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UNIVERSITE NATIONALE DU RWANDA

CAMPUS DE RUHENGERI

FACULTE DES LETTRES

SETTING AND CHARACTER IN EMILY BRONTE'S WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S JANE EYRE

Mémoire présenté en vue de l'obtention du grade de Licencié en Anglais

par

Jeanne MUJAWIMANA

Supervisor: Dr *Dennis* WALSH

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To

my family, whose love urged me to go forward.

To

Rachel and her beloved ones.

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Last but not least, I wink at Azra, Emeritha, Zakiya and Marie.

MUJAWIMANA Jeanne.

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INTRODUCTION

The Brontës are certainly among the most important figures in English literature who aroused and are still arousing much interest. In fact, that family of writers has always stirred the curiosity of many people. That fascination is not only due to their remarkable works, but also to their lives which were themselves a wonder. Their story would constitute "a powerful romantic novel", but "would certainly appear too romantic" because of the too many deaths that would abound in it.[1] All the main characters of that biographic "romantic novel" -Charlotte, Emily, Ann Brontë, and their brother Branwell- would all end tragically.

The Brontës were motherless at young ages and led mainly a secluded life with their stern father, the Reverend Patrick Brontë. But their great interest in literature probably compensated for their loneliness. Since their early childhood, they invented two worlds of fantasy, Angria and Gondal, in which were set their verses and stories. The characteristics of those fantastic products of the imagination can be observed in some of their later works. Unfortunately, their promising talents were doomed to end prematurely. After having led a dissipated life, Branwell died is September, 1848. Emily died in December of the same year, and Ann waited for some months and died in May, 1849. At their deaths, they were respectively 31, 30 and 29 years old. Charlotte followed them in March, 1855, at 39.[2] In a space of seven years, they had all vanished. They would perhaps have flourished, had they lived long.

That is very briefly the story of the Brontës' tragedy. It seems almost impossible to avoid being moved by it, at least if one

is really interested in literature. Hence the remarkable amount of works, many very good themselves, on the Brontës by many literary critics. That topic has been as a spring, a stream that never dries up.

It is Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights that the critics have emphasized. In the articles I consulted -which were unfortunately very limited because of the restricted documentation at my disposal- or the long lists of bibliographies I was able to find, I noticed that the stress has been chiefly on the indirect autobiographical indications in the novels, the themes, the structure, and so on. I, personally, was particularly struck by the sharp contrast between both novels and the others that were published at the same period. The gap is truly wide. That important disparity has been pointed out by some critics who tax both books with being "strange". But the problem is to show clearly the nature of their strangeness. That is my aim.

Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights were published in 1847, amid the victorian age, a period in which "the weight of the puritan code on ... literature was considerable"[3]. Moreover, "It was the respectable who composed the reading public, and it was for the respectable that the great victorian novelists wrote"[4]. Thus, it was more an objective than subjective literature, more about the outward or external than about the inward or internal.

That outwardness is almost invisible in Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights. On the contrary, both books are a deep exploration of the inner lives of the characters. The agitation that characterizes man's inner self, the perpetual conflict between his permanent instincts and the constraints of the outer world

are highlighted. Nor does the predominant touch of orthodoxy of victorian literature prevail in either novel. Even when religion is referred to, it is not necessarily shown as a beneficial force. Those are some of the elements that contribute to both works' strangeness.

But that strangeness can be easily understood if one gets acquainted with the period that preceded the victorian age : the romantic age. Among the important traits of the literature of that era, unorthodoxy and inwardness can be often detected. However, even long after the decline of romanticism, some novelists and poets continued the treatment of its principal topics. Charlotte and Emily Brontë are true representatives of that category, as evidenced by the analysis of their respective novels, Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights.

Thus, in spite of chronological differences between traditional romantic writers, such as Wordsworth and Byron, and the Brontës, the themes that are associated with both of them look strangely alike. That is why I consider Emily and Charlotte Brontë to be more romantic than victorian. Of course, some critics mention superficially that the novels talked about above are "romantic", without showing profoundly the nature or the extent of their romanticism. For example, J. Raimond states that

> The work of the Brontë sisters, chiefly Charlotte and Emily, takes into account the "something far more deeply interfused" that Wordsworth speaks of, the object of the romantic poets's quest.... In considering the chronology, one would speak, concerning Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights, of romantic rebirth.[5]

But that "something far more deeply interfused" is not the only link between the Brontës and the romantics. Some other criteria deserve some consideration.

Among those criteria, we can mention characterization and the treatment of setting. The romantics and the Brontës deal with them almost similarly. Thus, while taking into account the elements of romanticism in the two novels, the thesis I put forward is that although there is a striking correlation between setting and character in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre -so that natural and social environments seem to mirror, to mould or to symbolize the characters's lives-, the impact of environment may be negative or positive depending on the author. It is as if both sisters had different outlooks on life: in spite of that undeniable correlation, characters put in similar settings, under similar circumstances, do not necessarily behave similarly in both works.

In order to handle accurately the features of romanticism that emerge in Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre, I will first consider briefly "Romanticism" in an introductory chapter. Just like -or even more than- the Brontës, the period of romanticism, itself characterized by a rush of ideas, gave also rise to a rush of writings. I will make a synthesis of what that era refers to in general and its origins. The main stress will be particularly on British romanticism -as there are many romanticisms- since the books under study are immediately related to it. Its principal themes will be surveyed, and I will rely on extracts of poems, novels and plays to illustrate those themes. Only the most representative will be chosen, as examples abound in British

literature.

The second chapter, "Elements of Romanticism in Wuthering Heights : Setting and Character", will show how characterization and setting display remarkable traits of romanticism. That study will be viewed from two angles, the social and the natural enviroments. The former is the society, while the latter is the non-social setting in which the characters move. The mutual impact between setting and character will be progressively emphasized. The third chapter, "Romantic Tendencies in Jane Eyre: Setting and Character" will follow the same pattern as in chapter two. The last chapter, "Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre: Similarities and Differences", will be a comparison and contrast done in terms of setting and character. As stated above, both books reveal similarities as well as differences as far as the relationship between character and environment is concerned. Of course, I will try to evaluate the degree of romanticism of each novel.

Yet, three points are to be considered here. First, there is no agreement upon the precise years at which romanticism in general began or ended. Some critics do not even dare approximate to the dates. I will keep that problem in suspension. But concerning the beginning of British romanticism, I came to realize from my readings that the year of publication of "Lyrical Ballads", 1798, is the one which has many upholders. Concerning the main representative poets of that era in Great Britain, the most considered seem to be William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron George Gordon, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats. Novelists, excepting Scott and several gothic novelists, and dramatists did not have a strong influence.

The second point is that it seems that Jane Eyre received much approval, while the value of Wuthering Heights was not acknowledged at the time of their publication. Nevertheless, contrary to what I expected, many documents I was able to find were chiefly on Wuthering Heights. Twentieth century literary critics find Wuthering Heights to be superior. Finally, I noticed in the criticisms at my disposal on the two novels, that a close examination of the relationship between character and setting has not yet been undertaken. Some critics have been impressed by the likeness between the external aspects of the dwellings and their inhabitants' natures, but the impact that "environment" -in its full sense- exerts on the characters has not been surveyed. That is the main goal of this study.

Endnotes

[1]Walter Allen, The English Novel : A Short Critical History (Middlesex, 1978), p.187.

[2]Inga-Stina Ewbank, "The Brontës", The Encyclopedia Americana, IV, pp 596-599.

[3]Abrams et al., The Norton Anthology of English Literature Revised (New York, 1969), II, p.740.

[4]Allen, ibid., p.145.

[5]Pierre Coustillas et al., Le roman anglais au 19è siècle (Vendôme, 1978), pp.92-93. My translation.

CHAPTER I : ROMANTICISM

1.1. What Is Romanticism ?

> When a man is asked ... to discuss Romanticism, it is impossible to know what ideas or tendencies he is to talk about, when they are supposed to have flourished, or in whom they are supposed to be chiefly exemplified.[1]

That is the problem one encounters in any attempt to analyze romanticism. If then "to discuss" romanticism is not easy, one can imagine the difficulty that "to define" it would bring about. It is a topic which has been fully exploited, but no consensus has been reached about its exact meaning. Basically, there is nothing to add to what has been already said about that era, except maybe to find a common denominator that gives a comprehensive view of romanticism. It appears that many critics opt for an indirect way of defining it, as in this passage : "Therefore, if [classicism] ... is reasonable, calm and smugly confident, [romanticism] will be unreasonable or irrational, agitated, dubious, and troubled".[2] The enumeration can be lengthened, but the main elements are already stated. Even what is not directly said is hinted, so that if one dissects those ideas, one can grasp the whole complexity of the romantic age. The only fact that romanticism is an "agitated" period can allow us to speculate about the issue.

It is worthwhile to note the way Priestley and Spear elaborate on the problem. They do not dare enunciate straightforwardly what romanticism is. They somehow beat around the bush, and have

recourse to the method of defining by contrast. Two concepts are put forward, classicism and romanticism, and are confronted. The key of the problem is that one is the reverse of the other. If then one knows what classicism is, to figure out what romanticism involves would be an easy task. To simplify the complexity of the issue, I would propose that romanticism is a revolt against all that characterizes classicism. That definition would comprise almost most of what romanticism means, although it would certainly emphasize negation. The positive values of romanticism will also be explored.

Such a definition would not render the diversity of romanticism. The latter emerged as a rebellious conception of things. It concerned particularly writers who thought that their inspiration was hindered by the prevailing norms and adopted an unfamiliar -at least to their contemporaries- vision of things. The phenomenon looks like a generation gap. But contrary to the generation gap in which the older generation's views most of the time prevail owing to their presumed wisdom, while the younger generation's claims are generally disapproved of, romantic writers succeeded in imposing their opinions despite the hostility of the conservatives.

In order to make known his beliefs, the romantic writer introduces a particular method of conveying his ideas. Contrary to classicists, the romantic does not care much about man's preoccupations in general. His objective is to reveal his own inner feelings and thoughts to others. It is hard to tell if he is only led by egoism, if he chooses that method only for its effectiveness, or for both reasons. Anyway, that means of

displaying one's experiences and aspirations reaches its main goal, since the writer is then viewed as an individual eager to present his own grievances, instead of a vague spokesman whose ideas are lost amid the innumerable ideas expressed by the innumerable spokesmen. It is like throwing a pound of flour in an ocean. The flour would not even be noticed. Similarly, in presenting himself as a unique entity with distinct preoccupations, the romantic writer separates himself from the mass of other writers. Hence his ideas can be easily considered. Of course, his thoughts can be shared with others, but perhaps from a personal angle.

It is understandable that romantic writers could not let themselves go without liberty. They then stressed their thirst for liberty to surmount all the social barriers and let their passions take root and explode. For instance, they were most of the time dissatisfied with their social institutions and milieu, and wished to flee it. They either dreamt of quitting their society, or they simply left it and secluded themselves from their fellowmen. We notice that those loop-holes are almost impossible, or at least difficult to attain. Hence the romantics were insatiate, with a recurrent melancholy.

It is obvious that the society could not swallow or put up with all those rebellious ideas advocated by the romantics. On the contrary, the latter were often bitterly criticized and viewed as silly. Many people -among whom was Goëthe, a romantic himself- called romantic what was ill in contrast with the classic.[3] Maybe that "illness" also contributed to their melancholy.

We way now wonder whether the Brontës had that illness. Were they dissatisfied with their social environment ? Exactly, what revolted them among the social constraints of the time ? Is there any outward sign of their revolt ? If we consider their works, namely Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre, it is clear that several figures in those novels are in revolt against their circumstances -most notably Heathcliff and Rochester, but also Catherine and Jane. Those circumstances as well as the way those characters cope with them will be analyzed.

To define romanticism in definite terms is not then easy. But by picking up all its different characteristics, one can get a global view of what it is. The same problem occurs about the possible origins of that movement, but speculations can be made.

1.2. Origins of Romanticism.

Many critics and historians consider the romantic movement to be a consequence of the French Revolution. But it is probably more true to say that the romantic movement and the French Revolution appeared concurrently from some of the same causes. It also seems that one should not speak of romanticism without speaking of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It would be then helpful to understand his principles in order to evaluate his impact on the movement under study.

Just like romanticism, Jean-Jacques Rousseau attracted and is still attracting the attention of anybody interested in the history of ideas. That is why there are many writings about him. But as his influence upon romantics -and indirectly upon the Brontës- is

undeniable, it would not be a waiste of time to recall his life and work.

Rousseau was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1712. It was then long before the romantic movement. But his rebellion strikingly looks like that of many romantic writers. He did not care much about social conventions. For example, he ran away at sixteen and went to live with a widow of 28. That is one of his many irregularities, which suffices for illustrating how he had his guiding rules different from those of his contemporaries. That was due mainly to his somehow abnormal sensitivity. Maybe he did die insane because of the wide gap between his unusual desires and the facts around him that he found revolting. Anyway, he quit his native country for France, and one can wonder whether he hoped to fulfill his dreams there. It was from that host country that his ideas spread over many countries. Owing chiefly to him, the idea of revolution sprouted and grew progressively. In 1789, the French Revolution exploded. Those upheavals were not to remain within France's boundaries. They invaded almost all Europe, and the changes occurred in all the domains. It was a new mode of life which was somehow the beginning of what was going to be called romanticism.[4]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings preach many ideals. But mainly three of them caught my attention, since they are related not only to romantic writers's main topics, but also and chiefly to the themes treated in Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre. Those are the defect of social classes, the great value of the primitive man, and the stress on nature.

Rousseau is for the suppression of inequality between men. He finds the root of all evils in that "inequality which society produces, that transforms and alters all our natural inclinations."[5] From this, we learn that there is an inequality that "society produces", which means then that there is another kind of inequality. For example, if one is born one-eyed, deaf, without a nose, crippled or with any sort of infirmity, the society has nothing to do with it. That is "natural inequality", and Rousseau finds no fault with it. What he disapproves of is what we can call social inequality, because it is brought about by n. As an illustration, powerful or strong men crush the weak and appropriate the latter's properties. The weak become poor while the strong enrich, and that inequality between them leads to social classes. Rousseau is against it, and almost all the romantic writers who followed him condemn any kind of oppression.

If Jean-Jacques Rousseau supports all that is natural, even in its bad aspect, it is not astonishing that he puts on a pedestal the primitive man, that he calls the "noble savage", and who lives in nature. To highlight the qualities of that "noble savage", he contrasts him with the civilized man with his defects, in his "A Discourse on Inequality" :

> The savage and the civilized man differ so much in the bottom of their hearts and in their inclinations, that what constitutes the supreme happiness of one would reduce the other to despair. The former breathes only peace and liberty; he desires only to live and be free from labor;.... Civilized man, on the other hand, is always moving, sweating, toiling and racking his brains to find still more laboricus occupations.[6]...

That parallelism can go on. Two outlooks upon life that seem to be poles apart are presented. No middle-point is considered. While the primitive lets himself go, the civilized complicates his life, contributes to his own misfortunes, is as if fastened with chains. Hence Rousseau's strong belief in that men can be better if they live as simply as primitive men. He thus praises the "noble savage" and lowers the civilized man. One may wonder if his attitude was not due perhaps to that Rousseau was only acquainted with the civilized man and thought him as just the reverse of the primitive man. Anyway, he transcends the fact that a man is a man, and can be born with physical as well as predispositions to moral defects.

Another theme that Jean-Jacques Rousseau deals with and which goes hand in hand with that of the perfection of the "noble savage" is nature. He not only criticized civilization, but he also left it and went to live in nature. He was then among those who opted for loop-holes that we mentioned above. According to Rousseau, nature, just like the primitive man, is an incarnation of perfection. For many romantics also, nature is viewed as the symbol of freedom that people always seem to seek when they leave the society for wilderness. Nature is a kind of refuge from social restraints and atmosphere of civilization. It can teach qualities necessary to balanced humans. Even without book-knowledge, one reared in nature develops sensibility, honesty, etc., and the society can gain much by integrating those qualities which tend to disappear. It is what one can infer from their reasoning.

Rousseau's thirst for liberty and his rebellion, his worship of nature and the self, his rooted interest in a primitive man and a primitive society, etc, can undoubtedly be observed in romanticism. But that movement did not begin or end suddenly. It followed certain steps and took time to be established, just as its decline was gradual. The proof is that there is no consensus about the limits within which the romantic period can be put. If we take the example of British romanticism, it is between 1800 and 1837 for Priestley and Spear. For Woods et al., it is located between 1740 and 1832. Those two examples show the great disparity in opinions observed about that period. That can throw light on the difficulty encountered in classifying poets, dramatists or novelists in their respective movements. For instance, for some critics, William Blake is a romantic, while for others, he is a pre-romantic. There is also the problem concerning the aspects of romanticism that are stressed by such and such a nation.

However, it is noteworthy to mention that there were some English poets of Rousseau's generation who treated themes like his, and who certainly inspired British romantic writers, more or less than Rousseau did. Those are the 18th century poets of sensibility like Gray and Collins, and the "mad" poets like Christopher Smart. The latter was a peculiar poet. He even sojourned in a mad house. He was then a kind of precursor of some of the romantics who, some decades later, were often rejected by the society because of their disreputable conduct. Smart's peculiarity is reflected in his poems. A minor thing can be worthy of enthusiastic praise to him. For example, he can demonstrate that a cat is as important as -even better than- a man in front of God.

"My Cat Jeoffry"(1759-1763) is a moving eulogy for a cat, in which the poet affirms that

> For [the cat] is of the Lord's poor and so
> indeed is he called by benevolence
> perpetually -Poor Jeoffry ! the rat has
> bit thy throat.
> For I bless the name of the Lord Jesus
> that Jeoffry is better. [L.46-47]

That is funny ! Smart, like some romantic poets for whom a mere skylark, a vase, etc, stir imagination, can thus depict a worthless thing with grandiloquence and put it on a pedestal. He seems to suggest that a cat is also created in the image of God.

As for Collins, he is essentially attracted by nature in all its aspects. For instance, in his "Ode to Evening"(1746-1748), a poem whose tone is strikingly like that of Wordsworth's "It Is a Beauteous Evening", Collins describes the magnificence of the "Chaste Eve", tinted of "the bright-haired sun" with "cloudy skirts" (l.2-6). The poet is sensitive to the beauty of nature, and the way he sings the delights provided by the "Chaste Eve" is not very different from the way a lover would express his admiration for a beloved lady's charms. The beautiful landscape exerts a pleasant and soothing effect on the poet.

But that sensibility is mainly reflected in Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"(1742-50), a poem which treats almost all the principal themes of British romantic writers. It is a poem of the graveyard, hence carrying a gothic note, since that place often bears a depressing or frightning air. The action takes place in a "country" churchyard, and not in a "urban" one. As it is in the countryside, the buried ones -whose unknown honour, fame, value, etc, the poet is praising-

are simple peasants, "The rude Forefathers" [L.16] . The poem is an ode to the ignored qualities of the common man ("Full many a flower ... born to blush unseen,/ And waiste its sweetness on the desert air")(L.55-56), a derision of the powerful who are proud of worthless, and perhaps undeserved superiority : "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,/ And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,/ Awaits alike th' inevitable hour " [L.33-35] . That "inevitable hour" is of course death. The moral of the poem seems to be that "The paths of glory lead but to the grave"[L.36] , which implicitly urges people to be as humble as countrymen. The latter move in nature with which they live in harmony. Similarly, in "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard", a close parallelism between man's mood and that of nature is drawn. Graves imply death, and the latter is more associated with a gloomy natural appearance than with a luxuriant one. The complaining "mopeing owl "[L.10] , the "rugged elms", "the turf in many a mould'ring heaps" [L.13-14], etc, all set a melancholic mood. That sadness is even infused in the poet. All combines, as he states, to leave "the world to darkness and to me"[L.4]. The personality of the poet, and not of anybody else, is thus involved in that despondency, it is his own feelings which are expressed in the poem. But again, it is the praise of the common people which recurs throughout it. The poet celebrates the virtues and the non-exploited potentialities of the common man.

Those examples show that almost all the preoccupations of British romantics -the relationship between man and nature, the display of the writer's emotions, the celebration of the common man, melancholy, a free and often unusual choice of topics-, already

interested the English poets of sensibility or the mad poets of the 18th c. They were, with Rousseau, preparing the romantic era.

The question is to know whether the Brontës were either directly inspired by the French Revolution, or read Rousseau. Maybe they only read British poets of sensibility, romantic poets or novelists. Anyway, the themes they treat are basically the same as if the sources were the same. Moreover, some of the characteristics of romanticism seem to be eternal. For example, nowadays youth often rebel against actual institutions; there are still some people who are imbued with sentimentalism and almost faint at the sight of a beautiful flower; gruesome novels and horrible movies remind us of the romantic attraction for gothicism, for extreme emotional and psychic states. It is as if there were some traits which are rooted deep in man's nature and only seek for an appropriate moment or setting to be externalized.

1.3. British Romanticism : Principal Themes

> The word romanticism, at best extremely difficult to define in simple form, evidently has meant different things to different individuals and to different nations.[7]

Romanticism is a complex concept which can bear various attributes depending upon the context. German romanticism has its particularities, French romanticism has its own, British romanticism shares some elements with other romanticisms but has its distinct marks, etc. But in that British romanticism, it should be noted that poets are more representative than dramatists or novelists. Most of them read Rousseau, and the poets of

sensibility as well, and the themes they treat are greatly similar. They seem to be the most affected by the heat of that period. However, that period was also characterized by the gothic novel, which certainly influenced the Brontës. That kind of novel has chiefly recourse to the "gothic", a particular kind of setting, a special natural scenery, and the use of a Byronic hero. That is why an emphasis will be put on gothicism, the use of nature and the concept of the Byronic hero, besides the themes of melancholy and the interest in the common. Poems, a play and novels will serve as illustrations.

1.3.1. Melancholy.

There are some people who can observe or experience awful or pleasant events with the same cold eye, without being at all affected. Others may feel concerned at the very moment, but forget with time. Finally, there are other people who are greatly moved by things that seem normal, because they are easily excited. Most of British romantic writers are to be put in that last category. Their sharpened sensibility made them find sensuous enjoyment in minor happenings, just as they fell into despondency when they underwent or witnessed simple grievances. This last situation was the most likely to recur, because those writers were dissatisfied with what they saw. That despondency has the name of melancholy. The question is : Were those romantics naturally sensitive, or did they only develop that trait ? It seems inexplicable that almost a whole generation of writers can be born with such abnormal sensitivity.

Melancholy is a feeling of uneasiness, somehow of sorrow, which degenerates into melancholia when it becomes very stressed.

It is not the lot of the romantics only. Anybody can feel it when realities are in opposition to one's wishes. And as British romantics tended to find fault with almost everything, it is not astonishing that they had that "illness" that they seem to have cherished. John Keats even wrote an "Ode on Melancholy", in which he shows how melancholy is inevitable since it is inseparate from joy :

> She dwells with Beauty-Beauty that must die;
> And Joy, whose hand is over at his lips
> Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
> Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth
> sips. (L.20-23)

That is paradoxical, but the argumentation sounds true and convincing. Happiness becomes synonymous with pain, "in the very temple of delight/veiled melancoly has her sov'ran shrine" (L.24-25). But one can speculate upon that close relationship between two sensations that are mutually exclusive. As romantics seemed to be abnormally emotional, a simple thing that can provide some joy threw them into ecstasy. And as it is to be expected, the fall from ecstasy to another state may be abrupt and equal despondency to the person who experiences that pleasure. That despondent state may not necessarily be the reverse of that ecstasy. Only, the comparison between the two seems so. Thus, if one were normally sensitive, one's delight would be reasonable, and its end would be gradual and reach the average condition, that is the condition in which man is when nothing stirs his emotions. Normally, for the ordinary man with moderate feelings, melancholy should be caused by a dissatisfying or painful happening.

That idea of pleasure associated with melancholy is also stated by Wordsworth. But with him, the association is understandable, since the situation is concrete. It may happen that the experience of joy immediately recalls past and recent sufferings, and thus cannot provide true pleasure. Wordsworth shows it in "Surprised by Joy", in which the speaker's feeling of happiness is suddenly replaced by a pang as that happiness calls back to his mind the death of his beloved :

> But how could I forget thee ? Through what
> power,
> Even for the least division of an hour
> Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
> To my most grievous loss ! [L.6-9]

That situation can often occur. The speaker, like anybody, has an opportunity to enjoy something, and wants to share his pleasure with the beloved, but he remembers that the latter is no more. It is not then joy which brings about melancholy, but the situation that recalls remembrances. In that case, joy is not synonymous with pain, but a reminder. For the speaker, to allow himself "the least division of an hour" of pleasure is like a sin, since he should not have dared while the other is in the grave. That extract does not then show only the link between pain and pleasure, but also the great source of melancholy, death. British romantics were deeply moved by it. Its occurence was an opportunity to question the significance of life. The main conclusion was that all existence is nothingness. Coleridge's "What Is Life" is a pertinent question. Just as joy and melancholy are difficult to separate from one another, according to Keats, life and death come from the same bottom. Life supposes death and vice-versa.

Death is always overwhelming, and British romantic writers devote many writings on it, or rather on the despondency it leaves behind. Hence they tend to lengthen the time of mourning. (Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights mourns his Catherine until his death). The loss of a beloved can be mourned during all the life-time, and the mourner seems to take pleasure in that or to take as an obligation that state of drowsiness. It is like a way of staying in communion with the deceased. That shows again how romantics were easily impressed. Death upsets anybody, and some scenes may awaken reminiscences of it, but one must make an effort and try to lead a normal life after a certain time. An eternal mourning is abnormal, certainly sentimental and romantic.

Poems about death abound in British romanticism. We have for example Wordsworth's "Extempore Effusion Upon the Death of James Hogg", Keats' "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be", etc. Similarly, many novels of that period have death as principal theme. One may even call those books "death novels", because other themes dealt in them are often secondary and come as its complements. Those are for example revenge, problems of heritage, orphanage, etc. But the romantic preoccupation with death is not truly pathological, since humanity is always threatened by it. The human condition is tragic enough, but death comes to deepen the abyss of despair by annihilating man's efforts, dreams and hopes. It is understandable then that romantics, whose emotions were easily stirred, gave an important place to it in their works.

It is not only the separation between two lovers or friends that arouses melancholy. All kinds of instabilities, the inevitable end of things and men, as hinted in Shelley's "A Lament", can give birth to that gloomy mood. In romantic works, melancholy is

often associated with reveries at sunset or twilight. It seems that those hours are suitable for melancholy since they awaken the reminiscences of the happiness of the past. That is also questionable. For some people, those hours can be a favourable time to thinking about all the pleasant things or events encountered during the day. If sunset provides someone with a delightful sight, I do not see how it can plunge him into a melancholic state. He can take then profit from his wanderings and thank God because he is still alive instead of wondering why he is still living with his sufferings. Melancholy may become sharp and turn into a longing for death, as with some romantics. Death is seen as a better world where they would be released from their vissicitudes. So, one can say that romantics often force sources of melancholy, and can find pain where balanced people can find pleasure.

Briefly, British romantic writers' melancholy is mainly due to their disenchantment with existing realities, which is in turn the result of their high sensibility. Death, and on the whole the sense of life, is one of the principal preoccupations of those despondent "philosophers". That is why they dream of the happiness of the past and of childhood, that they think more perfect than present life.

1.3.2. Veneration of the Common

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's and the romantics' praise of primitivism, and most often of the common, is one of the aspects which differenciate them from classicists. While classic writers' subject matter is mainly the nobles and their refined and elegant manners, the British romantic writer's interest lies in the ordinary people and their simplicity.

That does not mean that the nobles are completely relegated to the position of mere onlookers in romantic poems or novels. They may play an important role, but are often depicted without the eulogistic terms as with classicists. Just as the primitive man is contrasted with the civilized one, the noble is often opposed to the rustic, and the former is most of the time portrayed with all his foibles, while the peasant's value, even superiority, is acknowledged.

But it is not only people who attract those romantics. All that is simple, ordinary, people or things, catches their attention. Wordsworth acts as their spokesman and explains, in the "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads", their inclination towards the rough:

> Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint and speak a plainer and emphatic language ...; because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.[8]

This argumentation is reasonable. It is of course romantic, but exempt from the sentimentalism that characterizes Rousseau's explanation of the supremacy of the "noble savage". Wordsworth's assertion can be observed and proved even nowadays. If we compare a citizen with a peasant or urban with rustic life, the gap is wide between their respective moral dispositions. The citizen generally has valuable book-knowledge. He is constantly informed of the up-to-date fashion and ideas, and thus adopts polished manners and looks. But he tends to overlook the worth of moral qualities. He is eager to climb all the steps towards success as

fast as he can, is in continual competition. And success implies wealth, that he wants to amass, whatever means he uses. Most of the time, he shows disregard for others' welfare in his ambitious enterprises, and can easily have recourse to hypocrisy, artificiality, even cruelty. The peasant, on the other hand, is not intellectually bright, has rough manners, but has a keen sense of humanism. He also wants to make progress, but without necessarily crushing his neighbour. He is more a social than an individual being. Consequently, he may be genuine, just, endowed with other qualities that the egoism of the city annihilates.

But the weakness found in Rousseau's vision of the primitive man is similar to Wordsworth's vision of rusticity. Both consider the positive aspects of what they defend and ignore, probably deliberately, the negative sides that are evident. All that is rustic is not perfect, all that is urban does not lack positive qualities. The only difference between Wordsworth and Rousseau is that the former's view seems to me close to the truth than the latter's.

Among the common or ordinary, British romantics include the lower classes or the oppressed. That reminds us of their sensibility to any kind of injustice. They generally condemn the great and support the humble, the poor. British romantic writers are so troubled by any kind of unfair ruling that they sometimes urge the under-privileged to rebel against their oppressor. That idea is found in Shelley's "Song to the Men of England", in which the poet reminds the working man how the seed he sows and all his wealth are appropriated by others

(stanza 3). He advises the oppressed to "sow the seed-but let no tyrant reap;/ Find wealth-let no impostor heap;" (stanza 6) . It is a call to revolt. In praising the work of the common man, then, the poet at the same time upsets the powerful. And thus, the theme of the veneration of the common man can be a complement to that of revolt.

It is chiefly in novels that the important place given to the ordinary is very visible. Rough characters are presented with a faithfull rendering of their unrefined language, even dialects. That is for instance seen in Walter Scott's novels. British romantic poets' interest in the unsophisticated is also revealed by the simple things that their poems treat. For example, an urn awakens Keats' imagination; a suim inspires Byron; an ordinary countrygirl, Lucy Gray, is a worthwhile topic for Wordsworth. Similarly, their style is free from rigid patterns, contrary to that of the classicists'. All those traits can be found in the Brontës' works, who also write about simple, even sometimes rustic people, with faithful descriptions of their daily occupations, in an ordinary language.

The glorification of the common or the simple person is then due to the fact that he is thought to be exempt from every kind of trick (a "quality" of the powerful), and is a treasure of authenticity. It is at least the opinion of most of British romantic writers, a view which seems in fact romantic, since not always right.

1.3.3. The Significance of Nature.

As mentioned above, there are many romanticisms which share similarities among them, but each of them also has its own properties. For British romantic poets, the treatment of nature -and in some way of gothicism- has its particularities. That theme has been discussed by almost all the romantics, but the feeling for nature carries a touch of novelty with British writers, especially poets. Almost half or more than a half of the poems they wrote are about that nature, directly or through other themes. In novels, one notices that nature is not only viewed as a device for embellishing the story. On the contrary, it is used as a reinforcement or accompaniment to the characters' moods. However, even though the place afforded to it in British writings, especially in poetry, is important, nature's significance varies depending on poets. The great disparity between Wordsworth's, Byron's and Shelley's conceptions of it illustrates that assertion.

Wordsworth's love of nature surpasses the ordinary, and he deals with it beautifully. Hence his nickname of "nature's high priest". His fascination for it tends towards true mysticism. But first, it is noteworthy to state what is understood by "nature". It may have many meanings. It can be applied to human nature, to the nature of things, and so on. For romantic writers, it mainly refers "to the great outdoors, the natural landscape or seascape, to mountains, fields, rivers, flowers, winds and rains, storms and tempests, moon and stars, night and day".[9] Thus, it includes all the natural surroundings and events.

We saw that Wordsworth thinks that countrypeople are endowed with

qualities that townspeople lack. The explanation for this that he seems to propose is that the former are in constant contact with nature, and thus gain much from that cohesion. He deliberately ignores the negative aspects of nature and only puts forward the virtues it promotes. His poems about it look like prayers to a deity with whom one feels in communion and to whom all the requests are addressed. The respect Wordsworth has for nature is consequently a kind of religious respect. Religion is believed to make its disciples better, just as nature does, according to Wordsworth.

Nature is often connected with innocence or perfection. It can be then expected that it will be most of the time associated with childhood with which it shares those qualities, since "Heaven lies about us in our infancy".[10] Man is created in the image of God, but as he is corrupt, the child is more likely to resemble the Creator than the adult. Then, as nature reminds man of God's goodness, the child is the most qualified to taste its sweetness. That close relationship between nature and childhood is well illustrated in Wordsworth's "Ode : Intimations of Immortality".

The poem begins with "The Child is father of the Man". Childhood moulds the future adult, and to understand one's adulthood sometimes requires going back to one's past and searching for the root of present behaviour. As the poet states later on in that poem "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" :

> The thought of our past years in me doth
> breed
> Perpetual benediction : not indeed
> For that which is most worthy to be blest;
> [...] But for those first affections,
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,

Are yet the fountain light of all
our day,
Are yet a master light of all our
seeing; [L.135-154]

So, be he happy or not, it is the "recollections" of his childhood which give him the force to endure the ups and downs of life. That is where he draws his strength, even though he wonders "whither is fled the visionary gleam? /Where is it now, the glory and the dream?" of his infancy. [L.57-58]. Wordsworth's poetry is a religious poetry, and that "gleam" is the gleam of heaven and God. When the poet goes in nature, he sees innocence and spontaneous joy in nature, which remind him of heaven, bring back the visionary gleam to his mind.

To show or highlight the difference between the adult and the child, Wordsworth considers how they both perceive the magnificence of nature. In "our infancy", all is bright. But progressively, nature begins to lose its purity for the "growing boy", then for the "youth", and finally for "the Man", little by little [L.67-77]. The child is the one who takes more delight than the adult in meadows, grove, stream, the earth, the Rainbow, the Rose, the Moon, waters, the birds and their songs, the Winds, etc.

"Ode : Intimations of Immortality" is the cross-section of the poems that try to put together all the natural elements that romantics praise. To show the high regard that the poet holds for those elements, he capitalizes them. We have Beast, Birds, Fountains, Hills, Groves,... which are personified like human or spiritual beings.

To tress the value of nature, Wordsworth likes to oppose it to the city. In "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey", he shows how a short stay in nature can be a stock of forces that allow him to put up with the city for a long time :

> Those beauteous forms,
> Through a long absence, have not been to me
> As is a landscape to a blind man's eye;
> But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
> of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
> In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
> And passing even into my purer mind,....[L.23-29]

The poet's whole being is then infused with those sensations : in the blood, along the heart, and into his mind. From this, we notice that nature is not only viewed as a source of pleasure, but also an escape for the poet who feels he is in a certain way a stranger in the city. And in contemplating the happiness inherent in the elements of nature, such as birds or trees, the poet wonders why man cannot follow that example and acquire the serenity prescribed by God, instead of wronging his fellow-man. That can be found in Wordsworth's "Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey", in which the question about human condition, especially about man as the source of his own misfortunes, is raised. The poet seems to suggest that a natural order, law, would be an effective answer to it. Contrary to many people who think that the development of science will promote human condition, Wordsworth underestimates the knowledge drawn from books. For him, "one moment" spent in nature has much more worth than "toiling reason",[11] that is learning from books at the cost of great efforts. The spontaneous is more fruitful than the forced. That is a visionary idea, at least for the modern man who is urged to devote all his

force to work instead of sentimentalizing. He even scarcely has time for reverie, and if he manages to find it, he would appear ridiculous in this era of practicality.

Nevertheless, the significance of nature differs from one British poet to another. All of them are interested in it, but it is seen from different angles. The strong attraction exerted by nature on Wordsworth tends to worship, because that poet has reached the degree of considering that nature as a God or manifestation of God. The atheists Byron and Shelley, fine examples of British poets who do not share the Wordsworthian respect for nature, like the latter for other reasons. Like other romantics, they are always in search of things or events that can stir strong emotions. For them then, nature is to praise mainly because some of its aspects are sources of powerful feelings. That is why contrary to Wordsworth who describes a calm, quiet nature, Byron and Shelley often depict its furious aspect. When one analyzes most of their poems about nature, one notices that they look like a description of any other spectacle liable to move deeply. For example, for a boxing-lover, the sight of two boxers tearing each other, with bleeding noses and swollen eyes, gives rise to great excitement. For another spectator, a concert of classical music gives him that excitement, when sweetness has much more appeal to his heart than violence. Similarly, if one opposes the Wordsworthian view of romantic nature to that of Shelley and Byron, one finds out that the former is of nature in its restful and soothing appearance, the latter in its violent form likely to provoke inward trouble or to represent it.

Nature in its turbulent aspect is portrayed in many poems, such as Shelley's "A Dirge" in which we have "Rough wind, that moanest loud/ Grief too sad for song" [L.1-2]. The poet is not dealing with a breeze, with a gentle wind, but with "rough wind". And that wind is not only considered as a mere natural phenomenon. Nature is compared with man. The wind moans with grief, the storm is sad and is crying [L.5], and natural elements" wail for the world'wrong" [L.8]. In this respect, Shelley meets with Wordsworth, who also finds some correlation between man's state of mind or spirits and his perception of nature. But "A Dirge" presents a good parallelism which shows nature as a mirror of the human condition, and not as something perfect in contrast with man's wrongs, as it is with Wordsworth.

Shelley's "A Dirge" carries a note almost similar to that found in Byron's "Stanzas Composed During a Thunderstorm", except that the wind gives place to a thunderstorm. A feeling of wretchedness can be guessed. It is on a "nightly blast","angry clouds are pouring fast/ The Vengeance of the skies", and the hopeless people are wondering "who mid thunder- peals can hear [their] signal of distress " [stanzas 1 and 6]. Nature's negative aspect is referred to. It is no more a mother, a protector with goodness and power, but a danger to man. But it is still able to awaken the poet's feelings, since it becomes an opportunity to muse over his "sweet Florence". It does not then leave him indifferent. And when one contrasts his as well as Shelley's attraction for the threatening side of nature with Wordsworth's interest in its quietness, one is tempted to conclude that maybe the treatment of nature by British romantic poets depends on their respective temperaments and conception of life.

So, even if the theme of nature is often greatly treated by British romantic writers, there is a visible divergency in the way they view it. For Wordsworth who takes it as a kind of deity, nature is often connected with childhood, a theme that Emily and Charlotte Brontë explore, as it will be seen later. Both sisters indirectly show the great correlation between the characters's childhood and their future development and maturity. Concerning nature, its portrayal is in accordance with the characters' mood and the events involved.

1.3.4. The Byronic Hero

Many romantic writers were known to be rebels, but Lord Byron seems to have surpassed other British romantics as far as non-conformism is concerned. The proof is that he is the only one to have given rise to an archetypal character, the "Byronic hero", whose origin is not only in Byron's work, but also in his life.

Lord Byron's conduct was always a defiance to his contemporaries, and he seemed proud of arousing amazement around him. For example, when people thought that he had incestuous and homosexual love affairs, he took pleasure in instigating the suspiscion instead of refuting it . He had a "complex character blended into one romantic, cynical, satirical, amorous, humorous, adventurous, melodramatic, liberty-loving person who roamed over Europe, tasting the joys of life, but ever searching and ever unsatisfied."[12] In brief, he had by himself almost all the characteristics of the revolutionary romantics. We know that they refused to comply with the generally accepted customs, conventions or laws of their society. Unfortunately, it was difficult to reach that goal

without being condemned by that society. That is why their main motto was liberty. They did not always express that wish directly, but their works reveal that thirst. That liberty supposed the liberty for the individual to express all his feelings and to behave as he wanted, as it is rendered in Wordsworth's "The Prelude"; Book II, 232 :

> Could I embody and unbosom now
> That which is most within me - Could
> I wreak
> My thoughts upon expression, and thus
> throw
> Soul,heart, mind, passions, feelings,
> strong or weak,
> All that I would have sought, and all
> I seek, bear, know, feel,- and yet
> breathe-into one word,
> And that one word were lightning,
> I would speak;

That is what the Brontës attempt to do, but it is hard to know to what degree their goal is achieved. Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre seem to be intense statements of "soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings", etc. Anyway, total independance is almost impossible in a world that is said to be civilized. Even in a primitive community, one can presume that thorough freedom is unthinkable as long as man will have to live with another man. Things would perhaps be different if he lived alone in a world inhabited only by himself, leading his life as he wishes for. But man is a social being.

As Byron's -and through him all other romantics'- longings could not be fulfilled without scandalmongering, he invented a fictitious character who acted as he would like to, a character that received

the name of "Byronic hero" afterwards. (Psychologists would say that it was a means of getting rid of his inhibitions or complexes, a "défoulement"). He was to be found in many works later on. That personage is "moody, melodramatic, tender, sinister, passionate, but restless and unsatisfied."[13] There is a striking likeness between Byron's traits and the hero's. The Byronic hero is found in "Don Juan" and in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage". But it seems that it is in Manfred that that archetypal character reflects more the poet. Of course, Manfred is the folding-screen behind which Byron hides himself, but the thoughts are his.

Manfred is the main character in Manfred, a play by Lord Byron. He is a count, then of noble birth like Byron. The setting is the Higher Alps, now in the mountains, and now in the protagonist's gothic castle, and the action takes place at midnight. All those elements already set the mood. The reader is immediately struck by their particularity and can begin to speculate about the possible events to come. They seem to be ominous, and that feeling is reinforced by the loneliness of the main character stressed in the stage indications. Those queer surroundings fit for a Byronic hero and remind us of the kind of natural environment that Childe Harold, the hero in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", prefers :

> Where [rise] the mountains, there to him [are] friends;
> Where [rolls] the ocean, thereon [is] his home;
> Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
> He [has] the passion and the power to roam;
> The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
> [Are] unto him companionship; they [speak]
> A mutual language [canto III, L.109-115]

That unusual landscape is considered as dangerous by the normal man, but is liked by Childe Harold. Similarly, Manfred also cherishes nature in its wild aspect, it is in it that his "early strength exult[s]" : "My joy [is] in the wilderness, -to breathe/ The difficult air of the iced mountain's top "[Act II, sc.2,L.62-63] As mountains and gothic mansions are often associated with emotions, even passions, one can expect to witness a display of deep feelings in the play.

Manfred feels out of place in the world of his fellow-men, who are not in fact his fellows since he finds he has nothing in common with them : "Powers, passions - All I see in other beings,/ Have been to me as rain unto the sands. [Act,Sc.1, L.22-23]. He is then a being apart, roaming above mankind, hence the self-sufficiency he often shows. He is alienated from others "since that all- nameless hour" [Act 1, sc.1, L.24] . That is the root of his gloominess, but which is not clearly stated. It is a kind of mystery, strengthened by the use of the supernatural all over the play. Manfred is under spell, "has been baptized... with a curse," and most of his interlocutors are spiritual beings. If we put aside that aspect of the play and consider the protagonist's torment, we find that he is torn apart. He is restless, haunted by a secret that makes him want "forgetfulness", "self-oblivion". That is in fact Manfred's preoccupation throughout the play : to forget the unnamed thing. He seems to be tortured by remorse.

One can imagine the pang engendered by a longing for "self-oblivion". It is impossible to find remedy for it, except of course in death. Manfred is powerful, above all men, but he can never be happy. That is the lot of Byronic heroes, who undergo ceaseless sufferings, and thus cannot enjoy their material wealth on earth.

Manfred would certainly like to exchange his life for that of the simple but happy hunter.

The only solution to Manfred's problem is death, that he wishes for but also fears. But the haunting spirit predicts that "Nor to slumber, nor to die, / shall be in [his] destiny." [Act I, sc.1, L.254-5]. He is doomed to eternal sufferings. Even the Destinies who "bow/ The necks of men" [Act II, sc.4, L.20-21] have no power over him since he has been raised to their level.

However, Manfred was not always a lone creature. He had a lover, Astarte, who "had the same lone thoughts and wanderings, the quest of hidden knowledge" [Act II, sc.II, L.109-110], and who is now dead. They nourished passionate feelings for each other, a passion that could only lead them to the kind of misfortune that Manfred is enduring :

> Thou lovedst me
> Too much, as I loved thee : we were not made
> To torture thus each other - though it were
> The deadliest sin to love as we have loved
> [Act II, sc.4, L.120-123]

Astarte's death seems to be brought on by shame. "The deadliest sin" is that they shamefully had a love affair whereas they were brother and sister (or half-sister). But as Astarte's death did not break off their scandalous bond, Manfred cannot find respite now, and his only rescue is her. She is the only one to release him from the burden of torment he carries. The play has a happy end, since he is supposed to join her, in death. Often, death is the only refuge for Byronic heroes. They are tortured people, because of hidden causes, and thus cannot find peace during their lifetime.

Manfred is a play full of supernatural beings, a mere allegory, some would say. But it would be perhaps to ignore the significant role that the Byronic hero plays. In fact, Manfred cannot find peace because he is haunted by a bitter remorse. That remorse is due to a secret thing that took place between him and Astarte, a thing that should not have happened, namely incest. One can make a parallelism between that situation and that of Lord Byron. He had had incestuous love affairs with his half-sister Augusta Leigh, and his conscience could not be quiet. We know that it was mainly because of the scandal which derived from that shameful story that he quit England for ever. It is said that both Manfred and Astarte had a "quest of hidden knowledge". Byron and Augusta also had that quest, because incest is prohibited and thus must be hidden. It was "the deadliest sin to love" each other as they did because that love was against divine and social laws, and deadly because it brought about a kind of banishment of the two lovers, once it was displayed. Byron and the Byronic hero share then noticeable traits.

But despite Manfred's grief and remorse, he is not ready to repent. To confess his sins would be to lower himself, it appears, especially to an inferior being whom he surpasses in powers. He treats other men with condescension, and thus cannot bother accepting their advice. That is one of the characteristics of Byronic heroes. They are superior persons, physically and intellectually, and they think of themselves as such, often treating others in a patronizing way.

Thus, the Byronic hero feels himself alienated from other men, just as many romantics were, but he is very proud of being a unique creature. As most of the romantics often wanted to appear and to be acknowledged first as individuals and then-only then- as members of a whole, the Byronic hero sums up almost all the dreams that they

could not fulfill. But his mental dispositions are mainly near his creator's, Lord Byron. The latter's worth is that he enriched the literature that followed of that queer personage. Charlotte and Emily Brontë are among the authors who make use of those tortured but proud heroes, namely Rochester and Heathcliff.

1.3.5. The Gothic.

Contrary to the preceding themes which are chiefly liked by poets but seem not to interest novelists, gothicism is introduced by the latter. It is even in novels that that theme is likely to be treated successfully, because the gothic heroes are then fully portrayed. Also, all the details are given, the descriptions are well done, the relationships between characters, setting and events are clear, so that the characteristics of gothicism are combined and lead to a coherent whole liable to provoke horror or evoke the supernatural. By the way, writers often have recourse to that supernatural or inexplicable in order to achieve a gothic atmosphere. By supernatural, we understand the power of forces or spirits to control man and his actions. They bring about mysterious accidents or misfortunes and provide man with implacable hatred and pleasure in cruelty, fearful monsters appear in graveyards, etc. The gothic and the supernatural are thus strongly related to each other. In Mary Shelley's Frankenstein,[14] a gothic novel that the Brontës had possibly read, and from which some gothic elements can be extracted, the place of the supernatural is also noticeable.

Before the publication of Frankenstein in 1818, other gothic novels had been written. The first was Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Story by Horace Walpole, in 1764. "The Gothic novel represents the romantic

return to the medieval, colored with the lurid hues of terror, the horror of the supernatural, the vaguely but monstruously sensation," and some of its principal characteristics are "haunted castles, terrible storms at night, secret footsteps ..., lost wills,forged documents ..., low moans, and piercing shrieks."[15] All of those elements are not present in Frankenstein, but its gothic appeal is undeniable.

Besides Castle of Otranto, there was a proliferation of other gothic novels: Vathek by William Beckford, The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian by Mrs Anne Radcliffe, The Monk by Matthew Gregory Lewis, etc. They influenced some British romantic poets, especially Coleridge. Of all of them, he appears to excel in the treatment of that theme, often mingled with terror. He succeeds in uniting dream to reality,and the combination is interesting enough. For instance, in "Christabel," Christabel has fallen under Geraldine's spell: "And Christabel saw the lady's eye/ And nothing else saw she thereby" [L.157-158]. Coleridge uses spirits in the form of human beings -such as Geraldine-, often endowed with hypnotic power. That hypnotic power is also found in "The Ancient Mariner", besides the supernatural things that happen to the ship : "He holds him with his glittering eye/ The Wedding Guest stood still [L.13-14]. The old mariner's "glittering eye" weakens the wedding guest's self-mastery, and he obeys like "a three years child" [L.15]. Those are brief extracts which illustrate the use of the supernatural and gothic in British romantic poetry.

To come back to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, it is a novel built on the horror engendered by an artificial monster. Most of the action

is set in the mountainous region of Switzerland. Nature is first presented merely as an embellishment in the narrative, next as an accompaniment to the atmosphere of the story. It is this second aspect that is recurrent in gothic novels where characters, events and natural manifestations are in total communion, one acting as a complement to the other.

Nature is described as an appeasing force, for instance when characters feel despondent. Nature is often capitalized (p.59), liable to arouse " the most exquisite impressions" and "ecstasy" (p.112); it is "maternal" (p.155), "imperial" (p.157), "object of a cult" (p.263), is "dame Nature" (p.268), and so on. It is praised throughout the work. But the horrifying events dealt with in Frankenstein fit, especially for thunderstorm, lightnings, etc., as if nature were expressing its rage because of Dr. Frankenstein's usurpation.

At the beginning of the novel, the story of doctor Frankenstein and his monster is not yet told. But the narrator's condition is suitable for it. He has undertaken a dangerous enterprise, an expedition towards the pole. He is surrounded by "ice and snow" and feels very lonely (p.23). Hence he can easily fathom the existence of supernatural powers : "But amid these savage and mysterious regions, many things would appear possible, whereas they would elsewhere bring on laughter from those who ignore the various powers of nature" (p.43). The setting is then appropriate for hearing dreadful things. A city with refined surroundings and genteel tastes would sound out of place for the account of Frankenstein's researches, the monster he creates at the cost of great effort, and the tragedy that

befalls him as a reward for those efforts, for his usurpation.

To flash back to the beginning action of the work, the researches Frankenstein has to carry out in order to reach his aim are in themselves gruesome, disgusting. He has to go into graveyards, disinter corpses, analyze their gradual decomposition, "find out how worms feed on those marvels called eyes and brain" (pp.80-81), and draw his materials from those corpses. That is heartless, and he pays for it. As he says, he undertakes things which are the most unbearable to human feelings. That is one of the main characteristics of the gothic : to treat things that are almost unendurable to man's susceptibility, liable to awaken his deepest sensibility. Most people cannot put up with the sight of a corpse. If they were to witness the dissection of that corpse, with the removal of the bowels, the heart, the brain, etc, some of them would go mad.

The result of those researches, as it has to be expected, is horrible : on artificial giant of eight feet, fearful to see : "His yellowish skin hardly [hides] the network of sinews and blood-vessels", he has horrible "vitreous eyes" deeply sunk into "livid orbits" (p.91). That is gothic. The description of the monster inspires disgust and fright.

The monster's physical aspect reflects his heart. But he is naturally good, kind, serviceable, as evidenced by his good deeds before his depravity. It is the society which rejects and maltreats him that makes him bad. He is the product of his society, a lamb turned into a wolf by man's injustice and cruelty. From then, he swears to devote all his power to his creator's destruction :"I will

gorge myself with death until I satisfy my thirst for blood with that of all the beings dear to you" (p.163). That outermost thirst for revenge characterizes gothic works. The monster murders Frankenstein's brother, his friend, and his wife on the very night of their marriage. Death succeeds death.

The correlation between the mood of the story and the natural manifestations is visible. The day the monster is given life -the origin of the whole tragedy-, it is a sinister night of November, at one o'clock, it is raining, and the candle is consuming (p.90). After his brother's death, Frankenstein meets with the monster during a dark night of rain, tempest, thunder and lightnings (pp. 120-121). The night his wife is murdered, there is a violent wind and torrential rain (pp.330-331). Other examples can be found, but those three are sufficient enough to show how character and natural environment work together. As in other gothic novels, tragic events generally take place during night, a propitious time for evil to occur. The atmosphere is full of suspense and tension.

Concerning the use of the gothic hero and of the supernatural in Frankenstein, Dr. Frankenstein resembles the gothic hero in some ways because he dares to put himself on a divine pedestal. He is like Satan in trying to take God's power. In his attempt to create a perfect human being, he is acting against the laws of nature and usurping nature's God. Like other gothic heroes, he is gnawed by remorse because of the dreadful creature he set in motion. He has no distinctive physical marks such as piercing eyes or scornful smiles, but he is vastly intellectually superior to other men.

The supernatural intervenes in order to show him his inferiority. The hero is an usurper and is punished in the most terrible ways by the supernatural by usurping God's power of creation.

After having considered the use of gothicism, one can wonder why romantics liked to explore that dark aspect of things. One can interpret that attraction to the strange as a search for new sensations, an exploration of extreme psychic states of mind. All that goes beyond our understanding -ghosts, magic, superstitution- are stressed. Actual things do not satisfy them, and unusual ones are to be found in imagination. For instance, the theme of madness is recurrent in British romantic writings, and is often in correlation with the horrors of gothicism. Madness occurs also in Jane Eyre at Thornfield, a gothic setting, and probably also at Wuthering Heights in Wuthering Heights.

To conclude this chapter on romanticism, we can have a look at a novel which was published long after Frankenstein, but also before Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre, in 1838. It is Oliver Twist,[16] by the great popular novelist Charles Dickens. Few people would accept that he is a romantic writer. In any case, Oliver Twist has many romantic characteristics. The main themes treated by British romantics are in that book, of course not always in the pure romantic conception, but they are all the same present, in one or another way. That illustrates how the romantic era had not definite end, which means that Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights were not at all out of place at their publication in 1847.

The five themes we have already considered are going to be surveyed in Oliver Twist, to show that they can be observed in novels written outside the true romantic period. First, the role of the

common is important in that book. It is even about pariahs. Fagin, Sikes, Monks, Nancy, Charles Bates, the Artful Dodger, etc, are not merely "common". Those depraved robbers and criminals are under the ordinary. Dickens depicts them in a vivid way, so that when they are compared with genteel people such as Mr.Brownlow and the gentleman in the white waist coat, the latter's character is shallow while the former's is forceful. Those scoundrels are truly real, present.

Before Oliver Twist's fall among Fagin's gang, he is an orphan boy maltreated first at the workhouse, then at the undertaker's. His condition arouses pity, compassion, even melancholy. That feeling is strengthened at the vicissitudes he undergoes during his journey to London. As his nature is not inclined to wickedness, he cannot be happy among thieves. There are many episodes in the novel where little Oliver is plunged into melancholy, thus stirring the reader's. A kind of Wordsworthian child, Oliver preserves his pastoral innocence.

If one had to look for a Byronic hero in Oliver Twist, one would be puzzled. Is it Fagin, Sikes, or Monks, with their misleading guiles ? Is it Mrs Bumble, that "great experimental philosopher" (p.5) full of hypocrisy and greediness ? Is it ...? It is difficult to say who among them deserves that name. What is certain is that the novel abounds in non-conformists, lawless ruffians and law-breakers, and Fagin, Sikes, Monks and the whole gang are appropriate characters in a gothic novel.

Nature is nearly worshipped, especially when Oliver is leading a happy life in the woods of the countryside, of the "inland village",

with his benefactors : "Who can describe the pleasure and delight, the peace of mind and soft tranquility, the sickly boy felt in the balmy air, and among the green hills ..." (p.262). Country scenery is endowed with a purifying power, physical as well as moral purification, curing bodily illnesses , as Dickens suggests in that novel. But nature can also be the mirror of the onlooker's inner mood. The perception he has of it depends greatly upon that mood :

> Men who look on nature, and their fellow-men, and cry that all is dark and gloomy, are in the right; but the sombre colours are reflections from their own jaundiced eyes and hearts. (pp.281-282)

There is then a connection between the state of one's inward state and the way one views the external world.

Finally, although there are no old castles in Oliver Twist, a gothic atmosphere is predominant in that book. Some characters are led by hatred and revenge, innocent ones are abused, wills are stolen, poverty is sickening, the gang lives in kinds of filthy holes, etc. Here is a sample of some characters' dwellings: "Crazy wooden galleries ...; windows, broken and patched..., rooms so small, so filthy, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted...; decaying foundations..."(p.420). That physical setting is appropriate for the underworld or gangsterdom. Dickens succeeds in integrating his characters in an environment they are likely to move in. When horrible events occur in those slums, such as the murder of Nancy, they add flavour to gothicism, and the reader is not surprised by them. For example, the scene describing how Sikes smashes Nancy so that her body becomes "mere flesh, and blood, no more but such flesh, and so much blood"

(p.400) is horrible, but not very unexpected. The pursuit of Sikes by Nancy's ghost or spirit -and his dog's reaction, all fit as well.

So, British romantic themes such as melancholy, the interest in the common and in nature, the gothic, can be found in Oliver Twist, even if they may appear in a different version. The child's innate perfection is highlighted. In spite of the corrupt milieu that Oliver is compelled to live in, he keeps his natural goodness. It means that man can learn from children because they have that innocence that comes from their closeness to God.

On the whole, romanticism in Europe came as the opposite of classicism and as a consequence of the revolutionary ideas and events of the time. British romantics were also infused with that new conception of things, and had for a long time been influenced by the cult of sensibility . Poets, dramatists and novelists emphasize some themes, such as the melancholy due to their dissatisfaction, and the praise of the common man. Also, the Byronic hero, nature and the gothic are fully exploited, particularly in novels, such as Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre. It is those two works which constitute the object of study in the following chapters. I will show how the romantic characteristics function in them, particularly in terms of setting and character.

Endnotes.

[1]Arthur O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticism", English Romantic Poets : Modern Essays in Criticism (New York, 1960) p.6.

[2]J.B. Priestley, Adventures in English Literature, vol III (New York, 1963), p.122.

[3]Henri Peyre, "Romantisme", Encyclopaedia Universalis, vol.16 (Paris: Encyclopaedia Universalis France S.A., 1980), p.86.

[4]G.K. Anderson, Tradition and Revolt, vol.3 (Atlanta, 1967), p.279.

[5]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "A Discourse on Inequality".

[6]Ibid.

[7]G.K. Anderson, ibid., p.269.

[8]M.H. Abrams, et al, eds., The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Revised, vol.2 (New York, 1968), p.102.

[9]G.K. Anderson, ibid., p.270.

[10]William Wordsworth, "Ode : Intimations of Immortality", p.67.

[11]Ibid, "To My Sister", pp.25-26.

[12]G.K. Anderson, ibid., p.460.

[13]George B. Woods, et al. The Literature of England : An Anthology and a History, 3rd ed., vol.2 (Chicago, 1948), p.14.

[14]Mary W. Shelley, Frankenstein (Verviers : Gerard & Cº, 1964). My translation.

[15]George B. Woods, ibid., p.24.

[16]Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist (New York : A Washington Square Press Book, 1964).

CHAPTER II : ELEMENTS OF ROMANTICISM IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS : SETTING AND CHARACTER.

> Character and environment are impregnated with each other ... the character ...is as he is because of the environment and cannot be detached from it.[1]

2.1. Social Environment

2.1.1. The Child and the Family

It is commonly believed that the development of personality is partly determined by the mutual action of internal potentialities of the child, on the one hand, and of the social environment, on the other hand. That is what modern psychologists think. Romantics seem to share that view. But although they also show the connection between social setting and character, they are mostly interested in the children's relationship to natural environment. That can be observed in Wuthering Heights. However, in that novel, the close interaction between natural and social environments is undeniable. The influence of natural manifestations on a character depends upon the way he views them or upon his temperament, view or temperament often shaped by his childhood milieu; the Byronic hero is as he is partly because of his social environment, etc. That is why to study the impact of natural environment on a character requires also knowing his social environment. Thus, before I turn to the truly romantic elements in Wuthering Heights, such as the impact of physical nature on character or the Byronic hero, I need first to establish the main characters, the social

forces that mould them, and their relationships.

In Wuthering Heights, the impact of social environment -mainly of the family- on the child seems to be determining. The character's behaviour in adulthood is often understood if one analyzes the circumstances under which he was brought up. Except Heathcliff who will be fully examined later on, the other characters who are reared at the Heights are going to be considered.

The Heights is the property of farm owners, the Earnshaws. They are in fact middle-class farm owners, who can read and write, people with some money and property. They are not then as common as some of their servants. But anyway, they have the roughness of common people. It is on the children of the Heights that a great emphasis is put, and the fact that the book is entitled Wuthering Heights is not arbitrary. Most of the action takes place there, and the characters who play the important roles in the story are from that rustic house.

Romantics are interested in the way the society forms a child. For example, in Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality", the poet shows how a child, with his innocence, often has to change in order to accommodate to the world. The child comes "trailing clouds of glory" (L.65) from his home in heaven and is turned into someone out of touch with nature, preoccuped with "getting and spending", someone around whom the "prison-house" (L.68) walls of the world have closed. He loses sight of his true god and he is also out of harmony with creation which continues to bear signs of God's creation and mercy.

That is the case at the Heights from the death of old Earnshaw to the improvement of Hareton. The inhabitants of that house blind the growing child's perception of what is good. He becomes uninhibited in the expression of aggression and other emotions. He reacts overtly to any kind of frustration and hits out, not necessarily because he is naturally so, but because he imitates the way adults react to him when he annoys them. The social milieu then takes him away from his "heaven" and teaches him new habits.

At the beginning of the story, the children to be influenced at the Heights are Heathcliff, Hindley, Catherine and Nelly. But Nelly is a case apart, as she rightly says, "I certainly esteem myself a steady, reasonable kind of body ...not exactly from living among the hills"[2] (p.73). The hills surrounding the Heights have no effect on her, contrary to the other characters from there. She is a servant, but she deals more with household duties than with manual labour, she reads much, and thus has raised herself above a common peasant. Later on , Hareton, Linton Heathcliff, and Cathy much later, are compelled to move in that setting. The adults to be imitated are first Old Earnshaw and Joseph, after Mrs Earnshaw's death, and afterwards, they are Hindley, Heathcliff, and Joseph again.

Hindley's bad character is referred to for the first time when he notices that he is no more loved by his father because of Heathcliff. If Old Earnshaw were sensitive enough to not show outwardly that he preferred Heathcliff to his own children, maybe Hindley's jealousy would not have an opportunity to explode. Since Heathcliff's arrival then, Hindley becomes embittered and

is led by a thirst for revenge on his enemy. As a consequence, he "rouse[s] the old man to a fury " (p.42). He strikes his son, and the latter strikes Heathcliff. Hindley's an eye for an eye grows, and that is normal. Many children would react like him. Even when in a same family one child becomes the favourite of the parents', the others tend to dislike him. One can imagine then the situation where the beloved one would be a stranger.

Of course, "the Earnshaws' violent dispositions" (p.156) have a part in Hindley's reactions. But one can say that the ill-treatment he is subject to awakens his inherited violence. Perhaps his impulses would keep dormant if he were not ruled with a heavy hand. If he were brought up in an environment liable to temper his instincts, one can presume that his temperament would be a little bit softened.

When he quits the Heights for college, he is only fourteen, thus still developing his personality. The college is like a complement to or a replacement for his family. Only, it is probable that the conditions in which he goes there can hardly make him like his new milieu. To go there is not a wish, but a means of getting rid of him because he is unwanted at the Heights. Whether the college becomes a good or a threatening setting to him, one will never know. Maybe he is also disliked. In any case, he "[is] altered considerably in three years of his absence" (p;52). At his return at his father's death, he is very irritable, becomes a despot.

Moreover, the girl he loves madly and marries, is not only weak-minded, and thus cannot correct his weaknesses, but also she soon

dies : "he [has] room in his heart for only two idols -his wife and himself : he dote[s] on both and adore[s] one" (p.75). He falls into dissipation after her death, but it is not the end of his misfortunes. It is an opportunity for his avowed enemy Heathcliff to finish him off. Hindley is encouraged to drink until his ruin, and he dies a dog's death. Heathcliff takes the Heights.

The reader of Wuthering Heights is inclined to dislike the personage of Hindley. He is the villain, the bad guy. But if one analyzes closely all those incidents, one notices that there are no remarkable circumstances that can make him better. His life is a succession of vicissitudes, and the root of all of them is in his childhood . If Old Earnshaw had not brought Heathcliff at the Heights, the peaceful climate that reigned there before would not have been threatened. If his father had not disliked Hindley because of Heathcliff, Hindley would not have been gnawed by jealousy and revenge, and thus awakened his violent dispositions. Consequently, he would not have been sent to college from where he came altered. He would not have encountered his silly and sickly wife whose early death plunged him into despair and later on into dissipation, making him the prey of Heathcliff. On the whole, Hindley is not spared by bad luck; and although he is not perfect, he is for the great part victim of his social environment, especially of his father's ill-treatment that is the seed of all the misfortunes that follow him until his death.

Hindley's sister, Catherine, embodies all the passions of the Earnshaws :"Her spirits [are] always at high-water mark.... A wild, wicked slip she [is]... and after all, ... she mean[s] no harm"

(p.48). So, she is not bad, but only high-tempered like other Earnshaws. She has good as well as negative impulses, like any balanced human being. Her deep attachment for Heathcliff whereas he stole her father's affection for her illustrates her goodness. She is above the meanness of jealousy. But she is far from being a good prototype of a 19th century girl, as is depicted in other writings of the time. Catherine is not satisfied with her circumstances and rebels against them, whereas girls are supposed to be quiet, passive. One of the novelties of Wuthering Heights lies then in the presentation of a girl with all her passionate feelings, a true female counterpart of romantic heroes.

But instead of developing Catherine's positive side, the environment perverts it. As it is the case with her brother, her father does not spare her. He does not consider the goodness one can get from her, but always stimulates her darkest aspect by continual scoldings : "His peevish reproofs waken[] in her a naughty delight to provoke him ... doing just what her father hate[s] most.... That [make**s**] her cry first; and then being repulsed continually harden[s] her" (p.49). That is how one's character is shaped. A child's temperament is flexible, and it can be definitively hardened. Even though old Earnshaw is not wicked, the failure to understand his children, after their mother's death into the bargain, embitters them. They become cynical, take pleasure in challenging any kind of authority. Because of their environment, they integrate some negative traits which could be avoided by tactful and humane handling.

One year after the publication of Wuthering Heights, one critic

noticed the importance that Emily Brontë gave to childhood as a basis for one's adulthood, for the latter's failure or success :

> Another reflection springing from the narrative is, that temper is often spoiled in the years of childhood. "The Child is father of the Man". The pains and crosses of its youthful years are engrafted in its blood, and form a sullen and a violent disposition.... But some parents are less wise regarding their children. The intellect in its growth has the faculty of accommodating itself to adverse circumstances. To violence it sometimes opposes violence, sometimes dogged obstinacy. The consequence in either case is fatal to the tranquillity of life[3].

The Wordsworthian conception of childhood is then found in Wuthering Heights. Old Earnshaw is "less wise" in spite of his age, and his children end by opposing violence to violence. One would think that the extract above was drawn from a psychological book. It is psychologists who tend to find the explanation of any kind of abnormal behaviour in childhood. If Old Earnshaw were aware of that phenomenon, he perhaps would react differently. But he is only an unsophisticated farm owner obeying his instints. If he were a comprehensive father, he would be able to moderate a little bit Catherine who "never ha[s] power to conceal her passion" (p.83). She needs some restraining influence, which should be provided by her family.

But if Old Earnshaw reproves Catherine for her impudence, he does not torture her. Hindley, on the other hand, uses a kind of terrorism which is doomed to fail with persons like Catherine. Consequently, her determination becomes fixed: "H. and I are going

to rebel" (p.22). With her challenging temper, she hits back when provoked. Even though they both are Earnshaws, Catherine seems more hot-tempered than Hindley. She is boyish, choosing for instance a whip while she" is hardly six years old" (p.41), whereas Hindley opts for a fiddle. Normally, it should be the other way around. Her preference is then a reflection of her strong character. Knowing that temper, her environment should try to restrain it, but it does just the reverse. She and Heathcliff "both promise[] to grow up as rude savages" (p.53).

The Heights is a milieu in which the adults are spoilt, and thus cannot contribute to the improvement of the children's good habits. Besides Old Earnshaw, there is the sly Joseph who acts as a catalyst in the former's rigidity. From the beginning to the end of the book, that old hypocrite lives at the Heights and witnesses or takes part in the misfortunes that occur there. Joseph is an anti-romantic figure in that he is a brute, but he brings a romantic hue throughout the book. His Yorkshire dialect reminds us of the romantics' attraction for the "plainer and emphatic language" of the rustic people. Joseph comes to add a touch of authenticity to the story.

Joseph is the cunning adviser whose aims seem to be the destruction of the Heights and keeping his place. His role is to sow the seeds of hatred among the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights :"Joseph is the character who emphasizes the atmosphere of the Heights, who is its necessary complement, because all the evil which surrounds it, he swallows it up greedily."[4] He is a member of a rigid Bible reading sect, who uses the Old Testament to support his brutal

rules. One can imagine the kind of education that a child can get from such a man, chiefly as he is the one supposed to promote Catherine's and Heathcliff's morality.

Catherine Earnshaw grows up then in an hostile setting. To defend herself against it, she also arms herself with spite. Her family's attitude towards her moulds thus her character. If she had to live at the Heights and stay with the same persons, no great problem would arise. She would continue to struggle. But finally, she meets with other people, and she falls in a trap. The personality that was shaped by her family becomes an obstacle, and she forces a false temperament in order to be in conformity with the Lintons' norms.

It is obvious that that superficial personality makes her react against her true nature, and that results in, directly or indirectly, the dramatic incidents that follow. Externally, she is as gentle as any Linton. But she has put on a mere mask. Her old habits are so fixed that she cannot remove them. On the contrary, she acquires another defect, hypocrisy, in order to hide to her gentle new acquaintances her true self that she knows is shameful. She is obliged "to adopt a double character without exactly intending to deceive any one" (p.78). But she deceives herself in contracting a marriage based upon superficial love and snobbishness. She marries Edgar for childish reasons, "to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood" (p.92). It is only social status that motivates her choice, because she herself knows that her whole self is directed towards another man :

> My great thought in living is himself [Heathcliff]. If all else perished, and he remained, I should

> still continue to be : and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger : I should not seem a part of it.... My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath : a source of little visible delight, but necessary.... I <u>am</u> Heathcliff! He is always in my mind : not as a pleasure, any more than I am a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. (pp 97-98).

No passion can be expressed with more vehemence! And to overlook such a fierce feeling is to auto-destroy. It is the reason of being of <u>Wuthering Heights</u>, and as E.M. Forster states, "Heathcliff and Catherine cause the action by their separation : they close it by their union after death."[5] After having betrayed that wild love, Catherine pays for it by losing her reason first, and her life later; Heathcliff is haunted by it until his death, and his bitter revenge is a minor compensation for it; Edgar and Isabella who dare love both frenzied lovers suffer from their unlucky choices.

Thus, Catherine's family at the Heights formed her nature which she cannot get rid of now. The rigid orders she received during her childhood hardened her so that she cannot soften herself in order to adapt herself to new milieus successfully. She is the child of the Heights, the product of that social environment, suitable only for it. To escape from it and from her true self can only bring about misfortunes.

Another child who is reared at the Heights is Hareton. But contrary to Hindley and Catherine, the degradation due to his

deprived social environment is temporary and vanishes when a better one occurs. His natural goodness has to play a great role in his change. He is raised virtually as a peasant, but later assumes the manners and learning of a middle- class farmer.

Hareton is motherless, surrounded by his drunkard father, the sly servant Joseph, and afterwards the devilish Heathcliff. He cannot be in better hands! When Lockwood sees him for the first time, Hareton is already a young man, and Lockwood cannot guess his position at the Heights : "I began to doubt whether he were a servant or not' (p.12). He is a servant but not a true servant : a servant because his milieu makes him so, not a servant because he does not deserve it. He is reduced to the level of a domestic whereas he should be the master of the Heights. Since his childhood, he is taught to act as his instincts dictate him, and the curate is even prevented from talking to the child. The regrettable thing is that he takes pleasure in his degradation, and thus is difficult to change.

Moreover, he seems hardly to be saved because he cherishes Heathcliff, allowing the latter to fulfill his wish : "Now my bonny lad, you are <u>mine</u>! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it" (p.226). The tree symbolizes of course Hareton, and the wind is all the circumstances, hardships, that would alter him, just as Hareton's father altered Heathcliff. That parallelism illustrates how the environment can have a determinant influence on a child. Disregarding the nature of the tree, may it be planted by man or not, the effect of a strong wind on one or another would be the

same as long as they are growing. Its origin would not matter. Similarly, Heathcliff is an abandoned child, of unknown origin; Hareton's parents are known, he has a name. But all those considerations are meaningless. What counts is the kind of "wind" they are subject to. If it is the same, they will grow with the same defects. But Hareton's future development contradicts Heathcliff's predictions. He has forgotten another criterion : Hareton's inborn qualities.

Hareton presents good inherited traits. Nelly thinks him as "Good things lost amid a wilderness of weeds... , evidence of a wealthy soil, that might yield luxuriant crops under other and favourable circumstances" (p.237). To have Joseph and Heathcliff as family cannot have a positive impact on Hareton, a child who is taught neither "virtue" nor any "precept against vice", who can neither read nor write. The comparison is highly picturesque. Hareton is a "good thing", a good seed stifled by wild weeds (Joseph and Heathcliff). He is also "a wealthy soil" from which good fruits can be obtained in "favourable circumstances", that is, in a better social setting. That is a convincing evidence of how a bad or harmful social environment can hinder or annihilate all the good potentialities that lie in a child. Heathcliff acknowledges that Hareton "had first-rate qualities, and they are lost : rendered worse than unavailing" (p.265). Many other examples show that if he were reared in another family, Hareton would be another person. The impact of the family on the child is then strong in the formation of his personality.

Nevertheless, contrary to Hindley and Catherine whose characteristic traits acquired during childhood cannot be

removed, Hareton undergoes a happy metamorphosis owing to Catherine Heathcliff. His degradation which seems incurable vanishes completely. That new social setting, combined with his inherited qualities, prevail over his defective education :"His honest, warm, and intelligent nature [shakes] off rapidly the clouds of ignorance and degradation in which it [was] bred" (p.388). Hareton's deficiencies disappear and his positive qualities strengthen. He tends towards the perfect. It is a character whose negative aspect is always excused by the author because it is due to unfortunate circumstances, she seems to suggest. For instance, he should hate Heathcliff after having known how the latter wronged him. But he "[is] attached by ties stronger than reason [can] break" (p.387). That can be understandable, since even though Heathcliff lowers him, he treats him well, even more than he treats his own son. He gives him plenty of freedom, is not really a bad "father" to him. Hareton is always out, in contact with nature, and he gains much from it.

In brief, the effect of the Heights's inhabitants, namely Heathcliff and Joseph, on Hareton is undeniable. Hence one can rightly suppose that the impact of the family -or of the immediate environment playing the role of that family- on the child is remarkable in Wuthering Heights. But afterwards, even during adulthood, a better social setting, added to innate goodness, can sometimes correct the defects engendered by childhood education, as it is the case with Hareton. The latter, motherless and fatherless, has his own nature as his best mother, and Heathcliff as his father.

Another child whose prime childhood is not spent at the Heights,

but who still needs parental education and affection at the time he is brought there, is Linton Heathcliff. He already has certain particular marks, but the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights with whom he goes to live have also an influence on him.

Linton is a child conceived in hatred and is unlikely to have remarkable qualities: "Hate is barren. Only the worst traits of both parents have survived this loveless marriage : the peevishness and self-pity of the mother and the bad temper of the father."[6] That is the part of inheritance in Linton's personality, which is visibly bad. But one can wonder to what degree the inmates of the Heights worsen his negative dispositions. With the harsh people he is compelled to confront, young Linton's temper can only deteriorate. He is desperate, misunderstood, even hated :"While I remain cut off from all hope, and doomed to solitude, or the society of those who never did and will never like me, how can I be cheerful and well ?"(p.311). Even some adults would not put up with such a situation. Or they would grow wicked in order to counter-attack.

Linton's despondency is heightened by the fact that his <u>own</u> father treats him as a useless thing: "I doubt whether I am not altogether as worthless as [Heathcliff] calls me frequently; and then I feel sorrow and bitter, I hate everybody! I <u>am</u> worthless, ... "(p.306). It is difficult to become better under such conditions. Normally, a father is expected to encourage his son and to be his advising companion on his route of development. But Heathcliff hates his son. Maltreated like that, and sickly above all, one can be easily bad-tempered even when one is naturally kind.

But besides that influence of the milieu, Linton is bad. He is cruel, greedy like his father, and stupid into the bargain. For example, when he learns that Edgar is at his last gasp, he is filled with elation:"... uncle is dying, at last. I am glad, for I shall be master of the Grange after him."(p.338). That is childish. He is himself dying, has only one month to live, but he is eager to amass material wealth instead of thinking of his health; he hardly moves from his chair, but he foolishly dreams of a pony to ride; he does not even care about Edgar's past kindness to him. He has then a deeply rooted badness, although the social environment he copes with at the Heights, especially his father, surely contributes to his moral deterioration.

In stressing the impact of childhood on the individual, and in giving a valuable place to unrefined, almost primitive people, Emily Brontë comes near romantic writers. The four characters studied above all move in a rustic setting, and the close correlation between their bahaviour and the family in which they grow up is fully portrayed. The children of the Heights are most of the time under the care of men only, while a child needs maternal affection. Even those men are the incarnation of rudeness, whereas children need tenderness, and the consequences of that defective education are observable even during adulthood. Only Hareton succeeds in fighting against the darkness in which he was brought up, and thus illustrates the romantic idea of how man is basically good, and may keep a stainless character despite corrupting circumstances.

2.1.2. Gentleness : a Hindrance to Individual Personality.

The people of Wuthering Heights and those of Thrushcross Grange seem poles apart. While the former are rough, the latter are very gentle. But, contrary to what one may expect, Emily Brontë depicts that gentleness as an obstacle to individual personality by portraying the Lintons with shallow characters.

The reader meets with the Lintons when Catherine and Heathcliff arrive at Thrushcross Grange for the first time. One is immediately struck by the contrast between the people of the Heights and the Lintons. The former are straightforward, without any sophistication or mask, whereas the latter put on airs. For example, the sight of Heathcliff fills them with surprised disgust, even horror, as if he were a dirty and harmful beast. They call him a rascal, a "villain", a "frightful thing", "a gypsy", "a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway" etc (pp.57-58). They are too snobbish and despise people of lower ranks like Heathcliff. Old Earnshaw is then better than them because he still is humane. He feels pity, compassion for that "castaway" while the gentle Lintons think the little gypsy should be hang for the welfare of mankind. They are so artificial that Mrs Linton is "shocked" that her children heard Heathcliff's unrefined language. As if those children were going to live in a closed vase where they would not have any contact with lower classes! Mrs Linton even "beg [s] that her darlings be kept carefully apart from that naughty swearing boy" (p.63) everytime they have to be at the Heights. Those examples illustrate how the Lintons are quite different from the Earnshaws to whom

manners are less important.

As it can be observed in Edgar and Isabella, and somehow in the second Catherine, the Lintons' gentleness does not really benefit them. They are unable to have definite, fixed personalities, contrary to the Earnshaws who are firm. As Catherine states, Edgar and Isabella "are spoiled children, and fancy the world was made for their accommodation" (p.117). They fancy, since throughout the book, that world reveals itself different from what they expect it to be. They are out of place in their environment, because they are brought up in a kind of paradise they cannot find anywhere else. Their parents are not wise enough to prepare them for actual life, and spoilt children cannot produce firm adults.

The Lintons are magistrates, thus of the middle-class. The middle-class child generally internalizes the moral values and prohibitions of his society, and controls his feelings more than the working-class child, by having recourse to repression. That is the case with Edgar and Isabella who, because of trying always to restrain their natures and forcing gentle manners, seem exempt from a true self capable of facing the conflicts inherent in life. They only have "gentle" personalities, not natural ones.

The first impression the reader gets of Edgar is that of a weak character. He is already fourteen years old, but when Heathcliff and Catherine, younger than him, see him for the first time, he is shamelessly "weeping silently" (p.55) because of a little dog. Heathcliff is filled with disgust : "The idiots!... to quarrel who should hold a heap of warm hair ..., we [do] despise them!"

(p.55). Indeed, they deserve to be despised. Edgar's conduct reflects the kind of education he got. Without necessarily being brutal, his parents should have taught him to be "a man", that is to have a strong character, not to be upset by meaningless things. By allowing him to do or by giving him all he wants, they hinder his self-defence or self-control. He is quite different from Heathcliff and Catherine whom hardships strengthen since their early childhood. Edgar's marriage with Catherine is an error on his part, and it is expected to be a failure. He is not virile enough to rule her, and he looks like a hen-pecked husband. He and Isabella are under her power : "It [is] not the thorn bending to the honeysuckles, but the honeysuckles embracing the thorn. There [are] no mutual concessions, one [stands] erect, and the others yield[] "(p.109). The natural symbolism is amusing. Normally, it is the thorn (Catherine) which bends to the honeysuckles (the Lintons) so that the latter may easily climb. But here, the honeysuckles have to make the first step, maybe in order not to annoy that strong thorn. Catherine should submit to the people she goes to live with in their own house. But Edgar and Isabella cannot resist the strength of her temper. "There [are] no mutual concessions" : their characters are widely poles apart so that a middle point of meeting is impossible to find.

It is chiefly in the episode of the quarrel between Edgar and Heathcliff that the difference between the children of the Heights and those of Thrushcross Grange is visible. Edgar is so overwhelmed that he "[is]taken with a nervous trembling, and his countenance [grows] deadly pale. For his life he[cannot]avert that excess of emotion" (p.138). He cannot, while the passionate Heathcliff can. The latter calls him a "lamb", a "milk-blooded coward", a "slavering

thing", "a rotten hazel nut",.... Catherine adds that he is a "suckling leveret", and compares him with "a colony of mice" afraid of a king (Heathcliff) (p.138). All those degrading names refer to his weak personality and are all drawn from physical nature. He was so spoiled by his parents that he is not prepared for counter-attacking accurately in such unexpected situations. But if he had married a girl of his class, of gentle breeding like him, he would not have encountered such problems. He is victim of his education.

The gentle Edgar has not only a weak character, but also he can be cold. His snobbism tends sometimes towards inhumanity. His insensitivity upsets Catherine who is just the opposite and cannot accommodate to that : "your cold blood cannot be worked into a fever : your veins are full of ice-water; but mine are boiling, and the sight of such chillness makes them dance."(p.141). Edgar is so heartless that he cannot even forgive his own and only sister, probably in the name of honour.

But despite all those defects due to his education, Edgar has also remarkable qualities. He can love greatly, but without passion. He is devoted to Catherine and falls into despair at her death. But his power of love secures him from deep melancholy, as his daughter somehow occupies the place his beloved wife had in his heart. Also, no vindictive thoughts enter his mind, unlike Heathcliff. He is mild, peaceful. If his parents had exploited all those positive qualities instead of pampering him, he probably would have been a man with a more decisive character.

Isabella is worse than her brother. She seems to have no

personality at all. The first time the reader gets acquainted with her, she "[lies] screaming... , shrieking as if witches were running red-hot needles into her" (p.55). She is not taught the wickedness of man, and she remains childish, so that even when she is eighteen years old, she still has "infantile manners". It is not then astonishing that she cannot be clever enough to guess Heathcliff's dark aspect. She idealizes him, sees in him "a hero of romance, and expecting unlimited indulgences from his chivalrous devotion" (p.181). She is a fool. But the mistake is mainly of her family which did not warn her of the wickedness of men, and only showed her a false scintillating picture of life.

When Isabella is awakened to the bitter reality, she acquires a remarkable personality. That shows that if her parents had reared her differently, she would have been different from what she is. After having suffered, she changes so that she even dares challenge the fearful Heathcliff. He instills in her a desire for revenge: "It is, if I may take an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; every wrench of agony return a wrench : reduce him to my level" (p.217). Vengeance is not to be praised. But from Isabella, it shows her great transformation. Another environment constructively moulds her, while her family failed. Like that, she can go into the world and struggle, because she is armed with another force.

The transformation can also be noticed in Cathy, Edgar's daughter. Like other children brought up at the Grange, she is spoiled. She is always called "love", and "darling", and "queen", and "angel" (p.239). However, although childhood is the period of innocence, a child occasionally makes mistakes, and thus must be scolded.

To always praise a child, not punish him and not show him his badness does not imply necessarily that one loves him better than the one who corrects him severely. Cathy is always eulogized, is not taught how a man can be harsh and wicked, so that she is horrified when she learns Heathcliff's cruelty, discovering a "new view of human nature". She "[is] amazed at the blackness of spirit that [can] brood on and covet revenge for years" (p.269). But later on, she herself is victim of that revenge, and she understands it. Endowed with the passionate temper of her mother, she is even able to defend herself at the Heights. Heathcliff finds in her an adversary : "I'll not do anything, though you should wear your tongue out, except what I please!"(p.35). The pampered child becomes a determined girl, with a striking personality. She would perhaps fail to assert herself if she had not inherited the hot temper of her mother. Her education does not alter her deep nature. She is a mixture of her father's goodness and of her mother's fighting spirit, that help her to adapt herself to the hostile milieu of Wuthering Heights. She has then all that is needed to live anywhere.

Thus, the gentleness that the Lintons' children are impregnated with leads to soft personalities unfit for an unfriendly world. Isabella is aware of that when it is too late, Edgar cannot get rid of the snobbism he is imbued with. Only Cathy succeeds in fighting and finds a place in her environment, owing to the Earnshaws' blood in her. In depicting particularly the weakness of the Lintons, Emily Brontë somehow sides with romantics whose interest does not lie in the people from high classes, with aristocratic manners.

2.1.3. Heathcliff : The Byronic Hero, a Product of his Social Milieu.

The interest of romantic writers in the outcast cannot be denied. That archetypal character is like -or is simply- a pariah who is alienated from his society. Generally, he is characterized by a peculiar behaviour. In Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff has almost all the traits of Byronic heroes. He is the hero -when heroism is not only applied to an act of courage and nobility- of the novel, and the thrilling story is as it is because he is remarkably present in it. It is more the story of Heathcliff than of the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, because he is the determining agent of their fate. He is the Byronic hero whose environment also plays a role in making him what he is.

Heathcliff has unknown origins. He is like a personage of superstitious tales or myth, whose peculiarities make people doubt whether he does not come from supernatural spheres. Nelly wonders whether he is not a mere spectre: "Is he a ghoul or a vampire?....I had read of such hideous incarnate demons.... But where did he come from, the little dark thing, harboured by a good man to his bane?' "mutter[s] superstition..."(p.398). That shows that he is not an ordinary man, who only brings about ruin around him, even to his benefactors. His physical aspect is also particular : dark skinned, black eyes, black whiskers, black hair. All is black with him, externally as well as internally. Not only "Not a soul [knows] to whom it belong[s] ", but also that "imp of satan" (p.45), that "goblin" (p.397) is "as dark almost

as if [he] came from the devil " (p.42). Many other passages hint at his satanic origin and behaviour. In brief, he is "an incarnation of evil qualities; implacable hate, ingratitude, cruelty, falsehood, selfishness, and revenge"[7]. A supernatural atmosphere is set simply by his aspect, and some happenings reinforce it. The fact that his name Heathcliff "was the name of a son who died in childhood" (p.43) strengthens the reader's impression that Heathcliff is like a resuscitated spirit. The name itself is drawn from rugged nature.

But before judging Heathcliff and condemning his wickedness, it is noteworthy to see first if his environment is blameless. Before his arrival at the Heights, he is an abandoned child left to the care of the streets. It is hard to guess how long he is like that. Anyway, "he seem[s] a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment" (p.43). He is not yet seven years old, and one can imagine the effects of loneliness and hardships on a child of that age. It is certain that he greatly needs affection, chiefly maternal love whose lack during prime years can be detrimental to one's personality. One would not then be totally mistaken if one suggests that Heathcliff's anti-social tendencies partly originate from that affective privation. He surely suffers before he is secured from perdition.

At the Heights, he gets a respite only for a while, under the protection of Old Earnshaw. But the latter does him in a way more harm than good, for he fulfills all Heathcliff's whims, accustoming him then to a treatment he is going to be deprived of afterwards. When he dies shortly after, Heathcliff has to endure Hindley's

strong hatred, which greatly contributes to his deterioration : "His treatment of the latter [Heathcliff] [is] enough to make a fiend of a saint " (p.77). As Heathcliff is not a saint, he is likely to be a demon. He is made a servant, is refused education, and is daily humiliated. His "family", Hindley and Joseph, uproot the remaining positive qualities that his life at Liverpool spared. John K. Mathison suggests that "The question is not whether Heathcliff and Cathy are good or bad. They are the result of psychological isolation and misunderstanding working on a particular native temperament".[8] So, if Heathcliff is guilty of cruelty in his adulthood, it is also in a way because he was victim of others' cruelty during his childhood.

Heathcliff's only light is Catherine, his "better half" (p.223), savage, passionate like him. Their love seems to give him the force to endure. But afterwards, she leaves him for one of the Lintons, his enemies who many times hurt his dignity and self-respect. He is victim of social classes that some romantics condemn . If Edgar were not rich and Heathcliff poor, if he were not of "gentle" birth and Heathcliff of unknown breeding, there would not be even a matter of choice. The unusual love that links Catherine and Heathcliff would not be overlooked, and the fatal consequences that result from Catherine's betrayal would not take place. The story would take another course.

Like any gothic hero, or like any uninhibited person, Heathcliff's long repressed anger and hatred cannot last any longer. He nourrishes that hatred since his childhood, wishing for having "the privilege of flinging Joseph off the highest gable and painting the house-front with Hindley's blood" (p.56). When he

says that , he is only thirteen years old. The great injustice he is constantly subject to is more liable to strengthen than lessening his grudge. One can also presume that if his environment were fair to him, his badness would stay in passivity. But his tormentors arouse his darkest and cruelest aspect. From then until his death, he lives on causing, witnessing and relishing on his enemies' destruction.

There are two main episodes in Heathcliff's life : the first when he has to undergo sufferings, and the second when he inflicts sufferings on others. It is in the second episode that he truly becomes the hero -or anti-hero- of the novel. Like the monster in Frankenstein or Monks in Oliver Twist, his vital force is revenge. But it is chiefly with the monster that Heathcliff can be compared. The former is peaceful before he is cruelly treated by men. The latter is relatively calm before the accumulation of revolting incidents drain from him all his patience. Both of them counter-attack by ravaging on their path all that is connected with the objects of their hatred. They show themselves to be true incarnations of all innate and destructive impulses which are hidden inside them. Their untamed passions which stayed dormant have then an appropriate opportunity to explode. Thus, it is his social environment which unlatches Heathcliff's fury, and one would not be totally wrong to propose that Heathcliff is a product of his social environment. If Hindley and Joseph were not utterly hostile to him, if his hated rival Edgar did not "ravish" his Catherine, he would be another man.

But even though Heathcliff's malignant behaviour is partly the

consequence of his maltreatment, he is a queer creature predisposed to be bad and to leave desolation where he passes. When he is introduced at the Heights, he is not like any ordinary child. Old Earnshaw admits that he "was never so beaten with anything in [his] life" (p.41). Heathcliff has something particular with him, frightening-to Nelly for example-, but also attractive. He has the characteristic trait of gothic heroes, who are most of the time depicted as characters surrounded by mystery. He seems to be the carrier of troubles, "a bird of bad omen" (p.123), so that "from the beginning, he [breeds] bad feeling in the house" (p.44). Gothic tales abound with premonitions, and Heathcliff himself is like a premonition. Mrs Earnshaw dies shortly after his arrival; Old Earnshaw's health considerably declines and he dies; divisions on his behalf are noticed at the Heights and degenerate in antagonism; he puts an end to the harmony of Thrushcross Grange, and so on. His "presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous" (p.137). He is like a spirit entrusted with the mission of sowing ruin at his passage.

Heathcliff has many other traits of Byronic heroes. Unlike Manfred in Manfred, he is not gnawed by a secret sin, but by a secret and deep thirst for revenge and for reunification with Catherine -which gives him grandeur. Manfred is superior because of his noble birth and supernatural powers, superiority which makes him alienated from his fellow-men. Heathcliff is of unknown, most probably low origin, but is a superior man, physically and intellectually. He thinks himself powerful, and despises others for their inferiority. For example, he views Edgar as a thing of insignificant value : "Cathy, this lamb of

yours threatens like a bull"..."It is in danger of splitting its skull against my knuckles. By God! Mr Linton, I'm mortally sorry that you are not worth knocking down" (p.137). He considers then himself as a bull and takes Edgar for a weak lamb. He also wonders how Catherine preferred that "slavering, shivering thing"(p.138) to him. If then his social position is not praiseworthy, he is physically strong and is proud of displaying that asset. It differenciates him from others.

Heathcliff's vengeance also places him above the common man. He sets it in motion monstruously, almost like the way the monster grudgingly pursues Frankenstein, until his deadly goal is reached. Heathcliff's plan for revenge even proves that he has a remarkable intellect, except only that he uses it for treacherous designs. In fact, only a sharp calculating mind can conceive such a scheme : by encouraging Hindley in dissipation, he hopes to appropriate Wuthering Heights; consequently, Hareton would be under his yoke and pay back more than the torture that Hindley exerted on him; as Thrushcross Grange is beyond his reach, whereas he also has a difference to settle with the Lintons, Isabella falls fortunately under his grasp; he marries her for more than material considerations : it is a propitious opportunity to inflict severe sufferings on a Linton. However, it is mainly the way he treats his own son that is diabolical. Even a mad person, or a beast, feels compassion and love for the product of his own flesh. But Heathcliff sees only in his son a means that will allow him to take Thrushcross Grange. The sequestration of Cathy and Nelly proves also how far his cruelty can go. He is a villain gothic hero who, as it is found in many gothic stories, kidnaps innocents

and puts them in inaccessible places. It is mainly because of his utmost misdeeds that Wuthering Heights is viewed as an uncommon novel : "it is wild, confused, disjointed, and improbable; and the people who make up the drama,... are savages ruder than those who lived before the days of Homer!"[9] It is "improbable" because it is unthinkable that a man can be as cruel as Heathcliff. Also, one may wonder whether the savages that J.J. Rousseau and his followers eulogize are to be like some savages found in Wuthering Heights.

Nevertheless, if all those preceding incidents are sufficient enough to put Heathcliff among Byronic heroes, it is essentially his passions which make him appear as an unusual figure of literature. It is true that he is led by passion in his revenge. But his passionate love surpasses his passionate hatred. Catherine has bewitched his whole being since his childhood, so that even before her death, he acknowledges that "Two words would comprehend [his] future -death and hell : existence, after losing her, would be hell" (p.179). Indeed, it becomes hell. She is deep in his heart, and the strength he was proud of before becomes an obstacle; while she is on the edge of death, he is still physically powerful : "so much worse for me, that I am strong. Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be when you - Oh, God! Would you live with your soul in the grave?" (pp.194-195). She is his soul, and to live after her loss means death in life. Their mutual love is so strong that they feel they are one being. Their parting is the episode which shows the most how Heathcliff is a creature burning of a fire of passionate love beyond the ordinary. Nowhere in the book has he wept, while he has undergone numerous

hardships, but her loss is able to make him cry. When he is a child, he accepts all kinds of physical or mental torture "without winking or shedding a tear" (p.43), so that Nelly is amazed to see that he also" [can] weep" (p.195). She is astonished, because she does not consider him like other human beings.

After Catherine's death, what can be expected happens. He becomes almost mad :

> Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you -haunt me then! The murdered do haunt their murders.... Be with me always- take any form- drive me mad! Only do not leave me in this abyss where I cannot find you! Oh God!.... I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul! (p.202).

Here, the Byronic hero, haunted and near mad, becomes sympathetic. All his wishes are granted : she can not rest because she visits him constantly. No lament can translate desperation like this. Also, as gothicism is hardly separated from the supernatural, the ghost of his beloved that he invokes haunts him until his death. At the beginning of the book, when Lockwood spends the night of the Heights, he witnesses Heathcliff begging her ghost to come in "once more" (p.32). Which means that she came many other times. But it is chiefly his queer end that highlights the supernatural. Coincidence or not, he begins to be peculiar after having struck Catherine's coffin, seventeen years after her death (p.347). Some months later, he is dead. He has constant visions of her, cannot eat, all his passions are altered, he has "lost the faculty of enjoying [Cathy's and Hareton's] destruction, and [he is] too idle to destroy for nothing" (p.390). So, even his reason for living after Catherine's death, revenge, does not

motivate him any more. There is a supernatural force that is draining from him all his fighting spirit. He becomes very melancholic, and his remedy can only be found in death, in an otherworldly communion with his beloved. Superstition has it that he wanders on the moors.

To emphasize Heathcliff's gothic appeal, there are many passages where he is compared with beasts. For instance, he is referred to as a "wolfish man" (p.122), "a bull" (p.137), an "incarnate goblin" (p.207), a "monster" (p.208), "groaning" (p.405) like a beast, ect. He sometimes behaves like an animal, for instance when Catherine dies: "He dashe[s] his head against the knotted trunk; and lifting up his eyes, howl[s] , not like a man, but like a savage beast being goaded to death with knives and spears" (p.202). If everybody had to react like that every time he was sorrowful, the distinction between a man and an animal would be hardly noticed. But from Heathcliff, who cannot control his passions, that reaction is not very surprising, since he seems to be apart from -if not above-normal beings.

Thus, Heathcliff can be put among that current of Byronic or gothic heroes of some romantic writings. He has a peculiar nature which distinguishes him from other characters, mingled with a dose of the supernatural that is connected with him. He seems to be led by uncontrolled feelings that bring about the misfortunes of all he crosses on his path. His beloved Catherine is not spared by his unlucky spell, because he partly contributes to her deterioration. If he did not come to sow trouble at the Grange, she would not have fallen into the fits that result in her death. He also,

like Manfred, finds respite in joining her in death. The happiness -even thrill- with which he waits for and welcomes the hour he will expire in order to be united to her Catherine, and his queer and sad death, constitute the tragic Byronic quality that elevates Heathcliff. His passions give him tragic grandeur. But if Heathcliff is filled with destructive passions, his social setting plays a great role in his wickedness. He has rough manners, and there is a caged restlessness and violence in him, which would have perhaps remained dormant if the frustrating conditions imposed on him by his hostile environment were not so unbearable. He is then a gothic hero with predispositions to wickedness, but he also is a product of his social surroundings, like the other characters in Wuthering Heights.

2.2. Natural Environment.

2.2.1. Dwellings : Mirrors of the Inhabitants' Characters.

Usually, houses are built by men, and thus are more the action of men than of nature. They should be then more included in social than in natural environment. However, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange seem to be impregnated in their natural location, so that if they were interchanged, they would seem out of place. The Heights are on a hill, and its roughness and solidity easily put up with the mishaps inherent in that location. The Grange, a refined but probably fragile mansion, is built in a valley, where it is likely to be more subject to breezes than to rough winds. Similarly, the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights are dark, strong and rude, whereas those of Trushcross Grange are light, gentle, but poor of health. The properties seem to be the mirrors of the proprietors' characters.

The name "Wuthering Heights" implies the climatic conditions that prevail at that place :

> "Wuthering" being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed; one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong" (p.2-3)

One can make a speculative comparison between the inhabitants of the Heights and the description above. We saw how the Earnshaws had "violent dispositions" and could display "a tempest of passion" (p.156). There is no need to enumerate once more all their characteristics, but if we draw a global parallelism between them and their house, the similarities are striking. The atmospheric tumult can be compared with the outstanding passions of the inhabitants of the Heights, and the stormy weather with the revolting conditions that prevail there. The ventilation that the mansion needs stands for the outdoors air that those people often long for. If they do not find it, they would be stifled by that corrupt milieu. The powerful north wind is one of the manifestations of the atmospheric tumult, and symbolizes some fit of passions. The gaunt thorns are the people of the Heights tortured internally by their confused and strong feelings, externally by their hostile milieu. Their limbs or all their whole selves are turned towards one direction : begging, aspiring to the sunlight because they live in the darkness of torment, hatred, etc. Fortunately, the house is strong enough to put up with that tumultuous climate, just as the

inhabitants of Wuthering Heights have strong physical constitutions as well as the mental power to endure. The parallelism can go on, and one can continue to find a kind of symbolism between that dwelling and their proprietors. All at Wuthering Heights is the image of its inhabitants' roughness : its gloomy and decaying aspect, its unrefined furniture and utensils, the monstruous dogs. One critic who views Wuthering Heights as a "Humanity in Its Wild State" is not at all mistaken : "It knows nothing of those breaking waters to the fury of tempest which civilized training establishes to subdue the harsher workings of the soul.... It is more subject to brutal instinct than to divine reason".[10] That is romantic : impulses receive primacy over reason, as many romantic writers preach it. When the supernatural adds a spice to the instinct, all that is rational seems meaningless at the Heights. But its inhabitants' unorthodox manners fit well the rural setting they move in. Their untamed passions or impulses are then justifiable and give a touch of realism to the story. Emily Brontë depicts well those characters with striking personalities and sound motivations -at least if we consider that they are true to nature.

As there is a noticeable contrast between the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights and those of the Grange, there is also a wide gap between their houses. The first time Heathcliff and Catherine go at the Grange, they are attracted by its lights. We compared the people of the Heights with thorns "craving alms of the sun". Symbolically then, the lights of the Grange can be opposed to the darkness of the the Heights. Also, the Grange is surrounded by a park, in a valley, and "it [is] beautiful -a splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson- covered chairs and tables,

and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold..."(p.55).
That is a setting quite different from the Heights where all is mixed in a single room :"a chatter of tongues", "a clatter of culinary utensils", a "huge fire-place", no "glitter of copper saucepans", etc (p.3). The Grange breathes wealth and refinement: a carpet, the bright colour of crimson, pure whiteness, golden embroidering, silver materials, etc. It is not astonishing that Heathcliff, who is accustomed to the hell of the Heights, thinks himself in "heaven" (p.55).

There is no wonder then that the first contact between both houses is not peaceful. Catherine, the child of the Heights, is immediately bitten by the Lintons' dog. Symbolically, her union with a Linton injures her, but mentally, as she dies with damaged nerves. If she had married Heathcliff, her personality would not have been split, and an inner conflict would not have destroyed her. As for the Lintons, to mingle with the children of Wuthering Heights contributes to their ruin. Their weakness is crushed by the latter's strength. Edgar dies in sorrow and leaves his property in the grasp of his enemy, while Isabella dies in loneliness, in exile.

The harmony found towards the end of the novel is represented by a kind of change of setting. Some flowers from the Grange are brought at the Heights to replace the black currant trees. Symbolically, the moderate temper of the Lintons comes to soften the passionate nature of the Earnshaws. It is as if a new dwelling were going to be inhabited by purified people, Catherine Heathcliff and Hareton, who will live in apparent harmony.

In brief, if Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange had to be inhabited, their respective inhabitants should be of the kind of Earnshaws and the Lintons, at least as far as suitability is concerned. It is as in gothic novels, in which gothic mansions often belong to gothic heroes. Similarly, Emily Brontë succeeds in portraying both houses as true mirrors of their inhabitants' temperaments. It is probable that she does not do it inadvertently, since a coincidence would be too strong.

2.2.2. Nature as a Balm.

The place given to nature -in its romantic conception- in Wuthering Heights is important. The atmospheric tumult that fits the powerful emotions in the novel prevails all through it, but nature is also depicted as a force liable to comfort or calm despondent or rebellious hearts. It may function then as a balm.

When Heathcliff and Catherine cannot breathe under the suffocating torture of Hindley, they run to "the moors, under its shelter" (p.24). Normally, a shelter protects one from rain. But for them, even when it is raining, the moors are a shelter, even though they are soaked. That shows the kind of protection they are in search of in nature. It is not physical, but psychological. It makes them forget for a while their sufferings. That idea is also found when Lockwood, unable to put up with the quarrels between the inmates of the Heights, prefers "escaping into the free air, ... clear, and still, and cold as impalpable ice"(p.35). So, it is not only in spring or summer that nature relieves hearts, as it is commonly thought, but even in winter, a season in which people generally like to stay indoors. For some romantics -or for Emily Brontë-, the outdoors may keep their soothing effect

even during bad weather.

It is chiefly Heathcliff and Catherine, the savage children, who most taste nature's magnificence. Rambling in nature is an effective means of forgetting the hardships they undergo: "But it [is] one of their amusements to run away to the moors... , and after punishment [grows] a mere thing to laugh at" (p.35). Nature is not only a kind of remedy then, but also a source of pleasure. They call such escapes "ramble[s] at liberty" (p.54). For those savage children, gardens or beautiful parks are not very interesting. It is in the moors, in nature in its wild form, that they "carr[y] [their] ill-humour" (p.64) so that they may be soothed. For example, when Catherine is at the Grange, she is surrounded by the beautiful flowers or trees of her gardens and park, but she has the nostalgia of the rough wind coming "straight down the moor" and to "have one breath" of it (p.149). The soft winds of the Grange cannot fully satisfy her emotions, which can only be calmed or subdued by the strong winds of the hills and moors, characteristic of Wuthering Heights. It is in fact the nostalgia of the roughness or wilderness of her youth associated with the house where she spent it. She seems to be fed up with the polish of the Grange.

Once they are deprived of the comforting nature, some characters are lost, bewildered. They feel they are inwardly jailed. That is the case with Catherine Earnshaw :"Oh! I'm burning! I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free.... Why am I so changed?....I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills" (p.151). A change of setting changes her personality.

She feels she is a stranger to what she was and it is almost true. In fact, she is passionate. And as she took the habit to pour off her emotions in nature everytime they tended to overflow, they are likely to suffocate her at the Grange because she does not ramble in her outdoors any more. Her passions have not the opportunity to burst out, they boil in her and can only destroy her. Her only rescue and consolation is to have her "resting-place", her tomb, "in the open air" (p.153). The Grange prevents her from breathing, and it is in that death that she hopes to be released from her burden. Like romantics, her refuge is death.

Even the calm Lintons believe in the healing property of nature. For example, Edgar feels that "the air [blowing] so sweetly... would cure [Catherine]"(p.161). For him, that sweetness is curing, but not for Catherine who does not need softness but violence in nature.

Cathy, Catherine's daughter, has inherited her mother's love for nature. She also likes nature in movement, but especially nature in bloom. She "delights to climb along... trunks,... sit in the branches, swinging twenty feet above the ground" (p.277). Nature provides people with other good effects. For the sickly Linton Heathcliff, for instance, the "pure heather-scented air... relieve[s] his despondency," and it is" healthier" for him (p.248), according to Nelly. The latter enjoys nature in the Lintons' view, "finds plenty of entertainment in listening to the larks singing... enjoying the sweet, warm sunshine" (pp 256-257). Nature, then, can have a similar balming impact on all of them, but Cathy likes to take part in nature's activity by moving around and around, contrary to other Lintons who enjoy its quietness.

Diverse manifestations of nature, such as strong winds or breezes, sunshine, songs of birds, flowers and trees, etc, are shown having an influence on the characters in Wuthering Heights. For example, once Cathy is sad, to ride under a "beautiful moonlight" immediately" [takes] away her gloom" (p.300). Or "every breath from the hills [is] so full of life, that it seems whoever respires it, though dying, might revive" (p.320). Almost all the aspects of romantic nature are presented, and when the two lovers, Hareton and Cathy, stop towards the end of the book "to take a last look at the moon -or, more correctly, at each other by her light",(p.407), Wuthering Heights ends like any romance where man's happiness is in communion with a pleasant nature.

Thus, nature as depicted by Emily Brontë can be healing, soothing, reviving, an escape, a pleasure, etc. In brief, all that can release the heart from worries or the body from pain. She does not worship it like Wordsworth, but she acknowledges her value and impact on man, as many romantics do. She also uses it, as did Shakespeare, to dramatize happenings in the human world.

2.2.3. Nature as a Reflection of the Characters' Inner Lives.

Emily Brontë describes the forces of nature bestowing goodness to mankind in Wuthering Heights. But in that novel, nature is for the most part used as a reflection of the characters' temperaments and moods. The Earnshaws like some aspects of nature that the Lintons cannot put up with, and vice-versa, because they are not equally spirited. Or nature accompanies their humour. Sadness, joy, anger, any kind of passion, are connected with different natural manifestations.

David Cecil notices that striking correlation between nature and man in Wuthering Heights, "the antithesis between man and nature", as he calls it, and shows how it works: "Men and nature to her are equally living and in the same way. To her, an angry man and an angry sky are not just metaphorically alike, they are actually alike in kind."[11]

Nature is then seen as a complement to man, with which he feels akin, and not as an enemy. There are almost no cases of irony in Wuthering Heights, where for instance people are at a burial under a bright sun shining, surrounded with a blossoming nature.

Mark Schorer makes a succint analysis of how nature and human beings are treated as a same reality by Emily Brontë. But his main concern seems to be the terminology that the author uses. Men, beasts and other natural elements behave in the same way : "hair flies, bodies toss or tremble like reeds, tears stream",[12] etc. Schorer's whole article is a detailed rendering of such terms. By my goal here is not to study the kind of language that Emily uses, since Mark Schorer does it well. I want to pick up some episodes in the book in which a parallelism between nature and man can be drawn.

Shortly after the opening of the book, winter sets in and sets the mood. Most of the events are gloomy, and fit that season. Lockwood's visit at the Heights is spoilt by an uncivil welcome, and the snow compels him to stay there; in the book he reads later on, Heathcliff's and Catherine's sufferings are accompanied with rain and cold; his nightmares are flavoured with "the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow"(p.28) etc. Rain, wind, snow, chiefly during night, are associated with fear, sufferings.... It is also

an appropriate setting for the supernatural, and it is not very surprising that Lockwood dreams of ghosts, or that Heathcliff believes in their presence.

The day Old Earnshaw dies, it is on a night of "wind and rain" (p.50). At the departure of Heathcliff -departure which is the beginning of the end since he is going to prepare his plan for revenge, a departure after which Catherine contracts a marriage which is going to contribute to her ruin (and some other characters')-, it is an uncommon day. All the natural forces gather to predict the misfortunes which are going to result from that event. Nelly Dean is not mistaken when she thinks that "it must be a judgement" on them (p.101). It is at Heathcliff's return that almost everybody is going to be cruelly judged by him, and condemned. That day he goes, it is night :

> About midnight, the storm [comes] rattling over the Heights in full fury. There [is] a violent wind, as well as thunder, and either one and the other split [s] a tree off at the corner of the building : a huge bough [falls] across the roof, and knock [s] down a portion of the east chimney-stack (p.101).

Such descriptions are frequent in gothic novels, in which midnight is a propitious hour for horror. Storm, wind and thunder stress that mood of terror. Nature is in solidarity with Catherine in her deep sorrow and with Heathcliff in his pain and frustration. The split tree and a part of Wuthering Heights destroyed can be interpreted as premonitions of the unfortunate happenings that are going to follow Heathcliff's departure, of the destruction that is going to befall the

the inhabitants of that house.

When Catherine grows delirious, a disease which is going to lead her into the grave, it is night, "in the middle of winter, the wind [blows] strong from the north-east" (p.146). At Catherine's death, it is "about twelve o'clock that night" (p.198), midnight then. The day of her burial, while the fragrance of nature can still be observed the day before, all changes suddenly: "In the evening, the weather [breaks] : the wind shift[s] from south to north-east, and [brings] rain first, and then sleet and snow" (p.204). Nature also mourns her. Also, Heathcliff dies on a night of "rain", of "showers" (p.404). Even the supernatural is thought to occur at similar times and in atmospheric tumult. For example, it is superstitiously believed that the spirits of Heathcliff and Catherine appear "on every rainy night" (p.406). Many other minor examples can illustrate the communion between man and nature, but those are sufficient enough to show the important similarities between Wuthering Heights and some gothic novels.

Apart from that angry form of nature that works together with the disturbed emotions of man, there is also nature acting as a symbol. For instance, Hareton, the uncorrupt child who is going to restore life to what Heathcliff destroyed, is born "on the morning of a fine June day" (p.74). It is then during spring, the season of rebirth. Hareton plays the role of rebirth in the story.

Besides the function of nature as a reflection of the characters's moods or as a symbol, Emily Brontë also portrays nature as an image

of the characters' temperaments. The Earnshaws, with their tempestuous natures, like a wild nature, whereas the quiet Lintons prefer a calm nature. That contrast is illustrated by Catherine Heathcliff's and Linton Heathcliff's best ideas of spending happily a July day :

> He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadly and cloudlessly. That was his most perfect idea of heaven's happiness: mine was rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throstles, and blackbirds... pouring out music on every side... and woods and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy. He wanted all to lie in an ecstasy of peace; I wanted all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee. I said his heaven would be half alive; and he said mine would be drunk; I said I should fall asleep in his; and he said he could not breathe in mine (p.299).

If we imagine Wordsworth and Byron arguing about nature, Wordsworth would probably side with Linton, and Byron with Cathy. That wide difference between the kinds of natural beauties they enjoy is a perfect picture of their entirely different temperaments. Catherine is high-spirited, hot-blooded, like the Earnshaws, while Linton has the phlegm of the Lintons. If then one cannot at all put up with the "heaven" of the other, it is understandable that their union is doomed to fail. That is why there can be no harmony in the marriages between Edgar and Catherine, between Heathcliff

and Isabella, even between Linton Heathcliff and Cathy. Only Hareton and Cathy who share some traits can suit each other.

So, in Wuthering Heights, nature is described as refreshing, healing, etc. It varies according to the mood of the story and of the characters, and reflects that mood. In its furious aspects, it reminds one of some gothic scenes found in the novels of horror. Or it acts as a symbol.

In brief, the analysis of the relationship between setting and character in Wuthering Heights reveals almost all the main characteristics of British romanticism. It is a book about middle-class and rustic people. The latter are almost primitives with their basic unrestrained tendencies. The passionate love between Heathcliff and Catherine is a fine example of "the overflow of powerful feelings". The gentle people with their shallow personalities are almost invisible when compared with the rough ones. If the latter are generally led by their instincts, it goes without doubt that they are non-conformists who want to follow laws of their own. Most of the time, they are not satisfied with their conditions and rebel against them. The Byronic hero, the archetypal hero of the gothic novels, plays also a determinant role in Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff is depicted with all the deceits and brutality he is capable of, but also with a certain grandeur, sometimes almost that of the noble Lucifer himself. The place of the child as well as the way he is greatly shaped by his milieu is predominant in the book. Finally, nature plays diverse roles. It is used in almost all its romantic meaning.

Endnotes.

[1]Walter Allen, The English Novel (Middlesex, 1978), p.98.

[2]Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights (New York, 1964),p.42. All parenthetical page numbers refer to this edition.

[3]"Humanity in Its Wild State", Wuthering Heights, An Authoritative Text With Essays in Criticism (New York, 1963), p.283.

[4]Henriette Guex-Rolle,"Préface" to Wuthering Heights (Lausanne, 1968) p.15. My translation.

[5]E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York, 1954), p.145.

[6]E.L. Gilbert, Monarch Notes on Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights (New York, 1964), p.83.

[7]"A Strange Book", Wuthering Heights, An Authoritative Text with Essays in Criticism (New York, 1963), p.283.

[8]John K. Mathison, "Nelly Dean and the Power of "Wuthering Heights", ibid., p.327.

[9]"A Strange Book", ibid., p.281.

[10]"Humanity in Its Wild State", ibid., p.282.

[11]David Cecil, "Emily Brontë and Wuthering Heights", ibid., p.302.

[12]Mark Schorer, "Fiction and the "Analogical Matrix", ibid., p.358.

CHAPTER III : ROMANTIC TENDENCIES IN JANE EYRE: SETTING AND CHARACTER.

3.1. Social Environment

3.1.1. The Orphan and the Foster Family : Sufferings as Stimulant.

Acute sufferings seldom leave a child unaffected. They either have negative or positive consequences on him. On the one hand, they can hinder his mental or psychic progress, and may even result sooner or later in neurosis. That is the most frequent case. The other alternative is that hardships, instead of discouraging the child's attempts to go forward, sharpen his wits and do not at all alter his natural qualities. That is the case of Jane in Jane Eyre.[1] The vicissitudes she passes through seem to render her wilful. They act as stimulant.

Charlotte Brontë's portrayal of Jane's childhood and of all the ill-treatment she undergoes is vivid. Jane Eyre opens with Jane, a little orphan of ten years old, persecuted by her foster-family. Rejected by the Reeds and their servants (except the servant Bessie in some way), she is an object of contempt of all, and thus lives in seclusion. As the main goal of romantics is to arouse emotions, Jane's torture is intended to appeal to the reader's sensitivity. Jane has to endure the brutality of John, who punishes her "not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in a day, but continually" (p.42). One can imagine the effects of perpetual stress on a child. He would never be himself, always in fear of what would befall him at any time, just like a puppet awaiting the moments the strings would be pulled. That

constant suspense would hardly allow him to develop a personality of his own, as he would be entirely at the mercy of others. Jane always has her heart in her mouth, expecting the worse : "every nerve I [fear] him, and every morsel of flesh on my bones [shrinks] when he [comes] near" (p.42). From that state to neurosis, the gap is easy to fill.

The incident of the red-room shows Jane as a child whose feelings are easily excited, and it is one of the most stirring of the novel. It does not differ from the sequestration of innocents found in romantic gothic novels, but it surpasses them in that the prisoner is a child. The description is convincing, real, and the reader easily grasps the confusing emotions that can invade a child in such a circumstance. Charlotte Brontë succeeds in catching the sensivity of the reader, as many romantic writings do, without necessarily having recourse to the illusory.

The theme of childhood, namely of abused childhood, is well dealt with in Jane Eyre. The injustice, even cruelty, that the little heroine experiences and that attracts attention is again that of the red-room. It illustrates how the Reeds are hard on Jane. Everybody knows how children's imagination is easily moved by ghosts. And as they often connect the supernatural with death, the latter is also dreaded (even by some adults). Despite that, Mrs Reed locks Jane in a room that stands for death, a room in which her uncle expired and that almost everybody shuns. It is likely to stir her nerves, and it indeed does : "it... gave my nerves a shock, of which I feel the reverberation to this day. Yes, Mrs Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering" (p.52). That is how

childhood can leave a stain on one's mind.

Lowood, an institution of physical sufferings and inaccurate teachers, is not likely to cure the repetitive mental shocks that Jane stored up at Gateshead Hall. The settings are then different, but the conditions are practically the same. The only warmth is provided by Miss Temple and the sickly Helen Burns, who probably make Jane think that, "Better is a dinner of nerbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (p.106). So, her mishaps teach her to value the little kindness bestowed on her, instead of hardening her and making of her a grumbling child. She takes the bitter with the sweet, and that is an admirable quality. All the humiliations she bears do not subdue her moral strength. Her personality is still fragile, and then can be easily injured, but it surprisingly becomes firm. She is the faithful portrait of Charlotte Brontë's archetypal heroines : "All her small, plain, and orphaned heroines are female Robinson Crusoes, making their own way, refusing to be trampled on by their supposed superiors".[2] From the beginning to the end of the book, we see Jane struggling for making people acknowledge her intrinsic value.

At Gateshead Hall, she is dependent, has to live on the Reeds' charity. The latter and the servants do not miss any opportunity to remind her of that inferiority, comments which are "very painful and crushing"(p.45) for her. She is supposed, even obliged to obey them, fulfil all their desires, and receive their blows mildly and mutely. But with the incident of the red-room, she puts an end to all that and decides to assert herself : "like any other rebel slave, I felt resolved, in my desperation, to go all lengths" (p.44). That determination is the beginning of a new

life to Jane, which is going to characterize her all along her life. Her "Resolve" (p.47) sets her free. She becomes then a non-conformist, a stereotype in her own way of those revolutionary personages of romantic writings.

Mrs Reed isolates Jane, but that discrimination does not strongly upsets her any more. Her rebellion, added to her dry frankness, are the first step of the battle she is going to wage with the Reeds. From a child of ten years old, it is unthinkable. But it is her hostile environment which prematurely matures her, by filling the cup of abuses to the brim : "speak I must : I had been trod-den on severely, and must turn"(p.68). She dares face her wicked "benefactress" Mrs Reed : "I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved you; but I declare I do not love you : I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed"(p.68). Very few people would be brave enough to express in such a frank way their hatred to their enemies, face to face, especially their superiors. Jane knows that her fate is in Mrs Reed's hands, but she is not afraid of spitting her rage on the person who tormented her during ten years. If she does not burst up, it is as if the grudge she owes her foster-mother would turn against herself and trouble her. Her burden is unfastened, and her "soul [begins] to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph" (p.69). That is the advantage of being true to oneself. After having taken off the mask, one experiences exuberance. For passionate people like Jane, it is the only way to be in communion with oneself. Jane acts on the spur of the moment, obeying then more her impulses than her reason, conforming to romantic precepts.

Jane's character is outstanding, and she conforms to Charlotte Brontë's conception of how personages should be delineated. In fact, the writers who overlook the deepest feelings of men and portray only superficiality are the target of Charlotte Brontë's criticism. Jane Austen is the sample of the former, and Charlotte does not spare her :

> She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement,
> disturbs him by nothing profound.
> The passions are perfectly unknown to her....
> What throbs fast and full, though hidden,
> what the blood rushes through, what is the
> unseen seat of life and the sentient target
> of death- that Miss Austen ignores.[3]

She complements or only supports Wordsworth who, like other writers, preaches the exploration of true and rooted emotions. But this rebelliousness is more a Byronic trait than a Wordsworthian one. Thus, Charlotte Brontë's characterization is partly romantic, and Jane's vehemence is a specimen of true passions. She has long been crushed, and that invigorated her. Her honesty, frankness, passions and courage are the arms that are going to help her survive her difficulties.

At Lowood, Jane is opposed to Helen, and that technique of foils enables us to measure the degree of Jane's rebellion. Helen is calm, whereas Jane is revolted : "When we are struck at without reason, we should strike back again very hard; I am sure we should- so hard as to teach to the person who struck us never to do it again" (p.90). That is a sound reasoning, even though it is not at all Christian. Moreover, one may want to strike back but be unable to. For instance, when Brocklehurst humiliates Jane, she is revolted but does not react. Unlike Helen, she does not believe

in God, and thus cannot draw moral force from religion. Rousseau, Shelley, Byron, etc, in their atheism, would also have probably relied on their personal capacities instead of awaiting for uncertain divine help.

Nevertheless, Jane's vindictiveness has been engendered by the ill-treatment of the Reeds. A little understanding suffices for changing her. All she needs is to be loved: "if others don't love me, I would rather die than live- I cannot bear to be solitary and hated"(p.101). The hatred of the Reeds has left a stamp on her temperament, but Miss Temple's goodness transforms her. Her new social environment subdues her passions, which waken when Miss Temple departs :"I [have] undergone a transforming process;... and... now I [am] left in my natural element, and beginning to feel the stirring of old emotions" (p.116). That illustrates how a social setting can exert a strong impact on a child. When Jane arrives at Lowood, she is only ten, still needing the maternal care that Miss Temple fulfills. To lose her is like losing her mother for the second time.

But even when one changes, there is a part of the self which cannot be altered at all. Jane's hatred or thirst for revenge have been cleansed, but her impatient nature is still there. She still wants freedom: "I desire[] liberty, for liberty I gasp[], for liberty I utter[] a prayer"(p.117), and is eager "to seek real knowledge of life amids its perils"(p.116). From a girl, this sounds strange. Normally, it is young men who are fond of adventures. The Byronic heroes are often delineated with that eagerness to move to and fro. But Jane is an unusual female character. She is the heroine of a romantic novel, and thus is not described as the habitual

gentle, quiet, obedient woman of the classicists. She is the new woman, fighting for clearing her own path :

> The contribution of Charlotte Brontë to the English novel... lies in the realization, which no novelist before her had achieved, of modern womanhood with its paradoxical impulses- intellectual ambition and emotional hunger, drive towards independence, and need for love.[4]

That is the greatest appeal of Jane Eyre. Its author does not follow the road of her predecessors and instead introduces a new image of a woman, which shocked her contemporaries (just like everything new often does), but which certainly touched their feelings. Maybe that even those who expressed overtly their shock were inwardly attracted by such a novelty, but feigned for the sake of formality or conservatism.

Jane Eyre's nature is clearly revealed when she falls in love. Her love for Rochester transforms her whole life, somehow confuses her senses. That love is "a precious yet poignant pleasure"(p.203), since it is an inward treasure, but also a source of pain. A 19th century well-bred girl was not supposed to experience or externalize such strong emotions. But Charlotte Brontë's heroine cannot help it. However, although Jane is hot-tempered, she keeps within the bounds of reason. She proclaims that she "[has] no faith"(p.225), but still, "Conscience... [holds] Passion by the throat"(p.324). That is where romantics differ from Charlotte Brontë. For the former, one has to follow one's instincts. There must be no barrier to one's deepest aspirations; but for Charlotte Brontë, passions are controlled when they tend to betray one's principles

of respectability and self-preservation. Jane accepts to suffer instead of obeying her tempting desires: "I like you more than I can say; but I'll not sink into a bathos of sentiment"(p.301). Her strength of character then bids or allows her to have power over herself. Yet, that view is still romantic, since romantics privilege the instincts, but at the same time support self-assertion. Jane is unique in her tough self-preservation.

Jane's sufferings steady her personality. After having escaped Rochester's temptation, she also escapes St John's. All that force to win over herself is due to the fact that she is thouroughly aware of her nature and knows the fatal consequences that would result from betraying it. If she yields to be Rochester's mistress, her thirst for liberty will certainly urge her to get free from an illegal union. If she accepts to marry St John, she will destroy herself. Her fate will be unbearable :

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

She is clear-minded enough to see what will be her future. She looks beyond her nose, one would say.

From the description above, Jane may appear as a hardened person, always struggling for her survival and personal welfare only. It would be wrong, since her hardships make her headstrong without altering her other qualities. They are even sharpened, probably because she knows what loneliness, poverty, hunger or lack of love mean, and does not want others to experience them. Jane

is frank, she proves it since her childhood. She is not vindictive. Very few people would forget a grudge such as the one that the Reeds sowed in her, but Jane does. She has "a strong yearning to forget and forgive all injuries, to be reconciled and clasp hands in amity" (p.259). She has no snobbery, is not egotistic. She is faithful. Otherwise, she would not continue to love the defaced and lame Rochester. In brief, she is obstinate, but also has a feminine heart.

Charlotte Brontë presents then a woman who, without lacking positive qualities, is also able to lead the life she wishes for without the monitoring of anybody, a privilege that is generally held by men only. Through Jane, the author expresses her feminist thought of the equality between men and women :

> Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel;... they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced for their sex.(p.141)

That is too daring in a period where a woman was not even allowed to vote and was most of the time relegated to the position of a mere housekeeper. But Charlotte was a radical writer, and seems to preach non-conformism. She treats another aspect of romanticism which recalls the radicalism found in Mary Wallstonecraft Godwin's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women", in which the

author tries "to show the equality of the sexes and to advocate equal education, so as to make of the relationship between men and women, 'a rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience'."[5] Those ideas are of 1792, before the publication of "Lyrical Ballads" (the presumed beginning of British romanticism), and long before Jane Eyre.

If we put aside that aspect of women's liberation, Charlotte Brontë not only shows how hardships can act as a stimulant on a child's temperament. She also demonstrates how spoiling a child is to damage his personality. She in a way opposes Jane and her country students to the Reeds and other supposedly genteel people of Blanche's kind, who act "in conformity to ideas and principles instilled into them, doubtless, from their childhood..." (p.216). The snobbery and coldness of those people can be contrasted with the simplicity and warmth of Jane's country students and their parents. The latter are "unmannered, rough, intractable as well as ignorant" (p.385), but have "natural politeness, and innate self-respect" (p.392). Their genuiness is put in opposition to the genteel people's sophistication. That interest in common people that characterizes romantics is not found much in Jane Eyre, but Charlotte Brontë's admiration for the lower classes is very clear in that novel. Jane Eyre can be viewed as her spokeswoman, and for Jane ,"The British peasantry are the best taught, best mannered, most self-respecting of any in Europe" (p.415). That is a straightforwardly stated point of view. She acknowledges the moral value of rustic people.

As it is the case in many romantic writings, the correlation between childhood and adulthood is then clearly demonstrated in Jane Eyre. Two main aspects are presented : the pampered child afterwards becomes an adult without the force to cope with the difficulties of life, whereas the persecuted and the common children succeed in asserting themselves and are good-hearted. It is as if Charlotte Brontë were giving a lesson of morality.

3.1.2. Religion : a Hardening Force.

Romantics praise all that is natural, instinctive. Consequently, religion is seen as a hardening force since it urges the control of impulses and preaches a tempered nature. In Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë also presents for the most part a caricatured version of religion. Apart from education whose influence on one's personality is undeniable in Jane Eyre, religion also seems to have a curious impact on those who want -or pretend- to follow punctiliously its precepts. Normally, Christian religion is supposed to appease the disciples who wait for the celestial reward. They are then liable to lead a quiet life, because they hope to inherit the bright future prepared for them. But in Jane Eyre, religion seems to be a damaging force to those who hold rather extreme calvinist views. Except Helen Burns who is portrayed almost as perfect, and Miss Temple whose remarkable goodness shows how she is truly religious, Eliza, Broklehurst and St John are cold-hearted people.

Jane gives great importance to being loved and to love. Love seems to be her religion, it is from it that she seems to draw her force. Helen Burns, on the contrary, transcends human considerations and

draws her endurance from the heaven she is expecting. Through her, Charlotte Brontë presents a good vision of religion quite different from calvinism. The latter emphasizes the horrible hell instead of stressing the happiness that Christians hope to get. Helen Burns does not believe in the existence of the burning hell preached by fanatic puritans :

> I hold another creed, which no one ever taught me and which I seldom mention, but in which I delight, and to which I cling, for it extends hope to all; it makes eternity a rest -a mighty home- not a terror and an abyss (p.91).

She sees then a kind God displaying his love to men, instead of an angered and grudging God. That is perhaps why Helen Burns has an uncomplaining endurance of sufferings and is endowed with an inner fulfilment. For her, religion is a source of consolation that helps her to cope with all the problems she encounters.

Contrary to Helen Burns who lives up to her beliefs and has no mask, and Miss Temple who puts in practice her religious precepts, Brocklehurst is an hypocrite whose coldness and wickedness is not normally expected from a man who pretends to be a man of religion. He abuses the Bible and deceives people. The biblical saying "If ye suffer hunger or thirst for my sake, happy are ye"(p.95) is a pretext for him to starve the orphans of Lowood. Religion, instead of making him better, provides him with opportunities to use the Bible as a means to usurp or to extort from the orphans their donations. Religion, instead of sharpening his conscience, seems to make of him a bitter man who misinterprets the Bible without any guilty feeling.

The female version of Brocklehurst is the "puritanical" Eliza,

except only that she is not in the position to display her harshness. She has "something ascetic in her look" (p.256), is egotistic and heartless, and the jealousy and hatred she vows towards her sister are unthinkable from a girl who is near to entering convent :"I can tell you this -if the whole human race, ourselves excepted, were swept away, and we two stood alone on the earth, I would leave you in the old world, and betake myself to the new" (p.264). One would wonder what her religious beliefs have changed in her temperament. Filled with such bitterness, it is hard to imagine what she prays for and how. She is going to take veil, and thus is supposed to be charitable, but she is so close-fisted that she cannot share whatever she has. It is hard to tell if it is love for God and for her fellow-beings which motivates her to be a nun. So, religion seems to be a kind of refuge for cold-blooded people, and its effect on them is to reinforce their rigidity.

More than Brocklehurst and Eliza, the one whose life is really divided between religion and natural inclinations is St John. He seems to think that self - torture is the best way to be a good Christian. If only he could get true happiness from what he decided to be! But he is full of "troubling impulses of insatiate yearnings and disquieting aspirations" (p.378), and thus cannot experience entire joy. Emotional contradictions are his earthly lot. If his religion could kill completely those disturbing instincts, he probably would be cheerful. But his constant internal battle develops a bitterness which can be even detected in his sermons :

> Throughout there was a strange bitterness; an absence of consolatory gentleness; stern allusions

> to calvinistic doctrines -election, predestination, reprobation - were frequent; and each reference to these points sounded like a sentence pronounced for doom.(p.378)

He cannot teach with softness as he himself has no inward peace. He cannot annihilate the actual "fever in his vitals"(p.383). To hide fire and to want to replace it by ice is not an easy task.

As a preacher's son and as a preacher himself, St John gives a tremendous importance to religion. He searches for refuge in a rigid phylosophy. That escape is a kind of negation of the demands of his senses, which sometimes makes him appear as an odd man. His over-spirituality, instead of solving his inner conflict, may worsen it. For instance, as he refuses to admit the necessity of sexuality, his psychic life may be threatened. In his eagerness to extinguish the flame, he risks burning himself inwardly.

St John shrinks from life, and his outstanding self-control is well illustrated by his passionate love and desire for Rosamond against which he is madly fighting in order to accomplish accurately the mission he assigned to himself. He is burning up, and he is aware of that : "I love Rosamond Oliver so wildly with all the intensity... of a first passion"(p.399), but he cannot let himself go because he thinks she cannot be a good missionary's wife. His religion and convictions give him a praiseworthy self-denial. But anyway, he cannot fully enjoy the fruit of his efforts because of the pang of love that is devouring him. That is what romantics are against : to refuse acknowledging and obeying one's nature.

When the reader first sees St John's coldness and afterwards notices that he is at the same time troubled by passions, he wonders whether it is either the soul or the senses which will triumph. If he were a romantic figure, the body would certainly gain. In fact, the avoidance of earthly but legitimate satisfactions that characterizes St John may deserve some derision. He totally dissociates his hunger for the spirit from the fulfilment of his desires, and this results in a constant conflict which manifests itself in his rudeness. He is a divided character as if he were victim of schizophrenia. He wants to behave as a creature of absolute conformity. Consequently, he sometimes adopts attitudes unfit for real life, for instance his awkward way of asking a girl's hand in marriage. He thus complicates his life, and in this sense, romantics are right to advise men to be as natural as possible.

Thus, except Helen Burns and Miss Temple who soften the negative version of religion, Christian religion is chiefly presented in the calvinistic aspect in Jane Eyre. Instead of giving cheerfulness, brightness to its followers, it deprives them of any blooming, even develops hypocrisy and cruelty in them. In criticising religion then, Charlotte Brontë sides with romantics who condemn all moral, social, religious restrictions which prevent man from living up to his natural dispositions.

3.1.3. Rochester : the Gothic Hero Shaped by External Forces

If one had to look for the smack of gothicism in Jane Eyre, it is around Rochester that one would find it. He has the physical or moral characteristics of a gothic or Byronic hero. However, his

gloomy mood has for the most part been engendered by some unhappy circumstances.

Jane's first glimpse on Rochester makes her think of a spirit. The horse he is riding "[is] very near, but not yet in sight" (p .143). Similarly, even when Rochester is not physically far off, he is not easy to fathom. He is strange, mysterious. That impression is completed by his particular traits : "his broad and jetty eyebrows, his square forehead,...the horizontal sweep of his black hair, his decisive nose, his full nostrills, his grim mouth, chin and jaw"(p.151). He resembles those dark personages of novels of horror :

> In Rochester she [Charlotte Brontë] makes a figure of mystery, with a suggestion of the sinister. In part he is her fantasy of what the male as an instrument of sexual passion might be, and in part he is Montoni of Mrs Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho or a Byron transferred to a middle-class setting.[6]

He gives a peculiar impression preparing a peculiar story. He is dark, and his attractive, but manly ugliness is liable to be connected with passion.

Contrary to Jane Eyre whose life is detailed from her infancy, Rochester is met with during his adulthood. His past experiences are summarized, and that is why there are not many things to say about him. The reader notices only that Rochester is hard, unpredictable, sardonic, cynical, authoritative, etc, and wonders what made him so. Progressively, one learns that Rochester was hardened by external forces :

> I started, or rather... was thrown on to a wrong tack, at the age of one and twenty,

> and have never recovered the right course since; but I might have been very different; I might have been as good as you-wiser-almost stainless.(p.166)

He "was thrust" because he did not want to. The "wrong tack" stands for the arranged marriage between him and his mad wife Bertha. From then, he feels ashamed of himself.

Like many Byronic heroes-such as Manfred-, Rochester has remorse. But contrary to Manfred who dies in sin, Rochester's love for Jane makes him repent. His dreadful secret stands for the pathless space laying between his and Jane's lives that he speaks of in his song (p.300), a great threat to their happiness. We can say that if he had not been tied to Bertha, he would have remained uncorrupt. It is "rather to circumstances than to [his] natural bent" (p.167) that he is as he is. Before he encounters Jane, he seeks mistresses, such as Céline Varens, most probably in order to forget his misfortunes. For him then, sex is like drinking alcohol or taking any drug in order to transcend for a while one's torments. The proof that he is now well-meaning is that he wants to change. The only contact with Jane is able to transform him.

The deep secret or "poison of life" (p.167) which Rochester keeps, his adventures, his indulgence of senses, etc., all combine to make of him a Byronic hero. His passionate love is also another trait of that hero. While St John cannot let his love expand, Rochester is guided by it. Morality or social conventions do not stop him when he is aroused by love. The proof is that he is ready to lead a bigamous life. When he loses Jane, he isolates himself : "He would not cross the doorstones of the house, except at night" (p.452).

The darkness of the night and the solitude suit his melancholy. He is low-spirited, and his physical blindness equals his psychic blindness. Jane is going to be his light in the night. His later half recovery of sight can be interpreted as a release from the misfortunes he went through until then.

Contrary to other gothic heroes who often die with their defects and power, Rochester becomes another man. He was a strong man, commanding, and he becomes dependent because of his infirmity. He was an irreligious man, proud of his power, but he later on acknowledges his inferiority and repents : "I thank my Maker, that, in the mids of judgement, he has remembered mercy. I humbly entreat my Redeemer to give me strength to lead henceforth a purer life than I have done hitherto."(p.473) The Byronic hero is then reduced to the level of an ordinary man. Allen thinks that "Rochester's mutilation is the symbol of Jane's triumph in the battle of sexes".[7] That is arguable. Maybe Rochester's decline is only a message, that of the nothingness of power on this world. Anyway, disregarding those inferences, there is a fall of a powerful man, of a gothic hero.

In brief, Rochester presents almost all the traits of a gothic hero. But it is circumstances rather than nature which mould him, and a close contact with another social environment, namely Jane, transforms him. In the end, he is no more a mysterious and haughty hero, but a simple man relying on his wife, and thus not a convincing Byronic hero, who normally maintains at least some of his distinguishing characteristics.

3.2. Natural Environment

3.2.1. Thornfield : the Gothic Hero's Gothic Mansion.

As its name suggests, there are thorns at Thornfield, literary and figuratively. It is a mansion surrounded by mystery and where the horror takes place. It is a gothic setting suitable for Rochester, and its destruction can be paralleled to the degradation of the gothic hero.

Thornfield is an old property. When Jane arrives there, she is particularly struck by the third story, which, according to her, would be an appropriate "shrine of memory", the "haunt" of a "ghost" (p.137). A supernatural impression is then produced at the very beginning, which is associated with that same story. It is strengthened by the "curious laugh-distinct, formal, mirthless" (p.138), that Jane perceives from that same story. That laugh is one string in the knot of mystery that surrounds Thornfield and its proprietor. Suspense, one of the great characteristics of gothic writings, is thus built.

The laugh becomes the leitmotiv at Thornfield, and Jane's nerves (or the reader's) are awakened. A succession of unexplanable events are accumulated to stir fear. And when gossips allow Jane to infer" that there [is] a mystery at Thornfield" (p.195), some flavour is added to Thornfield's gothic appeal. The reader is thus encouraged to go forward in order to know that mystery. That method is an effective means of provoking excitement.

The arrival of Mason continues to knit the net, and Thornfield looks like the haunted mansions that romantics greatly deal with.

However, there is no ghost, but a ghost-like being whose" savage... sharp... shrilly sound" in the night is animal-like. Bertha is like a "wild beast" whose sounds are a "snarling, canine noise, and a deep human groan" (p.239). Normally, it is animals which snarl, grind their canines and groan. But in the novels of terror, beasts and men may behave similarly. Many questions are not immediately answered in order to intensify suspense, but the truth about the "carrion-seeking bird of prey" (p.240) is being progressively disclosed. For example, Jane is now certain that there is a sequestered woman in the third story. The danger is imminent, and the strange woman who tears Jane's veil evidences that.

Dreams and presentiments contribute to rising the tension in the novel, and they approach the supernatural. Rochester's song in which Right, Woe, Wrath, haughty Hate and grinding Might (p.300) unite to torture him foreshadows the catastrophe that is to come soon. Thornfield becomes a ruin, and Rochester, the "fierce falcon", the "wolf", loses his strength.

A touch of exotism intervenes to add the romantic appeal to the book. The mother of Rochester's wife was a Creole and mad. It is as if her origin had a close link with her insanity. Madness is a theme that greatly attracts romantics. The nightmares that abound in their works are somehow a softened version of it. In Jane Eyre, madness is viewed as dangerous. Bertha offers a fearful sight of a blood-thirsty monster :

> What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not at first tell : it grovelled, seemingly, on all flours; it snatched and

> growled like some strange wild animal :
> but it was covered with clothing, and
> a quantity of hair, grizzled hair, wild
> as a mane, hid its head and face (p.321).

That is the haunting-spirit of Thornfield, which poisoned Rochester's life. The end of his misfortunes is linked to Bertha's end, who is fortunately smashed and "dead as the stones on which her brains and blood [are] scattered" (p.453). The sight is certainly horrible, like that of the monster when Dr.Frankenstein was still working on it in his laboratory, with the disintered parts of the body. After the fire, Thornfield becomes an entire ruin, thus a true gothic setting. Ferndean, the house with "decaying walls" on a "quite desolate spot" (p.455) where Rochester goes to isolate himself, is the gothic decaying refuge of a fallen and desolate, powerful man.

As gothicism is most of the time linked to the supernatural, the latter aspect is also present in Jane Eyre. For example, Jane speaks with her deceased mother who advises her to go away from Rochester. Also, the final meeting between Rochester and Jane is arranged by supernatural forces. She hears a mysterious call from her lover, from far away : "it [does] not seem in the room, nor in the house... ; it [does] not come out of the air, nor from under the earth, nor from overhead" (p.445). Jane's and Rochester's love surmounts hills and mountains and allows them to communicate verbally at distance through the supernatural.

Thus, Thornfield is truly a gothic setting. Its proprietor and his features, its aspects, the air of mystery that pervades there, the nightmarish madness of Bertha that reigns there, and the

fearful incidents that happen there, are sufficient enough to call Jane Eyre a gothic novel. However, its destruction breaks the mystery it bore, and lessens in some way the degree of gothicism towards the end of the book.

3.2.2. Nature and Character.

We saw that most of the romantics deliberately ignore the threatening forces of nature. Deserts, dreadful storms, earthquakes, eruptions of ashes and lava, etc, are constant menaces to world welfare. But romantics transcend that and concentrate upon the positive aspects of natural manifestations. Similarly, in Jane Eyre, even when its fury is presented, nature has other functions. It may symbolize the characters' condition, or mirror their moods, when it is not shown as a protector.

Nature is depicted as a consolation during hardships. When Jane departs from Thornfield and from Rochester, she has nothing and is lonely. She suffers from hunger, cold and fear, and her fellow-men do not want to help her. But she knows that she still has one good friend: "I [have] no relative but the universal mother, Nature : I [will] seek her breast and ask repose" (p.349). Nature is then going to feed her of its fruit and shelter her :"Nature seem [s] to me benign and good; I [think] she love[s] me, outcast as I [am] .... I [will] be her guest, as I [am] her child : my mother [will] lodge me without money and without price" (p.350). Nature can be then kind, generous. Such lyrism, sentimentalism, does not differ from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's or Wordsworth's perception of nature. It is personified, endowed with qualities

that the egotism of human beings kills. Jane throws herself and her conflict to the care of that compassionate nature.

Charlotte Brontë's praise of nature is even pushed to mysticism. Through it, she sees the reflection of God :"it is in the unclouded night-sky, where His worlds wheel their silent course, that we read clearest His infinite, His omnipotence, His omnipresence" (p.351). That is an eulogy, a worship addressed to God through the magnificence of nature. Wordsworth, the "nature's high Priest", could not express his respect for nature more than Charlotte Brontë does in the extract above. A simple sweet wind has the spell to revive hope, to refresh hearts "dried up and scorched for a long time" (p.336), according to her.

Besides the romantic conception of a soothing nature, nature is also used as a parallel to man's condition. Winter is a symbol of misfortunes, worries and death. In Jane Eyre, all the first eight chapters are set in winter. That cold setting cannot brace Jane's despondency that is the main object of those chapters. On the contrary, it mirrors and strengthens that state. She feels lonely, imprisoned at Gateshead, cannot go out because of the freeze of the outdoors. The rest of her moral force becomes annihilated. Here, nature is not viewed any more as a mother. Maybe Charlotte Brontë chooses that overwhelming season in order to stress to which degree Jane's sufferings go. The "poor orphan child's" road is not easy to tread on,,darkened by the moonless and dreary twilight (p.54), as Bessie would sing.

At Lowood, just as the conditions of life are hard, there are also cold, rain, etc. However, to illustrate how the perception of nature depends greatly upon the mood of the onlooker, the wind

which plunged Jane into despair at Gateshead is tolerable, even exciting at Lowood :

> That wind would... sadden[ ] my heart : this obscure chaos would... disturb[ ] my peace : as it [is] , I derive [ ] from both a strange excitement, and, reckless and feverish, I wish[ ] the wind to howl more wildly, the gloom to deepen to darkness, and the confusion to rise to clamour (p.87).

So, as Lowood is comparatively better than Gateshead, and as Jane's spirit is thus comparatively high, her vision of things is more positive than it was before.

With the beginning of Spring, the season of rebirth, all changes for the better : the hardships of Lowood lessen. With that spring, the reader notices that the acute sufferings that the heroine undergoes are not any more elaborated on in length. She is spared by the typhus; Mr Brocklehurst, the tormentor of Lowood, has been relegated to a low position, and cannot any more harm; there is good food and clothing, etc.... In brief, Spring settles a warm life at Lowood. One may wonder whether the author purposedly chooses that method of putting in parallelism the seasons and the characters's psychic states. They become lively owing to the outdoors. The fresh air looks like an accurate remedy for all they endure.

At Thornfield, Jane is happy. Consequently, she takes pleasure in the natural sceneries that overwhelmed her when she still was sorrowful. For instance, the winter that she dreaded before is not at all distressing at Thornfield. On the contrary, she delights in

"a pleasant winter afternoon walk" and "[does] not feel the cold, though it [freezes] keenly" (pp142-143). One interprets then the beauty or ugliness of nature chiefly according to the state of one's heart. Jane can enjoy the magnificence of nature because she has joy, the "moon" and "her orb", the "trempling stars" have the power to make her "heart tremble" with excitement (p.148).

A pleasant nature carries a kind of spell that it throws to hearts and discloses secrets. The day Rochester reveals a part of his secrets to Jane, he is in a natural environment fit for it. He and Jane are surrounded with "apple-trees, and cherry-trees... , stocks, sweet-williams, primroses, pansies, mingled with southernwood, sweet-briar, and various fragrant herbs" (pp.244-245). It is as if such a fragrance had an exhilarating charm that brings about relaxation.

Nature's effect on man's acts is also seen when Jane and Rochester declare love to each other. Nature is in bloom; it is a midsummer night, a place and a time for emotions to be displayed. The day after, the "brillant June morning" is sharing Jane's joy, and she thinks that "Nature must be gladsome when [she is] so happy" (p.286). Nature's and man's relationship is here delineated as true friendship and mutual sympathy.

The other form of nature in communion with man found in Jane Eyre is that of nature symbolizing or predicting human conditions. For example, after Jane's humiliation by Brocklehurst, she is sadly musing about her lot, in company of Helen, when Miss Temple comes

to join them. As Miss Temple is her source of joy at Lowood, it is certain that she feels released at her sight. Similarly, "some heavy clouds, swept from the sky by a rising wind, [leave] the moon bare; and her light, streaming in through a window near, [shines] full both on [them]" (p.103). The heavy clouds can be compared with Brocklehurst and the sorrow he sowed in Jane; the rising wind which blows away those clouds is Miss Temple, thus allowing the light, that is some love, to shine on Jane's heart.

Also, natural agitation stands for passion. For example, Jane's sentimental disturbances are compared with the upheavals of nature. The "craggy pass in the channel" is her falling in love, the kind of life she has been leading henceforth is a "stream" which is going to" be broken up into whirl and tumult", that is, which is going to be disturbed by turbulent passions. The "atoms on crag points" are the hardships she is going to face because of that love, while the "calmer current" (p.173) is the end of her torment, here then her final meeting with her lover. Those emotions do not take long to disturb her. She "[is] tossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea", that is powerful but confusing feelings; the "bellows of trouble rolled under surges of joy" are the excitement she gets from that love, but excitement mingled with difficulties; those difficulties can be equalled to the "counteracting breeze" which "[drives her] back" and prevents her from reaching the "freshening gale" (p.182), which stands for her union with Rochester. Those are speculations which illustrate how man and nature seem to work together.

Nature acts also as a prediction of future events. After Rochester has asked Jane to be his wife, "A waft wind [comes] sweeping down

the laurel-walk, and tremble[s] through the boughs of the chestnut: it wander[s] away-away- to an indefinite distance-it die[s]" (p.282). That wind trembles and finally dies just as Jane's and Rochester's project of marriage has no solid basis, and consequently can be shaken,and wanders a short time only to be broken. Also, the chestnut tree "writhe[s] and groan[s]", ailing; "there[is] a crack, a crash, and a close rattling peal;" " the wind [blows] near and deep as the thunder crashe[s],fierce and frequent as the lightning gleam[s], cataract-like as the rain [falls]"; finally, the chestnut tree is struck and "half of it split[s] away" (pp.284-285). So, nature furiously wakes up, and that is a bad omen. The elements of nature are in communion with man, so that when Jane sees the split tree, she speaks to it as to a human being : "the time of pleasure and love is over with you; but you are not desolate : each of you has a comrade to sympathize with him in his decay" (p.304). Similarly, despite the misfortunes found in Jane Eyre, all ends well for the hero and the heroine.

Examples about the close connection between nature and man are numerous in Jane Eyre. When Jane's hopes are falling down, it is as if "A Christmans frost [has] come at midsummer" (p.323); when she "[sinks] down" during her hard journey, "the night-wind... die[s] moaning" (p.357); misfortunes occur especially in darkness, "At dead of night!... the hour of fatality at Thornfield" (p.451), the accurate moment for evil and devil to come. That is a striking parallelism.

Almost all the characteristics of romantic nature are thus dealt with in Jane Eyre. Natural elements and man's joys or sorrows

work together, happiness corresponding to sunshine, tempests, lightnings, etc, reflecting a disturbed heart, or other aspects of nature standing for man's circumstances.

On the whole, Jane Eyre is a compilation of most of the romantic tendencies. The theme of childhood is treated in a moving way, and the impact of that period of life on man's temperament is clearly demonstrated. Besides childhood, other external forces mould one's personality. For example, religion in its fanatic form is depicted as a hardening influence. The gothic hero is portrayed, his house is like the frightening gothic castles, and the violent incidents that occur there recall those of the novels of horror. The supernatural has also its place in the book, and nature's description is tightly associated with the characters' conditions.

Endnotes

[1]Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (Middlesex, 1974). All parenthetical page numbers refer to this edition.

[2]Inga-Stina Ewbank, "Brontë," Encyclopedia Americana (New York, 1972), vol.4, p.598.

[3]Walter Allen, The English Novel (Middlesex, 1978), p.117.

[4]Inga-Stina Ewbank, ibid., p.598.

[5] Ibid., "Godwin, Mary Wallstonecraft", Encyclopedia Americana (New York, 1972), vol. 12, p. 843.

[6] Ifor Evans, A Short History of English Literature (Harmondsworth, 1978), p. 253.

[7] Walter Allen, ibid., p. 188.

CHAPTER IV : WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND JANE EYRE : SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

When Charlotte and Emily Brontë published their books under the pseudonyms of Currier and Ellis Bell, many critics were convinced that Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights had been written by one author. They also thought that that author was a man, namely a passionate man, not a stereotype victorian writer[1]. In this concluding chapter of comparison, I am going to point out the elements in those works which sounded unusual for a victorian reader and which were liable to mislead those critics.

The reason why Charlotte and Emily Brontë were believed to be men can be guessed. In the preceding chapters, we saw how Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre were viewed as peculiar by the authors' contemporaries. That was due to that those works treat true, sometimes wild passions. That was more a trait of romantics than of victorians. And as the profession of novelist was adopted by few British women at that time, who all the more dealt more with sweet romances than with intense manifestations of feelings, only a non-conformist man could overlook the prevailing conventions. It could not at all be thought that the Brontës were women. For their contemporaries, then, there was no slight doubt that the Bells were men, peculiar men.

As for the fact that Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre were considered as the works of one author, speculations can also be made. Both books treat themes which are strikingly alike, and in a strikingly similar manner. Even the differences between them

are in a kind of opposition-relationship, as if both authors wanted to say that although their interests lie in the same topics, the way they view them is not always shared. It is those similarities and differences, as they are reflected by their books, which are going to be examined here.

Apart from some elements which, it appears, stem from the authors' biographies, such as for example the dissipated Hindley and John who recall the Brontë sisters' dissipated brother Branwell, Charlotte's and Emily's main common trait is that they both develop romantic themes : "Their work shows traces of the romantic movement, especially in their feeling for nature and for childhood and in the Byronic heritage of such heroes as Rochester and Heathcliff; but essentially it is the product of a peculiar combination of heredity and environment".[2] Those themes, which can be divided into minor ones, are sufficient to classify Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre among romantic novels. For instance, the Byronic hero implies rebelliousness, and he is often associated with a gothic atmosphere, which includes the supernatural, etc. The reference to the "peculiar combination of heredity and environment" stresses the noticeable correlation between character and setting found in Wuthering Heights and in Jane Eyre.

The theme of childhood receives remarkable primacy in both works. Like romantics, both authors are interested in showing what man can make of the innocent child. The relationship between the child's breeding and temperament is delineated. Both authors opt for the same reality : the hero in Wuthering Heights and the heroine in Jane Eyre are orphans tortured by their foster-families.

Heathcliff has to endure Hindley's hatred and brutality, whereas Jane is subject to the contempt and cruelty of the Reeds.

But each child reacts differently to his destiny. When Jane gets fed up with the injustice she is victim of, she explodes. On the other hand, Heathcliff silently receives the abuses, as if he were unaffected by them. Judging their respective behaviours during their childhood, one would think that as Heathcliff can easily transcend all his sufferings, he can immediately forget, and thus is not grudging, whereas Jane who cannot put up with any inconsiderate treatment is likely to become vindictive.

However, as it can be observed later on, Heathcliff and Jane grow to be different from what one expects them to become. The disparity in opinions between Charlotte and Emily is mirrored by that unpredictable development of their characters. Indeed, both characters' temperaments are strengthened by hardships. But whereas Jane appears to be a vindictive child, whose doctrine is an eye for an eye, and is then supposed to fulfil her revenge on due time, she keeps her obstinacy but becomes forgiving. Heathcliff's dumbness proves afterwards to be a sort of mask which had covered the stock of grudge he daily kept. The day that mask is taken off, the grudge bursts, breaking to pieces all that is akin to the people who humiliated him. The repetitive insults have festered in his mind.

Thus, even though the Brontës portray the impact of childhood on adulthood, one's view seems to be the reverse of the other's. Their hero and heroine undergo almost similar difficulties, but one turns diabolical, whereas the other benefits from her sufferings.

Did Emily see all in black, contrary to her sister ? That would be a speedy conclusion, since Hareton turns into a good man whereas he was greatly lowered, though not mistreated. Emily then studies two opposite aspects. First, she depicts a child as a stock of positive qualities which cannot be definitively corrupted. It is what Charlotte probably wants to demonstrate in her portrayal of Jane's happy metamorphosis. Next, Emily shows a child able to keep faithfully in storage all his past mishaps in order to counter-attack. Charlotte does not consider that aspect. She treats a headstrong but goodhearted child, whereas Emily, in addition to that, depicts also the other side of the coin. But both aspects support romantic views, since romantics believe in the innate perfection of the child, but at the same time are conscious of and condemn the harmful influence of society (hence of man) on that child.

Even though Charlotte Brontë describes Brocklehurst's, Eliza's and St John's religious beliefs in a disparaging manner, she still seems to have a religious concern. Jane prays, although her Christian beliefs are not conventional. It is only in moments of crisis that she invokes God's protection and help, as if her prayers were manifestations of intense emotions. Anyway, Charlotte has concern for religion, contrary to her sister for whom religion does not seem to count much in Wuthering Heights. However, we remember that many romantics consider religion as an obstacle to one's fulfillments, desires. It supervises man's mind, and thus does not allow him to live up to his true nature, and hence he cannot experience the thrill of pleasure that can result from letting oneself go. St John in Jane Eyre is a good example.

If we consider that, we can say that Emily sounds more romantic than Charlotte, since the former mainly deals with feelings exempt from any spiritual or moral barrier.

Some critics tend to find the root of the disparity in ideas between both sisters in such or such biographical circumstances. But to give credit to the many speculations made about those authors would perhaps be to force evidences. It would be easy to say that Charlotte and Emily had different temperaments, simply. Both sisters had different perceptions of things, which can give light to the discrepency observed in the development of their subject matters.

Besides childhood, the other romantic trait shared by the Brontë sisters is the revolutionary image of a woman that they develop in their works. In the literature of their time, female characters are often delineated as fragile vessels of glass at the mercy of men. The woman tends to repress her feelings, to kill them if possible. On that condition, she is likely to accomplish without protest the tasks destined for her by the society or customs (normally ruled and established by males). In presenting rebellious women, namely Jane and Catherine, Emily and Charlotte are non-conformists. It is as if they were revolting against their condition of underestimated beings, just like romantics who were always reacting against the crushing institutions which encompassed them. Jane and Catherine are hot-tempered creatures, and they want their environment to acknowledge that. The former is "hot" (p.409), with the "fire of [her] nature" (p.433) burning her if ever she betrays it. Similarly, Catherine proclaims that she has "boiling" veins

which cannot live in harmony with the "cold blood" and "veins... full of ice-water" (p.141) of her husband. The description of passionate women is a romantic innovation in British literature.

However, if Jane is impulsive, she can also keep under control her instincts. She has a moral code that tempers the fire of her nature. With those counteracting forces, she can easily adapt herself to any milieu. Catherine, on the contrary, has passions which are on the verge of frenzy. She cannot restrain them, since she has a morality and a religion of her own unlikely to help her. As all her instincts cannot be always satisfied, she feels maladjusted in her environment, and is doomed to sink into a nervous depression. One can interpret that difference as a consequence of the different natures of both sisters : "the helplessness of an animal was its passport to Charlotte's heart; the fierce, wild intractability of its nature recommended it to Emily."[3] The explanation is then that fierceness appeals to Emily whereas sweetness attracts her sister. But in any case, they both succeed in depicting remarkably real women who pursue what they want in a single-minded way.

It is farmers or farm owners who play the principal roles in Wuthering Heights. Emily Brontë's interest in the unrefined, common people, can then be clearly observed, especially in servants like Joseph and Zillah with their dialect . Only, that common tends towards wildness in that novel. Heathcliff and Catherine are true to their natures, guided by their instincts, sometimes destructive instincts, without any regulating force to stop them at the right moment. Charlotte, contrary to Emily, does not give

an important place to lower classes in Jane Eyre. But she clearly states her admiration for the peasantry, nearly idealizes them, just as many romantics did. For Jane, to live with ordinary people is "like'sitting in sunshine, calm and sweet'" (p.392). Those authors' interest in the lower class people then cannot be denied. But again, both sisters do not view them with the same eye. Charlotte has a more romantic vision of the peasant than her sister. The latter mainly shows the violence of her rustic characters.

Moreover, contrary to Emily who delineates gentle people, namely the Lintons, as people of little personality, Charlotte is not biased in that respect. Emily Brontë tightly limits her setting to two families. In confining herself to two houses, the author of Wuthering Heights does not give faithful representatives of the whole mankind. Man is a mixture of calm and of violence, and not of calm only or of violence only, as Emily seems to suggest. Charlotte Brontë, on the contrary, tries to include people from different circles in Jane Eyre. Besides the peasantry, the Reeds, the Brocklehursts, the teachers at Lowood, the people at Rochester's party, the Rivers, are from different milieus and are all judged by the author in accordance with their moral values. Charlotte praises the qualities of some of them and condemns the defects of others. Which means that she is more realistic -thus not romantic- than her sister on that point.

It is also worthwhile to note that the whole action takes place in the countryside in both novels, showing again the Brontë sisters's romantic attraction for rural setting and people. In Wuthering Heights, when characters quit the Heights or the Grange, they

are forgotten for a while and reappear in the story only when they are back in that setting. For instance, Heathcliff leaves the Heights for three years, probably for the town, but no mention is made of where he goes and how he manages to get rid of the degradation he was plunged in. The characters enter the narrative only when they are in the main setting of the book, in the restricted part of the countryside that the author chooses for them to move in. In Jane Eyre, Gateshead Hall, Lowood, Thornfield, Ferndean and Moor House are all located in the countryside.

Charlotte and Emily most probably set their novels in the countryside for another reason. If the action had taken place in town, the moors, the wild flowers, the winds from the hills and other natural elements which present all their luxuriance in an untamed environment would not have been fully described, whereas the place of nature is important in Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre. It performs various roles in both books, so that if it were taken from them, they would sensibly lose their appeal.

The family likeness between Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre can be noticed in the treatment of nature, although some differences can be observed. Indeed, it is nature in its romantic conception which is exploited in both novels. Natural manifestations are closely related to man. But while Charlotte likes to describe a quiet nature, except when she wants it to mirror the characters' despondency or to make it act as a premonitory sign or a symbol, Emily does not forget those aspects, but also puts an emphasis on wild nature in motion. That choice recalls Emily's attraction for violence in things, and Charlotte's preference for quietness.

Charlotte seems then to side with Wordsworth, and Emily with Byron and Shelley.

There are some episodes in Jane Eyre where nature is described with reverence and respect. It is personified, closely associated with God. That cannot be found in Wuthering Heights. But there is a remarkable similarity between both sisters' depiction of natural manifestations as premonitions or symbols. Winds, lightnings, tempests, always in the darkness of the night, often predict misfortunes. It is on nights of angry nature that symbolic trees are split at Wuthering Heights and at Thornfield. The events that follow those crashes are catastrophic. In Wuthering Heights, deaths and burials are most of the time accompanied by winds and rains, and death always occurs during night. Those are gothic traits. And as Wuthering Heights is filled with death and other misfortunes, an atmosphere of terror reigns in that novel. The supernatural and the passions of characters are reinforced by the fury of natural forces to add a dark note on the events. As for Jane Eyre, even though some incidents arouse horror, there are many lapses of time during which the reader gets respite, even forgets for a while those frightful incidents. Emily Brontë does not let her readers breathe normally through the book. The story originates from the arrival of Heathcliff at the Heights. He gradually poisons the existence of his hosts and of the Lintons, and there is a release only after his death towards the end of the book. Both sisters do not then build their suspenses with the same skill.

The violent incidents, sometimes mysterious, which build the

suspense, are reinforced by the settings in which they take place. In Jane Eyre, we saw how Thornfield is a true gothic setting. It is an old house, characterized by a dreadful laugh, peopled with inexplicable hideous incidents, and so on. All combines to create a climate of horror. Thornfield is an imitation of the gothic mansions which had filled the rising tide of novels of terror after the publication of The Castle of Otranto. The only difference between Thornfield and those mansions is that the former still has some refinement, whereas the latter were most of the time falling in ruin. If all the incidents of

Thornfield had happened in the decaying Ferndean, the tension would have been comparatively high.

In Wuthering Heights, the house which has a gothic touch, without equalling Thornfield, is the Heights. It is old, rough, rustic. The natural tumult, added to the power of hatred that prevails there and results in perpetual violence, sometimes make the air of Wuthering Heights unbearable. In this sense, Jane Eyre has a comparatively better gothic setting, but the atmosphere of that book is not tense if compared with that of Wuthering Heights. While Emily's descriptions rouse the reader to absolute frenzy in some passages, Charlotte's are most of the time reasonable. That is, Emily incites the "overflow of powerful feelings " more than her sister.

Both authors have recourse to the supernatural, which they strangely treat in the same way. Ghosts appear in different forms

and for different reasons. In many gothic works, they are often led by revenge, haunt their living enemies, may kill them, etc. But both in Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights, the supernatural seems mainly to be the consequence of love. Lovers, who are separated from each other by distance or by death, pine to meet their mates. The only means used by Emily and Charlotte to put those lovers in contact is to have recourse to the supernatural. It is as if the intensity of love were able to make those lovers communicate by telepathy. That is truly romantic: to mingle the power of love with the inexplicable.

In Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff is in permanent communion with his beloved Catherine owing to supernatural forces. He implores her spirit to come, which means that the ghost is a welcome visitor, and not an abhorred apparition, as it is often the case in many gothic tales. It is frightening only for those who meddle in the lovers' affairs. For example, if Lockwood had not read the manuscripts, he would have perhaps slept in peace.

Towards the end of the book, it is stated that the spectres of Heathcliff and Catherine haunt the moors, and not Hindley's and Frances'. It is as if only the kind of outstanding and mutual passion that had united Heathcliff and Catherine cannot definitively extinguish, even after their deaths. It is depicted as abnormal during the lovers's lifetime, and when the author associates it with the supernatural, the reader is not at all surprised.

In Jane Eyre, it is also the supernatural which permits the happy ending of the novel. If Jane had not heard the mysterious call from Rochester, she would maybe have accepted to marry St John.

And as Jane Eyre has a touch of gothicism without departing from a kind of sentimentalism, Charlotte allows the fulfilment of that love by using the supernatural. It is also owing to that love that Jane's dead mother urges her to refuse a tricky marriage.

However, the use of the supernatural sounds more convincing in Wuthering Heights than in Jane Eyre. From the beginning of Wuthering Heights, a mood of the unknown is settled. Lockwood (and the reader) wonder what kind of man Heathcliff is, the relationships between the inmates of the Heights, the reason of their mutual hatred, etc. All is peculiar in that house, and the uneasy feeling is stressed by what Lockwood reads in Catherine's diary. One gets then a strange impression almost at the very opening of the book, and the supernatural comes as a continuation of what was described as unusual at the Heights. The way Heathcliff reacts to the supposed ghost also prepares the reader for the hero's odd behaviour before his death. Thus, the whole novel is a concatenation of strange happenings, so that the supernatural seems to occupy its appropriate place in Wuthering Heights.

In Jane Eyre, on the contrary, the supernatural seems to be forced. The characters move in a normal and real world, and suddenly, the supernatural is introduced. If the mysterious call were heard in a setting like Thornfield, which is gloomy and characterized by strange occurrences, that call would have sounded accurate. But to make the supernatural intervene in unfit surroundings, simply because Jane is on the verge of temptation, appears a little bit unconvincing. It is as if the author clung to using the

supernatural in her novel at any cost, or as if she had not found any other appropriate means of making Rochester and Jane encounter. The supernatural is not then well integrated in the progression of the story. It is used to fill up a void, in a sense, is a deus ex machina.

Dreams also contribute to creating a gothic mood, and they have their place in both books. Lockwood's dreams upset Heathcliff, and the latter's reaction stirs the visitor's curiosity. If Lockwood had not had nightmares and provoked Heathcliff's odd reaction, maybe he would not have been interested in knowing Heathcliff's story. Those dreams in a way spark off the accounts of Wuthering Heights. Similarly, Jane's repetitive dreams, chiefly of an infant, prepare the reader for what will happen. They are prophetic, and have a share in the building of suspense.

Thus, although Emily and Charlotte do not create a totally alike gothic atmosphere, the devices they use to achieve it are almost the same. One or another treat such or such aspect in depth or beautifully, whereas the other's main preoccupation lies in another aspect. But on the whole, the goal to reach seems to be the same; that is, to awaken the reader's deepest emotions.

A gothic setting has to be accompanied by a gothic hero. Otherwise, the story would lack some flavour. Emily and Charlotte are aware of that, and they both portray Byronic heroes who have visibly something in common, Heathcliff and Rochester. Those heroes share many traits, so that one critic prefers to put them in the same pattern, that he calls the "Brontean hero"[4]. But the likeness

between both heroes is not complete. There are also some differences between them.

In Wuthering Heights, the reader follows progressively Heathcliff from infancy to adulthood, thus witnessing step by step the circumstances liable to improve or to alter his personality. Heathcliff is then a fully developed character. All the details concerning him are given, except the years he spends in Liverpool and the three years he is absent from the Heights. But that blank does not at all render shallow his vivid portrait. On the contrary, it adds some spice to the mysterious air surrounding him.

To emphasize the Byronic hero's traits in Wuthering Heights, Emily contrasts him with another character. We have two main male characters, Heathcliff and Edgar. The former is dark, of unknown origin, whereas the latter is fair and from a respectable family. They are opposed to each other in order to highlight the positive qualities of Edgar and the negative aspects of Heathcliff. That method of using foils is efficient. But the stress is put on Heathcliff so that Edgar becomes a personage of little depth. Even when Edgar succeeds in marrying the heroine, her whole self is monopolized by Heathcliff. Thus, it is the latter who logically triumphs in the battle of heroes. To confront both of them reveals Heathcliff as an incarnation of passionate love, hatred, revenge, and pride, hence an accurate Byronic hero.

Rochester is not well delineated as Heathcliff. Of course, the reader knows that Heathcliff led an instable life before he encountered Jane, moving to and fro, which is considered satanic, and thus strengthens the hero's gothic appeal. Yet, unlike other

gothic heroes, he still has restraints. Perhaps that his upper-class breeding has a repressing influence on his impulses, while Heathcliff's rustic milieu favours his natural inclinations. Heathcliff's depiction is a satisfactory rendering of a Byronic hero, whereas Rochester has the latter's physical features, but the intensity of his passions cannot equal Heathcliff's. Heathcliff is stern, gloomy, with dark face, hair, eyes and eyebrows. Rochester also has "a dark face, with stern features and a heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrowns 'look[] ireful and thwarted" (p.145), and he can be proud of his strong constitution. But their moral dispositions differ from each other. Rochester's grudge and past sin urge him to care much for Adele's and his mad wife's safety, whereas Heathcliff's grudge urges him to destroy. If he were in Rochester's situation, he would perhaps murder Bertha in order to be released from that burden. He sequesters Nelly and Cathy in order to reach his mean aims, but he would not sequester in order to protect, as Rochester does. Also, Heathcliff dies with his Byronism, still surrounded by mystery, while Jane Eyre ends with an ordinary Rochester, deprived of his strength and peculiarity. So, Heathcliff appears more gothic than Rochester.

Now, the problem is : Are Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre romantic novels ? They undoubtedly display almost all the characteristics of the romantic era. If they are romantic then, which of them is more romantic than the other ? That is hard to tell. Many critics acknowledge that Emily's and Charlotte's works are not to be put in the main trend of victorian novels. But opinions are divided on the degree of romanticism of both authors. For Allen,

> Jane Eyre is a highly subjective novel, as Byron's Childe

> Harolde or Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, and Jane as much a projection of her author as Harold and Paul Morel are of theirs. Indeed, Charlotte's resemblance to Byron is quite striking; one might say that she is the female answer to Byron, and it is in this sense that Jane Eyre is the first romantic novel in English.[5]

That is Allen's point of view. As Byron is taken for the true specimen of a romantic rebel, to compare a writer to him is to emphasize his doubtless appertaining to romantic ideals. One cannot deny that Jane Eyre is an exploration of the inner more than of the outer world, just as romantics did. But to say that Jane Eyre is the first romantic novel is to go far. For instance, another person would demonstrate how Walter Scott's The Heart of Midlothian, -in which the heroine is a mere peasant, with the underworld represented and thus creating a gothic atmosphere, with tortured childhood, etc-, is the first romantic novel. It was published in 1818, long before Jane Eyre, and it develops themes found in romanticism.

Moreover, it is not only Charlotte Brontë who can be compared with Lord Byron. If Allen thinks that she is a female Byron, Matthew Arnold finds that some of Emily's poems can be "placed by the sides of Byron's poems for vehemence, passion and pain".[6] As Wuthering Heights and Emily's poems look much like in form and content, that novel is also characterized by vehemence, passion, and pain. Consequently, Wuthering Heights also reminds of Byron's traits, which means that both sisters can be taken for Byron's female counterparts. Only, Emily is the one who sounds to be full of ardour more than Charlotte.

Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre are then more romantic than victorian. But if one compares both books, one notices that for all the themes and characters treated in those works, except perhaps the themes of childhood and the treatment of the gothic setting, Emily Brontë seems to be the one who succeeds in rendering them with more intensity, the condition sine qua non of a romantic writing. Of course, Charlotte Brontë also develops her characters and topics in an ardent way, at least if one compares her novel with her contemporaries'. But when one opposes it to her sister's unique masterpiece, Jane Eyre's flaws emerge, and Charlotte's characterization and thematic development appear a little bit shallow. And in this sense, one can conclude that although Charlotte and Emily Brontë are undeniably romantic writers, Emily is more romantic than her older sister, as it can be evidenced by the analysis of their respective works, Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights.

Endnotes

[1]William Sale, ed., Wuthering Heights, An Authoritative Text With Essays in Criticism (New York, 1963).

[2]Inga-Stina Ewbank, "Brontë", Encyclopedia Americana (New York, 1972) vol.4, p.596

[3]C.Day Lewis, "Emily Brontë and Freedom", Wuthering Heights, An Authoritative Text with Essays in Criticism (New York, 1963), p.374.

[4]Pierre Coustillas et.al., Le roman anglais au 19^{è}siècle (Vendôme, 1978), p.150. My translation.

[5]Walter Allen, The English Novel (Middlesex, 1978), p.189.

[6]Wilbur L. Cross, "Bronte", The Encyclopedia Americana (New York, 1961), vol.4, p.580.

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