel, Jacques. "Imagery in Wuthering Heights." Brontë Society Transactions 37 (1975): 1-7.
- Bowler, Peter J. Evolution: The History of an Idea. Rev. ed. Berkeley: U of California P, 1989.
- Brontë, Emily. "The Butterfly." Ratchford 338-39.
- . "The Cat." Ratchford 340-341.
- . Wuthering Heights. Ed. William M. Sale Jr. and Richard J. Dunn. New York: Norton, 1990.
- Burkhardt, Richard W. Jr. "The Inspiration of Lamarck's Belief in Evolution." Journal of the History of Biology 5 (1972): 413-38.
- . "The Zoological Philosophy of J. B. Lamarck." Lamarck xv-xxxix.
- Cecil, David. Early Victorian Novelists. 1934. London: Pelican, 1948. 11-26, 115-151.
- Chapple, J. A. V. Science and Literature in the Nineteenth Century. London: Macmillan, 1986.
- Chitham, Edward. A Life of Emily Brontë. Oxford: Blackwell, 1987.
- Darwin, Charles. The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection, Or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life. London: John Murray, 1859. Rpt. London: Penguin 1985. Ed. R. J. Burrow.
- Dobell, Sydney. Rev. of Wuthering Heights, by Emily Brontë. Athenaeum 4 July 1846: 682. Rpt. in O'Neill 49.

- Daley, A. Stuart. "The Moons and Almanacs of Wuthering Heights." Huntington Library Quarterly 37 (1974): 337-53.
- Dunn, Richard J. Preface. Wuthering Heights. By Emily Brontë. New York: Norton, 1990. vii-ix.
- Eagleton, Terry. Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës. London: Macmillan, 1975.
- Ebbatson, Roger. The Evolutionary Self: Hardy, Forster, Lawrence. Sussex: Harvester Press, 1982.
- Ellegard, Alvar. Darwin and the General Reader: The Reception of Darwin's Theory of Evolution in the British Periodical Press, 1859-1872. Göteborg, Sweden: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag, 1958.
- Eiseley, Loren. Darwin's Century: Evolution and the Men Who Discovered It. New York: Doubleday, 1958.
- Fraser, Rebecca. The Brontës: Charlotte Brontë and her Family. New York: Crown, 1988.
- Galef, David. "Keeping One's Distance: Irony and Doubling in Wuthering Heights." Studies in the Novel 24 (1992): 242-51.
- Gérin, Winifred. The Brontës: The Formative Years. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1973.
- Ghent, Dorothy van. The English Novel: Form and Function. 1953. New York: Harper, 1961. 153-70.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination. 1979. New Haven: Yale U P, 1984.
- Gillispie, Charles Coulton. Genesis and Geology: A Study in the Relations of Scientific Thought, Natural Theology, and Social Opinion in Great Britain, 1790-1850. New York: Harper, 1959.
- Glass, Bentley, Owsei Temkin, William L. Strauss Jr., eds. Forerunners of Darwin: 1745-1859.

- Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1959.
- Goetz, William R. "Genealogy and Incest in Wuthering Heights." Studies in the Novel 14 (1982): 359-76.
- Goff, Barbara Munson. "Between Natural Theology and Natural Selection: Breeding the Human Animal in Wuthering Heights." Victorian Studies 1984 (27): 477-08.
- Goodheart, Eugene. "Family, Incest, and Transcendence in Wuthering Heights." Explorations: The Nineteenth-Century. Ed. Ann B. Dobie et. al. Lafayette, LA: Levy Humanities Series, 1988. 34-50.
- Gose, Elliot B., Jr. "Wuthering Heights: The Heath and the Hearth." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 21 (1978): 1-19.
- Gould, Stephen J. Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time. Harvard U P, 1987.
- Hafley, James. "The Villain in Wuthering Heights." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 13 (1958): 199-15.
- Hayles, Katherine N. "Information or Noise? Economy of Explanation in Barthe's S/Z and Shannon's Information Theory." Levine, One Culture 119-42.
- Henkin, Leo J. Darwinism in the English Novel, 1860-1910: The Impace of Evolution on Victorian Fiction. New York: Russell, 1963.
- Hull, David. "Lamarck Among the Anglos." Lamarck xl-lxvi.
- Jacobs, Carol. "At the Threshold of Interpretation." Brontë 353-365.
- Jordanova, Ludmilla J., ed. Introduction. Languages of Nature: Critical Essays on Science and Literature. New Brunswick: Rutgers U P, 1986.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1962.
- Lamarck, J. B. Zoological Philosophy: An exposition with Regard to the Natural History of

- Animals. Trans. Hugh Elliott. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984.
- Levine, George. Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction. Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1988.
- , ed. One Culture: Essays in Science and Literature. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987.
- Lewes, G. H. Rev. of Wuthering Heights, by Emily Brontë. The Leader December 28 1850: 953. Rpt. in O'Neill, 47.
- Mathison, John K. "Nelly Dean and the Power of Wuthering Heights." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 9 (1956): 109-129.
- McGuire, Kathryn B. "The Incest Taboo in Wuthering Heights: A Modern Appraisal." American Imago 45 (1988): 217-224.
- Miller, Hillis J. The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers. Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1963. 157-12.
- . Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982. 42-72.
- Merrill, Lynn L. The Romance of Victorian Natural History. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1989.
- Norris, Margot. Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, and Lawrence. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1985.
- O'Hanlon, Redmond. Joseph Conrad and Charles Darwin: The Influence of Scientific Thought on Conrad's Fiction. Atlantic, NJ: Humanities Press, 1984.
- O'Neill, Judith, ed. Critics on Charlotte and Emily Brontë. Coral Gables, FL: U of Miami, 1968.
- Ratchford, Fannie E., ed. "Three Essays by Emily Brontë." Brontë Society Transactions 11 (1950): 337-340. Trans. Lorine White Nagel.
- Rigby, Elizabeth. Rev. of Wuthering Heights, by Emily Brontë. Quarterly Review December

1848: 175. Rpt. in O'Neill 49.

Sanger, Charles Percy. "The Structure of Wuthering Heights." London: Hogarth Press, 1926.

Rpt. in Twentieth Century Interpretations of Wuthering Heights: A Collection of Critical Essays. Ed. Thomas A. Vogler. Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968. 15-27.

Schachterle, Lance. "A Review Essay: Contemporary Literature and Science." Modern Language Studies (1987): %%.

Shuttleworth, Sally. George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1984.

Solomon, Eric. "The Incest Theme in Wuthering Heights." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 14 (1959): 80-83.

Snow, Charles P. The Two Cultures: And A Second Look. Rev. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1964.

Stevens, Lewell Robert. Charles Darwin. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1978.

Rev. of Wuthering Heights, by Emily Brontë. Atlas January 1848. Reprinted Dunn 299-301.

"Where the Brontës Borrowed Books: The Keighley Mechanics' Institute." Brontë Society Transactions 11 (1950): 344-58.

Young, Robert M. Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1985.