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FROM GLASSTOWN TO FERNDEAN: CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S JANE EYRE AND THE WRITER'S SEARCH FOR HOME

By

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ABSTRACT

In Charlotte Brontë's fiction, the search for home is a recurring pattern that symbolizes the writer's search for her place in literary culture. Beginning with her childhood writings set in the imaginary Glasstown, this search can be traced through the Angrian saga and Charlotte Bronte's first novel, *The Professor*, to its optimistic resolution in *Jane Eyre*, with the union of the two central characters at Ferndean.

The perspectives of cultural criticism and of object relations psychoanalytic theory enable this thesis to connect social and cultural meanings with the personal and individual significance of the search for home in these works. By means of this theme, Charlotte Brontë's fiction examines the question of preserving imagination and its connection to nature, a question which was also a concern of the Romantic poets. The search for home also reflects the woman writer's consciousness of the place of her work and her ideas in literary history. This thesis draws attention to the development of a characteristic narrative voice in the early writings, and to the increasing focus on female characters and the issue of creativity in the early writings and *The Professor*. The question of creativity is connected

to representations of home in passages of heightened figurative language that symbolically explore the writer's imagination.

In _Jane Eyre_, the narrative voice is female for the first time in Charlotte Brontë's fiction, and her search for home explores the complex relationship of nature and culture in the five homes in the novel, and in the narrator's imagination. _Jane Eyre_ also explores the religious meaning of the search for home and develops a dialogue between patriarchal Christianity and other religious expressions, including a maternal religion related to nature, domestic rituals and the care of the body. Finally, the novel embodies, in its union of male and female characters, the woman writer's connection with Romanticism, her literary home.

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For Wayne Allan

Anam Cara

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Introduction	1
I	The Search for a Literary Home: Narrative Voice and Female Characters in the Early Writings	24
II	*The Professor*: Discovering The Female Subject	74
III	Nature and Culture: Home in *Jane Eyre*	126
IV	Flesh and Spirit: Maternal Tradition in *Jane Eyre*	197
V	A Literary Home: *Jane Eyre* and Romanticism	266
	Works Cited and Consulted	312

Introduction

Charlotte Brontë was inspired to write at a very early age, in her childhood home. There, along with the other gifted children in her family, she found the medium for her desire to express an inner life that at times almost overwhelmed her. She explored drawing, painting, and needlework, as well as poetry, fiction, and other languages. The desire to create can be traced through the writing she produced, particularly in the theme of the search for home that persists from her earliest writing to her final work. In _Jane Eyre_ (1847), that search is both difficult and successful: the difficulties reflect a serious doubt about the stability of home, while the eventual success indicates the writer's optimism at that time. Home was the place of Charlotte Brontë's painful losses, the deaths of her mother and three of her siblings, yet it was also the place wher she became a writer. The search for home is a continuing theme in her mature fiction, and it reflects a deeper theme about literary creativity.

The Brontë children only left their family home at Haworth by dying. None of them ever established a separate home, although they all lived away from home for periods of time when they were at school or working. After the death

of their mother, Maria Brontë, in 1821, the oldest daughter, Maria, became to some extent a mother to the younger children, but in 1824, she too, along with the second child, Elizabeth, died of illness contracted at school. The mother's sister, Miss Branwell, took on the care of the remaining four children. Directing the household from her bedroom, at odds with her brother-in-law, and rather unsympathetic to the children, this aunt nonetheless maintained a sense of order in the home and taught needlework to the girls. Another important adult in the household was Tabitha Aykroyd, the housekeeper, a warm woman with a fund of fairy stories and folklore. Patrick Brontë, a clergyman, the ambitious child of poor Irish peasants, was the main influence on the children, giving them a large degree of freedom, and encouraging their literary aspirations. The children were involved intellectually with their father, identifying with his religious and political beliefs. Their emotional sensitivity to his loss of his wife appears in their writing in characters like Northangerland, a passionate individual whose dangerous and violent tendencies are unleashed after the death of his wife, to whom he was devoted; however, the children did not create a portrait of their father so much as they transformed the emotional climate of the parsonage into literary productions.

A number of factors contributed to the development of writing as the main mode of expression in the Brontë

household. The original "plays"--games and stories invented by the children for their own entertainment--were the kind of creative expression that children usually engage in. The crucial difference in the play of the Brontë children came about when they decided to write down their stories in the form of little books: permanent, material records of their imaginative activity. Patrick Brontë's interest in books and periodicals, as well as his own writing, no doubt established the importance of writing as something to be admired and valued. The encouragement and help that the children gave each other in their plays and their writing was another crucial factor. From the earliest writings, they wrote for each other.[1]

In this context, Charlotte Brontë's earliest surviving work, a small book for her sister Anne, provides a poignant example of her early creativity. Even the energy and concentration required for a child of ten to write, illustrate, and carefully sew together the small pages suggest the passion that inspired this gift. The story itself also reveals aspects of Charlotte Brontë's imagination that persist into her more mature work. The fanciful details of the rich parents, and the travels to a castle express Charlotte's

[1] Carol Bock has explored the literary implications of the support the children gave each other in her book Charlotte Brontë and the Storyteller's Audience (1992).

desire to create a mother for "Ane", the little girl in the story, as well as to save the mother by having the little girl give her medicine. Yet the realistic strain in Charlotte Brontë's work appears in the detail of the mother's being ill. If the book recreates the dead mother for Anne, the child who never really knew her, the young author's emotional honesty recreates the mother as a sick woman. Most importantly, Charlotte Brontë is able to give her symbolic restoration a finished form, so that the little book becomes a significant representation of the lost mother. Her production of a book is not only a response to the high cultural value accorded to literature in that household, but also a way to replace, symbolically, her mother and Maria, who first taught the other children to invent characters and create their "plays".

Patrick Brontë's aspirations may also have influenced the kind of writings undertaken by his children. Their social position was somewhat uncertain, and they may have concluded that life and excitement were to be found elsewhere, in the world of war and politics, and in the activities of higher social classes. Writing was a way to compensate for feeling deprived and cut off from life beyond Haworth. Later, Charlotte Brontë experienced the contrast between home and abroad in a different way. Her fascination with French language and culture led her to visit the

Continent. In 1842, she, and for a time, Emily, attended the school run by Constantin Heger in Brussels, where M. Heger encouraged Charlotte's writing, and she developed a passionate attachment to him. Emily returned home, and eventually Charlotte was sent home because of her inappropriate attraction to her teacher. Her return to Haworth led to depression, for the unattainable object of her desire, M. Heger, was now far away and unresponsive. In this situation, Charlotte was unable to write; "I feel as if we were all buried here," she wrote to Ellen Nussey (24 March 1845). Home felt like a prison where she was being punished for her infatuation with M. Heger. Not until she came across some poems by Emily did she recover her creative energies. The sisters re-established the old writing partnership, but now with each one as an autonomous author, collaborating in their support for each other's work as they read it aloud. Once again, Charlotte Brontë wrote at home, and she wrote there until her marriage, despite setbacks and disappointments. Even when she lost all three remaining siblings to death, she was able to continue writing, for by that time, she had established writing itself as the home for unattainable desires.

The idea of home is intrinsically intriguing, with its possibilities for figurative meanings. In fiction, every

feature of a home, its situation in a landscape or settlement, its architecture and furnishings, its atmosphere--all can be interpreted in different ways: as reflections of the individuals who live there, of social and class politics, and of thematic concerns. The house occupies various boundaries, between inside and outside, the natural world and the human one, the individual or family and society. It stands between the past and the future; it is the place where one generation has lived and future ones are born. Yet ideas about home are historically contingent and in constant flux in response to economic, political, social and aesthetic developments. As Philipa Tristram demonstrates in her study _Living Space in Fact and Fiction_ (1989), real and fictional homes bear a complex and varied relationship to each other. The representation of home in fiction can express positive or negative values about the home's place in the natural or the social world. Home can also be a focus for ideas about woman's place; this was especially the case when Charlotte Brontë was writing, a time when women were generally encouraged to be satisfied with domestic activities, under the control of the male head of the household. The home in a patriarchal culture is the house of the father, where a

woman is confined and ruled by the father's power.[2] At the same time, the idea of home as woman's place can include a degree of control and freedom in domestic activities; it can be an interior that is woman's domain. While this domain may support and reinforce patriarchal control, it may also foster female creativity, or even subversiveness, in relation to male power. Because of home's multiple meanings, questions of ideology, as well as symbolic and thematic concerns, can all be woven into a discussion of home. Charlotte Brontë resists the mid-Victorian domestic ideology that was leading to the doctrine of separate spheres for men and women. She also resists a sentimentalizing concept of home--such as Dickens represents in the Cratchit family, for example--by exploring the contradictions and conflicts in each of the homes in Jane Eyre. Even Ferndean, as a home, is far from idyllic. Nonetheless, her representations of various homes include passages of heightened poetic language that are related to the concepts of home as sacred space, and of home as a symbol of the the writer's creative imagination.

This study proposes to examine the idea of home as it evolves in Charlotte Brontë's fiction from the early

[2] For instance, Anne Elliot, in Jane Austen's Persuasion, is at the mercy of the whims of her foolish, vain and wasteful father, Sir Walter Elliot.

writings to Jane Eyre, with particular emphasis on that novel. The compositions of her childhood and adolescence, as well as her first novel, The Professor, are important for an understanding of the literary and cultural meaning of the search for home in Jane Eyre.[3] These works show her development as a writer of fiction, as well as the way the elements of the search for home emerge with increasing significance. This thesis suggests that the search for home represents the writer's--specifically the woman writer's--search for a place in literary history. Close readings of specific passages can illuminate and clarify the significance of certain images, of recurring patterns, and of underlying themes. Generally speaking, these underlying themes deal with three areas of interest. One is the cultural significance of home in both personal and social terms, what home means to individuals in their relationships with nature, and with a social order. A second is the idea of home as woman's sphere or place, in relation to men and to domestic activities. A third area involves the literary meaning of home in Charlotte Brontë's fiction, its significance, not so much to Charlotte Brontë the historical

[3] Kathleen Tillotson comments on Charlotte Brontë's lengthy struggle to overcome her own "wild will" in order to gain control of her writing: "Only when [this stuggle] is traced through her own earlier writings is Jane Eyre seen in perspective" (262).

person, as to "the writer" in the fiction, an integral, though elusive, fictional construction, the unique voice that Raymond Williams describes as "secret sharing", and that characterizes Jane Eyre and Villette in particular (English Novel 1984, 71).

The large body of scholarship about Charlotte and the other Brontës has been of great help in the preparation of this thesis. Particularly useful have been the fine editions of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë(EW) in four volumes by Christine Alexander 1987, 1991),[4] and the Five Novelettes(FN) edited by Winifred Gerin (1971), as well as Margaret Smith's 1975 Oxford Clarendon edition of Jane Eyre(JE) and her edition of the letters of Charlotte Brontë (1995).[5] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the letters are taken from this edition. Alexander's separate commentary on the early writings (1983), and Gerin's biographical and literary studies (1967, 1974) have also been very useful. The writings collected by Thomas James Wise and John Alexander Symington, The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendships and Correspondence (SHB), and The Miscellaneous

[4] Three volumes have been published to date.

[5] One volume to date.

<u>and Unpublished Writings of Charlotte and Patrick Branwell Brontë</u> (SHCBM) have been superseded by later collections since their appearance in 1932, but are still useful.

Various biographical works shed light on Charlotte Brontë's development as a writer, including Elizabeth Gaskell's, the first biography (1857), Kathleen Tillotson's incisive assessment in <u>Novels of the Eighteen-Forties</u> (1954), and Lyndall Gordon's literary biography (1994), as well as the psychobiographies of Margot Peters (1975) and Helene Moglen (1976). However, this thesis only incidentally refers to biography, in order to concentrate on the question of Charlotte Brontë's literary, rather than her literal, home.

Critical studies of Charlotte Brontë offer abundant interesting readings. A review of the relevant literature discovers many fruitful discussions of Charlotte Brontë's fiction from a wide variety of approaches; a number of these discussions have been helpful for this study. Many books and articles have taken a formalist approach in examining patterns of imagery, narrative structure, and symbolism, in <u>Jane Eyre</u> in particular. Of these, the well-known works by Robert Heilman (1960, 1980), Winifred Gerin (1966), Robert Bernard Martin (1966), and David Lodge (1966) have helped to establish connections between Charlotte Brontë and other Romantic writers, as have more historically oriented studies

by Cynthia Linder (1978), Robert Keefe (1979), Enid Duthie (1986) Sally Shuttleworth (1996) and others. The religious context of Jane Eyre, important for Chapter 4 of this thesis, has been explored by a number of writers, including Barbara Hardy (1964), Thomas Vargish (1985), and Jerome Beaty (1996). More general discussions of the historical period have been useful in establishing the background of Jane Eyre, especially Elizabeth Jay's book about Evangelicalism, The Religion of the Heart (1979).

Approaches that have a specific bias also yield a great deal of interesting material for a study of Charlotte Brontë's work. Psychoanalytic approaches to her writing have tended to emphasize connections to the writer's biography. While this thesis also takes into account a psychoanalytic approach, that of object relations theory, it uses this approach not for the purpose of psychobiography, but in order to understand the cultural meaning of home in the fiction. Another rich area of investigation has been the many feminist readings of Charlotte Brontë's work which have illuminated certain aspects of her fiction, especially of Jane Eyre, such as the notable section of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic (1979), whose title itself suggests Bertha Rochester. Other fresh insights from this point of view have come from Adrienne Rich (1973), Patricia Beer (1974), Maurianne Adams (1977),

Nancy Pell (1977), Gail B. Griffin (1982) and others. Some of these writers have identified what might be called a feminist strain in Jane Eyre, exemplified by Jane's vision from the roof of Thornfield, or her resistance to both Rochester and St. John Rivers.[6] However, any feminist themes in the narrative and other voices in Charlotte Brontë's fiction never include an essentialist view of gender, a point this thesis will explore in Chapter 5.

Still, Charlotte Brontë, like any writer, was of her time and place, and had absorbed or accepted a number of attitudes and beliefs that have left her open to negative judgements by some feminist critics and political historians. Jina Politi (1982), Firdous Azim (1993) and Gayatri Spivak (1985) have commented on racist elements in Jane Eyre, and on Jane's imperialist values. Politi and Terry Eagleton (1975) have found Charlotte Brontë lacking in her representation of the class system and politics. Eagleton sees her work in terms of her acquiescence to bourgeois values, and her failure to imagine a more

[6] Philippa Levine (1990) notes that the term "feminist" is anachronistic applied to women in the early part of the nineteenth century, but she also suggests that the term can be used legitimately to describe a point of view described by Linda Gordon as "'a critique of male supremacy, formed and offered in the light of a will to change it'" (2).

equitable social order.[7] Pat Macpherson (1989) and Penny Boumelha (1990) have also discussed the social meanings of Charlotte Brontë's work from a feminist point of view.

While granting the limitations of some of Charlotte Brontë's attitudes from a contemporary viewpoint, this study is not so much a critique, as an acknowledgement of those attitudes. Jerome J. McGann (1983) notes that

> . . . any criticism which abolishes the distance between its own (present) setting and its (removed) subject matter--any criticism which argues an unhistorical symmetry between the practicing critic and the descending work--will be, to that extent undermined as criticism. (30)

This thesis, then, tries to recognize the difference between Charlotte Brontë's day and our own. It attempts to work within the framework of a specific theme that appears to be important in Charlotte Brontë's fiction, and to understand what this theme might mean in her work. Its theoretical approach involves an effort to find some common ground between the approaches of psychoanalytic and cultural theory, especially as these theories have been explored in Britain in the years since World War II. In particular, the object relations theory of D. W. Winnicott (1965, 1974),

[7] Eagleton is in danger of saying that the bourgeois view has nothing to offer. In contrast, Peter Fuller remarks about Vermeer that while Vermeer's paintings reveal him as a petty bourgeois, " . . . not every petty bourgeois and not every petty bourgeois painter either, was Vermeer" (Art 185).

Charles Rycroft (1979, 1986, 1991), and, more recently, Adam Phillips (1988, 1998) and Jessica Benjamin (1988), is compatible with the cultural theory of Raymond Williams (1958, 1973, 1980, 1984) and Janet Wolff (1990). Both these approaches have helped to shape the ideas of the art critic, Peter Fuller (1980, 1985), whose writings, analyzing the connections between the individual, the work of art, and culture, have been influential on this dissertation.

All Charlotte Brontë's fiction involves the search for home. While her plots involve fictional representations of various homes, her works contain another, less obvious search by the woman writer to find a home for her imagination. Her early writing and her first novel can be seen as attempts to seek this literary home, a search that culminates in the writing of Jane Eyre. In that novel, Charlotte Brontë achieves her mature voice as a writer. In Jane Eyre, she explores the situation of the homeless orphan, symbol of some aspects of the writer, and she unites her with Rochester, the figure who symbolizes both the Romantic tradition and Charlotte Brontë's own earliest passion for writing.

Central to this exploration of the idea of home has been the idea that home is an eloquent symbol of culture by

means of its position between the individual and the social order, as a shelter or a prison for human individuality, and also because it is a cultural form that human beings are always constructing anew. The fact that culture and society can shape, oppress, encourage and resist the individual writer has led some critics to overemphasize the social and historical meanings of a work of literature. Terry Eagleton, for example, gives these approaches "a radical priority of status" (Myths of Power 2), believing that all writing is political, historical and social. He suggests that imagination is not "some timeless positive value; the opposition between `imagination' and `society', as the Brontës and other Romantics experienced it, is as it stands abstract and idealist" (11). Eagleton does acknowledge that the individual writer "actively transforms the historical structures which determine it into a unique artistic product" (7), but implies the writer's impotence in the face of cultural forces.

The theories of psychoanalysis, on the other hand, in particular of object relations theory, suggest that imagination is a capacity that all human beings can possess, and in that sense it is universal and "timeless"; at the same time, it is unique to each person and to their time and place in history. Also, D. W. Winnicott and others have pointed out that imagination can be damaged or oppressed. Moreover, an

individual can sense imagination's vulnerability in the face of personal or social threats.[8] Winnicott's concept of imagination develops out of his observation of the "transitional space" that opens between a mother and an infant when the mother leaves the baby alone. The baby learns to use an object, such as a toy, to replace and symbolize the mother's presence, and also learns to play with the toy in this symbolic space, filling the space with "creative playing, with the use of symbols, and with all that eventually adds up to a cultural life" (Playing and Reality 128). Thus, in normal development, when the transitional space is not damaged by too much intrusiveness or neglect, the baby and the mother together create the potential for the individual to be creative, and to participate in cultural life.

This approach, with its emphasis on the necessity of creativity, differs from Freudian and post-Freudian considerations of literature and other works of art that regard them as expressions of the artist's pathology, similar to the symptoms of neurosis, even if, in the Kleinian view, the art is regarded as reparative in some sense.[9] In contrast,

[8] For example, for Charlotte Brontë, a personal threat would be the death of her mother, and a social one would be the power of men to control women's lives and the fact that men have cultural privileges from which she is excluded.

[9] See Andrew Brink, Loss and Symbolic Repair (1977).

object relations theory considers culture to be the "means for self-realization" (Phillips, Winnicott 119).

While a psychoanalytical approach sometimes takes the risk of overemphasizing the personal and biographical, the point of view of object relations offers the possibility of including social and historical influences on a writer's development. The search for home in Charlotte Brontë's fiction can be seen as a quest to create a place for the writer in literary culture. It is also an endeavour to preserve and express the imagination itself. The fiction thus represents an imaginative engagement--both compliant and rebellious-- with personal and cultural history.

Winnicott's ideas were taken up by a number of other psychoanalytic theorists, including Charles Rycroft. While he accepts the Freudian division of psychic processes into primary "iconic and non-discursive" forms (dreaming, symptoms), and secondary "verbal, discursive" forms (rationality, language), (Psychoanalysis and Beyond 262), Rycroft suggests that these two opposite aspects of psychic life in some individuals "may continue to function in harmony" (266). He believes that creative expression is based on this relationship between primary and secondary processes, whereby unconscious elements can be transformed using "symbols which are part of the shared iconography of the culture" to which the writer belongs, the writer being

particularly sensitive to both processes because of what Keats has called "'negative capability'" (272-3).

Rycroft's ideas influenced Peter Fuller, whose art criticism connects the individuality of the work of art with its significance for the culture in which it appears. The idea that the artist can use what culture provides, and also make a new contribution, likewise characterizes the cultural criticism of Raymond Williams. The common ground among all these writers--Rycroft, Williams and Fuller--involves the importance they give to the concept of the imagination. Williams follows Coleridge in emphasizing the writer's need to preserve "spontaneous life-activity" against "rigidities of category and abstraction" (Culture and Society 207), an idea that suggests the need to protect imagination from threats to its vitality. Another of Williams' important ideas is that literary works embody "structures of feeling" (56) which resonate with the interests and beliefs of their readers. Williams examines these "structures of feeling" by exploring literary works in relation to wider social changes.

Peter Fuller, seeking to incorporate the ideas of both Rycroft and Williams, identifies a concern with the importance of biological and imaginative life in both writers (Art and Psychoanalysis 18). This concern involves nature, both inner and outer, and has characterized the tradition of

British cultural criticism from Coleridge through Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, and Morris. This tradition has recognized that social criticism must take individual imagination into account, along with the historical and social context. Fuller writes with the idea that in cultural criticism, "the opposition between the personal and the social" can be overcome (Images of God 158), because the artist is affected by, and contributes to, a "shared symbolic order" (159).

The attempt to reconcile the personal and the social in this study of Charlotte Brontë's fiction provides a way of looking at how "the writer" in the work uses the search for home to preserve her imaginative spontaneity, and also to find and create her own place in literary history, her cultural "home". In a sense, this search constitutes "an autobiography", as Jane Eyre is subtitled, not in a literal sense, but in the sense in which The Prelude, Wordsworth's description of the "growth of a poet's mind" is autobiographical. Rycroft notes that the poem is not, strictly speaking, an autobiography, but an account of the "growth of poetic capacity and imagination" (Psychonalaysis and Beyond 193). Similarly, Charlotte Brontë's writing traces the development of "the writer", represented by the narrative voice and the narrative concerns, as these unfold in the works examined here.

As this thesis traces the progress of the writer through the work, particular attention is drawn to questions

such as the narrative voice, the male and female protagonists, representations of home in description and dialogue, and indications of the writer's relationship to the literary culture of her day. The comments of a number of different critics about symbolism, structure, narration and literary history have been relevant and useful to an examination of these questions. Also of particular interest are passages of heightened and even poetic language that deal implicitly with the question of imagination. These descriptive passages often employ imagery of fourfold patterns, or of some combination of circles and squares. These can be read as verbal representations of the form known in art and religion as the mandala. This form, which combines the circle and the square in some way, occurs in Hinduism and in all forms of Buddhism, as well as in Christianity, for example in the Celtic cross. It can be interpreted as an image of the cosmos, and as an aid to enlightenment. Blake's "human form divine" is fourfold.[10] Sometimes it incorporates the four points of the compass, or an image of a man and a woman. In Japanese Buddhism, the mandala includes two complementary aspects of psychic reality: reasoning and spiritual knowledge; these might correspond to

[10] Anne K. Mellor points out that this form is male, and the female is an "emanation" of it. (Romanticism and Feminism 1988, 7).

the verbal and iconic in Rycroft's description of the psyche. It can also be seen as a "guide to the imagination" and as an image of "psychic order" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 632-4).

While Charlotte Brontë was probably not aware of the mandala or its symbolism as such, she would have been familiar with such images in the literature, art, and liturgical symbols of her cultural experience. They are iconic forms, part of the "shared symbolic order", and available to any artist. Her use of these forms is deliberate, in the sense that she is consciously creating a poetic structure or pattern in those passages in which mandalas appear. In her fiction, these mandala images indicate moments in the text when the writer's imagination is of primary importance; they are representations of insights about imagination's search for home, a place where opposing elements can be reconciled. Occasionally these opposites are depicted as male and female, often at a moment of harmony or fulfilment, emblems of an inner marriage of masculine and feminine elements in the writer. Rycroft has commented that

> . . . people who possess negative capability to a high degree . . . . seem to be refreshingly free from the conventional notion that activity is masculine and passivity is feminine and can therefore oscillate between active and passive states of being without feeling that their identity is threatened by doing so. As a result they can, for instance, imagine themselves into characters of the opposite--or rather other--sex as readily as into characters of their own . . . . and rejection

> of the masculine-active feminine-passive dichotomy could be regarded as a healthy immunity to indoctrination by cultural prejudices. (Art and Psychoanalysis 274-5).

A symbolic union of man and woman is a particularly apt representation of the capacity to reconcile contrary elements. In Jane Eyre, Jane's journey towards home is a pilgrimage both literally and figuratively to this reconciliation of masculine and feminine within the writer.

The search for home, embodying the writer's search, means telling the story of how the imagination is supported or denied by its environment, and how it responds or resists. The first chapter of this thesis examines the early writings of Charlotte Brontë, up to around 1840, when, at twenty-four, she abandoned the Angrian saga. In these early works, the search for a literary home involves two main developments: the evolution of a distinctive narrative voice, and the gradually increasing importance of female characters, some of whom prefigure Jane Eyre. Sometimes the writing contains passages of description that symbolize the process of creativity in the writer. Through these aspects of her fiction, the writer creates a place for imagination in writing itself. Following the practice of Christine Alexander and Winifred Gerin, irregularities of spelling or

sentence structure in the original manuscripts have been retained in quotations from these early writings.

Chapter 2 deals with Charlotte Brontë's first novel, The Professor, completed by 1846, but not published until 1857. This novel's focus of interest shifts among the three main characters: William, Frances and Hunsden. Themes and motifs that will be more important in Jane Eyre appear in this novel, and Frances herself resembles Jane in many ways. The theme of the search for home arises more clearly in this novel than in the early writings. Again, as in the early writings, the narrative explores various symbolic representations of creativity and of the union of opposites.

The last three chapters of the thesis deal with different aspects of the search for home in Jane Eyre. Chapter 3 considers the novel in terms of the dynamic interplay between nature and culture through Jane's progress from one home to another, examining each of these homes and their influence on her. Chapter 4 investigates the question of the religious meaning of the search for home, particularly in the opposition and reconciliation of patriarchal and maternal religious patterns. Finally, Chapter 5 deals directly with the writer's quest for a literary home and the novel's implicit claim to belong to the Romantic movement.

Chapter I

The Search for a Literary Home: Narrative Voice and Female Characters in the Early Writings

"The intricate threads within"

The early writings of Charlotte Brontë illuminate her development as a writer, from the age of ten, when she began producing collections of loosely related stories, poems and other material, to her abandonment of the Angrian saga when she was twenty-four. This early writing, including both juvenilia and the more mature novelettes, is not so much concerned with characters who search for home as with the writer's search for a place in writing to embody an imaginative world. These works gradually develop two elements of importance to the theme of the search for home in Charlotte Brontë's later fiction: a characteristic ironic narrative voice, and a complex, independent, central female character. Both these developments involve the concept of home, in that the writer's imagination seeks a literary home in a voice and a subject, and the female character desires a home with the man she loves. These two strands eventually coincide in Charlotte Brontë's creation of Jane Eyre, who is both voice and subject.

For Charlotte Brontë and her siblings, writing provided a structure for conscious desires and unconscious passions. Magical features in these juvenile works probably show the influence of folk and fairy tales, but magic also suggests the dreamlike way that unconscious elements function in the psyche. This supernatural strain was never to leave Charlotte Brontë's work entirely; quasi-magical events occur in Jane Eyre and Villette, and a reference to fairies appears on the last page of Shirley.[1] Supernatural elements, such as fairies, are mysteriously external, associated with nature and wildness, but in psychoanalytic terms, magical elements in literature reveal fears and wishes coming from the unconscious, the reservoir of passion and longing in human beings that inspires creative endeavours. For the Brontë children, writing may have been a way to express their longing for, and even to replace, their lost mother

[1] The loss of belief in fairies occurs at around the same time that Charlotte Brontë was writing, and is perhaps connected to the fact that ancient rituals and festivals were being suppressed by landowners and industrialists and supplanted by more repressive church festivals. Howard Newby (1987) observes that "especially during the early Victorian period, concerted efforts were made by the propertied classes to diminish the significance of popular customs and traditions and to render them more civilized, sober and law-abiding where they were not made defunct. This meant that the traditional round of festivals, ceremonies and celebrations was in decline . . ." (92).

and their sister Maria, who taught them to invent "plays".[2] Within a year after Maria's death in 1825, the children had begun to write. According to D. W. Winnicott, the earliest play takes place in "transitionl space", where the child replaces the mother with its own imaginative life. In his earlier writings, Winnicott believed that the point of this play is "not its symbolic value so much as its actuality" (Playing and Reality 6).[3] Towards the end of his life, however, Winnicott was again working on the idea of transitional space and saw in it the location of "cultural experiences that provide the continuity in the human race that transcends personal existence" (Playing and Reality 118).[4] He was not able to explore how the infantile playing with toys actually becomes the experiences of art and religion in the adult, but the Brontë children do demonstrate that the consolatory play of childhood became a way of participating in the culture of their day, despite their isolation.

[2]Charlotte described Maria as a "little mother". Ellen Nussey reported that as a schoolgirl, Charlotte would still weep when thinking of Maria ("Reminiscences of Charlotte Brontë" in Smith ed., The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 593).

[3] From "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena", 1953.

[4] From "The Location of Cultural Experience", 1967.

All four children collaborated on the original Glass Town stories, but after 1831 Emily and Anne Brontë chose to write together about the imaginary realm of Gondal, while Charlotte and Branwell created a fictitious society in Africa, based on their knowledge of colonial expansion on that continent.[5] However, their imaginary colony closely resembled the English landscape they knew, and aristocratic English society as they imagined it. The names they chose for their colony, "Glass Town",[6] and " Angria", suggest the function of this fictional geography as a reflection of their feelings. Charlotte Brontë shows her awareness that these stories are fantasies of wish-fulfillment when she describes Glass Town as "a dream or gorgeous fiction" (SHCBM 1: 29).

These early works produced between 1826 and 1840 feature great emotional intensity. Violent incidents and pas-

[5] Charlotte's writing can be differentiated from Branwell's by means of their handwriting, their pseudonyms, and their literary styles. The initials WT and UT ("we two" and "us two") probably identify works that they wrote together. Although the degree of verbal collaboration is very difficult to determine, the manuscripts themselves can be identified as Charlotte's or Branwell's work. Alexander suggests that "problems of authorship of the early Brontë manuscripts have been greatly exaggerated" (39). Helene Moglen notes that between 1836-39, Charlotte wrote what are now known as the Five Novelettes completely on her own (47).

[6] Alexander notes the similarity between the celestial city in Pilgrim's Progress and the desriptions of Glass Town (19).

sionate outbursts characterize the Angrian family dramas, adventures and love stories. Charlotte even envisions a dead father in the "Journal of a Frenchman" (1831); the narrator refers to his father as "the old hunks" (EW 1: 221). Deaths and resurrections occur regularly in the earliest stories, often as a result of intervention by the "Genii", the name the young authors gave themselves, conscious of their powers as writers to give life to their characters. The violent plots allowed the young writers to explore their fantasies about the hostility between parents and children, sibling rivalry, and the like.

A further impetus to the stories came from the set of wooden soldiers bought by Mr. Brontë for Branwell in 1826.[7] Entranced by these toys, each child seized one, giving it the name of a favourite hero: Wellington (Charlotte's), Napoleon, and so on. Thus contemporary culture as they understood it became part of their play. The soldiers formed the basis of the "Young Men's Plays" and perhaps contributed to the fact that Charlotte chose to write as a male narrator about male exploits. Although Wellington was her original hero, the central figure for Charlotte quite early in the sagas is the Marquis of Douro, or Duke of Zamorna,

[7] Gordon records that in the same summer Mr. Brontë gave Charlotte a copy of The Imitation of Christ, suggesting his different expectations of his son and his daughter (27).

the Duke of Wellington's son, and the earliest version of the Byronic hero who became fully developed in Rochester.

In the Glass Town and Angrian sagas, the primary violence of the story is the attack on the original Ashantee inhabitants of the African territory, with no recognition that it is home to the Ashantees. Although Patrick Brontë came from a colonized people in Ireland, he identified with British aggression and imperialism, particularly with the exploits of the Duke of Wellington, the "Iron Duke" who was a cultural model of ruthlessness, power and success.[8] The young Brontës learned early in life to admire and aspire to the mastery of upper-class males and to marginalize everyone else. For Charlotte Brontë, however, applying that marginalization to her own voice, and to female characters, would become increasingly difficult. Internalizing the values of both colonialism and patriarchy involved writing as a male and projecting savagery onto the "uncivilized" black Ashantees, and inferiority onto women; Ashantees and women remain in the male-dominated narrative as the subordinate other in the continual warfare and romance of the plot-line.

[8] "Wellington embodied Mr. Bronte's unfulfilled dream of an heroic army career, and both were Tories and Irishmen" (Alexander 24).

Charlotte Brontë and the other children adopted Wellington as their hero perhaps partly because his prowess on the battlefield enabled him to establish himself as an aristocrat.[9] His success, further idealized in his sons and their imaginary social world, enabled the children to imagine a romantic feudalism in which they explored their own wishes for power and social success, along with their anxiety about staying out of the lower class. The repetitious violence and the struggle to predominate indicate a continuing worry about class and race. This worry also appears as an obsession with birth and social origins, and as a constant need felt by all the characters to know that they are superior. Their struggles suggest concern about finding a place in the social world where the self can feel at home, as well as about the writer's capacity to find a place in literary culture. For a woman, these concerns are more acute: powerless to win success in the same ways as men, any woman not belonging legitimately to a man risks ostracism from the social world, an issue Charlotte Brontë confronts in her mature fiction also.

The struggles for dominance and love in Angria reveal a subtext about the writer and her effort to establish her

[9] "National heroes who had the misfortune to be born commoners had, necessarily, to be fitted out with an appropriate estate upon their elevation to the peerage by a grateful monarch" (Newby 59).

voice and her issues. Assuming that writing is a masculine preserve and that history is made by men, Charlotte and Branwell created a hyper-masculine world where Wellington is the good but distant father and women are politically insignificant, useful only as pawns and objects of male desire. Through the voices of male narrators, especially Charles (cf. Charlotte) Wellesley, the writer explores male narcissism, brutality and ruthlessness. Female characters are generally submissive, and only occasionally protest or rebel. Nonetheless, their presence provides an alternative to the tales of male power and violence that becomes the main narrative in the later novelettes (1836-9). Eventually, quiet, self-controlled women become the focus of Charlotte Brontë's stories. Along with this development, her mode of narration gradually changes. The emergence of a female narrator in her work is a long and circuitous process, but as the interest shifts to female characters, the narrative voice changes to become the home of an explicitly female consciousness in _Jane Eyre_.

Sometimes, in the earliest writings, Charlotte Brontë openly represses the feminine, as in a long, bombastic speech by Zamorna, her central romantic, and also violent, male figure, where he says:

> ' . . . I could for the moment forget my manhood and, in weary despair forsake the plough to which my hand has been laid. Only for the moment, Angrians. Other and more permanent feelings

> quickly follow. I sit down a vacillating woman but I rise up a resolute man.'

He ends,"'I sign myself your Guardian in Peace, your General in War, your Tyrant in Rebellions!'" ("Visits in Verreopolis" 1830; EW 1: 300). Zamorna's authoritarian, swashbuckling style typically uses an enormous number of Biblical references, and quotations from the *Book of Common Prayer*, classical mythology, Milton, Scott, Byron and Shakespeare. The writer's reliance on these literary "fathers" and her identification with Zamorna's cause do not admit much subtlety or irony, but as time goes on, the narrator becomes sceptical about Zamorna's exploits and point of view. Alexander (1983) suggests "that she delighted in stories of love and sexual passion, yet she felt moral discomfort over the rakish nature of her material" (228); using a male narrator perhaps avoided the issue temporarily as well as evading the question of a woman's right to have a literary voice.

For the male characters in the early works, women's domestic concerns invoke disdain or mockery. One comic episode in "The Tragedy and The Essay" (1833) deals with a character named Lofty who wants to write. Making fun of him, Douro (Zamorna) suggests that he write an essay on an unusual topic, "'the art of the laundress. Write an essay on it divided into three parts, viz.: washing, starching and

ironing'" (EW 2.1: 241).[10] Lofty does not know he is being teased, or that his "lofty" aspirations need to be brought to earth. However, Douro treats Lofty's aspirations more seriously than those of his own wife:

> At this moment, the Marchioness of Douro, . . . seated on a low footstool at the feet of her husband and Lady [Zenobia] Ellrington, exclaimed in her usual artless manner, 'I wish I had written a book!'
>
> 'And so do I,' was the response that immediately burst from Lofty's lips.
>
> The Marquis smiled at the characteristic naiveté of Marian's aspiration, but he turned with a more serious air to Lofty, and said, 'Well, Fred, what is there to hinder you from writing as many books as you like?' (EW 2.1: 240)

Marian's intellectual inferiority reveals itself in her position on a low footstool in relation to the more intelligent Marquis and Zenobia. The Marquis treats as a joke her naive wish, not to write, but to have written, but he raises what may nonetheless be an empowering idea for the woman writer: " . . . what is there to hinder you from writing?"

The hindrance, of course, is gender. It is not woman's place to write, to claim a place in culture that belongs to writers like Scott and Byron, whom Charlotte Brontë admired.

[10] Cf. Anna Barbauld's 1797 mock-heroic poem "Washing Day" (Breen 1994, 81-3).

In another scene between Zamorna and his first wife Marian, she explores the inhibiting effect of the Romantic hero on female creativity. In "The Secret" (1833), Zamorna attacks Marian for her "'disobedience'" in speaking to her former governess without permission, threatening to leave her if she does so again. His outburst affects Marian's ability to continue the drawing she is working on:

> But now the pencil seemed to have lost its power, or the hand which directed it, its skill. Instead of the flowing, correct lines and soft shadows which she had before produced, tremulous, wavering strokes and dark blotches mocked her unavailing efforts. At last she relinquished the attempt, and, after replacing the sketch in her portfolio and closing the ivory box which contained her drawing materials, she drew towards her a harp which stood near. (EW 2.1: 278)

Crippled by criticism, not of her work but of herself, Marian abandons the effort to be creative. She turns to performance; like many damsels in Romantic literature, she whiles away her time singing and playing a stringed instrument in a melancholy way. She sings only a "metrical fragment", reflecting the way her selfhood has been fragmented by criticism. Marian's passive compliance depends on repressing her passion, intelligence and aggression: there is always something missing in her that Douro will seek elsewhere, even as he insists on more obedience from her.

One way of dealing with Marian's submissiveness and vulnerability as the writer had defined them was to give her a rival: the older, dark-skinned, and therefore exotic,

Zenobia Ellrington. The stories set up a competition between these two about who is the more valuable woman, valuable to men, of course. Also, another argument enters the stories at this time as to whether women have equal talents and capacities to men. Zenobia is a gifted woman who expresses passion, assertiveness, and even violence. The portrait of Zenobia comes from Gibbon's description of a woman of the same name, "the most heroic of her sex", whose beauty came from her ancestor, Cleopatra. According to him, "her . . . manly understanding was strengthened and adorned by study",[11] suggesting that there is no innate "womanly" intelligence. Similarly, in "My Angria and the Angrians" (1834), another character says to Zenobia, "'Nature, in your case, mistook and placed a masculine soul in a feminine casket'" (EW 2.2: 280): an intelligent woman constitutes a mistake on the part of nature.[12]

In a pronouncement made by the ultimate hero and patriarchal authority, the Duke of Wellington, about the place of women, and specifically about Zenobia's intellectual brilliance, the Duke maintains that women are

[11] Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, quoted in Alexander (23).

[12] In Jane Eyre, St. John Rivers tells Jane that she has both "a man's vigorous brain" and "a woman's heart", a comment that indicates his paternalistic bias regarding female intelligence (413).

like swans, dignified, graceful and beautiful in their natural element, water, but an "'unseemly'" and "'ludicrous'" spectacle when they "'waddle'" on land. "'In like manner,'" he says, "'the proper and native element of woman is home. That is her kingdom, her undisputed and rightful possession.'" Another character domesticates the Duke's argument: "'At least I know that I should not like it if when I went home tired & hungry I found my table heaped with books and papers instead of a good, hot, smoking dinner'" ("Visits in Verreopolis" EW 1: 313-4). Home may be the woman's "kingdom", but it is his table. Yet the writer is aware that desire and intelligence can exist in a woman at the same time that she makes most of her female characters subservient, in line with cultural norms. Creating doubles, twins, and antagonists enabled Charlotte Brontë to express these contradictory aspects and to explore the issues of passion and creativity in women like Zenobia who refuse to be compliant.

Zenobia persists in her creative projects even when she is disappointed in love, unlike the passive heroines. Zenobia also practices magic, a kind of creativity associated with art. When Douro marries Marian in "The Bridal" (1832), Zenobia goes from despair to melancholy, "and while in this state, amuse[s] herself with carving [a] little image", a statue of Apollo holding a lyre (EW 1: 342-7).

Her response reflects on literary creativity, for she carves the god of poetry and gives it as a wedding gift to Zamorna. This gift may be interpreted as a symbol of the creative process, and it relates also to the union of male and female, the *Hieros Gamos*,[13] that inspires the art. Zenobia has aspects of both male and female in her personality as well, and her "masculine" soul may enable her to be creative, unlike the hyper-feminine Marian. Thus masculine and feminine are recognized by Charlotte Brontë as cultural constructions for qualities that can belong to a man or a woman, including the writer.

Uniting masculine and feminine elements in characters, images, and voice became a distinctive feature of Charlotte Brontë's fiction. Her narrative voice is a legacy of twenty years of practice with a male narrator, and of the duality in consciousness that she discovered early on. When she was fourteen, in 1830, she described her relationship to the characters she and her siblings had created, as well as to the historical figures who inspired them:

> It seemed as if I was a non-existent shadow, that I neither spoke, eat, imagined or lived of myself, but I was the mere idea of some other creature's brain. The Glass Town seemed so likewise. My father, Arthur and everyone with whom I am acquainted, passed into a state of

[13] The Sacred Marriage: "a symbol of the union of masculine and feminine forces in the cosmos, in life and in the inner realm" (Chetwynd 1982, 171).

> annihilation; but suddenly I thought again that I and my relatives did exist, and yet not us but our minds and bodies without ourselves. Then this supposition--the oddest of any--followed the former quickly, namely that WE without US were shadows; also, but at the end of a long vista, as it were, appeared dimly and indistinctly, beings that really lived in a tangible shape, that were called by our names and were US from whom WE had been copied by something--I could not tell what. ("Young Men's Magazine" EW 1: 257)

While she explores the relationship between the literary creations and their counterparts in real life, the writer does not describe the creative process, that "something" mysteriously present in this passage; it can perhaps only be described metaphorically.

Doubling characters also lets Charlotte Brontë explore the question of literary creativity through male voices. If Zamorna is a Byronic hero, the quintessential Byronic hero is Byron himself, not only an adventurer and a seducer, but a writer. Yet Zamorna is not a writer: instead, he has a brother who writes. "The Spell: An Extravaganza" (1834) introduces Zamorna's fictitious twin brother, resembling a writer in his introspectiveness. In one passage, the double, "Lord Gordon"[14] seeks solitude:

[14] The cast of characters in the childhood saga is not consistent. Only latterly in these writings does Charlotte Brontë settle on "Charles Townshend" as the writer-brother of Zamorna. The many and grandiose titles of the Angrian aristocrats sometimes make for confusing reading. "Lord Gordon" of course suggests Byron.

> Some thought rises in his mind which he wishes to ponder out alone and he steals off . . . to labour at the disentanglement of the intricate threads which are within him, but which he is too inexperienced yet to unravel. (EW 2.2: 334-5)

Not only is this character reflective and introverted, quite the opposite of Zamorna, but the image of his thought comes from domestic life, specifically from women's traditional creative occupation, needlework. He is thereby an androgynous figure who is also a writer. The most important of these doubles is Zamorna's younger brother, Lord Charles who moves from admiration of Zamorna to ambivalence and gradual disapproval of his arrogant behaviour. The voice of Charles Wellesley/Charles Townshend moves between romance and irony, for "the device of a cynical narrator allowed [Charlotte Brontë] simultaneously to criticize and to indulge in her romantic fantasies" (Alexander 230). Thus the writer found an imaginative home in the cynical voice of Lord Charles, while still avoiding the issue of a woman's right to have a literary voice.

Lord Charles is not explicitly masculine, like Zamorna or Northangerland. He is the inquisitive, apparently sexually neutral younger brother, and, unlike Zamorna, interested in gossip and domestic life. Clownish and awkward, he often gets into mischief, usually as a result of being where he is not supposed to be, spying on his brother or his sister-in-law. Lord Charles is habitually in or around the

world of women and their concerns, to which he is sympathetic, so that the writer is both in the domestic realm in terms of her interests, and outside it as an observer and narrator. The persona of Lord Charles, a sort of androgynous sprite, lets her comment on both men and women, and on the repressiveness of social position as defined by gender and class. Lord Charles describes himself as a complete outsider:

> I'd as soon be a shoe-black in a merry jovial servants hall as heir-apparent to Wellingtonsland. I'm burdened neither by domestic ties, religious scruples nor political predelictions. I never understood what home pleasures & family affections meant. ("Passing Events" (1836), FN 81)

He goes on to rejoice at the impossibility of his ever being caught, jailed, or hanged, expressing the joy of freedom in the imagination.[15] Paradoxically, at the same time that Lord Charles enters and describes the world of home and domestic relationships, his denial of home ties subverts the values of affection, relationship and stability. The other side of his freedom is a sense of alienation; Carol Bock (1992) notes his "boasting of an affective isolation that most people would find painful" (24). His point of view would eventually become the characteristic perceptive, dis-

[15] Lord Charles resembles Ariel in The Tempest in his love of freedom, his androgyny, and his magical ability to observe and comment on all the other characters.

illusioned, and sardonic voices of Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, who retain the status of outsider that enables them to comment freely on what they observe. Unlike him, however, they long for connection with others.

Having passed through various stages, from the robust masculine tones of Zamorna and others to the impudent curiosity of Lord Charles, the writer turns finally to virtual third-person narration in the later novelettes such as "Mina Laury" (1837) or "Caroline Vernon" (1839), which nonetheless retain a tone of irony and quiet wit.[16] For example, Zamorna receives a letter from Caroline Vernon:

> --It was a prettily folded, satin-paper production--nicely addressed & sealed with the impression of a Cameo--His Grace cracked the pretty classic head--unfolded the document & read . . . . ("Caroline Vernon", FN 328)

This passage mocks romance and indirectly comments on Zamorna's treatment of women; it also conveys some disquiet about a woman's claim to write.

[16] Christine Alexander and Carol Bock disagree about the narrative voice in "Mina Laury". Alexander believes that "Charlotte herself is the narrator" (165); Bock says that all the Angrian material has a male narrator (169). Because the narrator of "Mina Laury" refers to his previous books, he is probably Charles Townsend, but his voice is impersonal, and Charlotte Brontë seems to be experimenting with a different style of narration, probably because she finds Charles Townsend's personality too limiting.

In 1836, Charlotte Brontë directly confronted this possible anxiety about her entitlement to write by sending some of her work to the poet Robert Southey. Southey's reply encouraged her to think of her responsibilities as a woman: "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be" (12 March 1837). Nonetheless, Southey did not deny Charlotte Brontë's "gift", and encouraged her to write poetry for its own sake, and for her own "permanent good". Moreover, he noted what was indeed a personal and a creative problem for her, the tension and conflict between romance and realism. This conflict had developed in a number of ways. From an early age, the Evangelical Protestantism of Charlotte Brontë's upbringing came into conflict with the romance, exoticism and adventure she encountered in Romantic writers like Scott and Byron. Yet she also appreciated the pleasures of domestic life;[17] gradually, domestic themes found more place in her fiction without ever displacing romance completely.

An early story, "An Adventure in Ireland" (1829), contrasts domestic comfort and Romantic excitement. The

[17] In December 1839, Charlotte Brontë wrote to Ellen Nussey that she and Emily were enjoying doing housework while Tabitha Ayckroyd, the housekeeper, was ill: "Human feelings are such queer things--I am much happier--blackleading the stoves--making the beds and sweeping the floors at home, than I should be living like a fine lady anywhere else" (21 December 1839).

narrator goes for a walk and sees a castle where the gentleman owner invites him to stay: "I was shown into a large parlour, in which was an old lady sitting in an armchair by the fireside, knitting, On the rug lay a very pretty tortoiseshell cat." The old lady is the gentleman's mother; his father is dead. A little boy, Dennis, shows the narrator to his room, warns him about "'the ould masther's ghost'" and leaves. The narrator wakes to confront a skeleton in a sheet who tells him, "'Arise, that I may show thee this world's wonders'"; these turn out to be Romantic landscapes, waterfalls, gulfs, floods, deserts and so on. Just as the narrator is about to encounter a lion, he is wakened by Dennis opening the window curtain. The exciting Romantic scenes turn out to exist in the dreamer's psyche and need to be balanced by the homelike security of "the little old-fashioned room at the top of O'Callaghan's castle" (EW 1: 18-22). Thus the traveller finds refuge as well as adventure on his walk. Interestingly, the mother provides the domestic security and the father, in the shape of the ghost, provides the adventure. Similarly, in _Jane Eyre_, Mrs. Fairfax provides the comfort and Rochester the excitement.

Another story finds Lord Charles visiting Captain Bud and the two characters enjoying a delicious tea from a silver urn, comfortably seated beside the fire with wind and

rain storming outside. Amusingly combining the domestic and the apocalyptic, Charlotte Brontë writes, "At length tea, like all other things from the world to a needleful of thread, came to an end" ("Visits in Verreopolis" EW 1: 318). Bored with conversation, the two characters lapse into silence, broken when Lord Charles suggests that Captain Bud tell a story. If domestic comfort is the solution to the dangers of romance, romance is the solution to domestic boredom and silence.

Both the domestic and the romantic themes in Charlotte Brontë's work involve the search for home. The domestic theme includes ideas of comfort and security, but the romance theme often means the search for a home in the social world. Although her settings symbolize the psychological worlds of her characters, their inner homes, the pictorial quality of her writing also gives them a material and social context: landscapes, buildings and rooms that place them in a Romantic, aristocratic world as she imagined it. The descriptions of exotic scenes, powerful individuals, and luxurious interiors suggest her cultural influences, her ideas about "high life" derived from Scott, or from the popular "silver fork" novels of the 1820's and 30's that depicted the "insolent luxury of the Regency" (Altick 10). She also saw pictures like the Romantic works of John Martin, which she copied as models for the Angrian

cities. However, when grandeur is the keynote, it can be difficult to represent home as a place for the personal, or to differentiate one luxurious setting from another, let alone one handsome or beautiful character from another. Faced with the problem of sameness in these descriptions, Charlotte Brontë creates contrasting elements of restraint, describing characters who wear only white, or who wear no jewelry. Characters who experience or choose limitation over indulgence gradually acquire greater significance in her work, a theme that deepens in her later fiction. She also turned to details drawn from her own experience and began to romanticize the landscape, buildings and domestic settings of Yorkshire, the moors, the parlours and other rooms of old houses that she had actually seen, like the Red House at Gomersal (Pinion 1975, 267).

In the novelettes, the writer often places her "outsider" characters like Mina Laury or Elizabeth Hastings in less idealized, more realistic settings, often in houses that imply an older tradition, or a decaying way of life. These mansions, however, signify displacement for such female characters, because these are not their own family homes. Zamorna has established Mina Laury in a mansion, but her original home is a lower-class cottage, and although she plays the role of an upper class woman, the facts of her birth, even more than her status as a mistress, exclude her

from belonging to the aristocracy. Elizabeth Hastings only seems to belong in the decayed surroundings of Massinger Hall. Similarly, Jane Eyre lives amid the grandeur of Gateshead or Thornfield, but these are not her real homes.

The early writings of Charlotte Brontë try to reconcile her ingrained feelings about class with the desire for wealth, beauty and cultivation. Thus she does not simply assign these privileges to the aristocratic women alone. Instead, she lets lower- class women sometimes have access to upper-class life by becoming the mistresses of titled men, although she recognizes that this move means social death for the women. No matter how much she idealizes Mina Laury, this character remains a glorified servant with no social status and some implicit moral weakness. At the same time, she recognizes that rank does not necessarily imply genuine superiority. As Mina puts it:

> 'The noble and high-born cannot endure grief. They fly with cowardly terror from the coming of mortality . . . what wild, impious wailings fill dome and turret, bower and hall. It is not so in cottages. Poverty and the necessity of labour strengthen men's souls wonderfully' ("The Spell", EW 2.2: 177)

Although Mina talks about men's souls, the issue is really women's place. Mina's problem is her desire for the aristocratic hero, but the writer's problem is her awareness of the poor woman's intellect and talent. Mina is completely able to play the role of an upper-class woman, as

Mary recognizes: "'She might be an earl's instead of a cottager's daughter'" (175). If a poor woman's home is rightfully among the rich and titled, the class system is undermined. Also, the rich and titled in the Angrian stories often do not seem to deserve their social superiority. The stories satirize the bickering, competitiveness and shallowness of the privileged characters, who are not unlike the culturally inferior Ingrams in Jane Eyre. This critical attitude reflects widespread social changes in England as the middle classes encroached on the waning power of the aristocracy (Newby 52).

The decay of the aristocracy means increased opportunities for those who want to get ahead through education or talent. The patrician home is the focus of these social changes in a conversation between Hartford and Richton as they look at the old and neglected Hartford Hall:

> 'Aye' replied Hartford 'even plebeians, if you remark Richton, when they look upon an old ruin like that, with its screen of ivy, its grey gables & swallow haunted stacks of chimney--even dull, fat plebeians--do feel a little reverence toward the family that once owned it. . . .--Aristocracy passes from the earth, Richton--half a century hence . . . some staring city mansion of brick will have been reared on its ruins . . . .' ("Julia" (1837), FN 97)

The house represents the decline of the aristocracy and also of romance. Natural elements, the ivy and the swallows, belong to the building, the evergreen ivy, symbolizing "the enduring strength of plant life and the persistence of

desire" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1994, 546), and the swallows, perennially returning birds representing seasonal renewal and life's continuity. Bearing traces of their mythological and literary meanings, these living things will disappear when the "staring city mansion" of manufactured bourgeois brick replaces the natural grey stone of the old building, the values of the city overwhelming those of the country, and capital replacing land as the primary form of wealth.[18] Oddly, Hartford seems to acquiesce in the whole process of decay and loss. His lack of energy contrasts with the rising power of the middle classes who will build the brick mansions. Women, however, are generally outsiders to the process whereby the upper class perpetuates itself.[19] Elizabeth Hastings may feel at home in Massinger Hall, but these old houses are passed on from male owners to male

[18] Charlotte Brontë here accepts truisms of her time, and of our own, about the moral superiority of inherited land to wealth acquired in other ways, and about the country's moral superiority to the city. Raymond Williams has examined the concealed capitalism of the landed classes and he notes, "If what was seen in the town could not be approved, because it made evident and repellent the decisive relations in which men actually lived, the remedy was never a visitor's morality of plain living and high thinking, or a babble of green fields. It was a change of social relationships and of essential morality. And it was at this point that the 'town and country' fiction served: to promote superficial comparisons and to prevent real ones" (<u>Country</u> 54).

[19] Over a century later, Vita Sackville-West was unable to inherit her family home, Knole.

heirs. Part of the tension between romance and realism in all Charlotte Brontë's writings comes from the social, intellectual and artistic ambitions of her female characters being at odds with their relative powerlessness as women to realize them. Also, women generally only have homes by virtue of their relationships to men, yet the home is their "natural element", the place of feminine values.

In the latter parts of the Angrian saga, the writer simplifies the domestic scenes, gradually rejecting the splendour of earlier settings. "Caroline Vernon" makes this process explicit. Caroline's dreams of romance lead her to imagine herself living in a palace in the usual Angrian luxury, but the story turns away from this fantasy to a more realistic--if still idealized--representation of Zamorna living somewhat modestly as a country squire. The narrator treats Caroline's aspirations ironically and dismissively:

> . . . as for the gardens of roses & the Halls of Marble & the diamonds & fine pearls & the rubies--it would be vanity to attempt a description of such heavenly sights--the reader must task his imagination & try if he can conceive them ("Caroline Vernon", FN 313).

Romance becomes the reader's responsibility. In the later novelettes also, another development takes place: the shifting of narrative interest to the female characters and their evolution into women who prefigure heroines like Frances Henri or Jane Eyre. This development involves an increased use of realism and of domestic scenes. These novelettes

explore the nature of the female protagonist and the question of female creativity through images of home and domestic pursuits, especially needlework.

Throughout the juvenilia, one of the predominant obstacles to women who want to find a place where they belong is the character of the hypermasculine heroes, especially Zamorna. Although he symbolizes the writer's creative energy, as well as the literary culture she admires, his need for constant action and violence means that no woman can satisfy him. In fact, his character grows increasingly discontented, his appetite for excitement resolved only temporarily by another political struggle or another love interest. Thus the women who love him can never find a secure home with him. Tillotson notes that Zamorna "lacks even the Byronic sense of sin" and that the values of Angria constitute a "moral chaos" (271). Yet as a symbol of wild literary genius as well as of literary culture, Zamorna was too important for the writer to relinquish completely. His character posed the need to find a way to make him more humane and decent, as well as to please him. In _Jane Eyre_, Jane herself is the humanizing influence, although Rochester's physical injuries and spiritual suffering also render him more humble.

The female predicament--and the writer's--regarding Zamorna is that the Romantic hero is both essential to domestic happiness, and inimical to it. The same hero who is associated with the fire of sexual passion, and of the domestic hearth, can extinguish that fire whenever he wants. In this passage from "Mina Laury", the firelight reflects Zamorna's mood of contentment with his mistress:

> --all that was capable of yielding her happiness on this side of eternity was at that moment within her reach--The room was full of calm--the lamps hung as if they were listening--the fire sent up no flickering flame, but diffused a broad still glowing light over all the spacious saloon-- (FN 163)

In contrast, the following passage from "Caroline Vernon" shows Zamorna's incestuous desires associated with an extinguished hearth, symbolizing his power to disrupt family relationships:

> his high-featured face, & dark large eye, beaming bright with a spark from the depths of Gehenna, struck Caroline Vernon with a thrill of nameless dread . . .--all at once she knew him--Her Guardian was gone--Something terrible sat in his place--The fire in the grate was sunk down without a blaze--this silent lonely library, so far away from the inhabited part of the house--was gathering a deeper shade in all its Gothic recesses. (FN 353)

The demonic fire from Gehenna in Zamorna's eye overcomes the fire of domestic comfort and continuity in the hearth. Locating this interview in the library associates Zamorna with Romantic literary imagination. The library is separate from the household, and is part of an earlier "Gothic" past,

so that the incident happens outside the "inhabited" space and daily activities of the house. Both these passages refer to the hero's sexual adventures outside of marriage, but "Caroline Vernon" acknowledges the dangerous destructiveness of the hero.

As Charlotte Brontë grew older, and more interested in the question of female sexual desire, she concentrated increasingly on the suffering experienced by Zamorna's lovers, none of whom ever enjoys his exclusive devotion, and thus never has a secure home with him. She resolves the issue, temporarily, by letting her female characters collude in Zamorna's narcissism. For example, Zamorna muses about his wife, Mary: "'One comfort remains to me, the consciousness that I can, by an hour's ardour, compensate to you for a year's neglect' . . . it had been to him the delight of his life at times to satisfy & soothe her intense idolatry" ("Julia", FN 112-3). Mary's suffering can evaporate when the idol condescends to demonstrate some "ardour". The same narcissistic element appears in Zamorna's relationship with his devoted mistress, Mina Laury, who spends her entire life looking for opportunities to serve him.[20] Zamorna knows, as

[20] In "Passing Events", Zamorna persuades Mina not to accompany him to the war zone by reminding her of the "public claims" of his wife (FN 47). Mina's response is to wish herself dead, "buried and insensible to the shame that overwhelmed her", but this shame seems to be about her self-assertion rather than about her status as a mistress.

he does with Mary, that he gives her what she wants: "'I give you such true and fond love as a master may give to the fairest & lordliest vassal that ever was bound to him in feudal allegiance." Mina replies, "'Obedient till Death'" ("Passing Events", FN 48). However, in the next sentence, a subversive female character, Louisa Dance, appears. Mistress to Zamorna's alter ego, Northangerland, and a coquettish, rebellious "she-tigress", she bites Zamorna on the hand, prefiguring Bertha Rochester, who similarly represents everything that Jane Eyre has repressed or controlled in herself. The writer undermines the over-controlled, passive heroines with a character whose passionate anger intimates the price paid for self-control, restoring the emotional life denied by characters like Mina Laury and Mary. However, although the submissive women suffer silently, the rebellious ones are social outcasts.

Zamorna himself defines home for a female character as sitting in a male lap when he begins to seduce Caroline, the child of Louisa Dance and Northangerland, his own father-in law. When Caroline asks where Mary, his wife, lives, Zamorna replies,

> 'She has no home till I come back--her home is just where you are at this moment, she would be happy in no other--' Caroline did not seem quite to comprehend-- 'Where I am at this moment--I am on your knee?' ("Julia", FN 115)

Zamorna implies that only a male embrace can create, or provide, a home. But the security of home depends on the reliability of the male in question. Throughout the rest of her fiction, Charlotte Brontë returns repeatedly to this aspect of home and the central question of the male provider, but another line of development explores the possibility of a woman's providing a home for herself, a home in the sense of a physical structure, but also in the sense of an identity.

Although other male characters sometimes make fun of Zamorna, the "Great Gun" ("Julia", FN 106), his sadistic moodiness forces others, especially women, to cater to him. His first wife, Marian Hume, to some extent a prototype of Jane Eyre, with her simple "Quaker-like" dress, cannot please her husband. One incident in an early story, "Brushwood Hall" (1833) describes Zamorna flinging his wife "with violence to the farthest corner" because she has gone out without permission (EW 2.2: 226). Home is certainly not a safe place for Marian; the only way to survive involves compliance and subservience. A domestic scene in "The Secret" illustrates Marian's accomplished performance of the wifely role. The narrator reports that the Marquis takes an hour and a half to eat breakfast because he likes to read the morning papers.

> The Marchioness of Douro, who considers herself honoured in being permitted to attend the

> beck of her lord and master when she has finished her own slight repast, usually takes up some piece of ornamental fancy-work and continues patiently plying the needle with her small, slight fingers until the last leading article of the last newspaper is concluded. (EW 2.1: 293-4)

Marian's small appetite and small hands show her self-control and powerlessnes; she neither wants nor grasps too much (in contrast to Zenobia, who is both large and physically strong). She apparently is not interested in the newspapers that absorb her husband, nor does he read them to her. She spends her time on "ornamental" work, an elaboration of her own position as ornament. In fact she is making a purse of "seed pearl and gold beads", interweaving her husband's initials with her own hair, so that her artistic project symbolizes her dependence and lack of a separate self, even her hair being used to enhance his existence.

Indeed, Marian is so passive, compliant and uninteresting that she is unable to keep her husband's attention and dies an early death, essentially of a broken heart. Zamorna's comment on her death shows his narcissism; he suggests that it was a good thing: "'For, if I had permitted her to remain an impediment to my inclinations, I should have hated her, lovely, devoted and innocent as she was, and my blood was cold at the bare imagination of that'" ("The Spell" EW 2.2: 159). Zamorna's comment may also reflect the writer's view of her heroine and the "bareness" of her imagination when she tries to give life to this figure.

The question was: what does the Byronic hero want? Two idealized, impossibly beautiful female characters: Mary, the Duchess and legal wife of Zamorna, and Mina Laury, his mistress cannot please him. Only occasionally does Zamorna seem to be aware that his wife might matter to him:

> Mary looked prettier than any of her rivals ever did. She had finer features, a fairer skin--more eloquent eyes--no hand more soft & delicate had ever closed on the Duke's than that which was detaining him now--He forgot her superiority often & preferred charms which were dim to hers--still she retained the power of wakening him at intervals to a new consciousness of her price--& his Grace would every now & then discover with surprise that he had a treasure always in his arms that he loved better a great deal than the far-sought gems he dived among rocks so often to bring up. ("Caroline Vernon", FN 332)

This passage identifies woman as a commodity, a "treasure" with a "price". Yet even the prettiest woman fails to win her husband's loyalty. Furthermore, this is a contest that no woman can win, because of the tendency of male desire to seek distant objects. In the conversation that follows, Mary charms her husband by her "naive simplicity". Capable of speaking with much more "depth and sense", she accommodates herself to Zamorna's desire for this insipid conversation, focussing on her adoration for him, not on her own ideas and point of view. "Art [is] at the bottom of the thing" ("Caroline Vernon", FN 333). Feminine art directs itself towards pleasing and pacifying the male.

Mina Laury is socially inferior to Zamorna and, for that reason alone, marriage to him is an impossibility. She

is the quintessential housekeeper, servant, and mistress, but the text is silent on the question of what she might have had to conquer to become this model woman. Zamorna sets her up in a kind of baronial mansion where he visits at will, sometimes bringing his male colleagues. Mina's involvement with this male world gives her a curiously androgynous quality. Like the other compliant females, she expresses no desire or assertiveness:

> . . . she hardly felt that his Majesty's arm had encircled her waist, & yet she did feel it too and would have thought herself presumptuous to shrink from his endearments. She took it as a slave ought to take the caress of a Sultan . . . ("Passing Events", FN 46).

The imagery of enslavement and orientalism creates the erotic as an exotic region.[21] Mina's passive response means that her (relative) purity and her pleasure, if such it can be called, find a place in the narrative. Paradoxically, Mina's utter loss of self in serving another does give her an identity. In Jane Eyre, on the other hand, Rochester behaves like an Oriental despot also, but with a very different reaction from Jane, who threatens to stir up a mutiny in his imaginary harem (272).

The underlying issue involves woman as the property of a man. Confusion exists in the narrative and in the

[21] See Firdous Azim, The Colonial Rise of the Novel, Chapter 4.

characters about "belonging" in the sense of deep emotional ties, as opposed to ownership. The woman who feels like part of her "master" treats herself, consciously or unconsciously, like his property, as he does. Others also see Mina as property: "Miss Laury belonged to the Duke of Zamorna--She was indisputably his property as much as the lodge of Rivaulx or the stately woods of Hawkscliffe, & in that light she considered herself--" ("Mina Laury", FN 143). Here the woman is like a house or a part of the landscape, owned or colonized but not owning herself. Mina is a social outcast; she "keeps the Lodge of the Cross of Rivaulx, halfway between Verdopolis and Adrianopolis" ("Mina Laury", FN 178). At the halfway point between two centres of civilization, Mina is nowhere, the symbolic cross suggesting martyrdom or death.

When the character called Hartford proposes marriage to Mina, she is evasive: "'I live so with men and statesmen--I almost lose the ideas of a woman--'" ("Mina Laury", FN 144). As they talk, Mina sits with her work table between them, to avoid his glance and give her "little hands" an occupation. She is embroidering a veil of lace, an enigmatic symbol of the wedding veil she will never wear; of the seclusion she experiences as Zamorna's mistress, veiled from the world; of the woman's work that keeps her in her proper place; and perhaps also of the essential mystery of her selfhood,

veiled from herself as well as from others.[22] Sewing is also a slow, ritualized organization of time to produce a non-verbal statement of female desire; hence its symbolic literary value. Mina's needlework represents both her creativity and the writer's, an appropriate symbol for the illusion created by the literary imagination. Unlike the purse that Marian embroiders for Zamorna, the veil is presumably for Mina herself, and does suggest the possibility of her having a separate, if tenuous, identity, the veil coming between her and others. Later, Zamorna says he would rather see her dead than married to Hartford; ironically, she is dead in a sense, buried alive at the Cross of Rivaux.

Charlotte Brontë created other mistress-figures who express more independent emotional life than Mina Laury does, although their illegitimate position makes them social outcasts and leaves them totally at the mercy of the men who control them. They endure one or another form of death as "kept women". The more desperate die as a result of their passion for an unattainable man. Rosamund Wellesley, who never appears as a living character, enters the text as a tombstone on which is written the word "Resurgam", later to appear on Helen Burns' grave in _Jane Eyre_. This woman

[22] Jane Eyre's wedding veil, chosen by Rochester, also symbolizes her entrapment.

agreed to be Zamorna's mistress, and was placed by him in "Scar House", where she killed herself, making the grave her true home, the home, symbolically, of the woman who denies social reality, with "no name, date or age--" on her tombstone.

In the last novelette about the Angrian characters, "Caroline Vernon", Caroline, infatuated by Zamorna, becomes his mistress and is promptly shut away by her lover. He tells her of a "'little retreat'" where he keeps all his "'treasures'": "'It is a plain old house outside--but it has rooms within as splendid as any saloon in Victoria Square--'" ("Caroline Vernon", FN 353). This turns out to be Scar House, the scar in its name suggesting Rosamund Wellesley's death, and a reminder of the injury that occurs when female passion colludes with male exploitation.[23] The house itself symbolizes two problems. First, the splendour of its interior is pointless; if the social world cannot acknowledge its existence, the house is as far away as it can be from "Victoria Square". The house also suggests the problem of the woman who has interior splendour: intelligence, a rich inner life, imagination. Her "plain" exterior conceals her inner treasures. The writer

[23] "Scar" is also a common place-name in Yorkshire and refers to a steep cliff, suggesting the precarious position of such an illicit home.

symbolizes a more intelligent and complex heroine, not by Caroline, but by this house. The house represents a woman who has the inner riches to match the hero's outward wealth, vitality and power, but the exterior, the social disability, makes union with the hero impossible, within this story's frame of reference at any rate.

Eventually Charlotte Brontë's representation of her central male characters became less idealized (Alexander 171). In 1839, just over a year after writing "Mina Laury", she and Branwell created a new character closely resembling Branwell in his self-destructive tendencies: Henry Hastings. He has come into conflict with his father and been turned out of his home, fragmenting his family. This "unreclaimed tiger of the Jungle" (217) nonetheless has the complete devotion of his sister, Elizabeth, although he feels no gratitude or responsibility towards her. However, in the course of this story, the narrative shifts from him to his much more interesting sister.

In "Captain Henry Hastings" (1839), Charlotte Brontë found a way out of the deadlock symbolized by Scar House and the fate of incarceration and death for female characters who give in to their passionate attachment to an

unattainable male. From now on, her female protagonists will have a sense of self that is more powerful than the fear of abandonment. The story concerns a resistant heroine with a mind and a life of her own. Elizabeth Hastings is the first Angrian heroine who is poor, unworldly, and intelligent. She defies her father and supports her brother by becoming a governess-companion to Jane Moore. The riches and beauty that seemed so essential to the earlier heroines are split off into this other character and undermined by having Elizabeth as the centre of interest.

The narrative voice in this novelette belongs to William Percy, Elizabeth's would-be lover. She emerges from a symbolic interior setting:

> It was an appartment with the chill of a vault on its atmosphere--furnished in drawing room style--but without fire in its bright steel grate--without light in its icy chandelier . . . . the mirror between the windows looked as if it had never reflected a human face for ages--the couch--the chairs--the grand-piano all stood like fixtures never to be moved. Over the piano was a large picture . . . . the image, smiling all by itself in this frozen-dreary room, reminds one of that legendary lady who pricked her finger--& having fallen into a trance, was enshrined in a splendid chamber where she sat twenty years in all the stillness of death & all the beauty of life--I was still looking at this picture & had just ascertained in the features an indubitable likeness to Jane Moore--when . . . I saw a young female enter the room-- (FN 218-19)

Massinger Hall is the old family home of Jane Moore; the room has no fire or light, symbols of home, and an atmosphere of death-in-life pervades its coldness and emptiness,

especially in the detail of the mirror which has not reflected a human face, alluding to Elizabeth's loneliness. The portrait, another example of death-in-life, reminds the narrator of Sleeping Beauty. While it might refer to both young women, the idea of Sleeping Beauty suggests the advent of the new female protagonist who is now wakened by the writer. In this scene, the steel grate has no fire in it, but later the narrator notes that "sparks of fire danced in Miss Hastings' eyes--" (220); again, he describes her intense emotions:

> . . . in her ordinary course of life always smothered under the diffidence of prudence & a skilful address, but now when her affections were about to suffer almost a death-stab--when incidents of strange excitement were transpiring around her--on the point of bursting forth like lava--still she struggled to keep wrapt about her the veil of reserve and propriety-- (220)

He describes one self enclosed in another, an inner self of volcanic feeling--"lava"--and an outer self represented as a "veil" of proper behaviour that both protects and separates her from others, reminiscent of the veil Mina Laury embroiders in the earlier story. Elizabeth Hastings' divided self differentiates her from less independent women. She is a new kind of heroine for Angria, offering a new set of values. This figure is essentially homeless, estranged from her father, uncared for by her wild and intemperate brother. William Percy falls in love with her, but is unwilling to give her a legitimate home, asking her instead

to be his mistress. Elizabeth's refusal of his offer leaves her alone to find a place in the world, a problem faced subsequently by all Charlotte Brontë's heroines.

Intercepting Elizabeth on one of her solitary walks, William Percy meets her at Scar House, where he likes to visit and meditate on Rosamund's grave as "[his] own blank tablet of mystery" (253). This blankness may simply imply that he does not understand himself, but it is also a warning to Elizabeth of what her fate will be if she accepts William's offer to make her his mistress. The blank tablet also suggests something to be written on by the writer, and the motif of resurrection relates to the new reality that Elizabeth represents through her combination of passion and refusal. Unlike Jane Eyre in a similar situation, she fears the "'scorn of the world'", but she makes the same choice, to refuse her lover and to live with divided feelings. In psychoanalytic theory, this split condition is necessary for consciousness. "The split subject means perpetual struggle--it means, among other things, that the self must negotiate a dual loyalty to itself and to civilization" (Goodheart 1991, 129). If Elizabeth chose only her own sexual satisfaction, she would remain unconscious, a condition represented by Rosamund's tombstone. Elizabeth's refusal--not a denial, for she asserts her desire--keeps her emotionally alive and preserves the integrity of the self, her most fundamental home.

To summarize: in her exploration of female protagonists Charlotte Brontë compares Marian and Zenobia, contrasting Marian's innocence and restraint with Zenobia's intelligence, creativity and passion. She also compares Mary and Mina, who are equally beautiful and talented, but powerless; the essential difference between them is their class. Then with Jane Moore and Elizabeth Hastings, Charlotte Brontë weights the comparison in favour of the poor woman, giving her moral and spiritual strength, intelligence, and sensitivity in contrast to Jane Moore's beauty and wealth. Elizabeth, divided between inner feelings and outward demeanour, resembles subsequent female characters who attempt to find their true homes. The first-person narratives of Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe explore the dual self as an essential aspect of their characters. Each woman has an outer conforming self and an inner core of life and feeling. Conformity to the outer world means that they can gain some kind of acceptance, but the inner longing to belong keeps them alive. Jane Eyre's inner life breaks out in her occasional explosive utterances that express her inner truth, her own perceptions and feelings rather than what she knows others expect from her. Lucy Snowe is more carefully conforming, with a more rigid exterior than Jane's, and a greater pessimism about ever belonging to another human being. When her inner core breaks through, as

in her collapse during her summer alone at the school, it overwhelms her. Thus she lives in anxiety about being taken over by her own passions and maintains a constant state of vigilance and restraint. The first-person narration gives the reader access to Jane's and Lucy's thoughts and feelings, in contrast to their quiet and even drab appearance. Like the house in "Caroline Vernon", they have the inner riches and the outward disability.

In the later novelettes, the idea of a man and woman creating a home together contributes to a subtext about the literary imagination, significantly placed in domestic settings. In "Captain Henry Hastings", a couple of episodes dealing with marital and domestic matters occur in the midst of a fragmented narrative about Henry and Elizabeth Hastings. The careful descriptions of domestic interiors show how the objects in these rooms reflect and symbolize the lives and relationships of the human inhabitants, but these settings also symbolize the invisible presence of the writer who creates them. For example, the description of the drawing room is set at sunset, an hour of great significance in Charlotte Brontë's fiction when her characters often engage in reflection and reverie. Far from signifying the end of something, sunset here suggests an awakening of

consciousness, centred on the hearth but including the light of the sun and moon:

> The daylight perhaps is not quite drawn in--for winter, you must remember, is past & the sunset of a fine day leaves a long glimmer behind it--However, it is dusk enough to bring out the full glow of a good fire--& in this Drawing[room] which I wish you now to imagine, there is more of red reflection from the hearth than of pale gleam from the windows. . . . A sofa covered with crimson occupies one side of the hearth--the further end of this sofa comes against a window--through which the shrubs of a garden are seen dimly clustered in twilight--& above them ascends a half-moon--softening a sky of clear, cold azure. ("Captain Henry Hastings", FN 263)

Sunlight is associated with male endeavours in Charlotte Brontë's work, especially in one of Zamorna's nicknames, "Rising Sun", while the moon traditionally symbolizes a feminine principle, as an embodiment of the ancient mother-goddess.[24] In this scene, the light of day unites with the moonlight to gleam just beyond the hearth, the light of human civilization and culture. This union reinforces the imagery of reconciliation between male and female, the subject of this chapter. The reference to the garden outside the windows repeats the motif of civilization, the shaping of the elements of the natural world to meet human needs for order and beauty.

[24] See "Moon Goddess" in Sjoo and Mor, <u>The Great Cosmic Mother</u> (1987) 155-9.

In Chapter 5, Zamorna goes to his wife's room in order to make up a quarrel, and unlike earlier episodes of domination and submission involving Zamorna and his wife, their dialogue concerns mutuality and equality. Zamorna and Mary reconcile with a kiss, and although they leave the room, the description continues:

> --The candle remained burning on the toilet--the two chairs stood vacant before it--the splendid little room reflected around its fairy beauty--but the living figures of the scene were gone--Solitude and silence lingered behind them. the candle burnt soon to its socket, the flame flickered, waned--streamed up in a long tongue of light, sank again--trembled a moment & finally vanished in total darkness. Then a piano was heard playing in the drawing-room below--& when the first notes had stifled the clamour of children, a voice sung. ("Captain Henry Hastings", FN 269)

This room represents the creative process in the writer. The absence of human figures and the third-person narration emphasize the presence of the artist in the domestic details, and the room is a metaphor for the inner space where writing takes place. The narrator has only a glimpse of the mysterious union of male and female, symbolized also by the two chairs, while the room itself with its "fairy beauty" appears as a reflection, in the magical mirror of imagination. "Solitude and silence" are the conditions for creative work, while the candle is a traditional symbol for human life and intellectual endeavour, the life and endeavour of the writer who keeps the magical room in existence. But when the candle fades, all is not over, because

the work of the artist remains in the form of the song, that nonetheless requires a human voice to sing it. This scene is evocative of the relationship between the individual artist and culture, each requiring the other, and both dependent on the union of male and female. This scene contrasts with those in earlier stories where male criticism was able to damage female creativity. Creative energy here belongs to neither a male figure nor a female one, but to the invisible writer who contains both male and female in the imagination.

At the same time that Charlotte Brontë was creating symbolic places to embody the imaginative process of writing, this development in her work did not solve other deep problems with the Angrian material. The male narrative voice which enabled her to assert herself as a writer, to explore the territory of ambition, aggression and sexuality, nonetheless failed to connect her to the larger world of literary culture. Angria was still essentially a secret world. Also, the Angrian saga, as Kathleen Tillotson notes, was a moral and structural chaos, even if it was the chaos from which came the later novels. Charlotte and Branwell wrote separately, but because the stories:

> . . . issued from a corporate daydream, nothing ever needed to be explained; each piece assumed a knowledge not only of all the rest but of much that was 'made out' only in talk or in solitary imagining. As the amorphous mass swelled and sprawled, it became impossible to envisage

> 'outside' readers; the large problems of structure . . . were never faced. . . . In its massiveness and distortion Angria was, as its chief creator came to see, dangerous to the claims both of art and life, a Frankenstein monster.
> (Tillotson 270-1)

It is an ironic comment on Charlotte Brontë's role in the Angrian saga that Lord Charles has imaginative freedom, but virtually no power, and is at the mercy of other males in the narratives. Similarly, Charlotte was often at the mercy of Branwell's control of the Angrian narrative, especially when she went to teach at Miss Wooler's School at Roe Head in 1835, when she was nineteen. Branwell, who was always most interested in political and military conflict, took over the story in Charlotte's absence and intensified the conflict between Zamorna and Northangerland into civil war. Rather than contributing to the accounts of battles and destruction, "Charles Townshend", writes: "I leave to other and abler pens the description of . . . the onslaught of the Angrians . . . and again I sink back to the details of private life".[25] Charlotte and Branwell may have been struggling for control of the narrative. Mary is killed off by Branwell but resurrected by Charlotte in an alternative plot as told by Charles Townshend in "The Return of

[25] "The Return of Zamorna." Untitled and undated manuscript (location untraceable: formerly in the Law Collection). Published in SHCBM 2: 281-314 (Alexander 28n).

Zamorna".[26] Her "My Angria and the Angrians" may also reflect her assertion of ownership of the saga.

The writing by both Branwell and Charlotte Brontë shows signs of strain at this period. Branwell's emphasis on bloody civil war, oppression and revolt surely comments on his psychic state. Meanwhile, the "Roe Head Journal" (July, 1835 - May 1838), a collection of fragmentary autobiographical writing, describes Charlotte's painful conflict between the imaginary world of Angria and her responsibilities in the real world. She was cut off from home, and Zamorna's enemies were laying waste to his domain, which was also her imaginative home. In one scene, written at Roe Head, she imagines that Quashia, Zamorna's ancient Ashantee enemy, gets drunk in Mary's "sanctuary". The scene may be an image of what Branwell is doing to their shared endeavour. In any event, this crisis in their mutual authorship eventually led Charlotte Brontë to create fictional worlds that were uniquely her own, difficult as it was to renounce Angria.

[26] Charlotte wrote about Mary's possible death: "Is she dead? Is she alone in the cold earth on this dreary night . . . now quite forsaken because her eyes are closed, her lips sealed and her limbs cold and rigid . . . . A set of wretched thoughts are rising in my mind. I hope she's alive still partly because I can't bear to think how hopelessly and cheerlessly she must have died . . ." ("Roe Head Journal" quoted in Moglen 44).

An increasing realism in the emotional lives of the characters, as well as in the narratives and settings, marks the beginning of the end of the Angrian saga. Nonetheless, the realm of fantasy had a powerful attraction for Charlotte Brontë, an attraction that Gerin calls an "addiction" (FN 18). Her references to the dream world of Angria as "the infernal world" or "the world below" give a sense of her going into the depths of the unconscious to write. Eventually she found a way to reconcile her literal home of Yorkshire with her creative home, the Angria of romance, imagination and desire.

Christine Alexander sees realism as Charlotte Brontë's ultimate goal in the juvenilia, and believes that her "early imaginary world was . . . hindering her progress as a writer" (209). Indeed, after having incorporated realistic details into a romantic mega-narrative, Charlotte Brontë began to integrate romance into realistic novels: Still, it was important for her subsequent work that she not lose her ability to visit "the world below" with its powerful and vivid scenes and characters. In her "Farewell to Angria"[27], Charlotte Brontë herself describes that world as her home:

[27] The date of the "Farewell To Angria" is uncertain, but probably it was written in 1840 after Hartley Coleridge discouraged Charlotte Brontë from pursuing the Angrian style and material (Gerin, FN 19-20).

> I have now written a great many books and for a long time have dwelt on the same characters and scenes and subjects . . . but we must change, for the eye is tired of the picture so oft recurring & now so familiar. Yet do not urge me too fast, reader, it is no easy thing to dismiss from my imagination the images which have filled it so long; they were my friends and my intimate acquaintances . . . When I depart from there I feel almost as if I stood on the threshold of a home and were bidding farewell to its inmates (FN 20).

In this passage, she also describes Angria as a "burning clime", writing of it in terms of fading fires and sunsets. She wants to turn to a "cooler region where the dawn breaks grey and sober and the coming day for a time at least is subdued by clouds". The fiery emotional life of the Angrian saga could not disguise its eventual sterility.

However, in turning away from Angria, Charlotte Brontë does not so much reject this material as transform it. Earlier, in the "Roe Head Journal", she describes her method of working from images, letting them float up into her conscious mind, and then bringing them to imaginative life. She is gaining access to her own unconscious, using the technique of free association, a method used in psychoanalysis. This kind of waking dream enabled her to draw on another place in the psyche not completely under the control of the ego. That place was Angria, and even when she apparently left it behind, the realm of the unconscious remained to her as a source of inspiration and comfort, the home of the imagination.

Chapter II

The Professor: Discovering the Female Subject

"The embroidery of appearance"

In Charlotte Brontë's first adult novel, *The Professor* (written in 1846), William Crimsworth's pursuit of a home conceals another search: for the place of the woman writer and her creativity. The novel provides representations of home that are linked to that search. While the most obvious concern of *The Professor* is to tell the story of the romance between William and Frances, with its happy ending in the ideal country home in England, the subtext of this tale of love and upward mobility concerns the writer's continuing search for an imaginative home. William's narration describes his love for a quiet, intelligent and creative woman, but ironically, the romantic tension in the story occurs, not between William and Frances, but between Frances and the enigmatic Hunsden, another version of the Romantic hero and a symbol of Romanticism, like Zamorna or Rochester. Thus the subtext of the narrative involves the writer's search for her own voice and for a connection to the male Romantic writers who have inspired her. Through Frances Henri, a woman of two cultures and two languages, *The Professor*

provides a bridge between the Angrian passions and idealizations and the romantic realism of Jane Eyre. This novel is also more concerned with representations of home than the Angrian narratives are.

Charlotte Brontë's use of a male narrator, William, is both a link to the early writings and an attempt to go beyond them. He embodies Charlotte Brontë's wish for something "plain and homely", for a hero who "should work his way through life" (Preface, 1). Through him, she hoped to abandon the fantastic narratives of high life that preoccupied her youth. However, her very choice of a male narrator links him with Charles Townshend and other male narrators of the saga. Moreover, as the younger brother of a more dominant, handsome and successful man, he continues the theme of rivalry between men in general, and particularly between brothers, present in many early works, from "The Spell" (1834) to "The Ashworths" (1839-40). The intense rivalry between these pairs of brothers, including Edward and William Crimsworth, seems to stem from their differences: the older and more powerful hypermasculine brother domineers over the younger, more sensitive, educated and introspective one. This male rivalry masks the underlying issue of the woman writer's desire for power and creativity, with the younger, weaker brother representing these desires displaced onto a male figure. Once Charlotte Brontë begins

to use a female narrator, this theme of rivalry between brothers either disappears or becomes less important, reappearing briefly in Jane Eyre in the conflict between Rochester and his older brother.

When Edward disappears fron the story, The Professor maintains the theme of competition by replacing him with Hunsden. Like the Angrian heroes, William and Hunsden are intensely competitive; their dialogue is rude and insulting, with a theatrical nastiness. Hunsden's cynical tone jars with the kindness of his actions: for example, in his obtaining the portrait of William's mother. His accompanying note remarks that "'There is a sort of stupid pleasure in giving a child sweets, a fool his bells, a dog a bone . . .'" (194). In turn, William insults his friend and never thanks him for the gift. A similar discordance occurs in Hunsden's attitude towards Frances, whom he both admires and berates, something William does also at certain points. The rivalry between the two men is most clearly shown in the scene immediately following Hunsden's introduction to Frances, when he is at first under the illusion that she is an uneducated working-class woman. After the visit, he attacks William on the street, rolling and wrestling with

him on the pavement (224).[1] By the end of the novel, although they are the best of friends and close neighbours, the antagonism persists, perhaps as a posture of self-concealment, but more likely because Hunsden, as the Romantic hero, is more suited to be the partner of Frances than William can be.

Self-concealment is a persistent theme in this novel. At the outset, when William encounters his brother Edward after a separation of many years, he feels he must conceal his true self. However, the following passage can also be read as a covert expression of a woman's feelings, specifically those of the concealed woman writer:

> I thought he was trying to read my character but I felt as secure against his scrutiny as if I had on a casque with the visor down--or rather I shewed him my countenance with the confidence that one would shew an unlearned man a letter written in Greek--he might see lines and trace characters, but he could make nothing of them--my nature was not his nature, and its signs were to him like the words of an unknown tongue . . . . (17)

The double metaphors, of armour and of language, convey William's duplicity, as well as suggesting that he is a knight in the romance tradition and hinting at his aristocratic

[1] Federico (1994) rightly suggests that in the wrestling scene, "What seems like antagonism is nore like a male version of an embrace, and points to the cultural prohibitions placed on expressions of affection between men" (334). However, the antagonism between the two characters is the more striking and persistent feature.

qualities. The references to language also imply a subtext about writing and concealment. Just as William conceals himself from Edward, yet reveals his story to the reader, the woman writer conceals her identity behind the mask of a male narrator, yet reveals her truth to the reader through the language of the novel. In Charlotte Brontë's mature writing, language always has a double function, to conceal and to reveal. In Jane Eyre, for example, characters are duplicitous, yet they read each other's truth in various ways, through layered dialogues and body language.

The motif of duality pervades the novel. William perceives in Hunsden "the idea of a foreigner"; at times William notices that "an indescribable shade passed like an eclipse over his countenance, and seemed to me like the sign of a sudden and strong inward doubt of himself . . ." (29). Hunsden similarly comments on William: "'I discerned that there would be contrasts between his inward and outward man, contentions too, for I suspected his soul had more of will and ambition, than his body had of fibre and muscle'" (29). This comment might describe either a man or a woman. The contrast between inner self and outer behaviour suggests a self both imprisoned and protected, hidden behind "natural Sentinels" of "Caution, Tact, Observation" (26). Images of locked-up treasure convey that the self can be neither plundered nor shared: "I kept the padlock of silence on mental wealth," William says.

Caution, silence and concealment operate between men and women also. On William's first appearance in the schoolroom, he encounters the three "queens of the school", and reports that within five minutes he has "buckled on a breast-plate of steely indifference and let down a visor of impassible austerity" (77). Human relationships become a kind of warfare. William has a conversation with Mdlle. Reuter in which she attempts to discover his weak points; he resists her scrutiny, and they part "without having gained any advantage on either side . . . It was a regular drawn battle" (80-1). William explicitly compares her to Edward, although as dusk falls on their conversation, he finds her more feminine and attractive, the twilight softening her features, and enabling him to deceive himself.

The female characters are as duplicitous as the men, and similarly are trying to gain an advantage. The most devious of all is Mdlle. Reuter with her frustrating evasiveness and wordiness. Her need to control everything would deprive the other characters of autonomy if they did not protect themselves; she continually tries to direct the story in her own way. In contrast, the self-concealment of Frances Henri enables her to preserve her own story and her inner self. Mdlle. Reuter's inner self, both catlike and foxlike, betrays itself while she is engaged in needlework. M. Pelet tells William to watch her when she is doing

knitting, or "'some other women's work'", and appears uninterested in what happens around her: "' . . . her humble feminine mind is wholly with her knitting . . . observe then her eyebrows . . .'" (84-5). Mdlle. Reuter usually brings her knitting to the classroom, where she observes and manipulates both teachers and students. Her "women's work" represents another kind of craftiness. Roszika Parker (1989) suggests that "while embroidery was employed to inculcate femininity in women, it also enabled them to negotiate the constraints of femininity" (11). Mdlle. Reuter hides her adroitness and power behind her skilful needlework, a traditional image of "self-containment and submission" (Parker 11). The men, however, are aware of feminine duplicity. Because he has glimpsed what lies beyond the disguises of the women in the school, William notes:

> . . . to the tutor, female youth, female charms are like tapestry hangings of which the wrong side is continually turned towards him, and even when he sees the smooth, neat external surface, he so well knows what knots, long stitches and jagged ends are behind that he has scarce a temptation to admire too fondly the seemly forms and bright colours exposed to general view. (110)

William's knowledge of the technical details involved in embroidery is unusual in a young man whose experience has been confined to an education at Eton and work as a clerk in a factory. This recurrent theme of camouflage, expressed both literally and metaphorically through needlework, points

once again to William's as the concealed voice of the woman writer. It is not William so much as the writer herself who has "seen the plain texture of truth under the embroidery of appearance" (190), and who shares both aspects with the reader.

Frances Henri resembles Elizabeth Hastings in "Captain Henry Hastings"; she is a heroine whose quiet and rather dull appearance conceals inner treasures of intelligence, passion and creativity. Frances also does needlework, and her work, too, symbolizes the difference between the outer person and the inner self, as it does with Mdlle. Reuter. However in Frances, the concealed self longs not for power over others but for self-expression. Her needlework is a practical necessity, but still functions as a kind of veil between Frances and the world, concealing her real vocation as a writer and a teacher, and her real self as a passionate woman. She mends a precious commodity belonging to others, and is further alienated from her work because she recreates the labour of other needleworkers who made the lace in the first place. On another level, however, the lace that she mends symbolizes her imagination, and her ability to repair psychological damage, not so much her own damage, perhaps, as William's. William has suffered misunderstanding and rejection within his family, and approaches other people as enemies. He is impatient with human flaws and arrogant

about his ability to conceal himself behind defensive armour. His contact with Frances lets him experience the feminine art of needlework that preserves and recreates something valuable; in a sense, Frances is a cultural worker. William also experiences through her the literary creativity that allows the self to become manifest.

Both William and Frances regard her needlework as inferior to writing and literary study. Frances explains her difficulties in teaching by pointing out that sewing is "'a subordinate art'" (133). She finds the work "'tedious'", while William terms it "'dull--stupid'" (130). Still, the needlework has enabled her to support herself, and thus to meet William. In contrast, Mdlle. Reuter's needlework has a sinister purpose. At one point, she is sewing and listening to Frances read a devoir that she has written for her English studies with William. This is an imaginary emigrant's letter to friends at home, describing the scene of a "great, new-world river, barren of sail and flag" (137), that is, there is no woven or sewn fabric in the scene, but only the natural world in its beauty. The intensity of Frances' writing shows her capacity to use imagination to express feeling and reveal something of her vivid inner life: her wish for a new world, perhaps, and a love of nature. In contrast, as Frances reads, Mdlle. Reuter is creating another river, a "'rivière', or

open-work hem around a cambric handkerchief"; her face gives a glimpse of her inner world: it is a "mask of purely negative expression . . . as blank of comment as her lips" (138). After this scene, she suggests that William not encourage Frances' literary ambitions, and two weeks later, she dismisses Frances from the school.

Another story that Frances writes, about King Alfred and the cakes, is reminiscent of the Angrian narratives; it has a fragmentary, fairy-tale quality, drawing a contrast between the peasant hut and its royal occupant. It is also a displacement of William's own story: despite his aristocratic origins, he has been forced to toil among the inferior "peasants" of Belgium. The story refers to Frances as well, to her powers of imagination and her inferior situation, and to the theme of outer poverty and inner wealth. William mitigates the frustration of her situation as a sensitive, creative woman whose talents are going to waste when he says, "'I care nothing for the poverty of her purse so long as her heart overflows with affluence'" (145). Thus the story connects William to Frances in its symbolic meaning, and Wiliam's response to it allows one aspect of the writer, perhaps "will", to care for another, the overflowing heart.

Thereafter, the novel describes William's rediscovery of Frances, their romance, and their marriage, while a related plot concerns an ironic version of that romance in the courtship of M. Pelet and Mdlle. Reuter. These two pairs of schoolteachers typify creative marriage and its ironic version: the self-seeking Reuter-Pelet ménage that might have been William's fate had he not found the ideal woman in Frances. Instead, a fantasy of success through marriage and running their own school resolves all problems for William and Frances. Yet their union seems discordant because of the master-slave relationship between them. For example, after their engagement, William describes Frances: "as stirless in her happiness as a mouse in its terror; even now in speaking she scarcely lift[s] her head" (207). Although Frances works after marriage, and seems to be as capable as William--while earning half what he earns--they avoid any question of equality through William's rather unpleasant dominance and Frances' submissiveness. To keep Frances in line, when she has been a "vexing fairy", William gives her a "dose" of Wordsworth, making her read to him:

> . . . Wordsworth steadied her soon; she had a difficulty in comprehending his deep, serene and sober mind; his language too was not facile to her; she had to ask questions, to sue for explanations, to be like a child and a novice and to acknowledge me as her senior and director. (233)

This relationship resembles the master-slave patterns of Zamorna and women in the early writing, but it also slightly

resembles the relationship between Rochester and Jane Eyre, who similarly is a "'malicious elf'" (276) in Rochester's view. In that situation, however, Jane maintains control of Rochester's passions--and her own--through her vexing behaviour. William, on the other hand, needs to dominate, and he does so through culture, without actually forcing Frances to conform to his will. He uses a literary master to subdue her and put her into the position of a child. The magical power of literature resembles the magical way Frances transforms herself every evening from the capable and assertive "lady directress" of her own school into the meek lace-mender and wife.

Nevertheless, although Frances retains her submissive demeanour to the end of the novel, in another way, her union with William enables her to find her own voice, a metaphor for the writer's simultaneous discovery of her own literary voice. After William's offer of marriage, Frances speaks with "a new, yet still subdued inflexion of the voice"; this change in her tone both provokes and pleases William and is accompanied by "a 'sourire à la fois fin et timide' in perfect harmony with the tone" (206). The new element in Frances' tone is irony, hitherto in the novel an attribute of masculine humour, and more sarcastic than ironic. On the other hand, while Frances refuses to be a passive "lil[y] of the field" (208) and insists on working for a living, her

assertiveness conflicts with her insistence on deferring to William, "the Master in all things" (232). Jane Eyre goes beyond this kind of simplification; while Rochester is her "Master", she ultimately resists her tendency to submit to him as to an idol who obscures her relationship to God.

William's apparent success in winning the submissive Frances makes all the more strange his collapse into hypochondria and depression after his engagement, a crisis that seems to have more to do with the subtext about the writer than with the requirements of the plot. This illness, which incapacitates William for a week, is never mentioned again. One possible interpretation involves the question of Frances as the embodiment of the writer's desire to find her own voice. Both William and Frances symbolize literary creativity, William as the narrator, Frances in her writing and her needlework. At the point where he considers returning Frances' money to her in Chapter XIX, William thinks that her shyness might yield to "a little bit of determined Will" (151), a figurative use of his own name. The master-slave relationship between William and Frances suggests that they are two sides of the same coin: while William's is the voice, Frances is the feminine image. Her association with the colour green, in the mat at her doorstep, and the thread she uses to tie up her letter, and in the verdant setting of the cemetery where William finds her,

connects her to the natural world and to mortality. This link with nature implies the traditional equation of woman with nature, both being at the disposal of male energy and creativity, but on the other hand, Frances represents what the narrator needs.[2] William lacks liveliness and has cut himself off from human and natural contact by his arrogance and self-control.

The bout of depression that William experiences is thus a curious consequence of the union between these two characters. The illness--"Hypochondria"--seems both physical and emotional. William introduces the episode by breaking the narrative with an address to the reader, as if what he recounts has more to do with the writer than the narrator:

> Now, reader, during the last two pages I have been giving you honey fresh from flowers, but you must not live entirely on food so luscious; taste then a little gall--just a drop, by way of change. (210)

This introduction conveys a subtle anger, expressed towards the reader, but probably having to do with restoring the balance between fantasy and realism in this work. In one way, William's illness is related to his neglect of his body; he has forgotten to eat and drink in his excitement, and he is overwrought from his efforts to find employment and to win Frances: " . . . the soul, of late rushing

[2] See Susan Griffin, Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (1980).

headlong to an aim, had overstrained the body's comparative weakness" (211). The body reacts with a reminder of its mortality.[3] The meaning of the strange collapse may be found in the writer's realism, restraining romantic ideas and balancing them with realistic detail. Thus William's illness comes from his agitation and even more from a recurring tendency to depression that he has experienced from childhood, a result of his emotional deprivation: he has been "lonely, parentless; uncheered by brother or sister" (211). In Winnicott's terms, William has lacked a facilitating environment for his developing self. In response, he has strange terrors and fantasies, coming from his unsupported imagination; having "many affections and few objects" has caused a gap between longing and satisfaction.

William describes his frightening fantasies of a female figure, a "sorceress" or "concubine", seducing him away from life with visions of "her own Country--the Grave" (211). She points to a "Necropolis" and tells William it contains a "mansion" prepared for him, an ironic reference to the New Testament promise of "many mansions" in Heaven, and a different home from the one he wants. This strange figure

[3] William compares himself to Job, who has a vision of a spirit, but the spirit in his version quotes a line from the service for the burial of the dead in the Book of Common Prayer: "'In the midst of Life, we are in Death'", a reminder to William of his human limitations.

might be interpreted as a negative mother, an internal destructive and devouring witch, appearing in the absence of a good internal mother. Yet her relationship to William seems more sexual than maternal. In contrast, William describes his new relationship with Frances in maternal terms:

> . . . but *now* when my course was widening, my prospect brightening; when my affections had found a rest; when my desires, folding wings, weary with long flight, had just alighted on the very lap of Fruition, and nestled there warm, content, under the caress of a soft hand--why did Hypochondria accost me now? (211)

William's question remains unanswered, but can tentatively be explained by the suggestion that William and Frances are both aspects of the writer. Uniting them is anticlimactic; it leaves out the necessary energy generated by difference, the romance and conflict represented by Hunsden, who has a similar meaning for both characters. The union of William and Frances does not deal with the underlying question of the writer's search for an imaginative home, a narrative voice. The deathly Hypochondria may represent that still silent feminine voice demanding to be recognized, unable to be expressed through William.

The Hypochondria episode has been interpreted by critics in a number of ways: as sexual panic (Moglen 95-6), as Oedipal guilt (Maynard 1984, 88), or as William's "loss of his voyeuristic freedom" (Federico 343). Janet Butler (1986) links the episode to Charlotte Brontë's own anxiety

about remaining unmarried and connects it to other passages in her fiction that represent spinsters in terms of death and ghostliness:

> It is characteristic of Charlotte Brontë that she was successful in creating in fiction the happinesses that life had denied her. Yet, it is equally true that she could never altogether exclude from her writing the disappointment and pain that she experienced in real life; this authorial awareness of underlying truth managed to obtrude into all her novels, but nowhere more startlingly than in the seemingly illogical "hypochondria" in The Professor. (37)

Indeed, the episode seems to be an example of something Peter Fuller describes in nineteenth-century painting, when the reality of imaginative estrangement from nature began to invade and shatter the transitional space of the work of art (Images 79). In this case, the reality may be the writer's realization that someone remains unmarried in this union of William and Frances, and the writer is unable to sustain the illusion of the male narrator's persona. This union lacks the spark of difference.[4] William is not the Byronic hero of the earlier fiction. The search for home in Charlotte Brontë's fiction, from this novel onwards, always contains an attempt by the writer to create a passionate connection

[4] Adam Phillips writes about the importance of inner conflict to generate interest and vitality in psychic life: " . . . we should sustain the conflict inside us and not be trying to resolve it", or we lose interest in life, as William does when he becomes depressed, anxious and apathetic. (Beast 36)

between an intelligent woman and the Byronic hero, the embodiment of male literary genius, but never a writer himself.

In The Professor, sexual attraction depends on difference rather than on similarity. For all his pursuit of Frances, William's real attraction is to Zoraïde Reuter. His hostile encounters with her energize him, just as her physical roundness and rosiness attract him. When she marries M. Pelet--another instance of like uniting with like--William feels he must move out of the Pelet house because he would inevitably become sexually involved with her. His sexual attraction to her seems much greater than his love for Frances. Although William chooses to dominate Frances, who gives only occasional and brief glimpses of her sexuality, he has to rationalize his choice of bride. The final chapter hints at the possibility that he has lost rather than gained by his preference, when Hunsden remarks about Zoraïde Pelet, "'Brown says she weighs twelve stones now; you see what you've lost, Mr. Professor?'" (247). The abundance of her weight implies that there is too much of her, perhaps sexually as well as physically, and the question is, of course, ironic, but in the challenge she offered she may have been a more exciting partner than Frances, and losing this possibility may provide another explanation for William's depression.

For her part, although Frances makes protestations of love for William, and does occasionally exhibit a well-controlled passion, her most animated dialogues are with Hunsden. A strong attraction between them creates the possibility of a relationship of stimulating conflict between a man and a woman that will be further refined in Jane Eyre, a novel that finally makes central the idea of antagonism and attraction between a quiet, intelligent and strong-minded woman, and a rich, educated, arrogant and chronically dissatisfied man. William's rather silly role-playing of the tempestuous "master", "locked into a socially sanctioned tone of superiority" (Federico 329), cannot compare with the suspense created by the mysterious, unpredictable and sexually experienced Hunsden. Rebecca Rodolff has also pointed out that the story of Frances anticipates Jane Eyre (1982, 72). Significantly too, Frances and William have a son, Victor, in whom Hunsden is very interested, who resembles Hunsden more than he does either of his parents. He therefore seems like a child Frances has created with Hunsden, a covert indication of the strong attraction between them.

While one aspect of home is the relationships among those who live there, another is the home itself as it is

constructed in the writer's descriptions. Long before he establishes the ideal home with Frances, William observes a number of domestic models: his brother's home, Hunsden's bachelor rooms, Mdlle. Reuter's household, and Frances' rooms, where she has lived with her aunt. Edward's house is a "mansion", large and comfortably furnished. In the library, while he waits for Edward, William sits in his "stuffed easy chair, covered with red morocco" (7), but there is only one such chair, and Edward takes it when he arrives, showing his unwillingness or inability to share comfort with another person. Similarly, in William's lodging there is only one armchair, but when Hunsden visits, he sits in the comfortable chair, presumably because he feels entitled to it. In Hunsden's own house, however, the furniture consists of "a couch and two very easy chairs", so that provision of comfort extends not only to another person but to a social circle.

In Edward's house, the obvious comfort and wealth are only superficial, much like the superficial attractiveness of Edward's pretty wife. William remarks on her beauty:

> I am no Oriental, white necks--carmine lips and cheeks, clusters of bright curls do not suffice for me without that Promethean spark which will live after the roses and lilies are faded, the burnished hair grown grey. In sunshine, in prosperity the flowers are very well--but how many wet days are there in life--November seasons of disaster--when a man's hearth and home would be cold indeed, without the clear, cheering gleam of intellect. (10)

In this association of woman with home, and specifically with the hearth, the spark moves from the hearth to the woman. Just as the eye reveals the soul of the woman, the hearth represents the soul of the home. Edward's wife's eye "gives no glimpse of soul". It is ironic, then, that William chooses to subdue the spark of intellectual fire in Frances with those doses of Wordsworth.

In <u>The Professor</u>'s descriptions of home, the hearth is crucial, and the image of fire symbolizes feeling, either controlled or dangerous. For example, in Chapter IV, William comes home to find "no cheering red gleam" in his hearth because the "slut of a servant has neglected it as usual" (26). William lacks the ability to create a home, including the ability to either encourage or discipline a servant. Oddly enough when he then goes walking in an unfamiliar neighbourhood and unknowingly passes Hunsden's house, Hunsden says to him from the darkness, "'Just so must Lot have left Sodom, when he expected fire to pour down upon it out of burning brass clouds'" (27). William is rather fleeing the "pale ashes" of an empty hearth, but Hunsden may intuit William's internal state of fiery anger and frustration. In the darkness, William notices the "red spark" of Hunsden's cigar, a token of the civilized "genuine ---shire fire, red, clear and generous" he soon encounters in Hunsden's room, along with a shaded lamp, a well-stocked

bookcase, and well-disciplined service from virtually invisible servants. The most basic element of a comfortable home, the glowing fire, is linked to symbols of class and education: the books, furniture, and good service; thus the "perfect order" that William admires in this household is also a social order, whereby Hunsden has those attributes of authority and ease to which his birth privileges him.

In the conversation between the two men, Hunsden suggests that William, too, is entitled to the advantages of an aristocratic birth. He legitimizes William's wish for a better life and a higher standard of living by suggesting that William belongs to a higher class than that of a clerk or tradesman, that he is "'the aristocrat of [his] family'" (22), resembling his mother, while Edward, the "'plebeian brother'", looks like his handsome father. When Edward loses his fine home and its contents, his bankruptcy reflects the way he does not deserve this kind of home, not having the kind of "'patrician descent [that] may be read in a distinctive cast of form and features'" (21). From this point of view, an individual's face and body constitute a text that can be read to determine where the individual belongs in the class system, that is, where his real home is. William has "'a laugh frigidly jeering; a look lazily mutinous; gentlemanlike irony, patrician resentment. What a nobleman you would have made,'" Hunsden tells him,

apparently in admiration. Yet he goes on to attack the aristocracy as a class:

> Now if you'd only an estate and a mansion and a park and a title, how you could play the exclusive, maintain the right of your class, train your tenantry in habits of respect to the peerage, oppose at every step the advancing power of the people, support your rotten order and be ready for its sake to wade knee-deep in churl's blood. (32)

The themes and values of Angria pervade these passages and imbue them with deep ambivalence stemming from the contradiction between the desire for the social and cultural privileges of aristocratic birth, and an awareness of the vices and shortcomings of that class. Characters like William or Jane Eyre seek homes that suit their tastes and abilities, and gratify their desires for education, experience and beauty. Ultimately, the novel, like Jane Eyre, validates bourgeois values while remaining ambivalent about those of other social classes.

This pervasive ambivalence means that William is able to have it both ways: to aspire to a life that establishes his "innate" nobility, while denying pretension, both attracted by the aristocracy and contemptuous of it. When William and Frances start a school for wealthy young women, William makes a point of describing their aristocratic students yet maintaining that Frances is not impressed by their social position. At the same time, William finds an appeal in certain aspects of Belgian simplicity and frugality,

characteristic of working class or petty bourgeois values. In contrast, he finds the English "slaves to . . . appearance" in their need for "elegance . . . superfluities . . . luxuries . . . strained refinements" (180). He develops a positive view of poverty and is glad in Chapter XXI that Hunsden will find him "absolved" from the "crime of prosperity", believing that Hunsden would have hated him had he found William ensconced in luxury "with a pretty, wealthy bride at [his] side" (181).

William's poverty is concerned with issues of gender and class, both related to the romance of rising in the social scale. For William to remain the hero of the novel, he must not use a woman to rise in the world. Similarly, he must succeed by his own efforts, although the novel is unconventional in showing Frances as a working woman after their marriage. William even fools Hunsden into thinking he is marrying an "ouvrière", when Frances is really genteel and educated. In fact, she is both bourgeois and a worker, like William himself. As a couple, they prosper because of hard work and few wants; they earn their way into a leisured class where they do not have to work for a living. The ten years of hard work are essentially invisible in the text, with much more attention being given to the happy culmination and the absence of labour. Thus the hard work has more to do with the ideology of success, of attaining idleness,

rather than with the novel's interest in the struggle itself.

The wish for marriage and home inspires William's effort to succeed. He describes the longed-for home in terms of a natural home: a "warm nest". When he reflects that he has no income, he thinks to himself: "'What will [Hunsden] say when, instead of a pair of plump turtledoves, billing and cooing in a bower of roses, he finds a single lean cormorant, standing mateless and shelterless on poverty's bleak cliff?'" (179). One of these "natural" homes is more domesticated than the other: turtledoves are kept as pets, and roses are cultivated, so the first home is an image of nature cultivated, in contrast to the cormorant's bare and lonely existence of mere survival on a barren cliff. "Culture is composed of forms that humans have created out of nature, or have permanently added to it" (Von Maltzahn 1994, 51). In reality, cormorants would have homes appropriate to them, but William is constructing an ideology of home. His mortification at his inability to offer marriage to Frances inspires in him the bourgeois impulse: "to do more, earn more, be more, possess more" (161).

William's decision to work hard for the wife and the home he wants involves not a new set of values but an intensification of those values by which he already vowed to

live in Chapter IV: duty and perseverance. In that chapter, however, he finds it difficult to make these qualities his "household gods" because of the profound antipathy between himself and Edward, his employer, a blight that cuts him off from the "sunshine of life" and makes him feel "like a plant growing in humid darkness out of the slimy walls of a well" (25). Moreover, William's real object of devotion is his "Darling, [his] Cherished-in-secret Imagination, the tender and the mighty" (25). Yet never does William indicate how his imagination manifests itself, and this remark seems to refer instead to the subtext about the writer. When William reads Frances' compositions, he perhaps encounters his own imagination through her writing. Before that happens, he has already recognized his "household gods" in her: he notes that Frances has "at least two good points, viz. Perseverance and a Sense of duty" (120), another example of the way these two characters are two sides of the same coin. The difference between them is Frances' imaginative power. Although William writes a letter to a friend in Chapter I, and narrates the novel, he is not able to create and sympathize with lives other than his own, as Frances does in her writing. Thus this male narrator encounters female creative power and a female voice. In her, perseverance and duty are not at odds with imagination, but enhance it. William's relentlessly condescending attitude

towards Frances' abilities resembles attitudes in Charlotte Brontë's early writing towards female creativity, and may represent the writer's resistance to the validity of a female voice, or an awareness of male resistance to it.

When William rediscovers Frances after her dismissal from the school, and especially when he actually visits her home, a female voice emerges in the narrative in the increasing assertiveness of Frances, and in the importance of home. In Chapter XIX, William visits Frances' home for the first time; this home is an embodiment of Frances herself. This episode establishes a contrast between the rainstorm outside and the comfort found within, a contrast that may reflect the difference between the stress and difficulties of the outside world, and the solace to be found in the inner world created by imagination. The perfect arrangement and cleanliness of a simple household convey a "neatness . . . better than elegance" that William also finds in Frances herself; in her well-fitting dress and white collar, she is "a model of frugal neatness". The only thing missing is a fire: " . . . had but a bright little fire shone on that clean hearth, I should have deemed it more attractive than a palace". Once again, the image of the hearth then moves to the woman's eye:

> Her eye, as she re-entered the small sitting-room, instantly sought mine, which was just then lingering on the hearth; I knew she read at once the sort of inward ruth and pitying pain which the

> chill vacancy of that hearth stirred in my soul. (159)

Frances' eye is literary and creative: she reads William's glance and immediately produces what is missing for him, not only the fire, but the sacred rites of an English tea.

Frances always takes tea on Sunday, appropriately enough on the day that other religious rites are observed. With her lighting of the fire, the ritual begins to bring the room to life:

> She had struck a light; the wood was already in a blaze, and truly, when contrasted with the darkness, the wild tumult of the tempest without, that peaceful glow which began to beam on the now animated hearth, seemed very cheering. A low purring sound from some quarter announced that another being, besides myself, was pleased with the change; a black cat . . . . (160)

In this description, the animal symbolizes the rediscovery of the body as part of nature and of culture. Frances goes on to arrange the ritual vessels "whose pattern, shape and size denote[d] a remote antiquity", reminding William of "'the England of a hundred years ago'". These are Frances' ancestral objects, preserved in a matriarchal line from her great-grandmother. Thus they represent a specifically feminine preservation of the past, not as objects in a museum, but in regular, yet ritualized use. These everyday yet special objects illustrate how "religion is made up of nothing special--the ordinary is holy or potentially holy; since the object of the religious is no-thing, its images can be improvised" (Sexson 1982, 10).

As she hands William his tea, Frances asks him if it will make him feel at home for a moment; that is, her presentation of the ritual drink creates the idea of home in the imagination. Frances' "exultation" at this epiphany is only partly matched by William's willingness to find "a sort of illusion in seeing the fair-complexioned English girl presiding at the English meal and speaking the English language" (161). This "illusion" will in time become the centre of interest for the writer. As we have seen, William does not know how to create a comfortable home. Frances, who is similarly impoverished, can create a home out of what she has. Frances' imaginative power is greater than William's, and if William is a version of the woman writer, concealed behind the male narrative point of view, Frances offers the possibility of the writer's home. William then says, "' . . . if ever I possess a home, it must be of my own making, and the task is yet to begin'"; at this point, Charlotte Brontë herself has not written explicitly as a woman. At that moment, William says, "a pang, new to me, shot across my heart: it was a pang of mortification at the humility of my position and the inadequacy of my means . . .". He remains mesmerized by Frances as she removes the tea-things and restores perfect order to the hearth; having "unconsciously watched her rather too closely" (161), he now consciously longs to look into her

eyes, symbolic of the life-bringing imagination: "the light I loved; a light where fire dissolved in softness, where affection tempered penetration, where, just now at least, pleasure played with thought" (162). This quotation might be describing Winnicott's idea of transitional space, written from the point of view of the one participating in the experience, not the clinical observer. The balanced syntax of the sentence reflects the balance between the inner world of the writer's desires and the outer reality of the world of culture.

Writing is the resistant-enough medium, "sufficiently resilient and responsive to withstand the full blast of the primitive love impulse" (Phillips, <u>Winnicott</u> 113). At the same time that William is finding what he needs in Frances, the writer is finding something essential. Up to now, she has relied on a male voice to allow her to participate in culture; through William, she finds her female subject and a cultural realm, located in the home. That this is both a fictional and a real discovery can be seen in the intensity of the writing, in the way the writer's interest shifts to Frances in the latter part of the book, and in her subsequent use of a female voice in <u>Jane Eyre</u>.

At this point in the narrative, William does not know what to say to Frances; he feels as if under a spell, and decides to use his will, his authoritative tone and manner"

to "compose" her, a term that suggests the process of writing. He uses literature to do this, and Frances fetches a book to read, Paradise Lost, from which they read the invocation to the Muse and discover an image of creativity: "how in the womb of chaos, the conception of a world had originated and ripened" (162), an image that echoes their own situation in the small room amid the storm, as well as providing an evocative feminine image of a new beginning for the writer. Like the ritual of tea, requiring both Frances and William to create home "'for a moment'", the idea of a new birth involves the union of male and female as a fundamental symbol of creativity. This reading transforms the world: the setting sun gleams through the window like "the reflection of rubies": that is, in the return to mundane reality, the reflecting imagination retains a vision of Paradise. Frances looks ahead to belonging in England, the Promised Land. Still, when William leaves, Frances quickly dismantles her fire; her poverty will not allow her to enjoy the luxury alone. In terms of literary creativity, the imagination requires the presence of other energies for the creative fire to burn. On his part, William longs to "'shovel coal into that grate ad libitum'" (165). For the time being, while Frances has the idea of the Promised Land to sustain her, William, like Noah, has the image of the rainbow that he sees as he leaves Frances' rooms:

> I left the West behind me, where spread a sky like opal; azure immingled with crimson: the enlarged sun, glorious in Tyrian tints, dipped his brim already: stepping, as I was, eastward, I faced a bank of clouds, but also, I had before me the arch of an evening rainbow, high, wide, vivid. (165)

This passage reiterates the idea of leaving behind the Angrian world of passion and imagination, associated in Charlotte Brontë's writing with the west and sunset. It also associates Frances with that world.[5] As in the "Farewell to Angria", reality, with its difficulties, is located in the east, associated with clouds and the colour grey. The beautiful sunset is a reminder that "Angria", the realm of imagination, is still there in the writer's world. Also, the brilliant rainbow gleaming amid the grey clouds in the east implies that reality, too, has its radiance, or perhaps that imagination can transform everyday reality. That night, William has a dream or vision of the same rainbow, this time accompanied by a decidedly Protestant angel who affirms that "'Hope smiles on Effort'" (166).

Some time later, when William and Frances are engaged, William brings Hunsden to meet her. Once again, the woman's room reflects her inner life; though Frances herself is in mourning for her aunt, the room expresses her joy:

> The room was so clean and bright, it looked like a little polished cabinet; a glass filled with flow-

[5] Perhaps this is why William feels he must subdue her on occasion: she is too Angrian for him.

> ers in the centre of the table, a fresh rose in each china cup on the mantel-piece gave it an air of fête. (217)

During this visit, the narrative focuses on the banter and argument between Frances and Hunsden, with William as an observer. At first cool and polite, Frances becomes animated when Hunsden mentions England, and her interest "thaw[s] Hunsden's reserve, as fire thaws a congealed viper" (217). Hunsden may be the serpent in the Eden created by William and Frances, but he brings some life to its perfect harmony. The argument concerns his critical views of England and its culture: "'a little corrupt, venal, lord-and-king cursed nation, full of mucky pride . . . and helpless pauperism; rotten with abuses, worm-eaten with prejudices'" (218). Frances responds with an attack on his cynicism and rationalism: "'Better to be without logic than without feeling'" (221). Her Angrian idealism opposes his desire for realism, but her devotion to domestic details contradicts his version of her as impractical. As a counterpoint to the argument, Frances is preparing a meal and setting the table. These activities are placed in parentheses: " (Fire stirred, dish put down before it)" (322), as if the domestic ritual is part of Frances' argument, as it is; her actions assert certain social and aesthetic values: sharing hospitality, creating order and beauty in everyday life, and nourishing the body. The

argument with Hunsden is actually a form of play and relationship; moreover, Hunsden, like Frances, can also create home as a sanctuary and retreat.

In the story of William and Frances, domestic rituals interweave with Biblical themes, especially the theme of Resurrection, and eventually the idea of home as Paradise takes over the narrative. References to the Old and New Testaments abound in the novel, especially in the dialogues between William and Hunsden. For example, Hunsden writes to William in Belgium and compares him to an Israelite enjoying the flesh-pots of Egypt. William frequently compares Hunsden to the Devil (179). However, the main recurring theme is resurrection, and the idea of resurrection is linked to a return to the natural world. When William defies Edward, and resigns from the mill, he escapes from the "sooty girdle" of the industrial town and walks out into the country, where he realizes that "Life [is] again open" to him. Like Jane Eyre in a similar situation, he hears a sound of "full-flowing water" from the nearby river, a sound that symbolizes the movement of life. The clock strikes four; he sees the sun shining through the old oak trees around a church, and hears the church bell (39). He is reconnected to nature and to the past, both natural and cultural.

The number four, here as elsewhere in Charlotte Brontë's writing, implies a mandala, and signifies a moment of selfhood in the character and of poetic self-confidence in the writer. Often it is associated with a sense of new life, or changed life in the character, and conveys a vision of fulfilment, of revelation, or of resurrection. References to the number four occur in the invocation to Belgium that opens Chapter VIII: "Three--nay four pictures line the four-walled cell where are stored for me the records of the Past". Belgium, one of the four pictures, says William, "stirs [his] world of the Past like a summons to Resurrection; the graves unclose, the dead are raised" (49). He goes on to describe the landscape on the drive to Brussels, but although he maintains that "all was beautiful" to his eyes, the scenes he describes are unappealing, including "some very dirty hovels, a grey, dead sky, wet roads, wet fields" and so on. At this point, William has been restored to life, but not to beauty. In Brussels, he becomes aware of the possibility of creating a home with a woman, first with Mdlle. Reuter, attracted by her comfortable rooms and pretty garden with its ivy and vine "trained"--and thus perhaps too controlled--around the window (70). Mdlle. Reuter also attracts him; she is like an apple, but of course, like the apple in Genesis, she represents a danger.

When William meets Frances and begins to teach her, he observes a change in her health and appearance, an increase of colour, animation and weight. She is "wakened to life" (136). Her increased energy and brightness allow the young students to recognize her similarity to them in a "Sisterhood of Youth and Health" (137). However, the imagery of resurrection is most striking when Frances has been dismissed from her teaching position and William is unable to find her, thanks to Mdlle. Reuter's lies and evasions. On his fourth Sunday of attending English church services in Brussels to look for her, he walks out of the city into the unattractive countryside, "the cultured but lifeless campaign" (152). A by-path leads him to the Protestant cemetery, a kind of enclosed garden, where a number of fourfold images lead up to his discovery of Frances. He notices inscriptions in English, French, German and Latin, mentioning four women's names. He goes on to notice the stillness of the air:

> . . .--the North was hushed, the South silent, the East sobbed not, nor did the West whisper. . . . under the trees of this cemetery nestled a warm, breathless gloom, out of which the cypresses stood up straight and mute, above which the willows hung straight and still, where the flowers, as languid as fair, waited listless for night-dew or thunder-shower, where the tombs and those they hid, lay impassible to sun or shadow, rain or drought. (154)

Within this mandala-like description of the four directions, and the four elements of the cemetery: cypresses, willows,

flowers and tombs, as well as sun, shadow, rain and drought, William discovers Frances: . . . here was my lost jewel dropped on the tear-fed herbage, nestling in the mossy and mouldy roots of yew-trees!" (155). The mandala symbolizes "an inner peace, a feeling that life has again found its meaning and order" (Jung 1968, 213-5), while the jewel, Frances herself, represents "the secret of immortality" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 554) which comes from a long and hidden life in the earth. Chevalier and Gheerbrant suggest that the jewel's origin in the earth makes it a maternal image. This description of natural and cultivated elements, mourning and joy, death and resurrection, frames the writer's symbolic recovery of a lost mother and her refashioning of this figure into the central female interest of her fiction. The theme of restoring the mother, who provides the first home, echoes other moments in the novel. William recovers his mother's portrait, a portrait that resembles Frances, and William restores to Frances her "Mother-tongue", English, the language of her mother.

In Frances, William realizes he has found the woman with whom he can create a home, but in her also, the woman writer has found her subject. Earlier, in Elizabeth Hastings, she created a similar character, but her male narrator refused to marry her, perhaps suggesting the writer's unreadiness to legitimize this figure. Now in William's

realization that he loves Frances, the writer's joy in her subject simultaneously appears:

> I loved her, as she stood there, pennyless and parentless, for a sensualist--charmless, for me a treasure, my best object of sympathy on earth, thinking such thoughts as I thought, feeling such feelings as I felt, my ideal of the shrine in which to seal my stores of love; personification of discretion and forethought, of diligence and perseverance, of self-denial and self-control . . . . Model of truth and honour, of independence and conscientiousness, those refiners and sustainers of an honest life; silent possessor of a well of tenderness, of a flame as genial as still, as pure as quenchless, of natural feeling, natural passion, those sources of refreshment and comfort to the sanctuary of home. (156)

The repetitive and balanced phrasing of this passage conveys the writer's excitement and certainty. The figure of Frances possesses not only the qualities produced by culture and education, but the water and fire of feeling and passion, the spontaneity and sexuality that spring from the body and belong to nature. The home that William and Frances create will be, at its most ideal, both a natural and a cultural creation, nature and culture enhancing each other in a union of opposites. This vision of Frances is both an expression of her value for the writer and an epiphany, an image of integration and wholeness. The underlying quest by the writer for her subject makes this image of the woman who is both virginal and maternal more than the traditional equation of woman with nature, mainly because in Charlotte Brontē's subsequent fiction, this

figure changes from the object of the writer's search to the speaking subject of her own story.

After William rescues Frances as if from the underworld, she is transformed, but perhaps only in the way that William sees her: "I felt that she was singularly changed for me . . . now I saw a face dressed in graces" (209). On their wedding-day, Frances is again transformed, first into the "imposing and festal" form of a bride, and then into a charming and submissive wife. Frances' tears on her wedding day remain unexplained,[6] and William expresses no feelings about her apparent distress; significantly, perhaps, in her first appearance as a married woman she is kneeling on the carpet as William hands books to her to arrange on a shelf, symbolic again of his controlling her through language and culture, but also of her being in charge of how the domestic space will be arranged. The couple's cosy room forms a contrast to the snowy winter day outside, and the home they are making includes another fourfold image. William teaches Frances to make a "proper" English tea, "at which there wanted neither candles nor urn,

[6] These abundant tears are, like William's attack of hypochondria, another eruption into the text of something discordant, a suggestion of disharmony between William and Frances, perhaps related to the question of Hunsden as a more suitable partner for Frances, or to the issue of the way William tends to subdue her intellectual passion.

firelight nor comfort" (227). The domestic religion will be observed correctly from now on, but whether Frances or William has created this image of perfection remains ambiguous.

The novel might have ended here, but this home is not yet the ideal home. William and Frances return to England, freed from having to work for a living. Eschewing the plot device of an inheritance, the novel nonetheless works some narrative magic by eliding the ten years of labour, saving and investment--"I need not say how gainful," William remarks (237). William's investments make him plenty of money with no inconvenient contact with the source of the profits, such as mills or colonies. Perhaps William is more like his brother Edward, who goes on to make a fortune in railway speculation, than he thinks.

William and France return to a home in "----shire", to "a region whose verdure the smoke of mills has not yet sullied" (237). This avoidance of industrialization involves a recognition that it exists as a menace on the margins of the story. The novel's realism does not deny the damage industry causes to the Promised Land of England, but allows these characters to evade it, both when William leaves Edward's mill in Chapter V, and when William and Frances make a home in England. Edward's mill is like a

sick animal, "vomiting soot from its long chimney and quivering through its thick brick walls with the commotion of its iron bowels" (14). Because William is able to escape, the fate of the other "slaves" is immaterial to him. At each turning point in his life, William simply walks away from urbanization and its complexities into the country. The final move, from Belgium and hard work to a life of ease and comfort, follows this pattern.

The move back to nature is a move to a female world, to "the very primal wildness of nature, her moss, her bracken, her blue-bells, her scents of reed and heather, her free and fresh breezes" (237). "Daisy-lane", the "not too spacious dwelling", definitely not a mansion, virtually dissolves into the world of nature, with its interior never described, except for the "low and long" windows that connect the house to the outdoors. The trellised porch resembles "an arch of roses and ivy", and the house is surrounded with sod from the hills. Needlework is unnecessary in this setting where nature provides the "minute embroidery" of flowers. Visiting takes place on the porch, and the tea-table is set out under the trees. It is unclear who prepares the tea, perhaps an invisible servant. Frances herself puts aside the honeysuckle, not the curtain, at the window, and she metaphorically becomes part of nature when William says, "her presence is as pleasant to my mind as the perfume of the

fresh hay and spicy flowers, as the glow of the westering sun, as the repose of the Midsummer Eve are to my senses". Moreover, in her concern for her child, she is "like a dove guarding its young from a hovering hawk" (246).

The hovering hawk is Hunsden, their closest neighbour on his ancestral estate, and apparently their chief social contact, although he is only there for five out of twelve months. William and Frances have moved into another class, but they apparently have no social world other than what Hunsden provides, and those contacts seem to be purely intellectual and male. They often go to Hunsden-wood and enjoy the various dinner guests who seem to consist of European "theorists" and "hard" businessmen from Birmingham and Manchester whose talk is of free trade; with these "practical men" Hunsden seems "leagued, hand and heart" (238-9), but this alliance of aristocracy and industry is not examined too closely, perhaps given that William himself has benefited from similar connections through his investments. William does refrain from aligning himself ideologically, other than to criticize some of the European thinkers in vague and ambiguous terms, a tendency that may simply be part of his sense of English superiority. Similarly, Hunsden collects art on his travels and William condescends to admire some of it. His tone reinforces his own superior taste and judgement, but he seems as completely dependent on

Hunsden for his cultural experience as he is for social contacts. Thus his choice of romantic seclusion in the natural world leaves him in a strangely isolated position, not unlike the situation of Jane and Rochester at the end of Jane Eyre, although Daisy-lane is a more benign or idealized retreat than the "insalubrious" Ferndean. Also, in the later novel, Rochester still bears the signs of his suffering and regeneration in his injured eye and hand, while William appears to believe that his ease and wealth are deserved and unproblematic. Still, the apparent perfection of the retreat to a feminized nature is undermined both by William's egotism and by the presence of Hunsden, an indication that something is wrong in this Eden.

The apparently peaceful ending of the novel becomes complicated in the last few pages by a number of elements related to Hunsden, "the voice of rebellion, a plot manipulator, a narrator in disguise", according to Gilbert and Gubar (333). He is closely connected to Frances and William's child, Victor, whose temperament exhibits "a kind of electrical ardour and power, which emits, now and then, ominous sparks" (245), and whose name may suggest the protagonist of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Victor, with his Angrian qualities, resembles Hunsden more than he does either of his parents, although Frances has been seen to have some Angrian tendencies in her vexing fairy moods.

Accepting this aspect of Victor, Hunsden "calls it his spirit and says it should not be curbed", but William is threatened by this aspect of his son and wants it radically suppressed by sending the boy away to Eton, away from Hunsden and from Frances, both of whom tell Victor "tales of adventure, peril or wonder". Frances is, however, also concerned about Hunsden's influence on Victor, although she seems to represent a balance between the romance of Hunsden's approach and the apparent realism of William's. Yet Hunsden's is the kinder treatment of the young boy. A sadistic tone to William's comments suggests an unresolved conflict about the way children are shaped by adults.[7]

[7] One possible explanation for William's cruel tone may be that William is jealous of Victor's relationships with both Frances and Hunsden. Another may be that it is another intrusion into the novel of the writer's feelings about Angrian tendencies or wilful boys. William imagines the violence of Victor's treatment at Eton and describes it in a confused and disrupted syntax:

> I call it the leaven of the offending Adam and consider that it should be if not *whipped* out of him, at least soundly disciplined, and that he will be cheap of any amount of either bodily or mental suffering which will ground him radically in the art of self-control . . . . [Frances uses love and reason to "subjugate" Victor]--but will reason or love be the weapons with which in future the world will meet his violence? Oh no! for that flash in his black eye--for that cloud on his bony brow--for that compressure of his statuesque lips, the lad will someday get blows instead of blandishments--kicks instead of kisses--then for the fit of mute fury which will sicken his body and madden his soul--then for the ordeal of merited and salutory suffering--out of which he will come (I trust) a wiser and better man. (245)

In Jane Eyre, this conflict is presented from two points of view, from the child Jane's, suffering under attempts to make her conform to her aunt's expectations, and from Jane's adult viewpoint, in her attempt to shape Adèle into a proper English child.

A further complication in the novel's last pages involves the dog, a ferocious mastiff, that Hunsden gives to Victor: Yorke, named after Hunsden himself. The dog is gentle with Victor, who loves him dearly. Taken by Hunsden to town, Yorke is bitten by a rabid dog and William shoots Yorke, to Victor's great distress. The incident appears to be in the novel to illustrate William's reasonableness and calm determination in shooting the dog, but the shooting may show his envy of Hunsden and Victor.[8] The dog, with its combination of ferocity and devotion, represents something in Hunsden and in Victor also: deep feeling and a refusal to compromise, or romantic wildness linked to love. William destroys the dog as he would destroy this aspect of his son. His action may also represent the writer's attempt to kill off the Angrian element, but it refuses to stay dead, and re-emerges in Jane Eyre. Boumelha (1990) notes that

> Hunsden threatens to unsettle the bourgeois family that would otherwise close the novel. And if

[8] Rodolff suggests that William "as it were" shoots "his difficult double" (86), the dog that symbolizes Hunsden himself.

> Hunsden is the unconstrained shadow of Crimsworth, then Frances likewise has her troubling double in the story of the woman who got away, Lucia . . . .(23)

Indeed, another complication of the final pages is that Hunsden shows Frances and William a miniature of his ideal woman, Lucia, whom he is unable to marry. Frances sees in this portrait the face of "'one who has made an effort, and a successful and triumphant effort, to wrest some vigorous and valued faculty from insupportable constraint.'" She guesses that Lucia "'once wore chains and broke them'" (241), that she is an actress, and that Hunsden could not marry her because of her violation of class and gender expectations. Hunsden neither confirms nor denies her conjecture, and goes on to compare her to Lucia: "' . . . don't you feel your little lamp of a spirit wax very pale beside such a girandole as Lucia's?'" (241). Once again, a romantic, subversive element enters the narrative at a point where the story seems to be over. Instead of loose threads being woven in, new loose threads are introduced. Into the domestic peace of William and Frances comes a question of female talent and ambition, and of unresolved passion, elements that refuse to be tamed. The actress, the woman who acts, is an image of a creative woman who reveals her gifts in public. She is thus related to the subtext of the writer, the narrative now having buried Frances alive in William's rural paradise. Hunsden's comments to Frances

about Lucia have a flirtatious ring that anticipates the dialogues in Jane Eyre. The underlying interest in The Professor has gradually emerged as the possibility of a relationship between a plain, poor, but creative and intelligent woman, and a handsome, rebellious, discontented and wealthy man. How might these two create a home together?

In the ménage à trois of William, Frances and Hunsden, masculine and feminine features are somewhat fluid. Frances' name might almost be a man's, William resembles his mother more than his father (20), and Hunsden's features are "small and even feminine" (29), while his handwriting is "neither masculine nor exactly feminine" (178). Most surprisingly, Hunsden's features alternate between extremes of masculine and feminine; at times they give him "the mien of a morose bull and anon that of an arch and mischievous girl" (30).[9] All these characters are aspects of the writer, elements that may have been coded masculine or feminine in Charlotte Brontë's cultural awareness, but are part of her imaginative life, projected at different times into

[9] The fluidity of gender is further illustrated when William meditates on his own resemblance to his mother and compares it to daughters who look like their fathers. A similar instability occurs when Hunsden compares himself to Isaac waiting for Rebecca, and "Fate sends [him] only a counting-house clerk in a grey Tweed wrapper" (27).

different characters. Yet the crucial question is whether a female character can tell or control the story. The instability of gender marks the ascendancy of the feminine within the work of fiction. The image of Lucia provides an example of a woman who has taken control of her story, something Frances has been unable to do. The union of masculine and feminine has been mostly on William's terms, but in Charlotte Brontë's next novel, the struggle to unite on terms of equality moves into the foreground.

Needlework and writing are images of feminine creativity that provide a counterpoint to William's control of the narration. While needlework sometimes suggests duplicity, in the hands of Mdlle. Reuter, for instance, it also implies entrapment in a female role. Frances' lace-mending enables her to survive, but is alienating and uncreative. Her work is not her true creative expression, which is writing. The danger represented by women's work--symbolic of the cultural constraints on women in general--is that it prevents fulfilment of the writer's talent. Frances enjoys composition: " . . . such occupation seemed the very breath of her nostrils . . ." (35). William's love for Frances is intimately related to her writing. His awareness of his desire to be close to her dawns when he is writing on the margin of her book, and finds he wants to remain, "[his] head very near hers, and [his] hand near hers too;

but the margin of a copy-book is not an illimitable space . . . " (136). Although William is the narrator, he is writing in the margins of Frances' creativity. At times his domination of her becomes strained, as if the male voice is trying too hard to stay in control of the creative work, or as if his tendency to domineer is at odds with his wish for Frances to express herself. He treats Frances in an austere and rigid manner, alternating with paternalistic kindness, like a gardener with a "precious plant" (137). More unpleasantly, he sometimes describes himself in godlike terms, comparing Frances to his "lost sheep" when he finds her in the cemetery. Rochester uses the same image to refer to Jane, but in the later novel, the image clearly indicates Rochester's spiritual arrogance.

Still, William does encourage Frances to write, while Mdlle. Reuter, on the other hand, tries to stifle this encouragement in terms that recall Southey's advice to Charlotte Brontë:

> " . . . it appears to me that ambition--*literary* ambition especially, is not a feeling to be cherished in the mind of a woman; would not Mdlle. Henri be much safer and happier if taught to believe that in the quiet discharge of social duties consists her real vocation . . . ?" (139)

William agrees with her, not simply to avoid discussion, but because his plans for Frances involve her development into

the perfect wife and mother, not a gifted writer.[10] Just as Charlotte Brontë reassured Southey of her attention to her feminine duties--"I have endeavoured not only attentively to observe all the duties a woman ought to fulfil, but to feel deeply interested in them" (16 March 1837)--the narrative reassures the reader about Frances' domesticity in her neat and charming clothing, her exquisitely ordered home, and her skill in cooking and sewing.[11] The union of William and Frances connects his masculine voice with her capacity to make a home, but in the process, Frances' expressiveness in writing disappears, to be replaced by her insisting on continuing to work as a teacher after marriage, in order to be closer to William, as well as to express her talents. After their marriage, William tends to become less dominant as a character, and to be more of a recording voice. He even questions Frances about what she would do if she had an abusive husband. William says, "I would have an answer, because I saw a strange kind of spirit in her eye, whose

[10] Noted by Boumelha, 55-57.

[11] If anything, Charlotte Brontë's letter is more ironic on this point than is the novel, where Frances' housekeeping reaches an idealized perfection. To Southey she maintains that she "endeavours" to feel "deeply interested" in her feminine duties, not that she really is so interested. While she reassures Southey that her days are too busy for her to indulge in daydreaming, her tone may be mocking when she notes: "In the evening, I confess, I do think, but I never trouble anyone with my thoughts . . . " .

voice I determined to waken" (235). That voice will be Jane Eyre's.

The very name "Jane" occurs when William is reunited with Frances after obtaining a position that will enable them to marry. Frances has written a poem about a student and a teacher, that ends with the "master" telling "Jane" that when she is "deceived, repulsed, opprest", she should "come home to [him] again!" (215); that is, home is where the master is.

> . . . Frances is an artist. But the very means by which she achieves that status is problematically linked with her sex, because of her dependence on the enabling intervention of the man. And her "Jane" poem establishes a further, and again highly problematic, link between the 'woman' and the 'writer' . . . (Boumelha 55).

Boumelha finds a contradiction between the ambition of the speaker in the poem, and her "inward wound", between her "femaleness" and "haemorrhage". Perhaps the master is a male Muse, whose inspiration both rouses and wounds, an idea not foreign to myths of male creativity. "Repeatedly in Charlotte Brontë's novels, a man extends a woman's power of expression in a way that extends and frees her desire" (Gordon 114). In <u>The Professor</u>, the writer takes on this male role and frees the woman's creativity, only to retreat from the issue, and then reintroduce it in the figure of Lucia.

William's comments on the poem are the insights of the writer who recognizes the possibility of union with feminine

creativity in a new way; William is not necessarily the incarnation of "a male literary tradition that discourages female writers", as Gilbert and Gubar suggest (327). The interplay between this narrator and his student is not simply a tale of the woman's creativity being subsumed by the male voice, although that is one layer of its meaning. Frances, reading her poem, also represents the release of creative energy in the woman writer, as does William's "musing" over the poem itself:

> I read--then dreamily made marks on the margin with my pencil, thinking all the while, of other things; thinking that "Jane" was now at my side; no child but a girl of nineteen, and she might be mine, so my heart affirmed; Poverty's curse was taken off me; Envy and Jealousy were far away and unapprised of this our quiet meeting; the frost of the Master's manner might melt, I felt the thaw coming fast, whether I would or not, no further need for the eye to practise a hard look, for the brow to compress its expanse into a stern fold. It was now permitted to suffer the outward revelation of the inward glow, to seek, demand, elicit an answering ardour. (205)

Before William enters the room, Frances has been repeating a poem by Scott, another literary "Master"; when William reads Frances' poem, he represents the master as enabler, and replaces Scott's poem with hers. In Charlotte Brontë's next novel, the writer abandons the male narrator, to speak through Jane Eyre directly in her search for a home.

Chapter III

Nature and Culture: Home in Jane Eyre

"Vexing and soothing"

In Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë's second novel, begun in 1846, the search for home, implicit in her earlier writings, now becomes explicit. Again this search includes a subtext about the writer's search for an imaginative and literary home. Both aspects of the search are more hopeful and closer to resolution than in any other of Charlotte Brontë's works. The orphan, Jane Eyre, explores a series of possible homes before her eventual union with her "master", Edward Rochester, who is also a symbol of the writer's inspiration by Romanticism. However, the novel emphasizes the many threats to Jane's happiness before the muted optimism of the ending.

Jane Eyre constitutes both a new development and a point of equilibrium in Charlotte Brontë's fiction. For the first time in her work, a female narrative voice represents the writer and expresses the vitality of her imagination. Jane combines the ironic detachment of earlier male narrators with the passion and desire of a talented and sensitive woman, no longer an object of interest in the fiction,

but a speaking subject. This change to a female voice makes the novel an autobiography both of the fictional Jane and of the writer who engages in imagination with her desires and anxieties as a woman and an artist. Because the writer's imagination projects its own "dreaming, imagining, creating self" (Rycroft, _Psychoanalysis_ 276) into the objects of its own fiction, the story of Jane Eyre explores what keeps this figure alive, what obstacles she encounters, and how she can find fulfillment. Jane Eyre seeks a place in the world where she will not be swallowed up or destroyed, either by her own desire and rage at her exclusion, or by the social world that excludes her. In her representation of the growth of the female artist's mind in _Jane Eyre_, the writer explores the influence of nature and culture on that development, to arrive at two paradoxical concepts. One is that the true self is natural, and connected to nature, but needs culture to embody and express it. The other is that the true self is divided, not unified or singular.

Home stands at the border between nature and culture, having something in common with the nests and lairs that animals construct for themselves, as well as constituting a fundamental symbol of human creativity. Home is intimately connected to biological needs for shelter, food, rest, and procreation. At the same time, home is the place where feelings, imagination and behaviour are first educated. Peter Fuller writes:

> . . . if there is a continuity between human aesthetic experience and 'natural' (or biological) life, there is also a rupture: and this has much to do with man's [sic] unique capacity for the elaboration of socially shared symbolic orders, for *culture*. Though culture itself is grounded in man's highly specific psycho-biological nature, it is also the means through which human history transcends natural history. (Images 10)

Jane's search for home, while personal, is also a social and cultural endeavour. The child Jane Eyre becomes Jane Rochester the autobiographer through her experience of five homes, each of which shapes her, but where she also challenges the values that each home would impose on her. Her journey constitutes an extended dialogue between Jane's nature--her feelings, perceptions and passions--and the culture in which she lives, exemplified in the various homes. At stake is Jane's ability to love, thrive, and be creative, for each home both nurtures Jane and threatens her in some way. Dangers to Jane are dangers to imagination, to the writer's capacity to connect nature and culture through language. In Jane's search for a home, journeying from Gateshead to Ferndean, she must deal with her anger at not belonging, with the conflicting claims of kinship and feeling, nature and culture, with the demands of education and work, and with her own dividedness, which will also be her greatest strength.

Jane's five homes are Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House and Ferndean. Each of them shows how the past

becomes part of the present through inheritance and experience, symbolized by architecture and furnishings that express "the life of present inhabitants", as well as creating a sense of "long-inhabited place" (Tristram 1989, 118-9), for none of these homes is newly built. The sense of place also includes a home's relationship to nature in its geographical and social situation. Each two-syllabled name suggests symbolic meanings.[1] Gateshead may echo the Biblical passage, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates" (Psalm 24:7), an ironic commentary on the pride of the inhabitants.[2] Of all the names, only "Gateshead" has the least connection with the natural, as opposed to the human world, having shut itself away from nature. In contrast to the pride of Gateshead, "Lowood" implies the unhealthy situation of the school, and the humiliation forced on its inhabitants, although for Jane, it is also the starting point of her upward social climb. "Thornfield", despite its grandeur and its garden, is a place of suffering for Jane, Rochester and Bertha. The field in the name represents a very simple enclosure and cultivation of nature, but nature perhaps more productive and sustaining than a "low wood",

[1] Each name contains two words, even Lowood (Low Wood), suggesting the way homes are created out of different elements.

[2] This psalm could also refer to the Reeds in its references to the dangers of vanity and deceit.

while the thorns suggest the Biblical crown of thorns, or Shelley's "thorns of life". "Moor House", the home of Jane's kinsfolk, is the most complicated and ambiguous of the house names, for it has two names, the other being "Marsh End". The double names suggest the home's situation on the boundary between the fresh, healthful moors and the dangerous confusing marsh. Here Jane finds another home connected with Moor House, the cottage at Morton, the unnamed two-room home supplied with odd bits of furniture from her friends and set up with the utmost simplicity. This is the only home where Jane lives alone. Jane's last home, "Ferndean", derives its name from two natural features, the delicate fern and the sheltered valley. The name of this final refuge is closest to nature of all the house-names in the book, and the most distant from the prideful exclusion of Gateshead. In going from the unnatural exclusiveness of Gateshead to the natural seclusion of Ferndean, Jane never finds the "busy world" of action for which she yearns. Instead, she discovers an inner world of imagination and passionate attachment to Rochester, a more mature and complex version of earlier Romantic figures like Zamorna or Hunsden, who satisfies the "restlessness" of her nature (110).

Gateshead seems deliberately isolated; it is a grand country hall separated by its lodge from the road; within it, Jane is also isolated from the drawing room, breakfast room, and dining room; she is confined to the nursery, and on one occasion to the Red Room. This room at Gateshead is a shrine to the past, with its old mahogany furniture, the bed where present generations were conceived, the throne-like chair. In contrast, the nursery where Jane spends most of her time, has a fire, ready access to food from the kitchen, toys, and a window that opens to permit feeding the birds. If its furniture harks back to the past, including the recent past of the children, it also remains part of present life by being in daily use.

Jane first describes her life at the age of ten. Her life before then is a blank, except for Mrs. Reed's later description of her as a helpless infant, "'a sickly, whining, pining thing'"(234), but loved nonetheless by her uncle because of his attachment to Jane's mother, his sister. Thus Jane's first home is divided between the different feelings of aunt and uncle. The opening chapters of the novel explore various facets of Jane's awareness, such as her sense of alienation from the rest of the Reed family, and her interest in books that provide reflections of her inner world. In _Bewick's History of British Birds_ she finds illustrations of the Arctic, evocative of her own emotional

environment: "those forlorn regions of dreary space,--that reservoir of frost and snow" (8). Other illustrations show "a rock standing up alone in a sea of billows and spray . . . [a] broken boat stranded on a desolate coast . . . [a] cold and ghastly moon glancing through bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking." Yet another is of a "quite solitary churchyard with its inscribed headstone; its gate, its two trees, its low horizon, girdled by a broken wall, and its newly-risen crescent, attesting the hour of even-tide" (9).

From one point of view, the illustrations reinforce Jane's loneliness and depression: the emotional coldness of the icy wastes, the boat that cannot sail out into adventure and experience, the shipwreck and the cemetery--all evoke the deaths of Jane's parents and the loss of her first home with them, symbolized by the broken wall. This is her inner home, where she really belongs, in contrast to the wealthy surroundings of her outer home at Gateshead, where she is an outsider. Nevertheless, another feature of these images is their hopefulness, such as the fact that birds can live and belong in the Arctic cold. The rock, a recurring motif in the novel, is an image of survival, of Jane herself living through the flood of experience, like her grief at learning of Rochester's previous marriage (299), or her struggle of wills with St. John Rivers, when she leans against a rock (413).

Another kind of rock is the headstone in the churchyard, a natural rock shaped by human hands and inscribed with someone's name. The hope implied by the headstone is that the natural object, the self, will be shaped by life into an individual form. These two stones, the rock and the gravestone, suggest Jane's natural self, with its instincts and feelings, and the self she will become through language and culture. Both are necessary to the writer; an absence of feelings means "death-in-life", but a lack of language means madness, like the madness of Bertha Rochester, who cannot, or will not, speak.

In the churchyard picture, another detail is the gate, a feature that enables movement in and out. Jane will be able to leave Gateshead, to move out from her dreary imprisoned childhood self, to find a fuller life and connection with others. The moon haunts these pictures, as it will the pages of the novel, suggesting the mysterious maternal power of nature, with its "interaction of beneficence and savagery" (Frye, English Romanticism 1968, 30), presiding over the horror of loss and waste, yet offering the possibility of renewal: the "newly-risen crescent" that symbolizes Jane's awakening consciousness.

The last three images Jane examines in the Bewick book, the two becalmed ships, the fiend pinning down the thief's pack, and the "black, horned thing surveying the gallows"

express the fear of death-in-life. They embody the concept of being physically, but not spiritually, alive, the state of "perfect submission and stillness" enjoined by Mrs. Reed (18). Jane experiences this state when she recovers from her ordeal in the Red Room and can find no pleasure in the things that used to delight her. Along with her appetite for food, she has lost her curiosity and capacity for interest, the "appetite" that is "the individual's lifeline" (Phillips, Beast xx). Later, at Lowood, after Miss Temple leaves, and at Thornfield, before Rochester appears, she feels this paralysis of her feelings. Most frighteningly, she realizes that St. John offers her death-in-life when he proposes marriage; it would be "'almost equivalent to committing suicide'" (419).

These pictures and her other reading reflect Jane's situation and help to constitute her inner world. Similarly, Bessie's stories nourish her imagination and feed her desires for "love and adventure" (9). However, the significant force that brings Jane's consciousness of herself into being in these first pages of the novel is her anger. This is the first occasion when Jane has expressed, or others have witnessed, her rage: "I resisted all the way: a new thing for me," Jane says, surprising Bessie but not Miss Abbot, who notes that "'it was always in her'" (12). This anger is an unconscious force: when Jane remembers attacking

John Reed, she says: "I don't very well know what I did with my hands" (11). Her anger has several apparently disastrous results, such as her terrifying imprisonment in the Red Room where she is unable to recognize herself in the mirror, and is panic-stricken by the gleam of light--an *ignis fatuus* that seems like "a vision from another world" (17). She wakes from her ordeal as if from a nightmare to see "a terrible red glare, crossed with thick black bars" (18); it is the nursery fire, but at that moment, Jane has lost her power to name it.[3] Like Shelley's west wind, "destroyer and preserver", Jane's anger resembles a force of nature that both brings her to life and cuts her off from it:

> A ridge of lighted heath, alive, glancing, devouring, would have been a meet emblem of my mind when I accused and menaced Mrs. Reed: the same ridge, black and blasted after the flames are dead, would have represented as meetly my subsequent condition, when half an hour's silence and reflection had shewn me the madness of my conduct, and the dreariness of my hated and hating position. (38)

Anger brings Jane to an awareness of her situation and enables her to express her spontaneous feelings, but its aftermath overwhelms her with a sense of her separation from others.

[3] Jane indicates her recovery to Mr. Lloyd by naming him when he asks her who he is.

Throughout the novel, anger remains an equivocal force, a life-bringing energy, and a dangerous will to power. Given the destructive forces arrayed against her, Jane's will to live involves finding within herself the physical and moral strength to withstand them. Some of that strength comes from her anger, and some from her desire for pleasure and beauty, from passions rooted in the body. The body is Jane's first home, and for a long time the only one that belongs to her. A woman must perceive herself as a commodity if she does not possess her own body. Jane learns in the course of the novel to be in charge of her body, in the sense of caring for it as well as recognizing and restraining her aggressive and sexual impulses.[4] Sometimes her body saves her: for example, when her convulsion in the Red Room accomplishes her release.

Nonetheless, language and culture also inspire Jane's feelings. For instance, when she confronts John Reed about his bullying--the incident that seems to bring the novel/her consciousness into being in the first place--she has already used her reading to clarify the meaning of John Reed: "'You are like a murderer--you are like a slave-driver--you are like the Roman emperors!' I had read Goldsmith's History of

[4] The Reed children, in contrast, grow up unable to care properly for their bodies. John Reed destroys himself physically, Eliza starves herself, and Georgiana eats too much.

Rome, and had formed my opinion of Nero, Caligula &c" (11). Throughout the novel, Jane will maintain this tension between her nature--her body and feelings--and the culture she acquires from reading, and from other people. Although Jane acknowledges her feelings, she is only beginning to be aware that she is a divided self. Her attack on John Reed occurs without her will and consciousness being involved, and she defies Mrs. Reed "as if [her] tongue pronounce[s] words without [her] will consenting to their utterance" (27). The divided part of Jane understands intuitively that "in order to be and to have the feeling that one *is*, one must have a predominance of impulse-doing over reactive doing" (Winnicott, Home 39). Jane's impulsiveness is an indication of her vitality.

After Jane's outburst to Mrs. Reed, Bessie calls Jane "'the most wicked and *abandoned* child ever reared under a roof'" (28).[5] As a punishment for her wickedness, and an unintentional correction of her abandonment, Mrs. Reed confines Jane to the nursery where, as if regressing to an earlier stage, she is treated as a much younger child, sleeping in a crib and playing with her doll. In this regression, Bessie becomes for her what Winnicott might term a "good-enough" mother, reliable, nurturing, but sometimes impatient

[5] My italics.

and cross. "'You should be bolder,'" she tells Jane, and Jane does become bolder, as well as more open to influence. She begins to resemble Bessie, becoming more affectionate and outspoken, interweaving her feelings with Bessie's efforts to teach her.

Still, Jane refuses to be defined by others; she will not be compliant and agreeable with the Reeds, even when Bessie tells her, "'You should try to be useful and pleasant, then perhaps you would always have a home here'" (13). The ability to thrive--"coming aggressively and spontaneously alive in [one's] own person and right"--involves not succumbing to destructiveness or inadequacy in parents or guardians (Khan 1974, 302). Jane is aware of the threat to her nature that the Reeds present, and both her rebelliousness with the Reeds, and her contentment in simple housekeeping with Bessie, come from her will to live. She finds a home in the nursery with Bessie, in the first instance of a recurring motif in the novel, of home as an enclosure or sanctuary within a hostile environment, others being Miss Temple's room at Lowood and the schoolroom at Thornfield.

Jane's love of learning, like her love of homemaking, appears to be "natural", an inner prompting to live more fully and develop her talents. In contrast, her cousins Eliza and Georgiana distort their natures into false selves,

as shown, for example, by their attitudes towards their own hair, symbol of vitality and sexuality. Eliza "would have sold the hair off her head if she could have made a handsome profit thereby" (29), while Georgiana at a young age is "interweaving her curls with artificial flowers and faded feathers" (30).[6] Jane feeds the "little hungry robin" at the window (30), while Eliza feeds her poultry in order to make a profit, showing how the culture of trade has corrupted her natural feelings. Jane herself has learned a genteel contempt both for poverty and for trade, choosing to define herself as a lady, with Bessie's endorsement.[7] She does not belong at Gateshead, and her nature seeks an appropriate home; treated like Eliza's imprisoned poultry, she has more in common with the robin that she feeds, a creature that is free to make its own nest.

"When Charlotte Brontë theorised, her appeal was to Nature . . . 'Unless I can look beyond the greatest Masters, and study Nature herself, I have no right to paint.' (Letter

[6] Commenting on "well-bred people" and her dissimilarity from them, Charlotte Brontë expressed the opinion that in society "Nature is turned upside down" (Letter to Ellen Nussey ?19 Jan. 1847).

[7] Jane's relationship to the Reeds indicates her connection to wealth, even if she is the poor cousin, and she is angry at her treatment at Gateshead because she feels she should be better than a servant. Similarly, at Thornfield, she is relieved to learn that Mrs. Fairfax is a servant; hence Jane does not have to feel inferior.

to WSW Sept. 1848)" (Gordon 148). In Jane Eyre, culture is often the enemy of nature; the class system, for instance, opposes nature, denies individuality, and distorts personality. Too much culture--wealth, privilege, possessions, power, society, religion--destroys the balance between nature and culture and represses the self. Yet in showing how Jane's true self develops through her education, the novel goes against the grain of the Victorian convention that education was dangerous for women, making them want to "flout 'nature'", to choose work rather than marriage, their "natural" destiny. Terry Lovell (1987) points out that the underlying belief behind this convention was that "feminine conformity is the work of nurture combined with compulsion and material interest, and that nature has very little to do with it" (99). In contrast, Jane Eyre depicts a woman with an extraordinary desire for learning who also understands the importance of a loving, comfortable home; Jane experiences no contradiction between these two impulses, because the novel values the home as the place where the self and its natural feelings, as well as its love of learning, can flourish. Ironically, Jane's banishment to Lowood School, intended (by Mrs. Reed and Brocklehurst) to lower her expectations, instead makes her culturally and intellectually superior to Mrs. Reed or the Brocklehursts,

despite their sense of social pre-eminence.*

Jane's next home, Lowood, cut off from the surrounding community by its isolated location and the wall that surrounds it, resembles a labyrinth. Inside the "large and irregular buiding" are found passages, compartments, staircases and rooms, some comfortable, like Miss Temple's parlour, and some miserably furnished and heated, such as the common rooms of the students (44). Despite its privations, this home nurtures Jane's growing self. The walled labyrinth contains a garden, a container for natural growth. When Jane arrives, the garden is dead and depressing--"all was wintry blight and brown decay" (48)--but when spring comes, the garden, like Jane herself, contains the possibility of new life. Jane's strength lies in her connection to nature, inner and outer. Usually one mirrors the other, for instance, when she arrives at Lowood:

> Probably if I had lately left a good home and kind parents, this would have been the hour when I should most keenly have regretted the separation: that wind would then have saddened my heart; this obscure chaos would have disturbed my peace: as it was I derived from both a strange excitement, and reckless and feverish, I wished the wind to

* The typical Regency names the Reeds and Brocklehursts give their children show their pretentiousness: Eliza, Georgiana, Augusta, Theodore.

> howl more wildly, the gloom to deepen to darkness, and the confusion to rise to clamour. (55)

In this passage, two factors--the lack of a good home in the past and the present deprivation of life at Lowood--stir up wild and destructive feelings in Jane. The storm outside symbolizes the state of her soul, but connects her to her feelings; this connection is also the capacity for imagination. The interpenetration of nature and culture depends on human beings having the ability to "think, imagine and dream in metaphor, seeing similarities between their own bodies and . . . objects and processes perceived in the outside world . . . so that each provides metaphors to describe the other" (Rycroft, Viewpoints 121). Jane's connection to wild nature helps her to defend herself against external threats; it also helps her to accept her own threatening feelings.

As a home, Lowood School is an institution where women are taught their social place. The school has a social system of Darwinian ferocity, in which the older girls deprive the younger and weaker ones of food and warmth in order to stay alive themselves. At the same time Brocklehurst wages a steady onslaught in the name of religion. The hair-cutting episode represents his attempt to destroy any natural abundance or spontaneous growth in the girls, as well as being a symbolic attack on their sexuality: "'[W]e are not to conform to nature,'" he maintains (64). His deathlike effect is clear in his association with cold,

starvation and death, and also in his effect on the emotions. When he sermonizes Miss Temple about her wish to feed the girls properly, her face appears to turn to marble: " . . . her mouth closed as if it would have required a sculptor's chisel to open it, and her brow settled gradually into petrified severity" (64).[9] Brocklehurst's own wife and children are unnatural in a different way, parodies of "ladies", overdressed and artificial. This difference between his family and the schoolgirls represents two sides of the same coin: denying natural tendencies and fashioning the self into an ideological form. In each case, sexuality becomes distorted. However, Jane "belongs to the world of nature, and cause and effect" (Judith Williams 1988, 25); she can resist the Brocklehurst point of view, and her capacity to grow and learn means that Lowood, despite the way it is governed, provides her with a home where she is more content with herself: "I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations for Gateshead and its daily luxuries" (75).

Helen Burns[10], on the other hand, accepts the

[9] He not only freezes her feelings, he silences her.

[10] The name "Burns" suggests something fiery in Helen that she has suppressed, perhaps connected to the Romantic poet Robert Burns, who, like her, comes from a northern part of the country. The name also suggests a conflict, for it has another meaning: in the dialect of Scotland and the north of England, it refers to a small stream. The watery aspect of her name associates Helen

Puritanical Christian view of herself and denies that she might have any innate goodness, believing that following her own inclinations can never be good. Still, she is "not a model of resignation and obedience", speaking to Jane when she has been forbidden to do so by Brocklehurst (Reger 1992, 214). Yet when Jane argues that it is "'natural'" for her to love those who are kind to her, Helen responds that "'Heathens and savage tribes hold that doctrine'" (58); Helen cannot acknowledge her own rebelliousness. Later, the two girls carry on this debate between nature and culture in their bodies, when Helen succumbs to consumption, unable to fight for survival, while Jane runs wild in the woods.

After Mr. Lloyd defends her account of her unfair treatment by the Reeds, Jane sets to work on her studies. She has overcome the charge of being a liar - a false self - and is soon "allowed" to study French and drawing. Appropriately enough, she "learn[s] the first two tenses of the verb *Etre*, and sketche[s her] first cottage" (75). A new language and an image of home are metaphors for the self at each stage in Jane's journey. At Lowood, she gives up fantasies of food in order to concentrate on imagining the

with another self-suppressing character, St. John Rivers.

translations she might do and the drawings she might make, models of nature, nurture and imaginary homes:

> freely pencilled houses and trees, picturesque rocks and ruins, Cuyp-like groups of cattle, sweet paintings of butterflies hovering over unblown roses, of birds pecking at ripe cherries, of wrens' nests enclosing pearl-like eggs, wreathed about with young ivy sprays. (75)

Drawing is another language for her as well, and connects her to characters like Rochester or Rosamund Oliver who respond to her imagination and skill.[11] These different languages symbolize the divided self.

In Jane Eyre, a self that is not capable of divided consciousness is disordered in some way. Eliza and Georgiana are examples of part-selves, each of them missing what the other has in too much abundance. In Helen Burns, absent parts of the self produce literal disorder, in her inability to maintain awareness of the real world of objects. "'That is curious,'" says Jane, "'It is so easy to be careful'" (57). Helen tends to daydream, to imagine herself at home in Northumberland; she imagines that the sounds she hears around her "'are the bubbling of a little brook which runs through Deepden near our house'" (57), as if the wish to be at home overpowers her. She imagines herself in the landscape, not in the house, nor does she miss

[11] A scrap from a drawing enables St. John Rivers to discover Jane's real identity.

particular people. In imagination, she is part of the landscape, and soon is so literally when she dies and her grave becomes a grassy mound. Helen "'cannot *bear* to be subjected to systematic arrangements'" (56), and prefers to hope for comfort in a heavenly home (59). Helen never learns from Jane to create order around herself, which is the way the self makes a home.[12]

Although Jane grows to resemble those she admires, she also avoids those who are dangerous to her, and while she loves and admires Helen, she also recognizes the dangers in Helen's attitude to life. When Helen is ill and dying, Jane is spending time with Mary Ann Wilson, an older girl who knows about "the world" and has "a turn for narrative". This again is a kind of regression, for Jane and Mary Ann run about like younger children, playing, talking, and "deriving much entertainment" from each other (78). On the night that Helen dies, Jane and Mary Ann have wandered late and far afield, becoming lost and asking for help "at a lonely cottage, where a man and woman lived, who looked after a herd of half-wild swine that fed on the mast in the

[12] Although Helen is thought to be a portrait of Charlotte's brilliant oldest sister Maria Brontë, who died from the dreadful conditions at Cowan Bridge School in 1825, her character is not idealized. As Charlotte Brontë wrote to Ellen Nussey (2 October 1837), "Ellen, depend upon it, all people have their dark side".

wood" (79). The girls have retreated so far from the civilized world that they reach a region where the natural world is scarcely mediated by human culture. The man and woman in the lonely cottage who tell the girls the way back to civilization bear a slight resemblance to Jane and Rochester at the end of the story, isolated at Ferndean, and also on the margins of the wild. When the girls arrive back at Lowood, Jane takes the time to plant some roots she has brought from the forest which she fears "would wither if I left them till morning" (79). Jane brings something living from the wild to cultivate not only in her garden, but in herself; this wildness brings life to an environment of illness and death.

After Helen's death, the novel is virtually silent about the next eight years of Jane's life. She eventually teaches at Lowood and becomes like Miss Temple, yet the character she has assumed is not her true self: "I believed I was content: to the eyes of others, usually even to my own, I appeared a disciplined and subdued character" (85). Miss Temple's departure precipitates the return of Jane's "natural" temperament: "I was left in my natural element; and beginning to feel the stirring of old emotions . . . now I remembered that the real world was wide" (85). She is a divided self, a restless soul who longs for "liberty", and a cultivated lady, product of a good education, a combination of nature and culture (86). Her nature, suppressed for so

long, seeks a different cultural context where her imagination can thrive. She finds this context at Thornfield, where she finds work as a governess.

Jane now finds a home that somewhat resembles Gateshead, an ancestral hall with many rooms and servants, yet Thornfield is different in a number of ways. Although somewhat isolated, it is close to a village, set amidst houses and fields and six miles from the town of Millcote. Unlike Gateshead, Thornfield has a library, reflecting the literary and intellectual interests of its owners.[13] Internally, the house contains a number of levels and rooms, from its baronial hall and fashionable drawing room to the housekeeper's parlour and Jane's own room. The dining room and drawing room of Thornfield, with their jewel-like colours and elegant furnishings, enchant Jane with an opulent beauty that resembles the Angrian interiors of Charlotte Brontë's early writings, and establishes the house as a location that is both exciting and dangerous. Thornfield also contains the mysterious third story, where unwanted possessions from the past represent the long history of the

[13] The building, as Robert Bernard Martin notes, resembles Rochester himself, and his secret--his previous marriage--is also the secret of the house (Accents 73-4).

house, and perhaps the process whereby Thornfield acquired its power and wealth. When Mrs. Fairfax first shows her the third story, Jane notices very old furniture, with embroidered hangings in Elizabethan or Jacobean style. The ancient furnishings, some carved with religious imagery, may imply that Thornfield's owners acquired it through Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. Raymond Williams observes:

> the idea of a 'traditional' order is most effectively misleading. For there is no innocence in the established proprietors, at any particular point in time, unless we ourselves choose to put it there. Very few titles to property could bear humane investigation, in the long process of conquest, theft, political intrigue, courtiership, extortion and the power of money. It is a deep and persistent illusion to suppose that time confers on these familiar processes of acquisition an innocence which can be contrasted with subsequent stages of the same essential drives. (Country 50)

The "same essential drives" to accumulate capital motivated Rochester's father and brother to manipulate him into marrying Bertha for her money; Rochester himself is silent about the question of acquiring wealth but he seems to have no difficulty about spending it--on travel, entertainment and women for himself, or jewels and clothes for his future wife.[14] The old furniture and embroideries in the

[14] What work Rochester does is unclear: people come to see him and he goes to Millcote on "business" (191); on one occasion he does a litle hay-raking, stopping when he is tired (269), but most of his work consists in giving orders, something that readily identifies him as a "gentleman".

third-story rooms, along with Bertha Rochester, represent the history of the house that the present owner would rather forget. This history, preserved in fragments and in its unspeaking inmate, is a tale of property perhaps acquired by questionable means, "the mystified feudal order replaced by a mystified agrarian capitalist order" (Williams, Country 39), while Bertha, the unspeaking inmate, is the witness to a more recent development, colonial expansion. A hapless casualty of imperialism, an object of racist projections, and a threat to Rochester's control of events, Bertha, with no way to tell her story, embodies a feature of the imperial enterprise that is hidden away yet acknowledged by the novel. Bertha represents something that cannot be got rid of: part of Thornfield's--and Rochester's--history.

Unaware of this history, Jane encounters a similarity of feelings and taste, as well as the affinity of erotic attraction, between herself and Rochester: "I felt at times, as if he were my relation rather than my master" (147). Part of their kinship may be a tendency to ignore or deny blood and legal ties in favour of imaginary ones. For example, although Mrs. Fairfax is related to Rochester and they share a name, it seems he does not acknowledge the connection (101), and she regards herself as an employee, not a relation. When this absentee owner returns to Thornfield,

his feudal presence inspires Jane to begin musing about a castle in Heidelberg, and she is soon part of the fairy tale Rochester constructs around her. When Rochester asks her about her relations, she denies that she has any uncles or aunts and he half-jokingly assumes that her relations are fairy folk. Between them, they construct a romance, but neither has a complete identity. Rochester denies his marriage, and Jane is still unaware of her connections on her father's side.

Nonetheless, Jane realizes that she and Rochester are separated by class distinctions. She decides to live with the contradiction between her class-consciousness and her feelings, realizing that "we are forever sundered:--and yet, while I breathe and think, I must love him" (178). Jane's passion comes from her natural--sexual and emotional--attachment, but her cultural awareness includes the social difference. Yet Jane later feels a sense of superiority to Blanche Ingram, stemming from her sense of having more refined feelings and tastes. Also, she expresses, if somewhat condescendingly, more pity than superiority towards Bertha and Rochester's previous mistresses. She is much more contemptuous of Grace Poole, however, whom she confuses for a time with Bertha. She disparages Grace Poole's appearance, speculates that Grace may have been Rochester's mistress, and stresses her own difference from this other

working woman, showing her class-consciousness and her wish to define herself as a lady. Jane does recognize that if she herself were to become Rochester's mistress, she would go from being an employee to being a slave. Even Rochester acknowledges that "'hiring a mistress is the next worst thing to buying a slave'" (316).[15] In resisting Rochester, Jane relies on the social code whereby marriage equals respectability. She knows its unfairness, but its values protect her from the rejection and contempt Rochester feels for his former mistresses. Jane relies on culture, on the social system and the moral code she has learned, not on romance.

At Thornfield, the obstacle to Jane's happiness is, in one way, embodied in Rochester's legal wife, Bertha; her presence in the novel reveals a hidden aspect of culture, a "repressed, nocturnal, secret and unconscious universe" (Kristeva 1981, 31), the madwoman in the attic. The fact of Bertha's madness being hereditary, far from explaining it

[15] In an interesting misreading, Martin notes that Rochester's plan to marry Jane bigamously is "only an extension of his enslavement by Bertha and his succession of mistresses" (Accents 78), an odd reversal of Rochester's symbolic (and also probably real) character as slave-owner, projecting this role onto the women instead.

away, links it to women's place in history and culture. Bertha has lost the power of naming, but her presence subverts the romance between Rochester and Jane by exposing the "legitimate" marriage that already exists in the social system of nineteenth-century England, whereby women lose language.[16] So long as Jane remains unmarried, she retains the capacity to name and describe her situation. Thus, because of Bertha, ironically, Jane escapes from Rochester, who would be a tyrant to her, while Rochester learns what he does desire in a woman: a separate and free spirit. Like the serpent in the garden of Eden, Bertha destroys paradise but enables Rochester and Jane to become human.

Various critics have noted Bertha's symbolic closeness to Jane, who has experiences of rebellion, anger and imprisonment in childhood that resemble Bertha's situation at Thornfield (Martin, Accents 62-3). According to Helene Moglen (1976), Bertha functions "as a warning against the consequences of Jane's desire for emotional release, her longing to cast aside conventional restraints" (126). Lyndall Gordon notes some contemporary male reactions to Charlotte Brontë's writing: Arnold's comment that her work

[16] Bertha is clearly too mad to use women's other language, needlework. All language requires a measure of self-cultivation, and hence self-division, except for the impulsive "body-language" of unrestrained feeling.

was nothing but "'hunger, rebellion and rage'" (227) and Thackeray's "'There's a fire and fury raging in that little woman, a rage scorching her heart which doesn't suit me'" (237). This dismissiveness on the part of male writers--their lack of curiosity as to why a woman writer might be angry, and their wish that she conceal it--indicates the subversiveness of Charlotte Brontë's work and the constraints on women that produced the anger in the first place.[17]

In her discussion of male and female culture in her essay "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1985), Elaine Showalter presents a model based on the work of Edwin Ardener. This model sets out two overlapping regions of male and female culture, with areas in each that are inaccessible to the other. This area she calls the "wild zone", and it might be seen as the place where Bertha Rochester lives. According to Pat Macpherson (1989), "Bertha represents power from the other world, where fiction and female desire have free play" (36), but this statement inappropriately idealizes Bertha. Bertha's madness and lack of language express a threat to imagination, to Jane's and the writer's capacity to create through language and

[17] In A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf expresses her discomfort with the rage she detected in Jane Eyre, yet anger is evident in her own writing, especially in Three Guineas.

participate in culture. When Jane experiences states that resemble Bertha's experience, these states are terrifying or oppressive. Bertha's situation of exclusion, madness, and rage, resembles aspects of Jane's character that she has brought under control through education and discipline; her passionate connection to Rochester suggests that sexuality is connected to these feelings. This passion, based in her biological nature, is the source of her energy and motivation, of her imagination and of her art.

In Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë exposes the woman in the heart of the home, not an angel in the house but, from a male point of view, a demon. The language of the novel and the structure of the house bring Jane and Bertha together. Bertha "is truly Thornfield's *genius loci*; it is symbolic of the deceptiveness of Thornfield on many levels that what seems to Jane totally alien is actually totally familiar" (Judith Williams 39). Bertha reflects something in Jane that is already there, familiar and unfamiliar at the same time, homely and foreign, the "heimlich" and "unheimlich" explored in Freud's essay on the uncanny (1919). Her uncanniness has political significance beyond her psychological meaning for Jane. "The *Unheimlich* lives at the juncture of the will to interpret and the fear of what will be revealed" (Engle 1984, 113). Jane makes secret visits to the roof above the third story, where Bertha is

imprisoned, and there Jane's poetic vision of a wider experience, both outwardly in the world and inwardly in her imagination, applies not only to herself but to all women, those "millions [who] are in silent revolt against their lot" (110). This connection to the imprisoned West Indian woman thus has a social meaning, albeit not explored further in the novel, both with reference to women and to social oppression in general. Neither black nor white, Bertha is both insider and ousider to the dominant narratives: the romance of Jane and Rochester and the story of imperial aggression whereby Jane and Rochester both acquire their wealth.[18] Bertha has not been completely silenced, and from the roof Jane hears her strange laughs and murmurs, a counterpoint to her own longings. On the night that Bertha sets fire to Rochester's bed, she is uncannily close to Jane: "I thought at first the goblin-laugher stood at my bedside--or rather crouched by my pillow" (149). Rochester at first accuses Jane of attacking him: "'What have you done with me, witch, sorceress?'" (150) in a scene where he confuses the fire of destruction with the water of rescue. Jane is similarly confused by ambivalent feelings when "billows of trouble roll[ed] under surges of joy" (152) and contending forces struggle within her: "sense would resist

[18] See Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts" and Firdous Azim, The Colonial Rise of the Novel.

delirium, judgement would warn passion" (153).

These inner struggles indicate the crucial difference between Jane and Bertha, for Jane contains the Bertha part of herself, her anger. Macpherson suggests that Jane is unable to explain Bertha: "her meaning for Jane remains unspeakable; Jane and Bertha remain unspeaking to each other" (35). However, Jane listens to Bertha on a number of occasions, for instance on the night of Bertha's attack on Mason, when Jane is also locked in on the third story, "hardly separated . . . by a single door". She hears "a step creak, a momentary renewal of the snarling, canine noise, and a deep human groan", signs of life, animal rage, and human suffering. "Then my own thoughts worried me," she says, echoing the canine imagery of Bertha's sounds (212). Bertha thus communicates to Jane[19] in her own "body language", and Jane, as it were, addresses Bertha within herself, in her ambivalent feelings.

Anger is often associated with fire in the novel, and like fire, represents both creativity and destruction. At Lowood, Jane learned to have some detachment from her anger without losing touch with it. Her anger is really the form taken by her desire for love and connection, when that desire is thwarted by others: "'I must dislike those who,

[19] Fulton (1979) notes this communication (439).

whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me'" (58). At Thornfield, she transforms her anger into combative dialogues with Rochester. His verbal challenge provides a new cultural form, a new language, and liberates her creativity as well as her desire. With Rochester, as with Bessie, Jane becomes bolder, but also more evasive. She is at her most devious during her engagement to him when she realizes that his passion, like her own, is dangerous. She undertakes a policy of teasing, annoying, and keeping her distance from him in order not to "'sink into a bathos of sentiment'" (276) to be overwhelmed by him. Thus Jane's evasiveness is a way of guarding the self: she both uses her divided consciousness and protects it.

Rochester is also a divided self. He connects Jane to a wider sphere of culture and travel, both in himself and through his library. He and his house represent history, class privilege and economic power as well as romance and passion. At the same time, he is an outsider, through being a second son and inheriting unexpectedly, and because of his disastrous marriage; his social place is somewhat uncertain. Rochester's doubleness stems from his secret, yet he acts out his divided self in various ways, as if to emphasize it. For instance, he may or may not be Adèle's father. Then too, he plays a double game with Jane and Blanche Ingram, adding another layer of deception when he takes on the gipsy

disguise, whereby he is curiously similar to Bertha in appearance. Rochester's vitality seems to come from this secret part of himself, sometimes taking an extreme and frightening form. His flashing eyes and strange expressions, the images of volcanoes, chasms and abysses in connection with him, convey his doubleness. "'To live, for me, Jane, is to stand on a crater-crust which may crack and spue fire any day,'" he says (218). Like Jane, Rochester is consciously divided, but unlike her, he wants to pretend that parts of him do not exist.

Rochester introduces a complication in his seduction of Jane by acting out a charade of courtship with Blanche Ingram, a woman of his own class. In comparing herself to Blanche Ingram before she has even met her, Jane makes two portraits to reinforce the class and personal differences between them, spending a couple of hours on her own unflattering portrait in chalk, and two weeks on a painting of the imaginary Blanche on an ivory tablet. The differing amounts of labour and materials that go into the two portraits reflect the different resources that the social system provides, based on birth and not on fairness. The more valuable materials go to enhance the portrait of Blanche as they do in reality to enhance her person. Ironically, Jane's merely visual representation falsifies the comparison by not taking into account the inner riches of

culture that Jane possesses, and ironically again, she reveals those inner riches by the care and skill she expends on the ivory portrait, and by the permanence and value of the work.[20] Again ironically, Blanche is not the hyper-feminine woman of Jane's portrait, but someone rather like a man in woman's clothing, resembling Rochester with her black eyes and "rich and powerful" voice. These odd resemblances among Rochester, Bertha and Blanche reveal that all three are involved in unconscious identifications with each other. Rochester, in particular, has great difficulty in acknowledging a woman as a self separate from his own desires. In his gypsy disguise, and in playing the courtship charade with Blanche, Rochester continues to act out his connection to Bertha.

Jane and Rochester both deal with their dividedness through art, Jane through her painting and drawing, an expression of her inner world, and Rochester through music and in fantasies of control which he plays out using real people, including Jane, in a kind of living theatre of which he is the stage director. In Winnicott's description of the

[20] The contrast between Jane and Blanche tends, as Gary Kelly suggests in his discussion of Romantic fiction, "to advance bourgeois values and practices by representing the inward self as authentic and the external, social world, controlled by aristocracy and gentry, as divided, relative, and hostile to authentic selfhood" (1993, 200).

transitional space where art originates, he explains how this imaginary space enables the infant to accept that it cannot magically control its mother, and then to develop "a growing capacity to tolerate the continual and increasingly sophisticated illusionment--disillusionment--reillusionment process throughout the life cycle" (Phillips, Winnicott 121). Rochester is still trying strategies of "magical control" to create the world in his own image, an attempt that verges on madness. Jane, on the other hand, often suffers the pain of disillusionment from an overdose of reality, at those times when she thinks she is nothing more than a "'Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain'", that is, with no real life in her (163). Eventually both Jane and Rochester overcome the division between "two impossible alternatives--the isolation and madness of excessive subjectivity or the impoverishment and anonymous futility of objectivity" (Phillips, Winnicott 122). They learn to reconcile fantasy and reality, without giving up either.

Thornfield, the house, reflects its owner's qualities of charm and mystery. Tristram suggests that the Gothic style, unlike the classical, is typically English. Classical architecture implies "man's mastery of nature" while the

Gothic mode suggests "a submission to the natural as master" (739). Like the house, Rochester pretends to a natural goodness that he does not possess. In conversation with Jane, he argues from "'Nature'": that "'she'" has made Jane unique among governesses and "'intended [him] for a good man'" (136). He later tells her that the house to him is "'a mere dungeon'", as if it is a prison to him, when in fact he holds Bertha prisoner there (217). To Jane, the house is "'a splendid mansion'", but Rochester rejects the house and its history in favour of his falsely naive view of nature, telling Jane, as he leads her into the garden, "'Now *here* (he pointed to the leafy enclosure we had entered) all is real, sweet and pure'" (218).

Rochester gratifies his paganism, using natural, erotic imagery to justify his "'right to get pleasure . . . . And I may get it as sweet and fresh as the wild honey the bee gathers on the moor'"(137). The natural world is a source of imaginative energy for Jane, so that Rochester's seductive references to nature speak of shared taste and values. Taste, as Fuller points out,

> . . . is a significant human responsive faculty whose roots reach back into natural, rather than cultural or social history. But taste requires a facilitating cultural environment if it is to thrive-- and it is denied this in a society which, as it were, chooses mechanism and competition, rather than organism and co-operation, as its models in productive life . . . . even in the absence of religion, nature itself can provide that 'shared symbolic order' which allows for the

> restitution of continuity between sense experience and affective life. (Images 34)

In Jane Eyre, nature can even express sympathy with the human situation through "signs" (222), but nature will not provide answers to moral questions. Rochester suggests to Jane that he wants to "'leap over an obstacle of custom'" and Jane does not know how to respond:

> The west wind whispered in the ivy round me; but no gentle Ariel borrowed its breath as a medium of speech: the birds sang in the tree-tops; but their song, however sweet, was inarticulate.(220)

Instead, Jane has to rely on culture, on the moral code she has learned, in order to advise Rochester to "'look higher . . . for strength to amend'" (221). Jane herself struggles with the conflict of nature and culture within her, defining them as imagination and reason. Imagination is a wilderness, a "boundless trackless waste" with no order, while reason, or "the safe fold of common sense," often speaks with the judgmental Puritanical voice of Jane's upbringing. In Jane's mind, the struggle is between nature, an arbitrary non-hierarchical realm of "hopes, wishes, sentiments", and culture, which she here defines as the telling of a "plain unvarnished tale" (162).

Jane does not recognize or admit here that the home of culture and nature is the imagination. Imagination uses the natural world to create a "shared symbolic order", and Rochester and Jane draw on the natural world through

language to create a meaningful inner world that they share. In this way they create a home out of language, so that when Jane returns from her visit to Gateshead to be with her dying aunt, she wishes that Thornfield were in fact her home, but she further recognizes that Rochester has created this sense of home for her: "'I am strangely glad to get back again to you,'" she tells him, "'and wherever you are is my home,--my only home'" (248).

Given the preference of Rochester and Jane for natural metaphors, the garden is the appropriate setting for Rochester's proposal. Tristram comments on two kinds of gardens, as she has on two kinds of houses:

> [The classical house and park control] nature, in the sense that the house is made the focus of the landscape, and may even set its stamp upon it . . . . The second type of garden is an extension of the house; it does not look out to a large world, but is introspective. It is often surrounded by high walls or hedges, and is as private as the house itself. (241)

Both aspects of the garden are present at Thornfield, just as in Rochester's temperament are found the commanding employer and the Romantic lover. However the lover cannot command the natural world, even if he can flout human laws and customs. The chestnut tree that shelters the marriage proposal "writhe[s] and groan[s]" immediately afterwards and is split in half by a bolt of lightning in the storm that forces Jane and Rochester indoors (259). The ruined tree symbolizes the way the truth about Rochester will ruin his

planned marriage to Jane, without destroying the natural connection between them; Jane looks at the broken halves joined at the roots: "the firm base and strong roots kept them unsundered below" (279).

As Rochester tries to dominate Jane, he deprives her of her natural feelings; this impoverishment of her self is ironically symbolized by the fine clothes and jewels he wants to bestow on her. The more Rochester attempts to control her, the more he is described in foreign terms, as an oriental despot, a figurative comparison that makes his dominance more attractive, because it is exotic and non-English, as Elsie B. Michie points out (1993, 73). However, this despotism is not altogether attractive: Jane inwardly responds to his "falcon-eye" but outwadly refuses to be "'hurried away in a suttee'" (275). After a month of this "courtship", she is more fearful than rejoicing about her impending marriage. She describes her approaching wedding day in terms of apprehensiveness, loss and death:

> The month of courtship had wasted: its very last hours were being numbered. There was no putting off the day that advanced--the bridal day; and all preparations for its arrival were complete. *I*, at least, had nothing more to do: there were my trunks, packed, locked, corded, ranged in a row along the wall of my little chamber; to-morrow, at this time, they would be far on the their road to London: and so should I (D.V.),--or, rather, not I, but one Jane Rochester, a person whom as yet I knew not. The cards of address alone remained to nail on: they lay, four little squares, on the drawer. Mr. Rochester had himself written the direction . . . on each: I could not persuade

> myself to affix them, or to have them affixed. (277)

In this passage, instead of increasing fulfilment and joy, the time of courtship has "wasted", as in dying or destructiveness, and Jane expresses a wish to avoid the marriage. A fourfold reference to the trunks-- "packed, locked, corded and ranged"--suggests the way Jane's imagination may be confined by her new role, as well as conveying the mystery of the married state, echoed also by the "four little squares", the cards bearing her new identity. Imagery of the uncertain birth of the new self--"I would wait to be assured she had come into the world alive"--is superseded by the ghostly aspect of the wedding dress and veil (278), and later by Jane's account of Bertha's visit to her room to tear up the wedding veil.

Bertha is an image of what it is to be Mrs. Rochester, and foreshadows the disrupted wedding ceremony, when Rochester does not seem to recognise Jane as "a human being" (292). Later, Jane symbolically struggles with Bertha in her anguish on learning of Rochester's previous marriage. She is flooded with her own feelings: "The whole consciousness of my life lorn, my love lost, my hope quenched, my faith death-struck, swayed full and mighty above me in one sullen mass." The "sullen mass" resembles what Bertha has become. Like Bertha, Jane has no words for her pain, but unlike her, Jane can turn to Psalm 69 to

express it (299). Yet this experience of loss and nothingness is nonetheless an experience of the self's integrity. The fourfold description--life, love, hope, faith--resembles the other fourfold patterns in Charlotte Brontë's work which point to the integration of the character's self and the writer's imagination. This episode of disappointment and suffering is the beginning of a *via negativa* for Jane, an experience of emptiness and poverty that leads to a new life, a new family and a new identity.

As long as Thornfield is Bertha's home, it cannot be Jane's; accepting the existence of Bertha shows Jane her own reality:

> Jane Eyre, who had been an ardent, expectant woman--almost a bride--was a cold, solitary girl again: her life was pale; her prospects were desolate. A Christmas frost had come at midsummer: a white December storm had whirled over June; ice glazed the ripe apples, drifts crushed the blowing roses; on hay-field and corn-field lay a frozen shroud: lanes which last night blushed full of flowers, today were pathless with untrodden snow; and the woods, which twelve hours since waved leafy and fragrant as groves between the tropics, now spread, waste, wild and white as pine-forests in wintry Norway. (298)

This poetic description identifies Jane not only with the world of nature, but with the cultivated nature of fields, orchards and lanes, symbolizing the self cultivated by care and education. Yet the novel is now revealing that the cultivation of Jane's self up to this point is out of joint, defeated by the reality of the situation. Overnight, Jane's

wish to experience her biological, sexual nature undergoes a complete reversal. The passage is not without hope, however, and its meaning lies in the sense that the time is not right for Jane's marriage. Instead, the beautiful harvest scene goes through a transformation, frozen into art like the scene in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn", for the marriage planned by Rochester and agreed to by Jane is a fantasy, belonging in the realm of fairy tales and dreams. The reference to Christmas suggests the possibility of renewal and rebirth, and the change from the tropics to Norway shows that the narrative is now in another country, far from the fantastic tropical groves where Rochester wanted to take her.[21]

Only when Jane refuses to let Rochester define the terms of their relationship does he recognize her as separate, using a cluster of images of house, cage and prison to describe his perception of her selfhood. Rochester realizes that physical force will not bend Jane to his will

> '. . . what good would it do if I bent, if I uptore, if I crushed her? Consider that eye;

[21] Hot climates in the novel seem to be associated with danger, moral, physical, and sexual. Rochester is seduced in the West Indies, but a fresh wind from Europe calls him home to England (312). He wants Jane to go away with him to the south of France but she finds herself in "a breezy mountain nook " instead (364). Later, St. John Rivers wants to take Jane to India, where his sister predicts she would be "grilled alive" by the fierce heat (420).

> consider the resolute, wild, free thing looking out of it, defying me, with more than courage--with a stern triumph. Whatever I do with its cage, I cannot get at it--the savage, beautiful creature! If I tear, if I rend the slight prison, my outrage will only let the captive loose. Conqueror I might be of the house; but the inmate would escape to heaven before I could call myself possessor of its clay dwelling-place. And it is you, spirit--with will and energy, and virtue and purity--that I want.' (322)

The representation of the self in this poetic description has two aspects. First is the image of the wild, "'savage'" creature caged by the body, but expressed through it (the eye), showing the connection of the true self to nature. Second is another fourfold image: "'will and energy, and virtue and purity'", a description of the self's multiplicity yet integrity, suggesting the paradox that only the divided self can be whole.

When Jane refuses to be his mistress, and abandons him, Rochester accepts his situation; he stays at home and mourns (433). Bertha's madness breaks out again, and she sets fire to Jane's old bedroom, but she can no longer threaten Jane herself. In Rochester's attempt to rescue her from the flames, he is badly injured. Bertha and what she represents, the "third story" of the woman imprisoned and denied by culture, shatters Rochester, the Romantic hero, the man who believes he can take whatever he wants without paying for it.

Jane must leave Thornfield and become homeless in order to survive psychologically and morally; she becomes a "cold, solitary girl again" (298).[22] As a child, Jane had rejected the idea of her Eyre relations because she believed they were poor. Now, venturing onto the moors to escape from Thornfield, she is forced to experience extreme poverty, something she has always tried to avoid. Ironically, being poor is liberating for Jane; as a poor student at Lowood, she acquires education and accomplishments; as a poor governess, she goes to Thornfield; as a wanderer and beggar, she discovers her father's relations; and as a poor schoolteacher, she finally has a home of her own. Her wanderings on the moors bring great loneliness and suffering, but Jane will find her father's family there, and a social place that she has been lacking.

In her ordeal in the "boundless trackless waste" of unmarked nature, Jane struggles for simple bodily survival. Terry Eagleton (1993) has written about the body as the "hinge between Nature and Culture", and notes its difference from other objects, in that "it is creative". Although

[22] Writing about the painting, "The Awakening Conscience", by William Holman Hunt, Linda Nochlin notes that "strict morality could be a liberating assertion of personhood, as opposed to objecthood, degradation and passing enjoyment in the hands of 'gentlemen'" (quoted in Brooks 1984, 140).

Eagleton does not define the issue in these terms, he is implying the mystery of incarnation, of word made flesh: he writes that "psychoanalysis . . . recognises that the body is constructed in language, and knows too that it will never entirely be at home there" ("Body" 7). Literature and psychoanalysis, and indeed culture in general, have defined the body as woman's realm, woman's task being to mediate between nature and culture (Gilbert and Gubar 1979, 300). Hence women's frequent responsibility, in European culture, for caring for bodies at birth and death, and for cooking and cleaning. Jane participates in this traditional realm of women, care for the body, but she wants to participate in a wider culture as well.

As she grows into a woman, Jane recognises and regrets her lack of beauty, but never rejects her body. She often looks in the mirror to ascertain that she is neat, to register changes in her appearance, and to relate how she is feeling to the way she looks. Refusing the categories of Puritan or coquette, Jane nonetheless cares for her dress and appearance and wishes she were more beautiful because, she says, "I had a reason, and a logical, natural reason too" (99); that is, she wants to be loved. Her care for the body lets her create a home wherever she is, for example by bringing food for herself and Adèle to the schoolroom, when they are forgotten by the servants in the excitement of the

company of visitors at Thornfield. Jane's romance with Rochester is also an awakening of her body: she begins to look pretty and when Rochester embraces her, it seems "natural: it seem[s] genial to be so well-loved, so caressed by him" (260).

As Jane moves from one situation to another, she repeatedly refers to the need for food, rest, cleanliness and exercise outdoors for herself and others. Whatever house she is in, she pays attention to the fire, light, furnishings, food and drink. In this way, she links nature and culture; her nurturing activity first of all supports life, and secondly fosters companionship and social exchange. Jane never forgets or abandons her body, and even when she has been reunited with Rochester at the end of the novel, she thinks of breakfast first thing in the morning (444).

When Jane endures the time of wandering, she achieves a new consciousness of herself as a human being in a mortal body, for to some extent she has acted the part of the pure spirit Rochester wanted her to be. Now in a sombre moment of understanding, fourfold imagery expresses Jane's selfhood as a human being:

> Long after the little birds had left their nests; long after bees had come in the sweet prime of day to gather the heath honey before the dew was dried--when the long morning shadows were curtailed, and the sun filled earth and sky--I got up and looked round me.

Jane has missed the moment of nature's awakening, burdened by her human needs. The bees, the birds, the shadows and the sunlight create a setting for Jane's situation, yet she does not belong there:

> What a still, hot, perfect day! What a golden desert this spreading moor! Everywhere sunshine. I wished I could live in it and on it. . . . But I was a human being, and had a human being's wants: I must not linger . . . . (329)

Wishing that she had died in the night, Jane wants only to merge with the natural world, "to decay quietly and mingle in peace with the soil of this wilderness", but her life is now her burden. The frame of the natural world contains a desert that contains another quaternity, Jane's individuality: "The burden must be carried; the want provided for; the suffering endured; the responsibility fulfilled" (329). These four elements are the self Jane brings out of the wilderness to continue her journey, searching out "human life and human labour" (330).

On the moors, and in the woods, Jane comes closest to losing her life from hunger and cold, even more so than at Lowood. She finds it impossible to find food, shelter or warmth and almost despairs. The memory of her connection with Rochester helps to keep her alive, and moreover, her own body will not let her die: " . . . to die of want and cold, is a fate to which nature cannot submit passively," she says (334). The cold itself forces her to continue to

seek shelter: "Could I but have stiffened to the still frost--the friendly numbness of death--it might have pelted on: I should not have felt it; but my yet living flesh shuddered to its chilling influence" (335). Desperately exhausted, Jane turns on her third night of wandering to a region of both marsh and moor where the landscape is so undifferentiated in the twilight as to appear like "mere alternations of light and shade". Boundaries blur, she is drenched with rain, and only a distant light gives her something to walk towards when she finds that she cannot passively lie down and die. Arriving at Moor House, Jane can at first only peer through the window at the comfortable kitchen where two young women are reading German together. The window itself is framed in ivy, an indication of the age of the building and its intimacy with nature. The room with its simple, good furnishings is an example of a "houseplace", a room belonging neither to a wealthy nor to a poor home, the place of people "wealthy enough to inhabit houses built for successive generations, and poor enough to preserve what they inherit" (Tristram 150).[23] This room,

[23] Tristram notes that women writers often describe such houseplaces, the Poysers' kitchen, in George Eliot's Adam Bede, being an example. "There are . . . very good reasons why women should enjoy the house place, even when they passed most of their life in sitting-rooms. The latter are 'polite' contexts, which deliberately ignore the staple activities of life--cooking, cleaning, and eating--where the houseplace discovers the beauty of these mundane occupations, and of the ordinary objects for everyday use connected with

with the motherly housekeeper and studious sisters, represents Jane's place, her biological place, her social place and her cultural place also, for she resembles these intelligent women, although it is not either her place of origin, or her true home, which is with Rochester.

Jane is rescued at Marsh End/Moor House, which turns out, of course, to belong to people who are related to her; it is the home of "'as ancient a family as could be found'", as Hannah tells her. However, Jane's connection is not really with this ancient family, who are gentry, but uncultivated--"'naught mich out o' t'common way: stark mad o' shooting, and farming, and sich like'" as Hannah says (347). Jane is related through the mother, an Eyre, her father's sister. Jane's actual place of origin on her father's side thus remains elusive. Her father, a clergyman, and her uncle, a successful merchant in Madeira, are unplaced in terms of their social or geographical origins, having risen in life through education and business acumen. Presumably there was no family property to inherit, except for what John Eyre acquired through his investments.

them . . . . They therefore knew much more intimately than men did . . . the texture of the commonplace" (150).

Thus although Jane finds a family of cousins, she does not find a permanent home, for Moor House is connected to her only by marriage. Her similarity to the Rivers family is a maternal connection, through her mother and their mother, both "ladies". Jane shares with her female cousins, also governesses, a love of reading, education, nature, and home.

In contrast, St. John's cultural values alarm Jane. When she goes to hear him preach, his sermon chills her, for it reveals nothing so much as his inner bitterness and "the turbid dregs of disappointment" (357). Jane observes him with ruthless clarity. She notes the way he neglects and even punishes his own body--"his hand looked wasted like his face" (382)--his body is wasted both in the sense of being worn away and also in not being enjoyed or trusted. The idea of waste describes both his physical deterioration and an unnecessary destructiveness, such as a good household tries to avoid. St. John's wasted hands and face may resemble the wasteland where Jane wanders, and his wastedness may be a form of wildness, of not being civilized or cultivated. Jane notes her cousin's classical male beauty, his ambition, and his incapacity to enjoy nature, either the beauty of the landscape or his own human and sexual nature. St. John crushes both his own sexuality and the affection of Rosamund Oliver--whose loveliness and sweetness make her his physical counterpart and complement--as he crushes the clump of

daisies at his foot (368). The difference between their ideas about Rosamund is that St. John's view is rigid and uncompromising, while Jane's understanding is more flexible: she sees the importance of passion and physical attraction, and she suggests that St. John might be more adaptable as well as more responsive; he might consider a different career.[24]

Eagleton suggests that the Evangelical attempt to crush "the Romantic spirit . . . is a tangible symbol of social violence" (Myths 66) and hence has a wider social meaning than a struggle between a particular fictional man and woman. St. John's denial of nature is ultimately irrational, for "loss of contact with the sensuous reality of persons and things leads to the investiture of ideas with absolute and dogmatic value" (Rycroft, Psychoanalysis and Beyond 30). St. John's is a culturally-sanctioned madness. His ideology of ambition relates to the dynamic expansionist ideas of capitalism and colonialism, a quest for material and spiritual profit, unmitigated by any ideas of restraint; instead, restraint applies only in the personal sphere, in

[24] Nonetheless, whether St. John would be happy with Rosamund remains an open question. He himself believes that her "defects", particularly her lack of seriousness, make her unsuited to life as a missionary's wife, and Jane herself notes that Rosamund is "not profoundly interesting or thoroughly impressive" (373).

terms of subduing the body and its desires, and forcing others to conform to his wishes.

The question of the relationship between nature and culture in Jane Eyre involves the issue of true and false selves, and how education--in the home, at school, through other people, or undertaken on one's own--can encourage or stifle the true self of an individual. Gardening, in the sense of cultivating nature, provides the ideal metaphor for education in the novel. Blanche Ingram, for example, is not cultivated, and perhaps cannot be; her heart is "barren by nature: nothing bloom[s] spontaneously on that soil" (187-8). Some of Jane's pupils at Morton are cultivated because of "their natural politeness, and innate self-respect, as well as . . . excellent capacity" (370). These natural abilities are different from the ability to perform: Blanche has the ability to dress up, to play and sing and act, as do Celine Varens and little Adèle, acting out a pretence of culture with no genuine feeling behind it.[25] Thus cultivation is different from improving the self

[25] Still, a good education can even improve on early training in French superficiality, as in the case of Adèle: "a sound English education corrected in a great measure her French defects" (455-6). Charlotte Brontë's stereotying of French culture indicates her nationalism as well as her prejudices about what she imagined French "defects" to be.

as a commodity, and different again from "improving" others in order to aggrandize the self, the project of imperialism.

The concern with education in Jane Eyre involves both psychological and social issues.[26] The novel does not idealize the landed classes who have the most access to education and cultural experiences such as travel and the arts. Instead, it questions the certainties of aristocratic ascendancy in favour of middle-class and Protestant values of hard work, sincerity, restraint and self-examination. Janet Wolff suggests that through this self-control, "women collude in their own oppression" (127), yet Jane's self-

[26] Charlotte Brontë herself had a passion for learning and cultural experiences. She wrote to Ellen Nussey (August 7, 1841) after receiving a letter from Mary Taylor describing pictures and cathedrals she had seen:

> I hardly know what swelled to my throat as I read her letter--such a vehement impatience of restraint and steady work. Such a strong wish for wings--wings such as wealth can furnish--such an urgent thirst to see--to know--to learn--something internal seemed to expand boldly for a minute--I was tantalized with the consciousness of faculties unexercised--then all collapsed and I despaired. (Gordon 240)

This letter resembles the passage in the novel when Jane stands on the roof at Thornfield and imagines a wider scope for her desires; in the letter, the reference to wealth shows how keenly Charlotte felt her relative poverty.

policing is also a mode of self-expression.[27] Jane views education as more than the acquiring of superficial skills, symbolized in the novel by elaborate, overly feminine clothing such as is worn by Georgiana Reed, the Brocklehurst women, Adèle or Blanche Ingram. "The body is the materialization of class taste" (Featherstone 1991, 90), and in Jane Eyre the bodies of aristocrats and would-be gentry are too large and too decorated for Jane's taste. Smallness, neatness, cleanliness, subdued colours, minimal ornament and a general air of self-effacement convey her idea of refinement in a woman, in contrast to the strength of her feelings and the immensity of her desires.

A problem with Jane's apparent egalitarianism is that she directs it towards the class to which she aspires: Jane "naturally" resembles Rochester in her tastes, or Diana and Mary in her education and feelings, thus obscuring social, economic or class issues. However, Jane's dealings with lower classes reveal her discomfort with her social "inferiors". She is dismayed by "the ignorance, the poverty, the coarseness" of her students and their families. They "have a difficulty in understanding each other's language" (363), until Jane has cultivated their abilities, and

[27] Without self-discipline, or ownership of the body, Helen Burns is at the mercy of her unconscious feelings, and Bertha Rochester trapped by her own rage. Cf. John Kucich, Repression in Victorian Fiction.

perhaps their speech patterns. With Hannah, or the school-children, her prejudices emerge, and she seems unable to recognize that her education, horrible as it was at times, resulted from class privilege. Even when some of her pupils make rather rapid progress, she continues to see them as peasants, and devalues their regard for her because it is only "the regard of working-people" (371). Thus Jane reinforces her own superiority in relation to those both higher and lower in the social scale, showing how she has internalized the "repressive structures of civilization" (Goodheart 1991, 116).

The home that Jane seeks is bourgeois, yet Jane's social place most closely resembles that of the "alien" in Matthew Arnold's analysis of class: she is motivated by a "general *humane* spirit" (1869, 452), but also, she does not seem to belong anywhere in the social system. Similarly, the social situation of the governess is ambiguous; expected to be a lady and a servant at the same time, she belongs neither with the family nor with the other servants. Terry Eagleton notes the social "impurity" of Jane and of Crimsworth in The Professor; they are

> . . . exiles, hybrids, outcasts, ambiguous figures trapped at a point of tension between alternative classes and competing ideologies . . . figures whose very ambivalence calls into play a whole pattern of contending historical forces. (Myths 44)

Matthew Arnold would define as "aliens" individuals who may come from any class, yet are set apart from all classes by their talent and their love of education. In Arnold's view, they are suited to be the guardians of high cultural standards by their disinterested love of knowledge (452).

Before Jane learns of the family connection and her inheritance, she does find a place of her own for the first time in the novel. That place is the cottage, symbol of Jane's independence, and of her economic situation, at odds with her social position as a lady. Before St. John realizes that Jane "belongs" to him as a relative, he helps her to establish herself as a teacher, with a home in the tiny two-roomed cottage at Morton. The poverty that she feared as a child turns out to be less fearful in this situation, where living space has been reduced to the bare, but sufficient, necessities. At Morton, Jane nonetheless defines home as a place for comfort and delight. Despite the simplicity of the cottage, she insists on warmth, cleanliness and order, with a bright fire and a mat at the door to keep out the wind and snow (381). But although she is content with the cottage, Jane is only moderately satisfied with her life at this time; having participated in a rich imaginative relationship, she finds her new home satisfying only to her reasonable daytime self. At night, her hungry imagination desires more.

Jane experiences her dividedness in dreams of Rochester, showing how he has become part of herself; her dreams resemble the visions she had from the roof of Thornfield: "quickened with all of incident, life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence" (110). At Morton, Jane's dreams are "many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy--dreams where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure . . . I still again and again met Mr. Rochester" (371). When Jane wakes from these dreams that are very like the "world below" of Angria, she experiences "convulsions of despair" at the separation of dream and reality.

The situation changes with Jane's new-found identity and the fortune that goes with it. Her wealth frees her from dependence on her cousins, and her decision to share the money mitigates the family plot--the manoevring of uncles--to set the next generation on a more equitable footing. Yet this new version of the family story that Jane creates is utterly dependent on the money from John Eyre and on the means whereby he acquired it. As Jina Politi points out, "Bourgeois ideology can only be proved valid in fiction if it is shown to function through a transcendent system of rewards" (89). The fact that old Mr. Rivers took John Eyre's advice and lost his money exposes capitalism as a system of gambles, with winners and losers, yet it turns out

to be a system that operates in Jane's favour. Jane's attempt to do away with the categories of winners and losers when it comes to the inheritance involves relying on the system in the first place.

St. John, a legitimate heir of his uncle, has been denied a share in the family property; instead it has passed to Jane, just as with her other family, the Reeds, she has inherited the cultural capital of books and education, ignored by the Reed children. Jane's unexpected inheritance suggests her innate right to share in both kinds of capital. Like Rochester, who could not inherit until his older brother died, Jane has lacked what belongs to her. Jane recognizes the injustice of the legal, patriarchal system, and decides to change it in her own way, showing the transforming power of money in service of a different set of values:

> I looked at the blank wall; it seemed a sky, thick with ascending stars,--every one lit me to a purpose or delight. Those who had saved my life, whom, till this hour I had loved barrenly, I could now benefit. They were under a yoke: I could free them; they were scattered,--I could reunite them--the independence, the affluence which was mine might be theirs too. Were we not four? Twenty thousand pounds shared equally, would be five thousand each,--enough and to spare: justice would be done,--mutual happiness secured. (390)

However, Jane's attempt to share the money equally among the four cousins does not yet put her on an equal footing with St. John.

Jane acquires money, in a convenient plot development, and as an indication of her social worth. Her wealth "is as real as Rochester's and all those other confident male figures in English fiction who depend on inherited wealth for their social substantiality" (Maynard 1984, 140).[28] Thus, despite Jane's protestations about equality, the novel has to rely on money to establish it, there being, presumably, no other code available to the writer.[29] Hans Mayer observes that in the years after the French Revolution, "Equality and individuality loomed, the one against the other, in contradiction. Bourgeois individuality . . . won out" (15). Jane's money symbolizes this triumph of the individual, enabling her to create her own reality; it makes possible her bourgeois version of home, which is, from the bourgeois point of view, a social place that avoids the extremes of either "aristocratic licence" or "proletarian coarseness" (Edmond 1988, 241).

After receiving the inheritance, Jane is only too happy to give up the cottage and return to Moor House, transform-

[28] Both Jane and Rochester also derive their wealth from the system of slavery on which West Indian fortunes were founded, but there is no reference to actual slavery or to the slave trade, although there are many metaphorical references to these.

[29] "Economic and social status seem after all to be minimal conditions of sexual equality" (Moglen, 129).

ing it with her newly acquired money into "a model of bright modest snugness", retaining the "old homely tables, and chairs, and beds", these still-used and useful objects connecting the home with the past.[30] Jane adds carpets, curtains, ornaments, mirrors: elements that bring colour, texture and light to the interior and are more transient and fashionable than the old furniture. However some of the new objects are "antique ornaments in porcelain and bronze", showing Jane's veneration for the past, as well as her desire to refurbish. Her choice of what to retain and what to renew is based on her feelings about both the objects and those who will use them: she knows that Diana and Mary will "derive more pleasure" from seeing familiar pieces of furniture (396).[31] However, Jane's choice of objects suggests that she is changing the interior from a homely farmhouse to a bourgeois home in her search for a niche in the class system. Eagleton notes in Charlotte Brontë's work,

> . . . a constant struggle between two . . . sets of values. On the one hand are ranged the values

[30] Jane's desire to redecorate Moor House for the Christmas season and to spend time with her cousins obscures the upward mobility of her move away from the cottage.

[31] Writing about Villette, Margaret Callander writes about the "banality" of such objects: "It is not so much because they restore the past that they represent security, but because they confirm the identity and unity of the self" (1987, 110-1). It may be more accurate to say that they confirm the continuity of the self.

> of rationality, coolness, shrewd self-seeking, energetic individualism, radical protest and rebellion; on the other hand lie the habits of piety, submission, culture, tradition, conservatism . . . . it is possible to decipher in the conflicts and compromises between them a fictionally transformed version of the tensions and alliances between the two social classes which dominated the Brontës' world: the industrial bourgeoisie and the landed gentry or aristocracy. (Myths 4)

Jane's decoration of Moor House represents a compromise between these two sets of values, retaining the old furniture of the landed gentry while introducing objects now accessible to bourgeois consumption, some of which would be the spoils of industrialism and imperialism. Dennis W. Allen (1993) points out that her use of "old mahogany and crimson upholstery", makes the house more like the Reed home at Gateshead (113). Nonetheless, although Jane constructs this home at Moor House, it is not her own home, and the reader never learns what becomes of this house. Instead, Jane's "only home" will be wherever Rochester is.

At Moor-House she arranges festivities for Christmas, when the family is reunited, in a reversal of her lonely Christmas at Gateshead with the Reeds. However at this point in the narrative, Jane is seriously threatened by St. John's plans for her. Robert Keefe refers to St. John as a "spiritual vampire" and considers that he represents "the ultimate threat to her existence" (1979, 111). Annexing her as a handmaid, he would subject her to dangerous extremes of

heat and cold. Diana and Mary share Jane's awareness that she should not abuse her health by walking out in all weathers, and Diana notes the dangers for Jane inherent in letting St. John urge her to "'impossibilities'" such as going to India (420). His restlessness and imperialism undermine St. John' representation of himself as a hero, and his choice of missionary work abroad rather than in the slums of London or among the labouring poor of Yorkshire, shows that he is part of Britain's imperial adventure in India after the abolition of slavery in 1833 made West Indian plantations less profitable.

Jane's legacy and her move back to Moor-House with the Rivers family seem somewhat to assuage her suffering over Rochester, giving her other companions who share her interest in self-development, but St. John insists on disrupting this happiness, by requiring her to leave her chosen studies, to visit Morton School, to learn Hindostanee, and ultimately to share his life as a missionary. St. John views life as a battle against natural impulses: against certain ambitions: literary, political, military; against his passion for Rosamund Oliver, even against his love of his native landscape (368). St. John only regrets that he cannot completely overcome nature until death (380). Jane recognises the possibility of madness in him: "If he were insane, however, his was a very cool and collected

insanity" (382). His madness comes from his trying to subdue nature completely; under his influence Jane must distort herself to fit his purpose: "The thing was as impossible as to mould my irregular features to his correct and classic pattern" (403). Eventually "nature" rescues Jane from succumbing to him when she hears Rochester's voice on the wind (425).

Arriving at Ferndean, Jane has had a series of escapes from homes that entrap her. In each case, she starts to resemble those she lives with. Repeatedly, Jane is torn between becoming like those she lives with and holding on to her own point of view. Thomas Loe (1989) suggests that the novel's plot structure depends on a series of conscious decisions Jane makes to reject each situation in which she finds herself. Each home both nurtures and threatens her: Gateshead represents kinship along with alienation, the cruelty of Mrs. Reed and the kindness of Bessie, as if Jane has two "mothers" in this home. She escapes from house arrest in the Gateshead nursery for another imprisonment at Lowood. There, she finds oppression and deprivation as well as culture and friendship; she explores her own abilities and takes on a social role. Thornfield represents a kind of independence for Jane, but also boredom, stagnation and

longing. With the arrival of Rochester, Thornfield presents the possibility of attachment and passion, along with the danger of being enslaved and kept a prisoner, like Bertha Rochester. The natural world, where Jane becomes lost, at first seems to provide a kind of home, a bed on the heath, but then reduces her to starving, freezing, and belonging nowhere. Marsh End/Moor House, provides kinship, acceptance, and a personal history, along with the danger of being entrapped and consumed by St. John Rivers.

Meanwhile, Rochester has become a virtual prisoner at Thornfield. As she learns later from the host of the inn near Thornfield, Rochester, far from leaving England as she imagined he would, never left the house during daylight, mirroring in some sense the alternations of daytime and nighttime worlds that Jane was experiencing. The host tells her that Rochester "'would not cross the doorstones of the house except at night, when he walked just like a ghost about the grounds'" (433). After his accident, Rochester "'can't get out of England . . . he's a fixture here now'" (434). Thus Rochester comes to suffer the imprisonment he has either imposed or tried to impose on women.

When Jane finally arrives at Ferndean, it might be said that she chooses her prison, a home that is not idyllic or ideal; it is isolated, containing the basic social unit of a couple, which then becomes a family; it includes servants as

well. The name "dean" means valley, but the Old English origin of the word means "den", suggesting Jane and Rochester's retreat to a primitive world of animal and vegetable life.

This home, Rochester's old hunting lodge, lies deep in a forest, the "green world" of romance. Rochester now lives ". . . in a house that is "scarce . . . distinguishable from the trees" (435-6). Ferndean is so insalubrious that Rochester did not want to imprison Bertha there; he decided not to commit "'indirect assassination'" and instead placed her in "'safety and comfort'" at Thornfield (313).[32] That Jane and Rochester end up at Ferndean indicates their failure, or their lack of inclination, to find a place in a social world. While the greenwood may be a region to nourish the imagination, it provides no community and is not far away symbolically from the deserted heath of Jane's wandering. It is close to a cottage in its simplicity, if not in its size, but is radically different from Jane's cottage in the midst of a community at Morton. This final resting-place is the compromise that Charlotte Brontë arrives at in the ongoing examination of the relationship between nature and culture in the novel. It requires both Jane and Rochester to make a human habitation out of this

[32] Bertha's quarters at Thornfield, more dungeon than attic, hardly seem comfortable.

dismal home, but that home is within nature, not apart from it: "We entered the wood and wended homeward" (454).

In seeking a home, Jane Eyre discovers her capacity to make one. Her achievement is not simply that she finds a place--or places--where she can belong, because those places turn out to be fraught with difficulties. Her imagination and language, which have preserved her selfhood, now enable her to create a place for herself and Rochester, who has lost both the will and the ability to control the domestic sphere.[33] She can do this by means of the divided self, that can connect nature and culture. The unitary self is a fiction: "The ego may aim at unity and coherence, but it is not coterminous with the self; it is only a component of the self" (Goodheart 126).[34] Rycroft mentions the importance of introspection in childhood, because thereby, "The self in a

[33] Elsie Michie points out that when he is "oppressed" by his injuries and losses at Ferndean, Rochester is described in terms that resemble images of the "simianized Irish" in contemporary accounts of Ireland, which was, after all, another British colony, showing how the language of colonialism pervades this work of fiction (60).

[34] Goodheart notes that Freud "condemns neither repression nor civilization: he understands the necessity for both. He possesses no third term, no alternative to the dualities of consciouness vs. unconsciousness, ego instinct vs. sexual instinct" (126). The "third term" missing in such a dualistic analysis might be the concept of the transitional space where subjective and objective realities meet. The novel, and all works of culture are created in this space.

sense becomes duplex, not only an experiencing subject, but also its own object, and from then on we can take up moral and affective attitudes towards ourselves" (Viewpoints 150).

That Jane Eyre is an account of the divided self appears in many references to dividedness and ambivalence, not only in Jane but in other characters.[35] Even Bertha might be described as divided between desire and rage: desire for connection--with Jane, for example, whom she does not harm--and rage against Rochester and her brother--whom she does attack. Jane survives to make a home with Rochester because she neither represses her feelings, nor, after Gateshead, does she let them erupt to control her. In each of her homes she finds different parts of herself through other people, and these new parts find expression in different ways, including the book itself.

The fact of Jane's cultural expression, her writing the book, reflects her imaginative freedom. Jane Eyre demonstrates the need to reconcile different aspects of the self without denying any of them, so that the divided self can live. Hence Rochester begins to accept his spiritual dependence, to "'acknowledge the hand of God'" after his accident (452). Unlike Zamorna in the Angrian world,

[35] References to phrenology reinforce the idea of dividedness: phrenololgy "presented character as the complex interaction of competing forces" (Karen Chase 1984, 56).

Rochester has to pay a price for his uncivilized behaviour.[36] Repenting, he calls out Jane's name as he is praying, so that when Jane hears this cry, religion (the prayer) and "nature" co-operate, or are reconciled in a coincidence that seems to Jane "too awful and inexplicable" to communicate to him, but not to the reader.

St. John Rivers is another divided self who resembles Jane in some ways. He too had wanted a life of adventure and achievement (366), and Jane recognizes that like her he has not found peace (357). He differs from her in the way he crushes nature in himself and others, and turns away both from the landscape and from his home. In the lengthy struggle between them, St. John uses the power of religion as well as his own commanding personality to try to make Jane submit to his will. As with Rochester, she recognizes that her self will be annihilated if she gives in to him; she will "rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence and there lose my own" (423). She is rescued, as she sees it, by nature, because St. John, unlike Rochester, cannot acknowledge the integrity and independence of another self. St. John's culture, religion, the form taken by his egomania and madness, would destroy her nature. A "wondrous

[36] In the early writings, the female characters like Rosamund Wellesley suffer for ignoring moral and social codes, but the men do not.

shock of feeling" returns Jane to the home of her body and simultaneously releases her as from a prison or a sleep (426). This is the point at which the novel unites its various dualities: nature and culture, flesh and spirit, romance and realism.

The Ferndean section of _Jane Eyre_ brings together the stories of Bertha and St. John Rivers, as well as of Jane and Rochester. Significantly, most of what occurs between Jane and Rochester is in the form of dialogue, the long conversation of the life of the imagination. "We talk, I believe, all day long," Jane says (456). Both Bertha and St. John reach the extreme limits of their madness, so that the inarticulate, imprisoned Bertha destroys both herself and Thornfield, that symbol of economic and social privilege, while St. John works himself to death in the service of a devouring religion that would wipe out all differences "of creed and caste" to remake the world in its own image, that of the Ubermensch, the "master-spirit" (457). The meaning of these two characters is that they cannot be integrated into the green world of the liberated imagination; they are fearsome examples of hapless object, the silenced, imprisoned, colonized woman, and narcissistic subject, the overweening, imperialist man. Why does St. John have the last word in the novel? Perhaps as a disturbing reference to the continuing dialogue of the male

subject with itself, the pattern that Charlotte Brontë's novel has tried to subvert in the interest of presenting the dialogue between a man and a woman as an image of self, culture and imagination.

Chapter IV

Flesh and Spirit: Maternal Tradition in _Jane Eyre_

"Domestic endearments and household joys"

In _Jane Eyre_, Christianity is the religious expression of a patriarchal economic and social system that distorts women's relationships with men through inequalities of power and freedom. At the same time, Christianity is a providential force in the novel, guiding, sustaining and comforting Jane in her search for home. The novel distinguishes between different versions of Christianity, as well as between Christianity and other religious discourses, to create a subtle and complex subtext about religious beliefs and practices. Moreover, Charlotte Brontë enlarges the concept of religion to include a tradition that Christianity has generally suppressed: the ancient religion of the earth goddess which is a religious orientation based in nature, and in rituals and practices of the home and domestic life. This tradition has found expression in ways generally rejected or attacked by Christianity: in a connection to the natural world, in folk tales and songs, in practices such as witchcraft and folk medicine, and in domestic rituals. The novel also differentiates between puritanical Christianity,

associated in this novel with the Evangelical wing of the established Church of England, and non-conformist Protestant beliefs such as Quakerism. This difference is never explicit, and is further complicated by being interwoven with the other discourse about natural religion, where the narrative distinguishes between the unfettered paganism of following one's "natural" inclinations and the orderliness of a moral and religious practice based on harmony with the natural world. The writer-narrator's search for home is also a search to understand and reconcile these four religious ideologies, as well as to challenge the dominant patriarchal order that would deny her point of view.

While patriarchal values are often associated with male, and maternal with female characters, the novel envisions an ideal union of these opposing beliefs. Men and women can share both approaches to reality, and indeed, psychological and spiritual integrity requires that they do so. Jane exemplifies the possibility of combining patriarchal values of spirit, self-control and reason with what may be termed maternal qualities of trust in nature, instinct and feelings. She embodies a religious attitude that allows the divine to enter human experience and shape it.

> Religion is not a discrete category within human experience; it is rather a quality that pervades all of experience. Accustomed as we are to distinguishing between "the sacred" and "the profane", we fail to remember that such a dividing

> up of reality is itself a religious idea. (Sexson 1982, 7)

In bringing together contrary religious traditions, Jane is "overcoming a dualistic heritage" and enabling herself to enter "the sphere in which ordinary reality is saturated with the sacred" (Sexson 10). Jane finds a point of view that counters the dangers of Evangelical puritanism, as embodied for example, in St. John Rivers, and she is also able to oppose the selfish paganism that Rochester represents, that is but another aspect of patriarchy. Rochester resembles the second generation of Romantic poets, who opposed an oppressive Christian religion by means of alternative myths, but myths that were also somewhat oppressive to women.[1] While Jane must deal with the way patriarchs sometimes abuse their power, nevertheless, patriarchal figures sometimes protect her. Her Uncle Reed insists on taking her into his household; her Uncle Eyre sends Richard Mason to prevent her from entering a bigamous marriage, and leaves her his legacy; her cousin St. John Rivers rescues her from the storm. All these relatives are

[1] The Romantic poets tended to create female figures who reflect male idealization or distrust of the feminine, figures like the woman addressed in Shelleys's "Epipsychidion", or the seductive, ambiguous females in Keats' "Lamia" or "La Belle Dame Sans Merci".

in some sense invisible[2], yet make decisions that affect Jane profoundly. Indeed, each of Jane's homes is associated with patriarchal figures, and with both the safety and the danger they represent. These male authorities sometimes attack Jane, but sometimes rescue her, showing how she must survive within a world that patriarchy has constructed for its own ends.

By revaluing female consciousness and woman's place, specifically the home, the novel establishes a dialogue between patriarchal and maternal values to create a place for female creativity to flourish. For instance, while the patriarch can bring the home to life, as when Rochester returns to Thornfield, Jane too can be a life-bringer, comforting Eliza and Georgiana when Aunt Reed is dying, renewing Moor House, and restoring Rochester himself, as well as the home, at Ferndean. _Jane Eyre_'s approach is not that of the later Victorian doctrine of separate spheres, or of the "angel in the house",[3] ideas that would limit women to

[2] Uncle Reed is dead, John Eyre lives in Madeira and never sees Jane, and St. John Rivers is not revealed to be Jane's cousin until some time after he rescues her.

[3] Coventry Patmore's famous poem of this title was published in 1855, only eight years after _Jane Eyre_. However a poem by Leigh Hunt, "An Angel in the House" appeared in _Leigh Hunt's London Journal_, September 24, 1834, reprinted in 1841 and several times thereafter. This poem envisions home as sacred space and the hearth as a kind of shrine. Charlotte Brontë was probably well aware of the contentious issue of home and woman's place, and _Jane Eyre_ contributed to that cultural con-

certain places and activities; Jane's meditation on the roof of Thornfield asserts the desire and the right of women to a wider field than the home. Rather, the novel revalues household activities that patriarchy has considered trivial and gives them a religious meaning. As Jane moves on from one home to another in search of a place where she can thrive, love and work, and is not confined to one home by a father or uncle, she is free to realize that homes differ from one another, and to create her own vision of home as sacred space. As Martin notes, "Jane Eyre is at bottom . . . largely a religious novel" (Accents 81), and Jane's search for home is a spiritual quest. Jane is a pilgrim who must learn to recognize the signs that a providential God offers for her guidance, such as the light from the window of Moor House.[4]

In the Reed home, Jane encounters the destructive face of patriarchy at an age when she seems to have few resources

troversy by examining the difficulties Jane encounters in finding a home where her imagination and affection can in fact thrive.

[4] Jerome Beaty explores the question of the providential theology of Jane Eyre in his book Misreading Jane Eyre: A Postformalist Paradigm (1996). Beaty, along with several other critics such as Jane Millgate (1969), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, or Barry V. Qualls (1982), notes the novel's allusions to The Pilgrim's Progress, and the way Jane and Rochester must learn, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, to "acknowledge their reliance on God" (173).

to deal with it. The benevolent patriarch, her uncle, is dead, leaving his son as the fourteen-year-old master of Gateshead who bullies his mother and sisters, and torments birds, animals and his cousin Jane. John Reed seizes the privileges, and also the vices, of his position, without accepting or understanding its duties and responsibilities. The Reed family perceives Jane as an outsider, but on that account they do not treat her with Christian charity; in fact, Gateshead is an example of a patriarchal home unconnected to either nature or Christianity, as shown in this description of the landscape:

> I opened the glass-door in the breakfast-room; the shrubbery was quite still; the black frost reigned, unbroken by sun or breeze, through the grounds. I covered my head and arms with the skirt of my frock, and went out to walk in a part of the plantation which was quite sequestered; but I found no pleasure in the silent trees, the fallen fir-cones, the congealed relics of autumn, russet leaves swept by past winds in heaps, and now stiffened together. I leaned against a gate, and looked into an empty field where no sheep were feeding, where the short grass was nipped and blanched. (38)

This is a landscape characterized by coldness, rigidity, deadness and sterility. The empty field has no sheep, and no sustenance for them; this absence of biblical sheep and shepherds implies a lack of Christian values as well. Nor does the autumnal decay hold any suggestions of natural renewal or of spiritual rebirth. Indeed, the Christian festival of Christmas has been celebrated at Gateshead without

including Jane in any way, and with no sense of spiritual regeneration. Jane's connection to her cousins seems threatening to them, and her intellect and temperament are so different from theirs that the Reeds see her as an intruder. Also, Jane has no money, and because wealth confers worth in a capitalist patriarchal system, the Reeds find her worthless. They tolerate her only because they feel compelled to respect the wishes of the dead father.

Although Jane remembers her uncle as a kind figure, and imagines that the way she is treated troubles his spirit, she is horrified at the thought of encountering his ghost in the Red Room, the "patriarchal death chamber" (Gilbert and Gubar 340). Mrs. Reed's power is located in this room, and she visits it "to review the contents of a certain secret drawer in the wardrobe, where were stored divers parchments, her jewel-casket, and a miniature of her dead husband" (14).[5] The parchments presumably concern Mrs. Reed's entitlement to the estate until her son comes of age, the jewel-casket symbolizes her sexuality, the sign of her value to the patriarchal system, and the miniature of Mr. Reed suggests his diminished influence after death. Although Jane imagines the dead uncle being concerned for her, she

[5] Elaine Showalter remarks that Mrs. Reed keeps these symbolic objects in a bedchamber where no living relationship can take place (Literature 1977, 114-5).

trusts to her own instincts for survival. In her passion for life, Jane offends her aunt. Mrs. Reed directs her natural energies only into idolizing her worthless son, and having everything in the household "thoroughly under her control" (36).

Mrs. Reed's control of everything can be compared with Frances' domestic management in The Professor, both in her own home and in the home she makes with William. The main feature of Mrs. Reed's management is power, while in Frances' case it is nurturing. In both situations, home is a kind of shrine, but the Reed home is set up to worship the patriarch, whoever he may be. In The Professor, Frances' own home is kept as a shrine apparently for its own sake, and to reflect Frances' creativity and sense of order. When she makes a home with William, however, Frances' homemaking revolves around him and his needs: the patriarch is at the centre. In Jane Eyre, a home dominated by patriarchal values distorts the natural inclinations of both its male and female inhabitants. John Reed, the young tyrant, eventually destroys himself, while Eliza and Georgiana conform to stereotypical expectations of women. Obsessive Eliza eventually becomes a nun, the image of one kind of submissiveness to a patriarchal religion; self-indulgent Georgiana engages in a respectable form of prostitution, another kind of submissiveness to a patriarchal order, when

she seeks a titled husband in the marriage market. The two sisters strive to find in religion or the social world not self-fulfillment or relationship, but the security that was lacking in their childhood home.

Jane survives emotionally and preserves her true self for three reasons. First is her natural disposition; her intelligence and perceptiveness help her to observe and understand her situation, while her assertiveness enables her to defend herself. Second, Jane uses what patriarchy provides--literature and education--to achieve an intellectual and symbolic grasp of her own existence. Third, Jane finds spiritual comfort and guidance in each of her homes.

Although Christianity is mostly unacknowledged at Gateshead, at least until Brocklehurst appears, another religious expression is available to Jane there: the maternal religion of hearth and home.[6] Bessie, the nurse,

[6] I am choosing to use the term "maternal" to describe the domestic religion in Charlotte Bronte's work, rather than the word "matriarchal" which implies some reference to a social system and a power structure. The domestic religion discussed here is more loosely organized, subtle and quietly subversive than the term "matriarchy" suggests. Instead, this "maternal" spiritual orientation values those aspects of nature, relationship and spirituality that are ignored or rejected by patriarchal Christianity, especially by the Christian religion represented by Brocklehurst or St. John. The maternal values include connection to nature and care for the body, for feelings, and for domestic rituals.

becomes a substitute mother to Jane and introduces her to songs and stories that awaken her imagination. Martin points out: "As the matriarchy goes underground it is preserved by the folk tales of the nurse, who thus becomes a surrogate mother culturally as well as physically" ("Faery" 1977, 86). Bessie instinctively nurtures Jane, remembers to feed her, and acknowledges her existence as no-one else does at Gateshead. Associated with bringing light and food, tending fires, and cleaning, Bessie teaches Jane how to perform these tasks, to create and enjoy order and cleanliness. Within the framework of the novel, these are maternal values, to do with nurturing feelings and bodily well-being. With her "capricious and hasty temper" (29), Bessie, like Jane, does not always keeps her passions under control, but this fault is life-giving, keeping Jane, and Bessie herself, emotionally and spiritually alive. Bessie teaches Jane to relate to a loved other person, while Jane gives Bessie someone to nurture. At night, Jane waits longingly for her, thus learning to depend on another person.[7]

[7] Elaine Showalter says that Bessie, Miss Abbot. Miss Temple and Grace Poole--in her role as Bertha Rochester's caretaker--are all willing to police and punish other women on behalf of "patriarchal tyranny". "Thus the heroine grows up in a world without female solidarity . . . " ("Charlotte Brontë" 1997, 71). On the contrary, Bessie and Miss Temple, at any rate, are willing to nurture Jane and others in spite of the instructions they are supposed to carry out for their employers, one of whom is a woman, Mrs. Reed. Also, both Bessie and Miss Temple have a positive effect on Jane.

Bessie introduces Jane to a non-Christian mythology, to folk-tales and songs about the supernatural that also affirm Jane's feelings. The song about the little orphan child, which prefigures Jane's own wanderings, describes her sense of deprivation as well as providing images of "'comfort and hope'" through the natural world and divine guidance (22). The song unites the two themes of natural and Christian faith, as the novel itself does. The idea that "'Heaven is a home'" will prove true for various characters in different ways: for Helen Burns, and St. John Rivers, home is only in heaven, but for Jane and Rochester, heaven can be found on earth. In Bessie, Jane first experiences maternal tradition, for both Bessie and her mother are sympathetic to her, and Bessie has presumably learned to nurture from her kind-hearted mother.[8] Jane becomes part of this tradition when she cuddles her doll at night, caring for what she believes to be its feelings, which are also her own: " . . . when it lay there safe and warm, I was comparatively happy, believing it to be happy likewise" (29). She also notices a little hungry robin and feeds it (30). At this stage of her life, Jane's conception of religion is personal and

[8] It seems that Bessie has a good mother who comments sympathetically on Jane's situation and "'would not like a little one of her own to be in [Jane's] place'" (39).

instinctive, to do with her own physical and emotional needs. She imagines her parents and her uncle in heaven, seeing her ill-treatment and deploring it, not as part of a theological system of heaven and hell, but in terms of relationships and natural justice.[9]

Jane encounters the idea of heaven, and, more exactly, of hell, when she meets Brocklehurst, the phallic pillar of respectability and the representative of patriarchal Christianity. Using religion for his own purposes, Brocklehurst threatens Jane with the fires of hell as punishment for her sins, those sins which he has only heard about from Mrs. Reed. When he asks Jane how she intends to avoid the torments of hell, Jane's response affirms what she knows of

[9] In Jane Eyre, mother-figures and maternal culture support Jane with "a cosmic and personal principle of order and control" (Moglen 131). This culture coexists with Christianity, as it does historically. Some historians describe a matriarchal order that prevailed in the Western world before being superseded by patriarchy (Christine Downing, The Goddess: Mythological Images of the Femine; Adele Getty, Goddess: Mother of Living Nature (1990);Maria Gimbutas, The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 1974). The desire among contemporary feminists to discover and describe a lost matriarchal religion resembles the efforts of feminist literary theorists to find and commemorate literary "mothers". Both efforts point to the fact that in most personal history, the mother was the first caretaker and authority, the one who nurtured the infant and young child.

faith so far: to care for and trust the body; thus she tells him, "'I must keep in good health and not die'" (32).

Throughout the novel, Jane cares for her own and others' bodies, in opposition to the Puritanical desire to mortify the body for the sake of the spirit, as characters like Brocklehurst, Helen Burns and St. John Rivers recommend, following St. Paul.[10] In school at Lowood, Jane's body does uphold her, and although she suffers from cold, hunger and depression, she does not succumb to the deadly diseases that threaten the girls there. Brocklehurst recognizes that Jane is "'not a member of the true flock'" but a "'castaway'" who resembles a "'little heathen'" (67), but as such, Jane will find her own alternative to Brocklehurst's religion. As it was at Gateshead, her rebellious nature is life-affirming:

> ' . . . I must resist those who punish me unjustly. It is as natural as that I should love those who show me affection, or submit to punishment when it is deserved.' (58)

Jane bases her moral judgments on natural feeling, the wish for affection; Helen, on the other hand, submits to rigid values of piety and self-abnegation, and has cut herself off from her natural impulse to preserve herself. However, Helen bases her faith not so much on the words of St. Paul

[10] "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

as on the example of Jesus in the Gospels: "'Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you'" (58), she tells Jane. Her advice and example enable Jane to gain more self-control, to discipline her instincts in order to be socially acceptable. Q.D Leavis suggests that "Jane is obliged to recognize the superiority of Helen's religion as strategy in the psychological warfare that, at Gateshead, she found life to be" (1985, 16). Yet Helen's religion, with its emphasis on passivity and trust, contributes to her premature death, while Jane's rebelliousness is vindicated by the course of her life.

Although Helen loves Jane, the motive for the friendship comes mainly from Jane, rooted as she is in everyday reality. Sometimes Helen is so caught up in her thoughts that she is "talking to herself" (57). Helen denies aggressive or destructive feelings, modelling herself on the Christian Gospel and refusing to accept that earthly life has any value: "'We are . . . burdened with faults in this world: but the time will soon come when, I trust, we shall put them off in putting off our corruptible bodies'" (59). Helen wants to get life over with, in order to obtain union with the divine. In the world tyrannized over by Brocklehurst--ironically referred to by Jane as the "'Coming Man'", like Jesus--Helen's preoccupation with the afterlife

is deadly. Brocklehurst, in the name of encouraging Christian humility, destroys the girls' health with a pernicious environment. His approach is a parody of good housekeeping, with his obsessive fussing over needles and thread and minute examination of the girls' stockings and other laundry. The feminine, domestic realm attracts Brocklehurst, but he punishes the girls instead of himself for the attraction. Brocklehurst is interested in the students as spiritual capital for himself, souls to be saved, and the sooner they are translated into that coinage the better. Helen accepts his valuation; her submission fits his oppression and she dies. "Helen's solution is not at all unlike Brocklehurst's: it totally separates nature from grace" (Tromly 1982, 52).

Reger notes that Helen's image of a loving God is a "far nobler religious vision than Brocklehurst's" (1992, 214). Yet although Helen does not entirely share Brocklehurst's cruel patriarchal version of Christianity, she still succumbs to it. At the same time, she herself is a kind of moon, the symbol in the novel of a nurturing feminine consciousness in creation. Her look alone comforts Jane (68), and she resembles the moon in other ways, as Jane realizes when Miss Scatcherd attacks Helen's faults: "Such spots are there on the disc of the clearest planet; and eyes like Miss Scatcherd's can only see those minute defects, and are blind to the full brightness of the orb" (68).

The feminine love of Jane and Miss Temple cannot save Helen; she tells Jane, "'I live in calm, waiting for the end,'. . . . Helen's head, always drooping, sank a little lower as she finished this sentence" (59). Indeed, she pronounces her own death sentence, despite Miss Temple's efforts to care for her. Adrienne Rich (1979) notes that Miss Temple "is maternal in a special sense: not simply sheltering and protective, but encouraging of intellectual growth" (94). Tea with her resembles a pre-Christian feast of "nectar and ambrosia" as Jane sees it (73), but this divine food and Miss Temple's blessing cannot nurture Helen as they do Jane. Two things rouse Helen somewhat to life: one is her conversation with Miss Temple, when she seems to wake and "kindle" with the intellectual stimulation (73); the other is the command to tidy up her belongings. In Helen, untidiness is the way nature and her body assert themselves. Her feelings of anger or self-assertion can only be expressed indirectly, in the unwitting or unwilling disorder she creates in her environment. In contrast, Jane finds domestic tasks comforting and self-enhancing; when she is overwhelmed by the changing classes and new lessons of Lowood, she relieves her feelings by doing needlework (53). Helen is unaware of her own life-affirming anger, gone astray in untidiness and forgetfulness. Natural feelings become dangerous if they are not felt and understood

consciously: Helen's domestic carelessness prefigures in a minor way the grand disorder created by Bertha Rochester. Jane learns from Helen and others to discipline her mind and control her feelings, but she never goes so far as to deny her feelings to herself.

Lowood School, nominally run by women, inculcates a sternly Christian and patriarchal mentality, yet even at its most rigorously ascetic, Lowood never lacks a mother-figure or benevolent maternal values. Miss Temple, whose name suggests a religious "home", nurtures the girls as much as she can. Jane is also sustained by her own body: by her interest in food and her love of nature. Spring comes like a female deity, accompanied by another female figure, Hope, a nocturnal presence who visits the flower beds, leaving "brighter traces of her steps" each morning and a scattering of flowers everywhere.[11] The natural world takes on a feminine aspect--"Lowood shook loose its tresses" (a reminder of the luxuriant hair that Brocklehurst insisted on mutilating)--at the same time that a typhus epidemic exposes the dreadful conditions at the school. Thus Brocklehurst loses his power and is driven away, like the harsh, cold season of winter that his rule has resembled. Miss Temple, the

[11] "Hope" thus resembles the goddess Flora, whose worship is associated with the may-blossom (Graves 1955, 1: 52).

maternal authority, now takes complete charge of the school, but her time is entirely taken up with caring for the sick girls, so that the healthy ones like Jane and Mary Ann are both permitted, and presumably trusted, to enjoy the freedom of the fields and woods, a green world, not so much Arcadian or pastoral as wild and uncultivated nature.

There Jane wades barefoot through the beck to sit on her favourite stone and "dine sumptuously" on generous portions of bread and cheese or pie provided by the housekeeper (78). The stone is large enough for two people, so that Jane can share it with her friend Mary Ann Wilson. While this stone in the midst of moving water is as a symbol of the self that endures amid the movement of time and events, it is also a rudimentary home. Meanwhile, Helen, who has given Jane "a taste of far higher things", is rapidly dying of consumption (78). On the night that she dies, Jane lingers outside to put plants from the wild in her garden before they wither. Her care for the plants' survival shows Jane's maternal capacity to nurture, while her fondness for the beautiful natural world keeps her outside to enjoy the sunset and moonrise, so often a moment of insight or illumination in Charlotte Brontë's fiction.

Presided over by the moon, Jane instinctively responds to its "majesty", a symbol both of the eternal cycle of nature and of the mortality of all living things "whether

plant, animal or human being" (Baring and Cashford 1993, 148).[12] The moon inspires Jane to go from contemplating its beauty "as a child might", to reflecting on Helen's state and the possibility of her death. The thought of death seems to Jane "an unfathomed gulf"; living in the present, she has not hitherto considered the "chaos" of what lies beyond the present moment (79-80). Jane's vitality stems from her capacity to live in the present, and from her desire to be loved--"'If others don't love me, I would rather die than live . . .'" she has told Helen (70). Now she finds herself capable of empathy, of loving as well as being loved, and decides to find Helen, who is quarantined at the other end of the house. Guided by the light of the moon that symbolizes the maternal authority for her decision to be disobedient, Jane visits Helen to comfort her last hours. Their conversation concerns Helen's belief that she is going to her "'long home'", her "'last home'" (80) and Jane's initial impression that Helen might be going home to

[12] Writing about the connection between the Great Goddess and the moon, Baring and Cashford note: "The moon was an image in the sky that was always changing yet was always the same. What endured was the cycle whose totality could never be seen at any one moment. . . . The individual phases could not be named, nor the relations between them expressed, without assuming the presence of the whole cycle. The whole was invisible, an enduring and unchanging circle . . . . Symbolically, it was as if the visible 'came from' and 'returned to ' the invisible - like being born and dying and being born again" (147).

her family. At this stage, Jane knows only the reality of an earthly life and an earthly home, while Helen trusts in a caring God who will look after her beyond the grave. Jane doubts the existence of heaven and even of God: "'Where is God? What is God?'"; Christian beliefs are not as real to her as the world revealed by her senses, but the influence of the moon has roused a new consciousness in her, and Helen's faith in a loving Father-God enables Jane to begin a dialogue within herself between maternal nurturing and patriarchal Christianity.[13] Fifteen years later, Jane will mark Helen's grave with a word that reconciles the "grassy mound" of nature with faith in the resurrection: "'Resurgam'" (83).

After the deaths of Helen and many others, conditions at Lowood improve through the efforts of a new committee who unite maternal and patriarchal values, "to combine reason with strictness, comfort with economy, compassion with uprightness" (84). Under their care, Jane becomes a refined, ladylike and Christian heroine, resembling Frances Henri in The Professor. Whatever causes Jane's conversion

[13] M. Joan Chard suggests that Charlotte Brontë's association of the moon with maternity has "ethical overtones" and that the writer "may have sought to recover for her own era the use of feminine metaphor for the cosmic deity as found in the Old and New Testaments but veiled through centuries of patriarchal interpretation" (1988, 201).

to Christianity, it is not the Brocklehurst approach, but rather the combination of Miss Temple and the "wise male guardians". Jane thrives, and stays on as a teacher. Yet when Miss Temple marries and leaves the school, Lowood is no longer a home to Jane: "with her was gone every settled feeling" (85). The masculine world, or "destiny in the shape of the Rev. Mr. Nasmyth" breaks up the serenity of the maternal atmosphere and separates Jane from Miss Temple. Her departure transforms Jane, who imagines new possibilities, symbolized by the window she opens to gaze at the world beyond Lowood.

The gap of eight years in the narrative emphasizes that Jane has been living in a place created by someone else; indeed Jane has been so identified with Miss Temple and her "serene atmosphere" that she has lost touch with her own nature. Nonetheless, this absorption into Miss Temple has enabled Jane to acquire the persona of a governess, and to make her way in the world. Thus the time at Lowood is crucial to Jane's development, and yet curiously immaterial to the narrative. It will only become clear as the novel unfolds what kind of education and values Jane has acquired at Lowood. Her religious position is symbolized by her dress, described by her as "Quaker-like" and suggesting Jane's spiritual non-conformity, her allegiance to an "inner light" and a quiet but persistent faith in Christian

values.[14] Now seeking new experiences beyond Lowood and struggling to think her way through to a solution, she exhausts her brain, only to have "a kind fairy" provide the answer, in an interplay of intellect and intuition (87).

Just as Jane is leaving the school to take up her new position as governess at Thornfield Hall, Bessie unexpectedly reappears, as if to give a maternal blessing to Jane's new endeavour. Bessie is now married, with children, but her former maternal connection to Jane appears in the way she has named her own daughter Jane. Bessie, the mother who first helped Jane with her troublesome and passionate feelings, reappears just as those feelings rise up again to carry Jane into another chapter of her life. By confirming that Jane is now competent and educated as a lady, Bessie provides a reminder of Jane's former self and a reassurance that those feelings are now disciplined and under the control of the ladylike governess that Jane has become.

[14] See Trevelyan 1986, 281-2. Even this subtle indication of non-conformity in Jane is surprising and intriguing coming from the pen of the daughter of a priest of the Church of England, for "however close their sympathy with Non-conformity, there remained the social barrier between Evangelicals and Dissenters" (Jay 24). Jane resembles the quiet middle-class dissenters of nineteenth-century England, not their predecessors whose "free spirits" led them at times into "obliteration of the difference between God and man" (Harrison 1984, 200). Jane is well aware of the dangers of this heresy (221) and of her own tendency to idolize Rochester (277); both are spiritual errors in her view.

Although owned by a man, Thornfield is inhabited mainly by women: Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, Jane herself, and various maids including the strange Grace Poole, and of course the unseen Bertha Rochester, whose "tragic" laugh Jane hears. A church stands nearby, but Jane never mentions attending it, and it seems subordinate to the Rochester estate. Instead, the great hall of Thornfield reminds Jane of a church (98), and indeed Thornfield is a shrine of sorts, a monument to capitalist and patriarchal power. The "chill and vault-like air" of the stairs and gallery suggest both the entombment of Bertha and the negative aspects of Jane's wish for liberty: the interior conveys "cheerless ideas of space and solitude" (98). The third floor contains discarded furniture from earlier centuries; it symbolizes ideas and institutions that have not been relinquished, "a shrine of memory" (107). Chests "like types of the Hebrew ark" suggest the patriarchal theology of the Old Testament, while the work and artistic expression of women survive in the "traces of half-effaced embroideries" and the "strange" flowers, birds and people on the ancient bed-hangings.[15]

[15] Jane's own artistic expression, in the paintings she shows to Rochester, has a similar strangeness, for she paints objects from her imagination and not from the outer world.

Thus this shrine to the past contains objects from both patriarchal and maternal traditions.

Just as she is limited by her position as a woman in a patriarchal system, Jane similarly cannot know about the whole of Thornfield, only about the parts she is permitted to enter. Some regions are hidden from her, and others, like the locked bookcases, are explicitly off-limits. Fascinated by the house, as she will be by its owner, Jane describes interior views, the view of the house from the grounds, and the view from the roof where she can look into the distance to "regions of life [she] had heard of but never seen" (110). There she longs for a life more active than the one she is leading, for "a field for [her] efforts". Adrienne Rich points out that "the roof is where Jane is visited by an expanding vision, but . . . this illumination brings her closer to the madwoman captive behind the door" (98).

While her view from the roof of Thornfield may bring her closer to Bertha, it also gives Jane a glimpse of Rochester's view of reality. The perspective from the roof lets Jane perceive a landscape with the hall at the centre, "the grounds laid out like a map", an intellectual abstraction, with all the elements of the surrounding countryside focussed on this building. Then, as Jane becomes more restless at Thornfield, her outlook, expanding to the world

beyond the immediate landscape, becomes wide-ranging, full of possibilities, connected to distant cities and the life that is happening there. This view suggests the power of a man like Rochester, a wealthy landowner, to look and move beyond the house itself. This orientation "produces a particular kind of knowledge, with its insistence on distance, objectivity and non-relational characteristics" (Wolff 1990, 80). Jane gives herself this glimpse of the patriarchal viewpoint; then when she turns away from the sunlit landscape to the limitations of domestic life, she encounters enclosure and darkness, which are Bertha's perspective: "the attic seem[s] black as a vault compared with that arch of blue air" (197).

Jane's sense of imprisonment, frustration and stagnation at Thornfield stems from being able to see what a man--the owner of the house, and of cultural life in general--can see, but being powerless to have or to act.[16] Jane's economic and social situation cuts her off from wider experience and puts her somewhat in the position of a wife, for at

[16] Janet Wolff notes that some adaptations of object relations theory (Dorothy Dinnerstein 1976, Nancy Chodorow 1978) suggest a possible explanation for patriarchal cultural assumptions about the differences between men's and women's ways of knowing. Because women tend to raise children, "boys have to separate clearly from the mother" in order to develop a male identity. "The commitment to objectivity is . . . a psychic need to retain distance", and not an intrinsic difference between men and women (79).

the time this novel was written, a wife's property belonged to her husband,[17] and she was unable to act or possess on her own behalf. Yet even if the hidden parts of the third floor of Thornfield arouse her curious interest, Jane also values the rooms in which she feels at home, like her pretty bedroom, or the room she enters on her arrival at Thornfield, where she sees "a snug small room, a round table by a cheerful fire . . ." (96), a room fitted to a human scale.

Jane's ascent to the roof, her point of view encompassing both a masculine and a feminine perspective, suggests what women's knowledge is like in comparison with men's. As a girl, Jane has found that many aspects of life are closed to her, while a boy, depending on his social class, would have found the world of masculine privilege more or less open to him. However, the cultural outlook of a woman includes some awareness of male experience, as well as the experience of her own exclusion. In this way, pursuits like learning and travel that patriarchy has defined as off-limits to women such as Jane Eyre attract her interest and desire. The novel explores the limitations imposed by her gender, social position, and relative poverty to reveal what the patriarchal order has suppressed. Jane's narrative is a

[17] Until a series of parliamentary acts in 1870-1872, all that a married woman possessed or acquired belonged by law to her husband.

way of transforming these patriarchal restrictions "to intervene in an excluding culture, and to articulate [a woman's] experience" (Wolff 10). In Jane's view, then, the limitations that women experience are culturally imposed, not intrinsic to women's capabilities.

Before Rochester appears, Jane's life proceeds in a quiet, orderly fashion, like life at Lowood, or convent life, but she chafes at Adèle's superficiality, Mrs. Fairfax's triteness, and Sophie's emptiness. Their lack of education and their intellectual shallowness frustrate her, but also this completely feminine world is stagnant: " . . . like a lifeless body, the house without its master has an air of decay" (Martin, _Accents_ 73). Jane desires the masculine, both outwardly and inwardly, without entirely realizing it. She resents the restrictions that patriarchy has placed on feminine culture: "making puddings and knitting stockings, . . . playing on the piano and embroidering bags" do not exercise women's abilities sufficiently, and they suffer "precisely as men would suffer" under such trivialization of their energies (110-111). In a passage reminiscent of Charlotte Brontë's own fascination with the Angrian narratives, Jane describes how she listens with her "inward ear" to "a tale [her] imagination created, and narrated continuously" (110).

Jane listens also with her outward ear, attuned to the landscape and the flow of life, as she sits on the stile in

the still winter afternoon when Rochester appears. This poetic description of the winter landscape includes references to the setting sun and the rising moon, and to the two seasons that preceded winter in this lane "noted for wild roses in summer, for nuts and blackberries in autumn, and even now possessing a few coral treasures in hips and haws" (112). The missing season is spring, although Jane herself is in the springtime of her life, and Rochester, seeming to be a hero of a quest-romance, will, initially at least, bring "fertility, vigor, and youth" to heal the stagnation and boredom of Thornfield (Frye _Anatomy_ 1957, 188). Although the lane is quiet and frozen, with a sheet of ice covering the path, Jane hears "the thin murmurs of life" from the nearby village, and a pervasive musical flowing of waters from the many becks and streams in the surrounding countryside, symbolizing the flow of life in nature and in Jane herself. Both the quiet setting and Jane's inner landscape desire the "master", the "rill from the outer world" that will bring the house - and Jane - to life (119). Rochester, in quest-hero style, accompanied by the characteristic animals of romance, the horse and the dog, does provide a connection to the outside world, both in the comings and goings of other people, and in the long accounts he gives to Jane of his life.

Rochester seems at times to reject the patriarchal values of his gender and class, for instance when he

socializes with his governess or masquerades as a woman. Nonetheless, despite having been manipulated and excluded as a second son, he has seized this patriarchal inheritance when it became available. He is perhaps more "natural" than his predecessors, but not more honest, using his patriarchal power when it suits him, whether to issue commands, or to invent stories involving real people. In him, erotic power proves to be a powerful weapon of patriarchy, and he threatens to overwhelm Jane. He also threatens her with savagery, represented by Bertha with her "'savage'" face (286) and by his own "look of exaltation" in which Jane sees the nearly wild state of his feelings (258). Rochester imagines himself as a shepherd to Jane's lost sheep, but later feels like the man who has slaughtered his one ewe lamb "'that was dear to him as a daughter'" (302), a clear reference to his ambivalent patriarchal relationship to her.

Rochester is, however, particularly suited to be an intermediary between the patriarchal territory of power and action and the maternal realm of domestic life. Rochester is not completely comfortable in the role of patriarch, even if he seizes its advantages. In the past, his father's power and avarice have worked against him, when the patriarchal custom of primogeniture enabled the father and Rochester's older brother to avoid dividing the property. Also it appears that the father and brother conspired to

entangle Rochester in a marriage with the wealthy but mentally unstable Bertha Mason. Only natural ties and events, the deaths of his father and brother, have made him the owner of Thornfield. Rochester never mentions his mother or any values she might have given him, and presents himself instead as a complete victim of plots set in motion by others, denying his own exploitation of the circumstances, and admitting only to his own sensuality. Rochester represents himself as a sort of child of nature, or, like the younger son in a romance or fairy tale, an innocent.

Despite having inherited Thornfield, Rochester cannot enjoy it, spending most of his time away from home to avoid his mad wife. He blames Bertha's coarseness and immorality for his disastrous marriage. He apparently never considers that his brutal treatment--taking her from her home, and then keeping her a prisoner at Thornfield, shut away even from the daylight--might contribute to Bertha's degraded and desperate state. Rochester avoids admitting that his sensuality still rules him, and claims that he "'could not live alone: so [he] tried the companionship of mistresses'", whom he commodifies and then rejects as not being to his "taste" (315). Rochester's lack of emotional and moral development, along with his ambivalent relationship to patriarchy, makes him less of a father-figure to Jane than his age would indicate, as she herself recognizes when she

tells Mrs. Fairfax: "' . . . he is nothing like my father! . . . . Mr. Rochester looks as young, and is as young as some men at five-and-twenty'" (267). When she makes this comment, Jane cannot understand that Rochester's youthfulness indicates his immaturity: in his inability to inhabit Thornfield, his ancestral home, or to acknowledge Bertha as his wife, Rochester is indeed as he was at five-and-twenty. He reduces women to stereotypes based on prejudices about French, German and Italian women. Similarly, his view of Bertha as sensual and degraded relates to her dark skin, in contrast to his own origin in a "'good race'".[18] Wanting to see Bertha as all body, disclaiming his own sexuality, and sensing that he lacks a spiritual side, he likewise chooses to perceive Jane as all spirit, a fairy, or an angel who will somehow make him good (263). Thus women are to embody for him those parts of himself that are disturbing or difficult for him to acknowledge.

Nonetheless, Rochester seems drawn to the maternal, domestic realm, traditionally the province of women. His fascination with witchcraft and the supernatural connects

[18] The racism here is probably Charlotte Brontë's, and she may imply no criticism of Rochester's sense of belonging to a superior race. Opposition to slavery and admiration of the abolitionist movement do not preclude a sense of racial superiority. Elsewhere, she has Bessie mention John Reed's "thick lips" along with his dissipation and bad conduct (92), possibly another racist allusion.

him to the earth-religion that preceded Christianity, for witchcraft, folk-tales and belief in ghosts and spirits were ways that elements of earth-goddess worship survived under Christianity. At their first meeting, both Rochester and Jane initially perceive each other in supernatural terms; Jane associates the sound of Rochester's horse, and the sight of his dog, with stories of a "Gytrash", or mythical beast, while Rochester perceives Jane as an elf. However while Jane quickly recognizes Rochester as human--"The man, the human being, broke the spell at once"(113)--Rochester continues to see Jane as a sprite, because of his pagan outlook.[19] Their first conversation in the drawing room involves an exchange about fairies and "green men" that mystifies Mrs. Fairfax but shows that Jane and Rochester still relate to this old mythology. Rochester is a "green man"[20] in his paganism and disregard for the Christian moral or legal code under which he lives, and he is quite willing

[19] Rochester's paganism is not the same as the "heathenism" of, for example, the Indian Hindus whom St. John goes to convert. Also, paganism is not a completely negative spiritual orientation within the novel's terms of reference, linked as it is with nature and imagination. However, allied with his patriarchal assumptions, Rochester's paganism is dangerously close to "savagery".

[20] William Anderson discusses this archetype of the green man in his book on the subject (1990). Northrop Frye notes that the "so-called Byronic hero is often a Romantic version of the natural man . . . " (Anatomy 30-1).

to go through a false wedding with Jane in order to possess her. The positive side to his paganism appears in his comparison of himself to the lightning-struck tree at Thornfield, and Jane's response:

> 'You are no ruin, sir--no lightning-struck tree: you are green and vigorous. Plants will grow about your roots, whether you ask them or not, because they take delight in your bountiful shadow; and as they grow they will lean towards you, and wind round you, because your strength offers them so safe a prop.' (450)

As a green man, "a personification of the intelligence in the tree of life" or "an image of balance between man and Nature" (William Anderson 105, 146), Rochester represents the wildness and vitality of the natural world as well as its lawlessness.

Despite his alienation from his family and home at Thornfield, Rochester seems most comfortable at the fireside, the centre of the domestic world. Although he has rationalized his experiments in "'hiring'" mistresses as a wish for companionship, there is some truth in his rationalization, for he is drawn to the social hearth and the pleasures of conversation, and is often depicted there during his courtship of Jane. His "'fire and chandelier'" are "'not sufficient company'" for him, so he invites Mrs. Fairfax, Jane and Adèle to join him (134). In addition to being at ease at the fireside, Rochester is metaphorically linked with fire, with his blazing passions and fiery eyes.

However, fire in the home needs to be confined to the hearth, site of the ancient goddess Hestia, guardian of the hearth. In the ancient world, this hearth would have been round in form (Visser 1994, 158).[21] Traditionally, Hestia is never represented as a figure, but is understood as a spiritual focus to be found in the fire at the centre of the home. This invisible goddess is a form of the older earth-mother goddess (Graves 1: 75). Fire, a natural element, can be dangerous if it is not contained. Religion has been the chief way of containing dangerous elements like fire or human egotism, but Rochester acknowledges neither the moral codes of Christianity nor the wisdom of the earth-goddess tradition. Hestia "represented personal security and happiness, and the sacred duty of hospitality" (Graves 1: 75), but Rochester violates this code. Neither Bertha nor Jane is safe under his roof, and he uses the rites of hospitality to tease and manipulate both Jane and Blanche Ingram. He swears by his "'household gods'", and says that he has made his heart a "'shrine'", but these objects of worship are ambiguous. Like Hephaestos, Rochester uses fire to impose his own shape on things. Fond of a comfortable home, he

[21] Bessie, Miss Temple and Mrs. Fairfax all serve very good tea in rooms with warm fires, plenty of food and round tea tables or serving stands. The round table suggests the original round hearth sacred to Hestia.

does not recognize that women create that comfort for him. Nor does he realize that there is a feminine principle in the hearth that he should respect; he simply assumes it all belongs to him as the owner of Thornfield. Unwittingly commenting on Rochester's tendency to play God, Jane notes, "'The human and fallible should not arrogate a power with which the divine and perfect alone can be safely trusted'" (139). By confining fire to the hearth, Hestia makes this element useful, to cook food and warm the body, and to be a focus for social life. Nonetheless, the flames in the hearth are still dangerous. When Rochester masquerades as an old gypsy woman, he draws Jane closer to the fire to observe her, but she complains that "'the fire scorches'" her (203). Fire is even more destructive when it escapes from the hearth, especially in the hands of Bertha Rochester, when she sets the bed curtain alight and again when she finally burns Thornfield into ruins. When Rochester is in the gypsy disguise he resembles Bertha, for he too is "playing with fire".

As Rochester is transforming himself into the old gypsy woman, Richard Mason, Bertha's brother, appears unexpectedly. Although the ladies seem charmed by Mason, Jane finds no life in his countenance; he is the opposite of Rochester, in her view, with features both "unsettled and inanimate" (192). At this point in the narrative, it seems

that Rochester disappears, splitting into the shell of a gentleman, and an old witch, his inner feminine part. "' . . . [W]e have a genuine witch in the house,'" says Blanche Ingram, "'who is in close alliance with the old gentleman'" (196). The "'old gentleman'" in this case is the devil, showing Rochester's connection to the dark side of paganism. In her essay "The Humanization of Edward Rochester", Gail B. Griffin points out that Rochester is possessed by "the woman within" (119), something Jane herself recognizes: " . . . a bold, vindictive and haughty gentleman seemed somehow in the power of one of the meanest of his dependents" (158); although Jane is thinking here of Grace Poole, her comment applies to Rochester's inner life. Rochester himself refuses to acknowledge Bertha as part of himself, legally and psychically, yet when he wears the gypsy disguise he even looks like Bertha with his straggling hair, powerful body and black face. Griffin notes how dangerous and unintegrated this female part is in Rochester, producing inner conflict and continually threatening to break out in impetuous and contradictory behaviour. Rochester himself whimsically hopes for a "'final re-transformation from India-rubber back to flesh'" (133) but does not realize what this will cost him. Rochester transforms himself eventually when he is able to accept both Bertha and Jane as human beings, risking his own life to

save Bertha's, calling her by name "for the first and last time in the novel" (Griffin 127).

Rochester's effect on Jane resembles William's on Frances in The Professor. Even before she realizes that she loves Rochester, Jane's contact with him releases her vitality. She becomes kinder and less judgmental towards Adèle. The verbal skill which she has previously used to defend herself and make her way in the world now becomes a way of expressing involvement and love; she engages in playful dialogue with her employer. Rochester perceives that Jane is emotionally frozen and overly controlled, but that she is "'not naturally austere'" any more than he is "'naturally vicious'" (140). Responding to the inner passion in Jane, Rochester in his gypsy garb speaks directly and insightfully, without the sarcasm and defensiveness he has displayed in his role as her employer. Disguised, he can tell her about herself: "'You are cold because you are alone: no contact strikes from you the fire that is in you'" (199). Nonetheless, Jane has suspected trickery from this Sybil in the library, and thereby both have engaged in a parody that is, and is not, a truth-telling. Cunningly also, in Rochester's literal and figurative charade with Blanche Ingram, he appeals to Jane's jealousy, a negative feeling that paradoxically gives her more sense of her own value. Jane watches Blanche's response to Rochester with

outward demure submission and inward contempt, based on a recognition of her own sensibility and intelligence. Ironically, in his manipulations to possess Jane, Rochester manages to make her more conscious. Rochester has already roused her emotions and brought her body to life: "my bodily health improved," she says, after Rochester has been at Thornfield for a while, "I gathered flesh and strength" (147). Now she realizes that she loves Rochester and, that she, unlike Blanche, would know how to please him if she were his wife: " . . . when she failed, I saw how she might have succeeded" (189).

Jane does not deny her feelings or her realization that she is superior to Blanche in many ways. Indeed, Blanche's superiority manifests itself only in her wealth and privilege, her beauty, and her singing, all of which Jane as narrator represents ambivalently and ultimately discounts. Blanche's privilege seems also to have made her cruel and insensitive to her social inferiors, while her beauty, a female version of masculine handsomeness, symbolizes the way patriarchy engulfs her very being and body. Her standard for a man is primitive:"'Hunt, shoot and fight: the rest is not worth a filip'" (181). Similarly, in music she prefers a Corsair-song, while a "'wild, fierce, bandit-hero'" is her model of male perfection, and a mirror of her inner self (181).

Jane realizes that she must "smother hope" of ever winning Rochester's love (177) because he is likely to marry Blanche. Her awareness of patriarchal values is strategic, letting her stay in touch with the reality of the world she lives in while still acknowledging her desires. Jane uses Christianity to comfort herself, quoting a psalm as she retreats to the schoolroom, her "sanctum".[22] This sacred space belongs to Jane in her role as governess, but it harks back to the nursery at Gateshead or Miss Temple's room, places of safety and nourishment. From it, Jane makes a foray to the kitchen to bring food for Adèle, as Bessie used to bring treats to Jane. The schoolroom is a cosy feminine space of domestic comfort and maternal care, but the psalm comes from the patriarchal tradition.

The Christian morality that Jane has acquired at Lowood helps her in this situation, because she keeps those Christian principles in mind, for example on the occasions when Bertha breaks out destructively. She quenches the fire in Rochester's room "by God's aid", and, thanking Heaven, refers to the water as a baptism (150). When Bertha has attacked Richard Mason and Rochester goes for help, leaving

[22] Jerome Beaty points out how Jane's reliance on the Psalms after she leaves Lowood contrasts with her childhood assertion to Brocklehurst that "'Psalms are not interesting'" (33). He suggests it is ironic that "Brocklehurst seems in retrospect right . . . " (157).

Jane in charge, she is watched over by a chest carved with the figures of Christ and the Twelve Apostles (212). Later, Rochester tries to manoeuvre Jane into supporting his wish to attach himself to a "'gentle, gracious, genial stranger'" by ignoring "'a mere conventional impediment'"(221). Although she does not understand the situation, Jane advises him to rely on God and not on "'a fellow-creature'". She must trust her religious education to help her in this quandary, to keep herself from being swept away by her wish to please Rochester.

Jane leaves Thornfield for a month to visit her dying Aunt Reed, assuming that Rochester's marriage to Blanche Ingram will soon take place and that she will have to seek a new situation.[23] Yet when Jane returns to Thornfield, her world is temporarily in perfect harmony. She comes from re-establishing her contact with "'the other world . . . the abode of people who are dead'", as Rochester puts it (247);

[23] In a brief interlude, Jane sees Bessie again, in Bessie's spotless and well-ordered home, a home indicative of Bessie's high regard for domestic rituals of homemaking and hospitality, and a striking contrast to the cheerless Reed home, with its selfish individuals, lack of comfort and dying fires. Jane's pleasure in this home comes about, not because of the style or quality of the furnishings, but because of the quality of care and attention that Bessie has given to it. Bessie lives in the modest keeper's lodge; Tristram notes that such buildings were beginning to displace the great houses both in the style of domestic architecture and in fictional representations (30).

this is the realm of complete patriarchal control, of her unknown uncles and unforgiving aunt, of the wild, ruinous heir John Reed, now dead, and her two cousins, spoiled and warped by their ignorance and lack of feeling. Returning to Thornfield, Jane imagines "a fire lit, an altar burning" in the western sky, and thinks with joy that for the first time in her life she feels as if she is coming home (246). The setting between sunset and evening, between being away and being at home, between spring and summer, indicates the significance of Jane's meeting with Rochester at this moment. She begins to speak in the present tense in an ecstatic poetic mode, uniting the outer scene with her inner feelings to create a frame with Rochester at the centre:

> They are making hay, too, in Thornfield meadows: or rather, the labourers are just quitting their work, and returning home with their rakes on their shoulders: now, at the hour I arrive. I have but a field or two to traverse, and then I shall cross the road and reach the gates. How full the hedges are of roses! But I have no time to gather any; I want to be at the house. I pass a tall briar, shooting leafy and flowery branches across the path; I see the narrow stile with stone steps; and I see--Mr. Rochester sitting there, a book and a pencil in his hand: he is writing. (246)

The scene is a landscape, not wild, but cultivated, with the haymaking and the labourers going home suggesting a sense of seasonal and human order. Hedges, fields, gates, road and stile are all the work of human hands, yet nature thrives in the abundant roses, symbols of beauty and passion. There is

no wildness is the human figure, Rochester, either, as he sits calmly with his notebook, his thoughts and feelings transformed into writing. Jane submits to the welcoming picture and puts herself into the frame, realizing that she is "beyond [her] own mastery". She speaks the truth of her feelings to Rochester: "' . . . wherever you are is my home'" (249). This is Jane's central realization about the nature of home in the novel. It includes not only domestic comfort--"a plenteous meal and a good fire" (244)--but also the presence of a loved other person.

At this turning point in the narrative, Thornfield epitomizes the ideal home in which the domestic values are secure, and the patriarchal owner acknowledges and relates to the feminine world around the hearth:

> When tea was over and Mrs. Fairfax had taken her knitting, and I had assumed a low seat near her, and Adèle, kneeling on the carpet, had nestled close up to me, and a sense of mutual affection seemed to surround us with a ring of golden peace, I uttered a silent prayer that we might not be parted far or soon; . . . Mr. Rochester . . . said he supposed the old lady was all right now that she had got her adopted daughter back again, and added that he saw Adèle was 'prête à croquer sa petite maman Anglaise' . . . . (248-9)

This scene links Jane to both a mother and a daughter figure, or to a younger version of herself and an image of the elderly woman she will become. Rochester points out the maternal connections. Food, the hearth, and the circular image of the "ring of golden peace", like the circular

tables at other hearths in the novel, indicate the presence of the invisible goddess, Hestia. Yet this scene is set uneasily against a "dubious calm" (249): the backdrop of Rochester's supposed engagement to Blanche Ingram and the still unexplained mystery of Bertha's outbreaks. The presence of the "master" animates the domestic scene, but patriarchal egotism is never far from threatening domestic serenity.

This brief moment of peace on Jane's return precedes another instance of momentary harmony at the boundaries of day and night, where sunset meets moonrise at the "twilight time of changing worlds" (Hall 1980, 136).[24] At this moment, apparent opposites such as sun and moon, emblematic of masculine and feminine power, unite in a scene of natural creativity and poetic inspiration:

> Where the sun had gone down in simple state--pure of the pomp of clouds--spread a solemn purple, burning with the light of red jewel and furnace flame at one point, on one hill-peak, and extending high and wide, soft and still softer over half heaven. The east had its own charm of fine, deep blue, and its own modest gem, a rising and solitary star: soon it would boast the moon . . . . (250)

[24] Mark M. Hennelly Jr. uses the ideas of Victor Turner in his essay on liminal imagery in Jane Eyre (1993), where he discusses the importance of images such as gates, doorways and crossroads, as well as of liminal times: "twilight, midnight and . . . solstice intervals" (93).

The two halves of the sky reflect Rochester and Jane as well as symbolic powers in nature. Rochester, like Zamorna, is often identified with the sun, his passion both a precious "jewel" and a devouring "furnace"; but now a purple glow of softer feelings reaches out to meet Jane's "rising and solitary star" set in a reflective deep blue sky. The "modest gem" alludes to the moonlike pearl brooch Jane wears, given to her by Miss Temple, symbolizing both the wisdom Jane has gained through her education, and her inner worth as a "pearl of great price". Neither the sun nor the moon dominates in this meeting between day and night. Jane goes into the "Eden-like" orchard to avoid being noticed, and the description now combines references to square and circle in a figurative mandala. The enclosed orchard is bordered on all sides by a high wall, a beech avenue, a sunken fence and a winding walk, in a fourfold image of protection. The labyrinthine walk ends at the giant horse-chestnut with its circular bench. As if she is in another world, Jane says, "While such honey-dew fell, such silence reigned, such gloaming gathered, I felt as if I could haunt such shade for ever" (250). Heightened by a shift to the present tense, the narrative reaches a turning point, the meeting between Jane and Rochester in the moonlight. Rochester's cigar smoke intrudes into the peaceful bouquet of "sweet-briar and southern-wood, jasmine, pink and rose"

that have been "yielding their evening sacrifice of incense" (250). Thus Rochester enters and indeed violates a sacred space with his improper proposal of marriage.

Nonetheless, Jane takes the initiative in declaring her passion, asserting her own worth and challenging Rochester to deal with her on terms of equality, not only the equality of natural affinity and similarity, but the equality of Christians before God (256). Rochester, on the other hand, makes a god of his own desires, setting himself above the codes of religion and law. Immediately afterwards, Jane notices a "savage" look on his face, or a look she would have called savage had she not begun to set him above everything else. Once the promise has been made to marry, the scene changes abruptly, transformed by a storm that hides the moon; the sun and moon are thus both obscured: Jane now turns Rochester into her sun, and Rochester thinks he owns the moon as part of his estate (269). The heavens retaliate with a thunderbolt that might have been hurled by Zeus or Jehovah, to strike the ancient chestnut, symbol of continuity and natural order, to its roots. The storm initiates a new day, and the following morning Jane's joy changes to fear at the thought of marriage, and Rochester changes into a domestic tyrant, trying to turn Jane into a possession and remake her in his own image.

Rochester disregards the rules of the patriarchy in which he lives, but he does so with unconscious

patriarchal egotism: "'I know my Maker sanctions what I do,'" he says (258). In this arrogance he resembles St. John Rivers, who also presumes to know God's mind. Like St. John too, Rochester has suffered materially because of the patriarchal system of inheritance and the sins of an earlier generation of men, but Rochester takes on his inherited power without questioning the system itself, much as St. John embraces the power of Christianity in its most puritanical form. Both are unlike Jane, who has questioned patriarchal privilege in the Reed home and puritanical Christianity at Lowood. When Jane suggests that Adèle go to school if Rochester is to marry Blanche Ingram, Rochester jokes, "' . . . and you, of course, must march straight to--the devil?'" (227), a remark that could apply to Jane's involvement with him or with St. John.

Because Rochester's religion is his own ego, he is loyal to no other system, but he nonetheless uses religion at his convenience to aggrandize his own position. He disregards the laws and moral code of patriarchy and the maternal code of respecting all life (Baring and Cashford, 660). Having manipulated and deceived Jane in violation both of Christianity and of the sanctity of home, Rochester proceeds to tyrannize over her; he imagines himself as an Eastern potentate choosing her for his harem, and tries to alter her appearance with clothing and jewels, a typical

means of displaying patriarchal power. He lies to her when she asks if anyone is suffering because of their betrothal, thus putting her in a false position (265). Jane tries to preserve her independence and their courtship becomes a battle for control. Jane maintains her position as an employee by continuing to teach Adèle, and she also makes an effort to contact her relative, John Eyre, in the hope of receiving some income from him, and thus having some power of her own. Although she does not know of Rochester's previous marriage that was contaminated by money, she does not want his money to control her. Jane even intuits that Rochester's political values are confused by his egotism, referring both to his "'aristocratic tastes'" and to his "'impetuous republican answers'" (283).

Her symbolic mother and daughter, Mrs. Fairfax and Adèle, help Jane to resist being overwhelmed by Rochester's egocentric wishes. Mrs. Fairfax's caution and realism--"'Gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses,'" she says (268)--encourage Jane to avoid sexual relations with her employer before the wedding. She reminds Jane of the class system, and of the need to protect her body. Adèle also helps to anchor Jane in the material world by her maternal concern. When Rochester indulges in an extended fantasy of taking Jane to the moon, Adèle points out that mademoiselle is not a fairy or a spirit, and will

need food, clothes, and a fire to warm her (269). Rochester wants to become Jane's god, and Jane begins to commit the error against which she previously warned Rochester when she told him that "'a Wanderer's repose or a Sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature'" (221). Now Jane, the Wanderer, as Rochester is the Sinner, allows Rochester to stand between her and "every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun." She cannot see God "for his creature, of whom [she has] made an idol" (277).

When Jane sees Bertha in the mirror two nights before her wedding, Rochester fears for Jane's safety, blind to the fact that he himself poses a greater threat, namely to her spiritual integrity. The veil Bertha tears, and that Rochester had insisted on Jane wearing, bears some resemblance to a cage in which he wanted to imprison Jane's spirit. After the revelation of Rochester's previous marriage on their wedding day, Rochester still refuses to relinquish his desire to dominate. He tries to persuade Jane to live with him as his mistress, and is tempted to use violence against her when she refuses. At that point, however, he realizes that even through violence he cannot possess her spirit, "'the resolute, wild, free thing'" (322), the aspect of Jane that is most precious to him, and that he has previously imagined as a bird, an angel

or a sprite. This is a great gain in consciousness for him compared to his willingness to obtain her at any cost before the wedding. He is now able to see her as flesh and blood, and to be maternal and nurturing by giving her food and wine after her ordeal of shock and grief at the realization of his deception. The food and wine are a symbolic communion, like the Christian sacrament, and they nourish Jane as fine clothes and jewels cannot do. Nevertheless, despite Rochester's greater spiritual understanding and Jane's own desire, she decides to leave Thornfield in order to preserve herself. No longer confusing Rochester with God, she pronounces a benediction over him before she leaves (323).

Jane must rely on help beyond herself in this crisis, on "a remembrance of God" (299), and on the language of the Bible to express her misery and sustain her. Even her reason strives against itself, suggesting that she stay to save Rochester from self-destructive action. She must now depend on the "'laws and principles'" she trusted before this crisis, even when "'body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour . . . . If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth?'" she asks (321).[25] She turns to God both outwardly, in her

[25] Millicent Bell (1996) mistakenly suggests that Jane's is "a quest for selfhood and not religious duty. Her religion is love" (267). Rather, the narrative is able to reconcile earthly love and religion, but this reconciliation depends on Rochester, like Jane, learning to rely on God.

reliance on what she has learned, and inwardly, for courage. The divine help she seeks comes to her both from Christianity and from a maternal principle in nature. Her dream-vision of the Moon-Goddess, "the Great Mother herself" (Rich 102),[26] speaks paradoxically from far away and from within: " . . . immeasurably distant was the tone, yet so near, it whispered in my heart" (324).[27] Thus the Father God and Mother Goddess speak to Jane both outwardly and inwardly. The Great Mother inspires her and the Father God gives her strength: "God must have led me on," she says (326).[28] Linder (1978) comments that Jane "finally acknowledges her belief in the infinitude of God" (46). She

[26] Perhaps a vision of Jane's long-lost mother.

[27] Susan Van Zanten Gallagher (1997) compares Jane's vision to those of Julian of Norwich, suggesting that Charlotte Brontë is using an alternative Christian tradition in which "minority voices have affirmed feminine qualities and women's gifts", and citing female Methodist preachers, Quaker leaders and Evangelical reformers as examples (67).

[28] "With God as her Father and Nature as her Mother, Jane is caught in a very old story . . . . two different ways of not being able to speak. Mother Nature seemed to deprive her daughter of voice and plot. But a providential Father offers language already spoken by another and too much plot, already written for her" (Carolyn Wiliams 1997, 235). Jane must reconcile these two forces, not, as Williams suggests, by a "resolute commitment to the sanctions of the self and its worldly desires" (232), but by compromise and reconciliation.

also begins to connect the feminine and masculine aspect of God: " . . . the Source of Life [is] also the Saviour of spirits" (329). While Jane maintains her trust in God, she does not abandon her trust in nature, even when nature seems to abandon her to cold and starvation.

Jane survives the wilderness and takes on a new identity, Jane Elliott (341). She is partly saved by forces outside herself, by feminine "'spontaneous, genuine, genial compassion'" from Diana and Mary, and masculine "'evangelical charity'" from St. John Rivers (352).[29] Her three res cuers, who will turn out to be her cousins, are positive versions of her three Reed cousins; in both cases, the brother dominates the two sisters, even if, in the Rivers home, the sisters preserve the maternal and domestic values.

[29] Margaret Homans (1986) suggests that the light Jane follows to Moor House is a "figuration" from the symbolic order of the father (160), but the light comes from the kitchen of Moor House, a feminine domain, the "domestic site of reading among sisterly women" (Burgan 1993, 86). Homans has also commented on women who are "bearers" of language and notes "the theme of women characters who perform translations from one language into another" (31); this is exactly what Diana and Mary are doing. Thus the symbol of the light cannot be clearly classified as masculine or feminine. The problem arises because of the assumption that language "belongs" to the Father.

The names Diana and Mary suggest "the finest traditions of classical and Christian womanhood" (Fulton 1979, 445). Their names and loving relationship suggest a harmony of different feminine tendencies and traditions: pagan and Christian, virgin and mother, nature and religion, assertiveness and submissiveness, independence and relationship.[30] As it turns out, Jane is related to this harmony literally, as well as figuratively, and she joins her cousins in domestic comfort beside the maternal hearth, while their minds roam freely in their study of German literature.

At Moor-House, the entire household caters to the young patriarch, St. John, who takes the place of the deceased father: this section of the book illustrates the way patriarchal power is exercised through the family. Jane is again in a feminine community governed by a man whom she must satisfy in order to be accepted by him. "To experience such dependency on male authority, where even one's most intimate feelings . . . are scrutinized and evaluated in narrowly righteous and patriarchal terms, is to get to the very bottom of women's oppression" (Macpherson 1989, 63).

[30] However, these two good women seem indistinguishable, unlike the two "bad" cousins, Georgiana and Eliza Reed. Faced with a similar problem in _Shirley_, that of differentiating between two good women, Charlotte Brontë inscribes Shirley as a man in order to make her different from Caroline.

St. John does make the decision to rescue Jane, yet, as his name suggests, his is a "saintly" form of the tyranny practised by John Reed. On the saintly side, St. John saves Jane's life, finds her an occupation and helps to discover her identity as the niece and heir of John Eyre, and thus their cousin. Yet, as Robert Keefe notes, " . . . of all her enemies, the young clergyman represents the ultimate threat to her existence" (111). In him, Christianity is as inhuman in a more positive form as it was in its negative embodiment, Brocklehurst. For all his self-denial, St. John is profoundly self-centred, a type of heroic masculine ego, driven by personal ambition and "inexorable as death" (361).[31] St. John Rivers resembles Brocklehurst in his Puritanical denial of nature, and he resembles Rochester in his plan to abduct Jane, to take her to India. In this case, the savagery behind the patriarchal abduction is projected onto the climate and inhabitants of the foreign land. Here, as elsewhere, when Jane's power is limited by dictatorial male power, the choice she makes shows that the chief resource she has is the power of refusal.

[31] The same man who can crush his own passion like a flower is presumably ruthless enough to make a good imperialist missionary and to prevail over the "heathens" with the Christian Gospel, molding others in his own image.

Unlike Rochester, St. John is not at ease at the fireside. He is usually either studying beside the window, or out of the house, and in any case, he is restless in the domestic setting and always wishing he were elsewhere. Moreover, as a priest, St. John is incapable of providing spiritual comfort.[32] His care for his flock and his missionary zeal are masks for personal ambition.

> He speaks with the tongues of men and angels, has the gift of prophecy and the faith that could move mountains, bestows his goods to feed the poor, and even gives his body to be burned; but, as he himself knows, he is without true charity. (Judith Williams 42)

Because he denies his own body and its desires, St. John is a threat to Jane's survival, as she herself perceives when she recognizes that he could literally destroy her by forcing her to suppress her own nature, her need for love. For him to observe the physical, sexual forms of marriage, without the spirit, would be death to Jane, for her religious faith includes both body and spirit and she needs both to survive. St. John interprets Jane's division of her inheritance between the four cousins as the action of "'a soul that revel[s] in the flame and excitement of sacrifice'" (408). His view reveals his own attachment to

[32] Mary Taylor noted that Charlotte Brontë "had a larger religious toleration than a person would have who never questioned, and the manner of recommending religion was always that of offering comfort, not fiercely enforcing a duty" (Quoted in Leavis 25).

money and to the patriarchal pattern of inheritance, and he projects his own eroticized model of sacrifice onto Jane quite mistakenly. Because St. John clings to a single vision, he repeatedly recognizes only one side of a question. Denying his own desire, however, leads to that desire contaminating his moral and spiritual life, and giving to acts of sacrifice an inappropriate excitement. Still, just as Jane somewhat resembled John Reed in her self-willed passion, she resembles this cousin in her longings for something unattainable, as she recognizes:

> I was sure St. John Rivers --pure-lived, conscientious, zealous as he was--had not yet found that peace of God which passeth all understanding: he had no more found it, I thought, than I; with my concealed and racking regrets for my broken idol and lost elysium--regrets . . . which possessed me and tyrannized over me ruthlessly. (357)[33]

Jane only escapes being overwhelmed by St. John because she can embrace both patriarchal and maternal values.

With a foot in both worlds, Jane maintains her own standpoint. To Rochester's selfish egotism she had opposed not harsh moralizing but love and a Christian blessing. She withstands St. John's icy Christian asceticism not with the destructive fire of unrestrained passion but the fire of the hearth and human relationships. Even St. John responds to

[33] St. John also uses the term "elysium" to refer to his love for Rosamund, a word that has connotations of paganism and death.

her interest in his feelings for Rosamund Oliver and her wish to talk to him about her. For Jane to talk in this way, appropriately enough at the fireside, is for her to be at home:

> . . . I felt at home in this sort of discourse. I could never rest in communication with strong, discreet, and refined minds, whether male or female, till I had passed the outworks of conventional reserve, and crossed the threshold of confidence, and won a place by their heart's very hearthstone. (379)

The architectural metaphor confirms the idea of home as the structure for relationships. Jane's reflection occurs in the first place that is truly her own home, the cottage at Morton, and shortly thereafter, she learns that she is in fact related more intimately to the Rivers family. Moreover, by her uncle's will, she is the heiress of Moor-House, where she arrived as a homeless stranger.

When St. John informs Jane of her inheritance, the thought of her independence pleases her, but the "wealth for the heart" of discovering her blood ties to the Rivers family is more meaningful and joyful (390). To his patriarchal identification of her as the legal heir of their uncle, whose will is a case of visiting the sins of the father on the children, Jane opposes the maternal idea of natural justice, and shares the money equally with her cousins, a fortune which "'could never be [hers] in justice, though it might in law'" (391). As heir to the estate, and coming

into possession of her own money, Jane changes, becoming less subservient to St. John. She decides that she will stop teaching and take charge of the domestic arrangements at Moor-House.

This last step is an assertion of Jane's religious principles in contrast to St. John's Christian austerity. Jane makes a number of clear statements about the religion of the home,[34] expressing a faith not in "mere" or "oppressive" domesticity as some critics contend, but in human affinity and the necessity of warmth to sustain life. For example, Northrop Frye writes disparagingly of "the romance that is physically associated with comfortable beds or chairs around fireplaces or warm and cosy spots generally" (Anatomy 202).[35] The comfort of home seems easy, perhaps, to those who do not participate in household labour, but in an age of coal fires and doing everything by hand, housework was an endless round of cooking, cleaning, laundry and sewing, as can be seen for example in the journal of Dorothy Wordsworth, which gives an idea of the work involved in running even a tiny household. Even some feminist critics

[34] Teasingly, she accuses St. John of dirtying her floor and making it like a "'trampled street'", thus committing the "'high crime and misdemeanor of spoiling a sanded kitchen'" (388). The home is sacred space.

[35] Macpherson suggests sarcastically that Jane is cleaning her imagination of sexual passion: "This is adult Victorian religious conscience" (66).

maintain that domestic work is demeaning and its pleasures insignificant.[36] Jane never trivializes the achievement of comfort, yet she recognizes women's needs for a wider cultural experience than home can offer.

Refurbishing the house and preparations for Christmas represent a sanctification of the home before Diana and Mary return for the holiday. This endeavour connects the "circularity of mythic time" typical of housework (Rabuzzi 1982, 49) with the cycle of the Christian year. Jane tells St. John of her intentions: of cleaning Moor-House "'till it glitters'", of arranging objects "'with mathematical precision'", burning fires in every room and "'solemnizing of other culinary rites, as words can convey but an inadequate notion of to the uninitiated like you'" (395).[37] Her tending of the fires conjures up the presence of the goddess Hestia, while her rubbing and polishing of the house till it shines suggests that material objects are being

[36] For example, Lee Edwards, Psyche as Hero (1984, 74).

[37] A visual arts review from our own time suggests, "The house . . . gathers up the four points of the compass, even as it gathers the life force inherent in nature . . ."; yet "homemaking is *work* - real, sustained physical effort . . . " (Mays " 1996, C16).

spiritualized, given the qualities of light.[38] Jane's language in describing her plans indicates, however playfully, that her activities are sacred mysteries and thus not incompatible with the Christian celebration of the divine birth, coinciding with her own birth into a new family. Thus these Christmas preparations provide another instance of the way Jane's religious position represents a union of Christianity with the domestic religion of maternal care.

Moor House now offers Jane the possibility of marriage with her cousin, in a typical patriarchal marriage plot (historical as well as literary), involving the marriage of cousins, that tends to consolidate land and other property within the family.[39] St. John represents a step backwards for Jane, to her family of origin, and indeed to her childhood, to the self-sacrificing ideology of Brocklehurst. St. John is uncomfortably close to Jane, more like a brother than a husband, as she recognizes. Because St. John "is blinded by his belief that the cosmic universe is masculine and that the masculine principle must dominate" (Fulton, 443), he decides that he must possess Jane. He thinks her

[38] "Sacredness is experienced in the qualities of purity, orderliness, balance and renewal. All of these are achieved through cleaning . . . . The glow of consciousness passes into floors, furniture, . . . " (Lawlor 1994, 163).

[39] As in Mansfield Park, where Fanny is a much safer bride for Edmund than Miss Crawford would be.

vitality resembles his own ambition and wants to subvert it to service in his cause: egotism in the guise of missionary zeal. Jane, on the other hand, wants to balance service with the enjoyment of her family and her gifts, her intellect and creativity. She and Diana realize that St. John's plans for her would kill her. She, who needs the alternating solar and lunar consciousness, would be destroyed by the fierce sun and heat of India, while another fire would be extinguished, the natural fire of her vitality. She would be "forced to keep the fire of [her] nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry, though the imprisoned flame consumed vital after vital" (413). When she tells St. John that marriage to him would kill her, he accuses her of being "'violent, unfeminine and untrue'" (417), but it is her care for her body and her understanding of both her temperament and his that resists him. Here again he shows his patriarchal bias: that to be feminine means to be submissive to the masculine will.

Jane's extended duel with St. John Rivers constitutes another stage in her development and opens the way for her to return to Rochester. She further develops her capacity to use language to protect herself, and speaks with increasing skill and confidence, showing a talent for sarcasm uninhibited by respect for St. John's office as priest:

"No doubt he had invoked the help of the Holy Spirit to subdue the anger I had roused in him, and now believed he had forgiven me," she comments at one point (421). Most importantly, in this struggle, Jane can separate God and man, to realize that she is St. John's spiritual equal, and that he is human like herself: " . . . I sat at the feet of a man, erring as I. The veil fell from his hardness and despotism . . . I was with an equal . . ." (411).

In their last confrontation over the issue of marriage, St. John has summoned up all his spiritual resources and reinforcements, reading from the book of Revelation--written by another St. John--about the kingdom which he considers his own, a kingdom beyond the natural order, which "has no need of sun or moon to shine in it" (422). He threatens Jane implicitly with the fires of hell, just as Brocklehurst did. His power of command is so great that Jane begins to succumb, almost as if she is bewitched: "Religion called--Angels beckoned--God commanded" (423). Jane's language contains a number of biblical echoes, indicating how St. John's Christian ideology is overwhelming her but also indicating that a moment of revelation is at hand.[40] At this moment, Jane turns to God: just as she did not trust herself to

[40] She speaks of life "changing utterly, with a sudden sweep", as in I Corinthians 15:51-52, and of "life rolled together like a scroll", as in Isaiah 34:4.

Rochester for love, she does not trust herself to St. John for duty. She appeals to "Heaven" to show her what she should do, and achieves the central religious insights of the novel: that no individual human can know the mind of God, and that the divine unites masculine and feminine. Jane hears Rochester's voice calling her name; she alone hears it, and she hears it in her flesh, waking her senses, "while the flesh quiver[s] on [her] bones" (424). The voice Jane hears is male, Rochester's, and she is saved by the sound of her own name, "the supernatural reminder from her distant lover that she possesses an identity which she must guard and nurture at all costs" (Keefe, 112).

This message Jane receives is both masculine and feminine, for the Christian God to whom Jane prays answers with the voice of female "nature". Because Jane separates the human from the divine, she can ask God directly for help, and receives an answer both personal and transcendent. The masculine voice within connects her flesh to her spirit in a mystery, an incarnation, not some logical synthesis of nature and religion.[41] She is also able to worship in her own way, "a different way to St. John's, but effective in

[41] Jane says that she "kept these things, then, and pondered them in [her] heart", quoting the Virgin Mary's words after the Annunciation.

its own fashion. I seemed to penetrate very near a Mighty Spirit . . . " (425).

Jane and St. John disagree radically about the relationship of flesh and spirit. For him, the dichotomy is simple and doctrinaire: "' . . . the spirit, I trust, is willing, but the flesh, I see, is weak,'" he writes to Jane. For her, the issue is more complex: "'My spirit . . . is willing to do what is right; and my flesh, I hope, is strong enough to accomplish the will of Heaven, when once that will is distinctly known to me'" (426).[42] The revelation of Rochester's voice within her has convinced Jane not only that she must see him again, but that the voice which spoke within her - "it seems in *me*--not in the external world," she says (426), comes from God.

When she goes to Ferndean, Jane enters a world as stagnant for Rochester as Thornfield was for her before his arrival; Ferndean is "ineligible, insalubrious . . .

[42] St. John follows St. Paul in his separation of flesh and spirit: " . . . they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8), but Jane is closer to the Gospel of John in her theological position: " . . . the Word was made flesh" (St. John 1:14), a process that she formulates as ongoing in the relationship between the flesh and spirit. Kathleen Norris refers to the Incarnation as "the ultimate metaphor, daring to yoke the human and divine" (1996, 158).

uninhabited and unfurnished" (435), a fourfold description that signifies that Rochester cannot be at home, either in this place or within himself. Ferndean is a characteristically masculine retreat, a hunting lodge with no garden, and not a home. "'Can there be life here?'" Jane asks as she contemplates the deserted-looking house almost swallowed up by the surrounding labyrinthine forest (436). The scene echoes the fairy-tale of Sleeping Beauty, with the gender roles reversed, but it also hearkens back to the story of the Minotaur in the labyrinth, again with a reversal: Jane is in the place of the hero, and the monster at the centre is a wounded human being. The neglected house is a place for the maternal to be creative.

Here at Ferndean, Rochester's power has been limited by the injuries he has suffered. He now knows something of the crippling and entrapment imposed on women by privileged men. In the past, Rochester could use his power to express his many-sidedness at will, as when he masqueraded as a gypsy woman, but now his physical injuries force him to recognize that he cannot shape the world in his own image. He is thus somewhat in the position of a woman in the patriarchal system. Indeed, he cannot even perceive his world, let alone shape it.

Rochester is transformed, not just outwardly in his injury and blindness, but inwardly, in his acceptance of

fate and his reliance on God, a God who unites judgment with mercy (453). Both Jane and Rochester have experienced the interpenetration of the divine and the human. Their bodies have been spiritualized and their spirits materialized as voices. Further transformation occurs when Jane influences Rochester to change, just as he once similarly influenced her. Uniting Christian symbols with the maternal symbolism of hearth and home, Jane brings water and candles, emblematic of Easter, but also of "'the Great Moon Mother'" (Durdin-Robertson 1990, 36). She also makes a fire and sweeps the hearth; " . . . real missionary work begins at home" (Fulton, 445). Rochester has sunk into an undifferentiated, almost primitive state, only conscious of being cold or hungry, with no enjoyment of life (442). To Jane, he now resembles a brownie, a goblin-like, benevolent "ghost of the hearth" (Martin, "Faery" 86), a shadow of his old self. She sets about to "rehumanise" him, caressing him, combing his hair, creating a new order in his household, and bringing shape and colour to him through language. Rochester can now recognize the disparity in their ages and situations, having grown up to his real age. His view of Jane has matured also. He treats her as a woman, not a pixie, and in turn she expresses her sexuality as she did not at Thornfield. She still sits on his knee, however, "home" of Zamorna's women in the early fiction. Not only

their dialogues, but their embraces, have a renewed vitality and trustfulness, now that Rochester no longer tries to overwhelm Jane, and she no longer needs to defend herself.

The realization that God transcends traditional Christianity, to include the maternal realm of nature and the body, does not change the world. However much their experience of the divine has transformed Jane and Rochester, the events subsequent to the climax in Chapter XXXV have a subdued, even ironic tinge, despite the charm of the dialogue. Ferndean itself, gloomy and isolated, Rochester's serious injuries, Jane's burden in caring for him, their isolated life, far from the scenes of adventure and excitement for which Jane used to yearn--all suggest an imperfect world.[43] Ferndean is a kind of Eden, but a fallen one, " a darkened and chastened Eden" (Burkhart 1975, 75), surrounded by a society to which Jane and Rochester do not belong. Also, as Lee Edwards points out, the fact that Jane gives birth to a son who looks like Rochester suggests the continuation of patriarchy (103).

Perfection can be found only by those who leave the world and the flesh behind, characters like Helen Burns and St. John Rivers, who can find transcendence in heaven. The

[43] Keith A. Jenkins (1993) suggests that Ferndean perhaps collapses "traditional boundaries between Paradise and the fallen world" (75).

novel suggests that theirs is not the only spiritual way, that heaven and earth can be united within imperfect human beings; Barry Qualls proposes that "the conversation of Jane and Rochester *is* in Heaven" (1982, 68). The last lines of the novel, given to a communication from St. John in India, reassert both Christian doctrine and faith in the union of flesh and spirit within human beings.[44] St. John writes:

> 'My Master,' he says, 'has forewarned me. Daily he announces more distinctly,--"Surely I come quickly;" and hourly I more eagerly respond,--"Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!"' (458)

The syntactical awkwardness of these lines, the quotations within quotations, and the words themselves, may refer to St. John's faith in another life--which he has not yet attained, even as the novel ends--but they also recall the mystical communion between Jane and Rochester. St. John hopes for union with his "Master", Jesus, but Jane has experienced a divine spirit on earth when she heard her "master" calling her. St. John rejects the body and worldly joys, but Jane and Rochester know that the body provides a home

[44]Interestingly, he is still communicating with Jane, an indication that he has forgiven her rejection of his proposal.

for the spirit.[45] Jane notes that the letter from St. John "drew from my eyes human tears, and yet filled my heart with Divine joy" (458). This moment in the text is an epiphany, a point when "the undisplaced apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment" (Frye, _Anatomy_ 203).

Jane Eyre represents Christianity as often being destructive and oppressive because of its incompleteness, its denial of nature. Yet the doctrine of the Incarnation means that God entered nature and became part of it. Wittgenstein has commented that the body is "the best image we have of the human soul".[46] The novel enlarges the concepts of patriarchal religion to include what it has rejected, the body, the maternal and domestic care of the

[45] Beaty maintains that the letter from St. John is part of the novel's providential meaning and that the ending is "conventionally literary and monologic" (214). Rather, the ending avoids a neat resolution and maintains the dialogue between Jane/Rochester (or Jane Rochester) and St. John. Peter Allan Dale (1997) finds "a strange disorder in the religious narrative. We both have and have not what we expected" ("Charlotte Brontë's 'Tale Half-Told'" 216). But the ending is far from disorderly; it embodies the order that Jane has maintained throughout which involves the recognition of the dangers of "single vision" in Blake's phrase, and the acceptance of dividedness.

[46] Quoted in Eagleton, "Body" (1993) 7.

body, and the earth-religion of the Great Mother.[47] It also humanizes the patriarchal virtues of denial and self-sacrifice by rooting them in love and human connection: Jane divides her inheritance, or describes her wish to care for Rochester in his infirmity, as no sacrifice (450). Jane gives equal value to the domestic religion of the hearth. She takes her religious position, uniting Father-God and Mother-Goddess, into that unhealthy corner of the fallen patriarchal world, Ferndean, thus making the place fit for human habitation.

[47]Patriarchal Christianity in its Roman Catholic version does make some provision for the maternal in its veneration of the Virgin Mary.

Chapter V

A Literary Home: _Jane Eyre_ and Romanticism

"Knit . . . so very close"

The search for home, implicit in Charlotte Brontë's earlier writings, becomes both explicit and successful in _Jane Eyre_. Never again in her fiction does this quest achieve the kind of resolution presented by the happy marriage of Jane and Rochester in their retreat at Ferndean, a place for the writer's mature artistic voice to be at home, not only in her writing, but in literary culture. Jane Eyre becomes Jane Rochester, united with the male figure who symbolizes Romanticism. As a writer, this figure has sought legitimacy, the right not only to exist, but to be recognized and granted a place in the world for "Jane Eyre", which is simultaneously a representation of her inner world, a narrative of her search for home, and a material object, a book.

In _Jane Eyre_, a predominant recognition is that thoughts and feelings must be realized in language, the home for the energy and vitality of the imagination. From time to time in the narrative, Jane's need to speak the truth overcomes her. Hence come her passionate outbursts to John

Reed and Mrs. Reed, her vehement anger on behalf of Helen Burns, her abrupt declarations to Rochester, and her blunt intimacy with St. John Rivers. Even the persona of the governess, the woman who can govern herself and her feelings, does not inhibit these outbursts of emotional truth. Rochester's brusque, direct speech pleases her, and frees her from a dilemma described by Rachel Blau DuPlessis (1985): "a contradiction between the desire to please, making woman an object, and the desire to reveal, making her a subject (280). Jane captivates Rochester with her candour and perceptiveness. Herein lies the significance of Jane's plainness, her lack of beauty: that she engages Rochester through language, revealing a spirit that he eventually realizes he cannot own. With St. John, Jane reads the language of the body to divine his feelings for Rosamund, but she is not satisfied until the feeling can be put into words between them. When St. John, backed up by the Bible itself, almost overwhelms Jane with his evangelical narrative of an empire of souls, starting with Jane's, language rescues her, not in her own speech, but this time in the voice of Rochester calling her name, reminding her of her true self.

Jane's story involves her survival and the survival of imagination, the source of all cultural expression. Although all human beings possess imagination, it can be damaged or suppressed: "So there is what might be called a

commonsense struggle for survival, and a struggle for the survival of imaginative vision" (Phillips, Beast 116). Jane's story is about imagination's engagement--both compliant and rebellious--with the social and cultural forces it encounters.[1] Rachel Brownstein (1982) points out that a figure like Jane is both the representation of a girl and "a metaphor for an erotic-moral-aesthetic-psychological ideal . . . . She is identified with art, with the novel which . . . bears her name" (xxii). Society and culture cultivate imagination and also coerce it. The threats to Jane's independence show how culture, particularly patriarchal culture, can be the enemy of the woman writer's imagination, preventing her from hearing the inner tale that is the source of her creativity. Fire is the symbol of the energy of imagination, both the secure and warming fire of the domestic hearth and human culture, and the fire of strong emotion. That emotional fire can lead to an "exciting, invigorating, frightening inner life of passionate self-fulfilment", as well as to "the disaster and punishment that wait upon an excessive indulgence in passion" (Lodge, 117). Jane Eyre demonstrates "that the struggle between our

[1] " . . . the ideal of adaptation [to culture] is always matched . . . by the ideal of improvisation: the . . . relative freedom to transform, according to . . . unconscious desire, the cultural givens" (Phillips, Beast 116).

impulses and a sense of security (both of which are vital to us) is an eternal struggle and one that goes on inside each one of us as long as our life lasts" (Winnicott, in Fuller, "Mother and Child" 1989, 50). As she encounters different homes in the novel, Jane must reconcile the expectations of others with her sense of a true self.

Jane more than once rejects the cultural expectation that her purpose in life is to serve others; instead she develops her intellectual and artistic gifts at every opportunity, finding teaching a kind of drudgery. Showalter points out the historically differing expectations of work for men and women. Men's work served

> . . . both self-interest and the public interest. In pursuing their ambitions, they fulfilled social expectations.
>
> For women, however, work meant labour for *others*. Work in the sense of self-development was in direct conflict with the subordination and repression inherent in the feminine ideal. (Literature 22)

Rochester, however, admires Jane's drawing and painting, a talent she has developed in her own way, and he enjoys the originality of her dialogues with him, showing, thereby, that he is the most suitable partner for her. St. John, on the other hand, exploits Jane's interest in languages in an attempt to have her labour in his cause. He removes her power to choose what language she will study, symbolizing his intention to manipulate her creativity for his own purpose, putting her in the position of being torn between

"the polarities of self-developing art and self-abnegating work" (Gilbert and Gubar 576). Jane's art has "its own impulse toward order" (Goodheart 16), and that order is Jane's telling of her own story. Jane participates in the culture of her day despite her status as an outsider. She does so by being a governess, a transmitter of culture, as well as through her painting, her verbal creativity, and her rescue of Rochester, symbol of "the literary tradition of masculine heroism" (Bell 263)[2]. Most importantly, Jane the writer creates the narrative that is itself a contribution to literary culture. When Rochester is brought down at the end of the novel, he suffers "the inevitable sufferings necessary when those in power are forced to release some of their power to those who previously had none" (Heilbrun 1973, 59). His loss of power is both political and literary.

At the end of the novel, when Jane and Rochester retreat to Ferndean, they limit themselves to individual concerns, to the family and the bourgeois home. They seem completely uninvolved in any wider cultural life. This seclusion symbolizes their self-sufficiency but also indicates that the social world has no place for cultural

[2] Millicent Bell notes the number of times Rochester literally leans on Jane: at their first meeting, after the fire in his room, on the occasion of Mason's visit, and finally at Ferndean (263).

"aliens" like them. As Raymond Williams notes, while nineteenth-century writers on culture, like Arnold, or Carlyle and Coleridge before him, recognized the importance of the aliens, they also recognized that "the then existing organization of society . . . offered no actual basis for the maintenance of such a class" (Culture 1958, 97).[3] The romance of the novel's conclusion is undermined not only by Rochester's injuries and the insalubrious setting of Ferndean, but by the lack of social connection, especially in the light of Jane's earlier desire for wider experience of life. One explanation for this contradiction might be that Charlotte Brontë is concerned to maintain bourgeois gender stereotypes, to "show that 'true womanliness' would remain unaffected by education or the vote or paid employment", and to perpetuate allegiance to "the sacred heartland of domestic ideology, the family and motherhood" (Lovell 105). Another possibility is that Jane Eyre is ultimately concerned with the question of the woman writer's place, or home, in literary culture, as well as in a literal home with husband and family, or in a social place.

Jane tells her own story, but the novel shows the great effort she must make to do so, to assert herself as subject

[3] Raymond Williams also comments about Wuthering Heights that there is "a tragic separation between human intensity and any available social settlement" (Country 176).

and creator of the narrative, and thus as a symbolic representative of the woman writer. At the time this novel was written, women had often been repressed and excluded as creators of literary culture; Jane Eyre demonstrates how the woman writer must resist being overwhelmed by male versions of herself and her story. Jane not only tells her story, but struggles throughout to gain control of the narrative. In the process, she places a high value on literature, writing, and "truth".

Early in the novel, Jane searches for reflections of her own situation in the books and pictures in the Reed library, but John Reed resents and opposes her use of "his" books. Significantly enough, he uses a book as a weapon, throwing it at Jane; he "clarifies that literary territory is being fought over here" (Macpherson 9). Books give Jane the comfort of a kind of companionship, as well as a sense of freedom and power; she is able to imagine different lives, and to articulate what is wrong in her situation. After her ordeal in the Red Room, she is listless until Bessie brings her Gulliver's Travels and her interest revives briefly, although she sees Gulliver as "a most desolate wanderer in most dread and desolate regions" (21), a reflection of her own mental state. When Brocklehurst appears,

Jane argues with him about whether the Psalms are interesting and, displaying some knowledge of the Bible, challenges Brocklehurst on his own ground. At Lowood, Jane welcomes the opportunity to learn and study, and questions Helen Burns about Rasselas, which Helen is reading. Jane deplores the lack of pictures, for visual images are important to her, and will remain so throughout the novel. She learns to make her own drawings and paintings which enter the narrative; however, from the point of view of the reader, these pictures are constructed in words.

At Thornfield, the library attracts Jane, although all the bookcases but one are locked. Rochester owns the books and controls Jane's access to them; when Rochester is at home, Jane and Adèle must vacate the library. In Volume II Chapter IV, Rochester is "the Sibyl" in the library, impersonating the kind of female wisdom that has been excluded from literary history. When Jane leaves Thornfield, her last encounter with Rochester occurs in the library. However, Jane and Rochester do not struggle for control of the books, but for control of Jane's story. Before Rochester even appears, Jane has begun to listen to her inward tale, the tale that will ultimately be the novel. There are other stories at Thornfield that come to Jane's attention. The interior of the attic looks to her "like a corridor in some Bluebeard's castle" (108), the first of a number of fairy tale motifs that recur throughout Jane's

relationship with Rochester. Rochester soon begins to construct a fairy tale around Jane, a tale that she will recognize is dangerous to her psychological survival, and thus to her desire to create her own story. Still, the association of Jane and Rochester with fairies throughout the novel shows their connection to the energies and vitality of the natural world that fairies symbolize, and that are threatened by the imposition of too much order or "civilization". Fairies are also connected to imagination, to the telling of stories. Andrew D. Hook (1979) notes that the threat to Jane is not only that of becoming a "fallen woman" but of being swept up in Rochester's storytelling "into that other seductive world of high passion and romance", the world of Angria (142).

Rochester tells Jane other stories: of his travels, his mistresses and his acquisition, so to speak, of Adèle. When guests come, and they act charades, they tell more stories, albeit unwittingly; these stories are all double in some sense. The representation of a marriage seems to indicate the future union of Rochester and Blanche Ingram, but also discloses Rochester's marriage to Bertha. The charade of Abraham's servant offering jewels and ornaments to Rebecca at the well suggests a mercenary aspect to Blanche Ingram's interest in Rochester, but it also reveals the way Rochester himself was bought by Bertha's wealth. Finally, the last

charade has Rochester impersonating a madman in Bridewell, symbolizing both the marriage which chains him and Bertha's imprisonment. Jane narrates these scenes as part of her story, and they hint at aspects of the plot which have not yet been revealed.

Jane also tells Rochester about herself, not only in words, but in the water-colour paintings she shows him, visions she has seen "with the spiritual eye" (126). The paintings show Rochester something of Jane's inner life, as well as giving him a glimpse of her poetic power and her familiarity with Romantic imagery. These works indicate to Rochester that Jane's "emotional and spiritual qualities have been awakened" (Linder 40); they are quite different from her landscape that hangs on the wall at Lowood. That Jane produces these pictures for him indicates that Romantic sensibility is what he brings out in Jane. Her paintings might well resemble those of Friedrich, or illustrate poems by Shelley or Keats, except that they are not paintings, but visions expressed in Jane's own words as narrator.

When Jane revisits the Reeds, she interprets her two cousins, Eliza and Georgiana as texts: Eliza's book is the prayer book, and Georgiana's "a novel of fashionable life" (236-7). There Jane reveals the story of her life through the drawings she does while she is with them,

> . . . representing any scene that happened momentarily to shape itself in the ever-shifting

> kaleidoscope of imagination: a glimpse of sea between two rocks; the rising moon, and ship crossing its disc; a group of reeds and water-flags, and a naiad's head, crowned with lotus-flowers, rising out of them; an elf sitting in a hedge-sparrow's nest, under a wreath of hawthorn-bloom. (235)

These poetic images of the self suggest elements in Jane's life--past, present and future. The two rocks and the ocean speak of the permanence of biological origins. The next two drawings both contain references to rising, to the rising moon and the rising naiad, indicating the influence of the nurturing moon-goddess in Jane's life, as well as her own blooming into love and sexuality. However, the ship symbolizes Jane's wanderings, which are by no means over. The elf in the nest, of course, implies that Jane will eventually find a home and a flowering of her affection and her talents. The last drawing Jane does is a portrait of Rochester, who has now become a part of herself and her inner life.

Diane Long Hoeveler and Lisa Jadwin (1997) comment that "Jane looks at and draws pictures rather than reading or writing, which reveals her status as being on the cusp of transformation from the Imaginary to the Symbolic Order" (83). Jane's drawings suggest her ready access to the world of the imagination, while the fact that she concretizes these images in words gives them a literary meaning. These are not conventional landscapes or

portraits, but imaginative renderings of Jane's inner life, resembling poetry more than painting. The emphasis here is not so much on Jane's skill as a painter, as on the power of her imagination: her capacity for ambiguity, poetic imagery and depth of feeling. Her longing for wider experience may also be a wish for deeper feeling and greater intensity of experience, such as is found in poetry. Charlotte Brontē commented on Jane Austen that her writing lacks "what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat and life and the transient target of death . . ." (letter to W. S. Williams 12 April 1850, SHB 3: 66). This is of course a statement of her own Romantic aesthetic values, with an emphasis on the human heart and its passions. In _Jane Eyre_ she expresses these passions through Jane's autobiographical writing and the imaginary paintings she creates. Placing Jane's paintings in the Romantic tradition, Michael Edwards (1989) suggests that "the Romantic Movement was definitely able to accommodate the idea of interpreting pictures in a psychological sense, long before the advent of psychoanalysis" (75).

In her paintings, in her visions and visionary descriptions, in her dialogues with other characters, Jane Eyre claims the right to construct her own story. With Rochester, she competes to control the plot, and to tell the story. From the outset of their relationship, he tries to

put Jane in a fairy tale, repeatedly designating her as an elf, a spirit, a fairy; but also from the outset, Jane disagrees with him. Rochester presents himself as Odysseus, claiming that he has "'battled through a varied experience with many men of many nations and round half the globe'" (134), but Jane responds with the assertion that his "'claim to superiority depends on the use [he] has made of his time and experience'" (135), thus noting the importance of an individual's creative response to experience, and implicitly defending the importance of the inward life and the domestic sphere, as opposed to the world of adventure.

They also disagree about what women are: to Rochester, Adèle is a "'poor thing'" that he recues from "'the slime and mud of Paris'", but he refuses even the possibility that she is his daughter (146). He conceals his marriage to Bertha until forced to acknowledge it, and then calls her a "'wild beast'", a "'monster'" and a "'goblin'" (313). He interprets his mistresses as "'often by nature and always by position, inferior'", and compares them to slaves (316). To Jane, however, Adèle is a "'lonely little orphan'" (146), Bertha is "'that unfortunate lady'" who "'cannot help being mad'" (305), and the mistresses are "'poor girls'" (316), whose fate she would share if she became their successor.

Rochester tries to control Jane's story, claiming that he can "'read'" her countenance and her character, and that

he can speak to her "'almost as freely as if I were writing my thoughts in a diary'" (137). He refers to Jane as an angel, a bonny wanderer, a vision, a pilgrim, but although she does not understand him, Jane is able to counter his wish to take over her history. She recognizes the danger of his egotism by trusting the religious and moral principles she learned at Lowood, so that she can put her own interpretation on what he tells her. Not only her education, but also her creative intelligence helps her here. Rochester's attempt to construct his own version of Jane by "'reading'" her is most striking in the episode when he is disguised as a gypsy woman. In that scene, it is significant that he is holding a book, the symbol of their rivalry and of their attraction, to each other and to literature. However, Jane recognizes what he has been doing and tells him "' . . .I believe you have been trying to draw me out--or in: You have been talking nonsense to make me talk nonsense'" (204). Rochester is also holding a book and writing in it when Jane meets him in the lane on her return to Thornfield after Mrs. Reed's death, and he again refers to her as an elf and a spirit (247). He reads Jane's loving "unspoken thoughts" and perhaps enchants her into a declaration of her attachment to him: "' . . . wherever you are is my home,--my only home'" (248). This enchantment is possible because Rochester does respond to Jane's spirit: they speak the same

language. Shortly thereafter, Rochester proposes in the garden.

The contest between them intensifies after their engagement, at which point, Rochester makes it clear that he owns both Jane and her story, trying to make her change her mode of dress, finding her eyes a different colour from what they really are (260), expecting her to give up her position as Adèle's governess, to devote herself to him and entertain him. Jane can see that he will swallow her up in tales like the one he tells Adèle about meeting Jane , "' . . . a fairy, and come from Elfland'", whose errand is to make him happy, and whom he intends to take to the moon (270). Jane recognizes another fiction in his attempt to change her into a "'doll'": " . . . his smile was such as a sultan might, in a blissful and fond moment, bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched" (271).[4] Jane threatens Rochester that she will "'wear nothing but my old Lowood frocks to the end of the chapter'" (271). Thus, the debate between them is about whose story will prevail, with Jane repeatedly interrupting Rochester's stories, such as the song he sings, to reveal its sinister aspects; she rejects its "pagan idea" (275). Bertha's intrusion into Jane's room, and

[4] In the Angrian narrative, Zamorna is often depicted as a sultan with a slave or a harem in his relationships with women. Rochester certainly resembles Zamorna in his romantic arrogance at this point.

Jane's own dreams, can also be seen as interruptions to Rochester's control of events. Even after Mason stops the marriage service, and Jane realizes that she cannot become the "'Mrs. Rochester'" whose name Rochester has inscribed on her trunks, Rochester himself refuses to be deflected from his purpose. Only Jane can change the story he has in mind, and she does so by "wearing her old Lowood frock" and the values that go with it, which is what she can muster instead of Rochester's Romantic fantasy. "'Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation,'" she tells him (321). Nonetheless, when Jane leaves Thornfield, she is not back where she started when she left Lowood, for the passion she has found with Rochester provides a counterpoint to the next chapter of her life with the Rivers family.

At Moor House, Jane encounters the German Romanticism that interests Mary and Diana Rivers, and the puritanical Christianity of their brother St. John, an extreme example of the Lowood values that were so helpful to her in her struggle with Rochester. In this situation, her memories of Rochester and her awareness of her own needs help Jane in another contest for control of her story, this time with St.John. Perhaps because of her own experience of love, Jane recognizes St. John's passion for Rosamund Oliver. Also, the love that is possible between him and Rosamund resembles the story of Jane's own parents: "'a poor curate .

. . fell in love with a rich man's daughter'" (384). Like Jane, St. John has a taste for Romanticism, "'the golden age of modern literature'", but he maintains a strict separation between his love of poetry and his own passionate feelings.[5] He imagines his own story, if he were to marry Rosamund, but he casts Rosamund in the role of false and seductive temptress: "'her promises are hollow--her offers false'" (378). He rejects her because of his overwhelming commitment to his ambition and egotism, ambiguously cloaked in the Christian faith.

St. John envisions Jane as a self-sacrificing Christian handmaid. However, Jane exposes the devouring quality of St. John's wishes for her, just as she exposed Rochester's tyranny. She is in a similar position with both men, in that they want to subsume her story into their own, albeit very different, narratives. Yet some critics have assumed that the representation of St. John is a transparent depiction of a Christian hero. Jina Politi claims that the text conceals "the complicity of the Church with Imperialism and . . . present[s] St. John as the disinterested

[5] Elizabeth Jay notes that even in 1838, at the height of Evangelical cultural sway, "the Record's leader column acknowledged "'the unhappy Byron to be the greatest poet of his day'", although "poetry, like fiction, tended to receive close doctrinal scrutiny and little aesthetic appreciation in the Evangelical newspapers" (204). St. John's liking for poetry may be something else he must strictly control in himself.

missionary . . ." (82); but surely, given his cold and calculating behaviour, the reader can be sceptical about St. John's goodness, especially as Jane herself questions it.[6]

When St. John discovers Jane's identity and her relationship to the Rivers family, his manner of telling Jane of his discovery shows his wish to appropriate her story: "' . . . I find the matter will be better managed by my assuming the narrator's part, and *converting* you into a listener,'" he tells her (383-4).[7] This episode involves competing narratives between Jane and St. John; he emphasizes the money Jane has inherited, and Jane aggressively pursues the question of how St.John came to find out about it, including the question of his relationship to her:

> 'But I apprised you that I was a hard man,' said he, 'difficult to persuade.'
> 'And I am a hard woman,--impossible to put off.'
> 'And then,' he pursued, 'I am cold: no fervour infects me.'
> 'Whereas I am hot, and fire dissolves ice . . . .' (388)

The parallel constructions in this dialogue emphasize the contest of wills, as well as Jane's ability to win the

[6] "The novel represents St. John as presumptuously assuming the voice of God in relation to Jane . . . the implicit parallels drawn by the novel between Jane and the Indians suggest that St. John intends to take an equally dubious mediating role in relation to the Hindus, learning their language the better to assume the voice of God towards them as well (Susan Meyer 1997, 117).

[7] Italics mine.

argument. When she finds out that the Rivers are her cousins, and proposes to share her inheritance with them, she and St. John compete again over the question of strict legal rights versus natural justice. The struggle for control continues, with St. John insisting that Jane learn Hindustani, giving up her studies in German, which he does not understand (448).* In the process of learning the Indian language, Jane finds St. John's power overwhelming her: "By degrees, he acquired a certain influence over me that took away my liberty of mind" (402). Also, he tries to overpower her with the language of Christian belief which both is, and is not, Jane's own language. When Jane rejects his proposal and expresses scorn for his lack of love for her, she realizes that St. John will never forget her words: " . . . they were always written on the air between me and him" (415), just as they are inscribed in the novel. In their last interview, Jane's prayer "to do what [is] right" (424) brings the sound of another word, her own name, in Rochester's voice, to return her to her own story.

Reunited with Rochester, Jane can now live with the romantic hero who has fired her passion and her imagination; she also takes over the story. Rochester himself has fallen

* He also would not understand the German Romantic idealism of the writers, such as Schiller, whose works Jane is reading with Diana and Mary.

into a state almost without language, so Jane begins to create the world for him by putting into words "whatever passes before her eyes" (Millgate 1968, 319). In telling Rochester about what has happened to her, she "leaves [the] tale half-told", like Scheherezade in the Arabian Nights, and she teases Rochester with the story of her relationship with St. John as he once teased her by inventing his courtship of Blanche Ingram. Yet she knows she pleases and comforts him with her speech, like David comforting Saul (443). When Rochester once again wonders if she is a fairy, and she counters that he is a brownie, the fairy tale aspects of their story are not lost, but integrated into a new tale, for, as Fuller notes, both the real and imaginary are necessary to create art.[9] At Ferndean, Jane uses her creative power to create both a home and a book. Philippa Tristram suggests, "The novel is invincibly domestic, partly because it functions like the house as a little world we think we can control" (268), and the novel is Jane's literary home.

Another meaning of this home that Jane creates with Rochester concerns the place of this novel in literary cul-

[9] Fuller is commenting on painting, but his remark is relevant to writing as well: " . . .a painter cannot be true to his experience of nature *unless* he uses his imagination as well as his eyes" (Images 103).

ture. Charlotte Brontë has frequently been considered a Victorian novelist because of the time at which she wrote, but she has been found wanting, particularly in the area of social realism, by critics like Terry Eagleton, for example. Sometimes she is considered to be writing in the Gothic genre, where her contribution is to give psychological depth to Gothic elements in her fiction, demanding "a more mature and complicated response" from the reader (Heilman, "Charlotte Brontë's New Gothic" 1970, 98). Yet Jane Eyre surely belongs to the Romantic movement, and implicitly makes a claim to stand beside the works of the Romantic poets whom Charlotte Brontë admired. Herein lies the significance of Rochester's resemblance to Byron's heroes, of Jane's passionate attachment, and also of her resistance. Helene Moglen says that Byron, compared to Charlotte Brontë's other hero, Wellington, "expressed deeper aspirations; the repressed needs and feared passions of her 'other' self" (26). Thus Rochester, like Zamorna and Hunsden in the earlier fiction, represents both Byron and Romantic poetry generally, as well as the Romantic element in the writer herself.[10] This element, represented as masculine, changed

[10] Kathleen Tillotson dates Jane Eyre as taking place 1799-1809, and observes that "Rochester's Byronic colouring is heightened in a world where there are ostrich-plumes, turbans, and corsair-songs" (97). Also, the Ingram party is more plausible as a representation of Regency manners, such as Charlotte Brontë had attempted in the early writings, than they would be as Victorians.

as the fiction evolved and Charlotte Brontë developed a female narrative voice that was able to engage in a dialogue with Romanticism. Moreover, the female narrator, Jane, has her own share of Romantic impulses, "governed" in her case by her situation as a woman, and by her education, but not suppressed. Raymond Williams quotes Keats' comment that "'the Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man' (Letter 90)", but he also notes "the emphasis on a personal discipline which is very far removed from talk of the 'wild' or 'lawless' genius" (Culture 61). Jane resembles Wordsworth or Keats in her Romanticism, while Rochester is more representative of Byron and Shelley. Jane is not a generic "woman writer", but a woman writer in the Romantic mode. Jane Eyre is a poetic Romantic novel that is at the same time a critique of Romanticism, and a claim for the woman writer to be part of the Romantic movement, with her own contribution to its ideology.[11]

Charlotte Brontë greatly admired the Romantic poets, especially Byron and Wordsworth. She wrote many poems, and her earliest publishing venture, along with her two sisters,

[11]F. R. Leavis has suggested that in the nineteenth century "the poetic strength . . . of the English language went into prose fiction" (1967, 145). Also see Donald D. Stone The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction (1980).

was a book of poems under the pseudonyms of Currer, Acton and Ellis Bell. Not only did she wish to be a poet, but also, by publishing under a male name, she wished, among other things, to be considered in the company of those male poets whom she admired. Apparently she discovered that her gift was for fiction, yet she still incorporated poetic elements into her work and, by the evidence of Jane Eyre, she developed an analysis of Romanticism, particularly of its representation of women, and of the male egotism she would have found in Byron, Shelley, and even Wordsworth. However, rather than writing a novel with a male hero who loves a different kind of woman, she makes the woman writer an equal of a male writer by having her heroine both live the narrative and shape it as the narrator.

Charlotte Brontë's chief similarity to the Romantic poets is in the importance she gives to nature and imagination, and in Jane Eyre, she establishes that a woman possesses an imagination as a man does. "To the Romantic poets, the imagination is a mode of transcending reality . . . . the imagination is . . . the active agent, shaping the world as it finds it, creating it anew with each vision" (Miyoshi 1969, 47). Hence the significance of the tale told to Jane by her imagination, of her paintings, which are visions expressed in words, and of the numerous metaphorical descriptive passages in the novel, such as the visionary

withered landscape she describes to depict her internal world after discovering that Rochester is already married. As M. H. Abrams describes in his "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric" (1970), " . . . in the course of this meditation, the lyric speaker achieves an insight, faces up to a tragic loss, comes to a moral decision, or resolves an emotional problem" (201). Each of these terms might describe various poetic passages in Jane Eyre. Herein lies, too, the importance of Jane as subject; the essential subjectivity in Romantic art "embraced a positive conception of the imagination, gave to dreaming and fantasies the status of creative source material, and to artistic representation of inner experience a new validity" (Michael Edwards 81).

The novel provides many subtle connections with Romantic literature, from the ballad that Bessie sings, to Jane's painting that Rochester recognizes as Latmos, location of Keats' Endymion, to Rochester's Orientalism and Corsair songs, to Schiller's Die Rauber that Mary and Diana are reading, to St. John's gift of a copy of Marmion. On 18 January 1848, Charlotte Brontë wrote to G. H. Lewes, "Can there be a great Artist without poetry?" (quoted in Hoeveler and Jadwin 155), and presumably she was thinking of her aspirations for her own work as well.

As Irene Tayler (1990) suggests, in connection with Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre should be read like the

major Romantic poems: Milton, Manfred, Prometheus Unbound, "as visionary poetry whose subject is creative genius itself" (14); she proposes that experience with a spiritual dimension might be considered a poetic subject. Robert Heilman describes Charlotte Brontë's "rhythmical, enchanted style" as "the 'Kubla Khan' mode" ("Charlotte Brontë's New Gothic" 106), while Mark Kinkead-Weekes (1970) writes about the "poem within the novel, the glimpses we get of the hidden life of the heart and of the nature of its progress" (79). He considers that this "poem" provides the novel's structure: "Jane Eyre . . . is at its strongest . . . not in the world of character and dialogue, but in the submerged poem that is the architecture of the fiction" (85). Furthermore, many passages of dialogue and description are also poetic. David Lodge has noted the "remarkable flexibility of the language of Jane Eyre . . . it moves from the quasi-metaphorical to the fully metaphorical to the literal without any sense of strain". He talks about an "essentially poetic flight" that "grows naturally out of the literal staples of the novel" (123). He also notes "It is inconceivable that Jane Eyre could have been written without the Romantic Movement". Lodge believes that Charlotte Brontë has set her novel in "that period whose literature she found most inspiring, the hey-day of Romanticism" (110). He bases this idea on St. John's gift

to Jane of Scott's Marmion, a "new publication". Marmion was first published in 1808, but St. John goes on to say that it was given to "the fortunate public of those days--the golden age of modern literature. Alas! the readers of our era are less favoured" (375). His comments imply that he is speaking some time later than 1808, closer to the time when Charlotte Brontë was actually writing the novel.[12] Still, the delight Jane and St. John take in Romantic poetry shows the centrality of that tradition to the writing of the novel.

Thus, the poetic qualities of Jane Eyre, its references to Romantic literature, and the crucial role of Rochester as the representation of the Romantic poet, all point to Romanticism as the literary tradition within which Jane Eyre is situated. Lodge further notes "the characteristically Romantic theme of the novel--the struggle of an individual consciousness toward self-fulfilment--and the romantic imagery of landscape, seascape, sun, moon and the elements, through which this theme is expressed" (110). Like any writer or artist, Charlotte Brontë required a cultural context, in Winnicott's term, a "facilitating environment". She needed "appropriate modes of work and

[12] His comments also somewhat contradict the date implied by the Regency flavour of the Thornfield party scenes.

materials, and a socially-given symbolic order" (Fuller, _Images_ 11), and she found this in Romanticism, although the place of women in that tradition, and the representations of women in its poetry seemed to exclude her. Therefore, she adapted the tradition to meet her own ends, and her relationship to this literary movement is a major concern of _Jane Eyre_.

Jane's quest for home and self-fulfilment takes place within the Romantic tradition, and so the novel's representation of a domestic religion of hearth and home is an example of female Romanticism, rather than of the domestic ideology that was gaining influence in Victorian poetry and fiction.[13] That ideology tends to emphasize the difference between men and women and their supposed need for separate spheres. Woman's place is the home, and her task is to make it a refuge and sanctuary for the man who goes out into the world. A further idealization of this convention is the notion of the "angel in the house", the innocent and devoted female caregiver who asks nothing more than to serve. Jane,

[13] Despite the counter-influence of writers like J.S. Mill (_The Enfranchisement of Women_, 1853), the trend was mostly away from the idea of equality between the sexes, for example in Tennyson's _The Princess_, which approves of only restricted education and opportunities for women. The idealizing, sentimentalizing view of home and of women's role is most fully expressed in a work like Ruskin's "Of Queen's Gardens" (1865).

in contrast, resists serving others until she takes care of Rochester at Ferndean, an involvement as much literary as domestic, for she mediates to him, through language, the world he cannot see. Also, in Jane Eyre, both Jane and Rochester value domestic life and both pay attention to domestic details. Rochester insists on Thornfield always being kept, as it were, alive, with fires in every room, and every room in readiness for human occupation. In contrast, St. John actively dislikes domestic comfort. With his Evangelicalism, his emphasis on duty and self-sacrifice, and his imperialism, St. John is perhaps more Victorian than Romantic. Although Rochester liberates Jane's passion, and St. John enables her to have an independent home, both men do expect Jane to be a kind of slave, putting their thoughts ahead of her own.[14] But Jane's Romanticism expresses her true self, with rich feelings and a capacity to create its own world, not simply to serve others. Her creativity finds expression in the home, but sometimes through resisting, rather than serving, others. She chooses to be creative in her own way, to refurbish Moor House, as well as to read, learn and draw, and to bring the Rivers family together

[14] Compare Byron: " . . . 'tis a base / Abandonment of reason to resign / Our right of thought--our last and only place / Of refuge . . ." ("Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", 4.127.1135-8). Jane, too, thinks her own thoughts and maintains her independence.

again by means of her money. When Jane goes to Ferndean and wonders, "Can there be life here?", the narrative reflects the life she does bring, which is her creative power, and as such, both domestic and literary.

Anne K. Mellor (1990) has argued that there were, in fact, "at least two romanticisms" in the Romantic Movement, "the men's and the women's" ("Why Women Didn't Like Romanticism" 285). She suggests that writers like Mary Shelley were disturbed by a "powerful egotism at the core of the romantic ideology" (284), and they opposed it by asserting the possibilities of education, rationality, care, and responsibility. Mellor believes that the major English Romantic poets shared convictions about the value of the individual and the importance of justice, but also that they "rebelled against the domination of reason, common sense, and logic" (276). Yet they tended to retain the patriarchal and hierarchical privilege of feeling superior to women, and regarding women as objects. In contrast, women writers emphasized the value of reason, while still maintaining the value of individuality and feelings, and the importance of equality. In Charlotte Brontë's novel, Jane stresses her need for equality, especially with Rochester and with her Rivers cousins, as well as her reliance on reason, for example at her greatest crisis, when she discovers that Rochester is married. Alone in her room, and *before* she succumbs to her grief, Jane sits at a table, head on arms:

> And now I thought: till now I had only heard, seen, moved--followed up and down where I was led or dragged--watched event rush on event, disclosure open beyond disclosure; but *now, I thought.* (298)[15]

Jane must think both about her own situation and about what has been revealed: Rochester's first wife, "the living proof", degraded into the condition of an animal, running back and forth in her prison, growling and biting. This creature was once a woman, now transformed into an inhuman form. Jane has also thought about Rochester's mistresses, and his contempt for them, but this woman, Bertha, was his bride, as Jane had nearly become. Jane has also been transformed by the destruction of her hopes and trust. She has seen the deadly possibilities of Romantic male egotism, and her subsequent course of action shows that she must escape from Rochester and find another way to live, and another story. The course of the narrative demonstrates that "calm reason and the domestic affections [are] necessary to preserve society from a romantic idealism that might otherwise unleash . . . truly monstrous consequences" (Mellor 286). However, the novel does not reject or abandon its Romantic hero; instead, it transforms him.

Rochester is on a Romantic quest for self-fulfilment and for the woman who will reflect his powerful ego. His

[15] Italics in original.

travels to the West Indies and Europe, his wealth, and his sensuality, involve him in charades of various kinds. Rebellious yet unhappy, he is able to act as he wishes, but, like his predecessor, Zamorna, without finding any satisfaction in his life. He attempts to turn Jane into his fantasy, a hybrid of elf and fine lady, in line with the contradictions of his divided self, but Jane refuses to be the object of his Romantic quest, as she subsequently refuses to be the handmaiden to St. John's imperial one. Both Rochester and St. John personify forms of death-in-life, Rochester trapped and empty, first at Thornfield and then at Ferndean, and St. John rejecting all natural impulses and living only for the next world. In the major Romantic poets, the goal of the quest is to unite "the Imagination with its bride" (Bloom, "Internalization of Quest-Romance" 1970, 17), but in Jane Eyre, the bride, the object of the quest, narrates the novel, and she is on her own quest, the quest for home. Her quest resembles that of the male poets: to reconcile "identity-as", or selfhood, and "identity-with", or imagination (Frye, English Romanticism 142). To give in to Rochester would mean acquiescing in his tyranny as well as succumbing to her own instincts. St. John offers another temptation: reason overdeveloped to the point of madness, "the madness of self-righteousness, frustrated anger and solipsistic self-withdrawal" (Bloom 1970, 19).

Jane almost gives up selfhood to "throw all on the altar--heart, vitals, the entire victim" (409)--for "identity-with" St. John, but the voice she hears recalls her to herself.

The novel furnishes no representation of Jane the writer other than the image of her union with Rochester. Both Jane and Rochester have creative powers, and each needs the other. The force of love unites the Romantic vision and the woman writer. Stripped of his power, but not of his imagination, Rochester needs Jane as much as she needs him. He is Jane's "master" because he is her literary teacher. Jane Eyre's search for home is really a search for union with Romanticism, but first, the object of her search, the ideal, must be exposed with its flaws. When Rochester acknowledges the transcendent power of God and nature, and his own limitations, the union can take place. Nature and imagination, reason and passion, can be united in the creativity of the writer; one does not have to be sacrificed to the other.

The poetic connection between Jane and Rochester appears in their shared language, and not only in their dialogues. For example, they both experience the state of homelessness in much the same terms, showing their literary affiliation. "'I transformed myself into a will-o'-the-

wisp,'" says Rochester, "'I pursued wanderings as wild as those of the marsh-spirit'" (314). Jane literalizes his metaphor in her wanderings on the moor to reveal the truth behind the image: the pain of finding that "not a tie holds [her] to human society" (327) and that nature cannot "submit passively" to a lonely death (334).[16] Human beings are not wild and independent; human nature needs human culture. The signs of that culture lead Jane out of the wilderness: the signpost pointing in four directions (327), the church bell (329), the light (335), and the "road or track" (335), all signs created by human activity, and ultimately by the human imagination. By the same token, human culture needs the connection with nature, inner and outer, and signs in the natural world, like the lightning-struck chestnut tree, "may be but the sympathies of Nature with man" (222). The voice of Rochester borne to Jane on the wind is another such sign, an example of "natural supernaturalism". Like the Romantic poets, Charlotte Brontë makes the creative process central to her narrative, but unlike much of male

[16] Margaret Homans believes that the literal is deadly for Jane, and that she finds her way back to the symbolic order by means of the light that she follows, the sign of the world of the father. However, the symbolic order can be equally destructive: Rochester is lost in the world of his fantasies and fictions. The novel's point is that each requires the other; literary imagination depends on a relationship between literal and figurative.

Romanticism, the novel shows how imagination transforms not only the natural world but the humble and everyday realm of domestic life.[17]

Because Jane writes her autobiography at Ferndean, ten years after her marriage, she writes out of her union with Rochester, the partner of her creative self.[18] When she finds him alone, blind and virtually helpless, he resembles a lamp "waiting to be relit" by her imagination. The image combines two aspects of Romantic poetic theory: the idea of the poet's mind as a lamp, here associated with Rochester; and the idea of the mind's creative power to transform and animate what it perceives, associated with Jane.[19] Between them, Rochester and Jane engage in "a ceaseless and circular

[17] Exceptions to this generalization would be Wordsworth, whom Charlotte Brontë admired, and perhaps Keats. Wordsworth values domestic life and the power of imagination to transform "ordinary things" ("Preface to Lyrical Ballads").

[18] Jina Politi, emphasizing the bourgeois ideology of Jane Eyre, suggests that Jane spends her time at Ferndean "talking idly with her husband . . . while income from investment and rent pours in" (89), an interpretation that seems unduly cynical, and ignores altogether the significance of Jane's literary creativity. If Jane were to continue as a teacher at Morton, or to do something similar, she would not write the book. Moreover, while the novel is in some sense a novel of protest about the situation of women and the denial of their creativity by the world they live in, it deals with that protest in its own way and should be read on its own terms.

[19] See M. H. Abrams The Mirror and the Lamp, 1953.

interchange of life betweem soul and nature in which it is impossible to distinguish what is given from what is received", as Abrams says of Coleridge's "Dejection" ode (Mirror 68). On her first morning with Rochester, Jane quotes from the Song of Songs, pointing to the mystical and literary nature of their union (444). From now on, Jane creates the world for Rochester and serves "both for his prop and guide" (454); theirs is a spiritual union, literalized by language, indicating that literal and figurative require a relationship: Jane says, "Literally, I was . . . the apple of his eye" (456). Biblical and Miltonic echoes reflect the mystical union of male and female that takes place through the writer's imagination and language.[20] Jane and Rochester enter a kind of eternity, symbolized by the present tense: "The present is the only thing that has no end".[21]

This creative union between male and female is a continuous process within the writer, a dialogue: "We talk, I believe, all day long: to talk to each other is but a more

[20] The image of "the apple of his eye" refers to God's love and guidance for Jacob (Deuteronomy 32:10). "Bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh" is found both in the book of Genesis and in Milton's Paradise Lost. Like Eve, Jane is Rochester's "likeness", his "fit help" and "other self" (Paradise Lost VIII 652).

[21] Physicist Erwin Schroedinger, quoted in Victoria Moran 199, 170.

animated and an audible thinking" (456). Similarly, either male and female consciousness can belong to the reader addressed from time to time in the novel, and if the writer can write as both male and female, presumably the reader can read from both points of view also. The concept of androgyny does not adequately encompass this idea of creative union. Judith Williams suggests that there are two metaphorical poles in the novel, corresponding to inner and outer worlds and "aligned with the female and the male respectively" (2), and that "the androgyne", the writer, has access to both. Yet this theory is so general as to obscure the particular emphasis in Jane Eyre on the relationship between male and female. Androgyny may also mean that a woman writes as a man, but as Elaine Showalter suggests, the strategy is not as liberating as it may appear (Literature 266). As a child, Charlotte Brontë began to write using an assumed male identity, partly because of her admiration for male writers, but her literary voice evolved to encompass both male and female points of view, finding its most characteristic power in the voice of a female narrator, thus giving herself (and "Reader") access to a woman's thoughts and feelings.[22] Rochester addresses the spirit behind

[22] Charlotte Brontë's early writing involved a great deal of male influence, from her brother Branwell, and from her teacher, Constantin Heger. Lyndall Gordon discusses the liberating aspect of Charlotte Brontë's having to imagine a relationship between a man and a woman from the woman's point of view (116), and

Jane's social persona, and Jane can speak freely to him, although they are not transparently honest: their communication is a process, not a frank revelation. They perform a game of verbal hide-and-seek with each other, using language playfully, revealing some things and concealing others, teasing, arguing, seducing with language. The mutually enchanting fictional conversation keeps desire alive in the novel, because Rochester, like Jane. is "an imaginative possibility" (Gordon 262). Jane's combative dialogue with him, therefore, preserves their difference, while their mutual playfulness increases their desire. Rochester is as "familiar to [her] as my own face in the glass--as the speech of [her] own tongue" (204), but he is not identical with her.

The outcome for Jane and Rochester is mutuality: awareness of their resemblance, and also of their difference.[23] Rochester can still be himself without his wish to tyrannize, because he has refined his spirit and recognized his limitations without losing his vitality, his feelings or his intellect. Yet Jane retains control of the story, her autobiography. She never reveals to Rochester that she

she finds the source of this liberation in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence with Heger, frustrating though it may have been for her.

[23]Jessica Benjamin's theory of intersubjectivity includes the idea that "sameness and difference exist simultaneously in mutual recognition" (1988, 47).

heard his voice on the night that he called to her. This secret is kept only with the reader, as pure narration.

A possible view of Jane and Rochester's creative union is to consider it as an expression of the bicameral mind,[24] represented in many cultures as the union of male and female principles: for example, in the yin and yang of Chinese thought, in the symbol of the Hieros Gamos, or sacred marriage, or in the dyadic God of Gnosticism "who embraces both masculine and feminine elements" (Pagels 58). These two sides of the mind "make love to each other" (Brivic 83), but they also sometimes disagree, and this conflict is "a creative arena for the artist" (Anderson 24). In psychoanalytic terms, "individuals ideally should integrate and express both male and female aspects of selfhood (as culturally defined)" (Benjamin, 113). Jane Eyre is a Romantic myth about the woman writer's quest for this creative union. The connection between Jane and Rochester resembles the love of Eros and Psyche in Keats' poem, where the "two fair creatures, couched side by side" are the focus of the poet's imagination. Just as the writer is neither Jane nor Rochester, although they both come from her imagination, the poet is neither one of these figures of Eros and Psyche.

[24] I am indebted for this idea to an unpublished paper by Mary Anderson (1994).

Rather, in Keats' poem, the speaker is the poet-priest who creates an imaginary world and serves the divine couple:

> Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
> In some untrodden region of my mind,
> Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
> Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind
> . . . .
> ("Ode to Psyche" lines 50-54)

Both Keats' poem and Charlotte Brontë's novel represent a revaluing of the feminine element in culture as well as in the creative imagination.[25]

The union of masculine and feminine in Jane Eyre is full of paradox. E. Margaret Fulton suggests that Jane's task is to "bring into balance the logical, rational, reasoning, or so-called masculine side of her being with the intuitive, instinctive, spiritual or so-called feminine side" (433). In fact, Jane and Rochester both have a masculine and a feminine side, with the implication that this doubleness makes them fully human. Often in her struggle not to be overcome by Rochester, Jane relies on her reason, not her instincts, subduing her own passion as well as

[25] A similar theme appears in Shelley's "Epipsychidion: "We shall become the same, we shall be one / Spirit within two frames . . . " (Quigly Shelley, 244). In this case, however, the poet and lover are the same figure, unlike the poet and the lover in Keats' poem. In the case of Jane and Rochester, the lover, Jane, is also the writer, but the fact that she serves Rochester gives her something in common with the poet-priest in the "Ode to Psyche".

Rochester's. Reason also helps Jane to perceive St. John as an erring human being like herself (411). At the same time, she trusts her visions and intuitions, and remains true to her passion. Rochester, too, learns to suffer being torn between his passion and his rational recognition of his responsibility for his own mistakes (452). He has already recognized in Jane's spirit something resembling a wild bird, an "it" that "has integrated the complementary virtues of male and female" (Macpherson 56); he also has his own wildness, a disregard for the rules of civilized society, and a tendency to become "savage" (432). He too resembles a wild bird, a caged and blinded eagle (436), liberated by Jane's imagination and her language. He has recognized, and the text also implies, that it is wrong to subjugate or destroy the wild human spirit; this wildness can be compared to the "untrodden region" in Keats' poem, a wild, yet sacred, interior space. Still, art must discipline the wild spirit in order to reconcile the opposites of existence: reason and passion, illusion and reality, masculine and feminine, but the poet-priest is a servant, not a master. Similarly, Jane both serves and creates as Rochester's wife and companion. Jane's success is to marry Rochester legitimately, as an equal, and to retain the power of naming that she had before her marriage.

Yet the last pages of Jane Eyre seem far from triumphant; instead the novel ends with a sense of anticlimax or melancholy, even a kind of loneliness. There are three possible reasons for this: the problem of the creative union itself, the novel's vision of civilization, and the question of the narrative's ending with St. John's letter.

Once the marriage has taken place between Jane and Rochester, once they are in complete harmony as bone of each other's bone, and once Jane has begun to create the world through words for Rochester, the tension of desire and opposition disappears, and that tension is the source of creative power in the novel. The dialogue has become a monologue. "Absence", Catherine Belsey notes, "is desire's recurring figure" (1991).[26] In her later novels, Charlotte Brontë recreates that tension in different ways. In Shirley, she brings together two couples who are opposites: gentle Caroline and strong-willed Robert Moore, and independent, male-identifying Shirley with imperturbable Louis Moore. A similar opposition occurs between the two men and the two women. Yet the artificially-created tension results in both marriages seeming forced and schematic. In Vil-

[26] Goodheart also comments, following Kohut, that "the sense of resistance" keeps desire alive (140). That sense of resistance between Jane and Rochester disappears at the end of the novel.

lette, an even more complex configuration expresses a sense of pessimism in the writer, not about the imaginative power of her protagonist-narrator, Lucy Snowe, but about the possibility of a creative, passionate union between a man and woman who make a home together. Lucy has to give up her love for Graham Bretton, who is revealed, moreover, to be unworthy of that love. Later, her projected marriage with Paul Emmanuel never takes place. Although Paul creates a home for Lucy and enables her to be independent and creative, they do not work together in that home, and their union is either ended by his death at sea, or endlessly deferred beyond the end of the book. Jane Eyre is the most successful and optimistic resolution of the tension between male and female characters in Charlotte Brontë's works. The union of Jane and Rochester means that the tension collapses, leaving the novel as a whole a testament to their creative union.

The home that Jane and Rochester create is an image of civilization; it represents the way they have resolved the dichotomies within and between them, in the cultivation of a balance between masculine and feminine aspects of themselves, between nature and culture, desire and reality, romance and realism. To be civilized is a compromise, not an idyll. In this way, transitional space--the space for imagination and culture--can be preserved. This space

breaks down when either the inner world or external reality predominates (Phillips, _Winnicott_ 119), but if it can be protected, it is the basis for the shared and consoling illusions of art and religion. The illusions created by imagination "combine the desired with the actual in tolerable ways" (Phillips, _Winnicott_ 119). The equilibrium between romance and realism in _Jane Eyre_ means that Charlotte Brontë offsets her refusal of fairy tale solutions by allowing Jane's intense attachment to romance, embodied in Rochester, to survive. Always conscious of the real world, Jane directs her efforts towards nurturing and even sanctifying home and relationships, whereas Rochester's tendency is to transform the real world into material for his romantic fantasies. Injured and brought to earth, he has to recognize both the materiality and hardness of the real world, and his wish to be reconciled with God. Jane, on the other hand, almost succumbs to St. John's false vision of angels and heaven--which would turn out to be the hell of being "'grilled alive in Calcutta'" (420)--and she is rescued by the earth, by "nature". To the extent that Rochester survives for Jane, he symbolizes the energy of romance and imagination; to the extent that he is injured, he shows the potential destructiveness of reality. We can interpret this compromise, following Winnicott, not as a loss, but as the miracle of art--the miracle of finding and

preserving shared illusions. The illusions created by Jane Eyre include the idea that it is possible to cultivate nature, including human nature, to produce culture, without losing imaginative and spiritual freedom: wildness. As Coleridge pointed out, cultivation is also a standard to be upheld "*against* the social process of civilization" (Raymond Williams, Country 117), against the mindlessness of the class system and the dominance of powerful ideologies. In terms of literary history, Jane Eyre challenges the uncompromising aspects of both Romantic male egotism and Puritanical Christianity without abandoning either Romanticism or Christianity. Rochester has to lean on Jane, as an indication of his literal, and literary, need of her. The melancholy of the end of the novel includes the sense of loss--of Rochester's only partially recovered sight and strength--and the sense of lack: Jane and Rochester seem cut off from wider culture.[27] Nonetheless, Jane's writing of the novel provides a connection with her culture, by making

[27] "There is a danger that the resort to vision may cut the visionary off from the human community, and this is a frequent theme in Romantic poetry. . . . . In a society whose practices and beliefs constituted a denial of human imagination and creativity, it was the poets' role to keep open a sense of alternative possibility" (P.M.S. Dawson 1993, 73). Rather than acquiescing and accepting an unsatisfactory social context, Jane and Rochester choose isolation as emblematic of their creative openness and rejection of a social world that denies imagination.

a creative contribution to it.

Finally, the end of the novel presents the problem that the last word belongs to St. John and his triumphalist Christianity. The ending has been interpreted as a vindication of St. John (Spivak 1985, 249), but Jane's view of him has already brought his religious and imperialist motives into question. With its sense of anticlimax and loneliness, St. John's letter is a loose end, a refusal of perfect order and integration.[28] Just as Jane could not be part of St. John's imperial narrative, so he cannot be part of the ordinary cultivated life that Jane lives, the compromise that she is able to make.[29] Not everyone can fit comfortably into every story; not everyone can be cultivated. St. John has chosen a different "Master", a projection of his inner world, as Jane has chosen hers. His home is in heaven, as Jane's is at Ferndean. Their shared home is the

[28] John O. Jordan (1993)has pointed out the "lack of unity in the narrative voice" in Jane Eyre, with "Jane Rochester" being the narrator of Jane Eyre's story (80). Similarly, St. John's voice represents in some sense the larger world of action which Jane Eyre desired. Jane's union with Rochester thus leaves this issue unresolved.

[29] St. John wants Jane to lean on the "Rock of Ages" (407), but the enduring stone in Jane's imagination has been shaped by writing and by Romanticism: Rochester's name is "graven on a tablet, fated to last as long as the marble it inscribe[s]" (403). These two stones, one a rock, and one inscribed, resemble the rock and the headstone in the illustrations of Bewick's book in the first chapter of the novel.

world of imagination, for as Northrop Frye puts it, all literature is a potential home for human nature which "we try to build up and enter at the same time" (Imagination 73).

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