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The Brontë Inheritance:
Some Brontë Progeny

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A Thesis

in

The Department

of

English

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

March 1997

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ABSTRACT

The Brontë Inheritance: Some Brontë Progeny

Carolyne A. Van Der Meer

This study is an exploration of the relationship among a body of modern texts relating to Branwell, Charlotte and Emily Brontë and to *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. These texts and the more fluid "Brontë legend" are examined as hypotext for *Heathcliff* (Jeffrey Caine), *Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights* (Lin Haire-Sargeant) and *Return to Wuthering Heights* (Anna L'Estrange). The modern texts are interrogated for their consistency and period authenticity as readings for their originals, and as discourse on the sources of the Brontë inspiration, including the supposed role of Branwell as prototype for "author" and as a model for Heathcliff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of the many people who supported and encouraged me throughout the writing of this thesis, there are two in particular to whom I owe my deepest gratitude.

Dr. Gerald Auchinachie, my thesis advisor, always offered his guidance—and his genius. Without him, these pages would never have materialized. I am duly indebted.

My husband, Robert Kopersiewich, was eternally patient, and always believed I would reach the end of this arduous task—perhaps more than I did. As on many occasions, he was my Rock of Gibraltar.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	1
Introduction	
Chapter 2	14
Lin Haire-Sargeant's <i>Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights</i>	
Chapter 3	25
Jeffrey Caine's <i>Heathcliff</i>	
Chapter 4	33
Anna L'Estrange's <i>The Return to Wuthering Heights</i>	
Chapter 5	56
The Brontë Legend: Branwell, as Sibling and Author, and His Role in the Creation of Heathcliff	
Conclusion	81
Bibliography	83

Chapter 1
Introduction

The principal purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationships among a body of texts relating to Emily and Charlotte Brontë. Before I discuss the texts themselves, I will explain how I have categorized them. This body of texts has been separated into three different groups: first of all, there are Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, which exist as text sources for the contemporary novels they have generated. Secondly, there is the history of the Brontës themselves, which can be referred to as the Brontë "legend." It is important to note that this legend does not have the same consistency or fixity as the fictional texts, but I shall use the "reality" of this legend as a basis for analysis in this paper. Thirdly, of course, there are the contemporary texts, novels written as sequels to fill the gaps or supply new perspectives on *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. The legend and the text source have given birth to these offspring texts, written in different forms, by different authors, and in different epochs.

One way of explaining the link between the text sources (primary texts) and the contemporary texts is by making a correlation with Gérard Genette's concept of hypertext and hypotext: "that which unites text B (hypertext) with a previous text A (hypotext) upon which it grafts itself in a way which is not that of commentary" (*Palimpsestes*, 11-12).

In *Palimpsestes*, a work by Genette which focuses almost exclusively on the concept of hypertextuality, two types of hypertext are described: transformation and imitation. Barbara Havercroft in *The Encyclopedia of Literary Theory* simplifies Genette's complex distinction with the following description: "The two major types of hypertextual derivations noted are the transformation of a text according to a particular formal constraint or semantic intention; and imitation, which necessitates a model of the imitated

text in order to produce the hypertext” (Makaryk, 335; and Genette, 89-90). In this thesis, imitative hypertextuality is the focus.

Genette points out that imitative hypertextuality is broken into two groups: pastiche, and forgery or serious imitation. The latter serves to extend or continue a previous literary work in one of several ways (Makaryk, 335). It is this kind of hypertextuality that encompasses the contemporary texts to be examined in this thesis.

It is, however, important to mention at the outset of this undertaking that there are several fictional texts which have incorporated, interrogated or imitated Brontë texts in one way or another, and can thus be referred to as hypertexts. Those of which I am aware are: *Masterpieces* by Arthur Bicknell; *Four Dreamers and Emily* by Stevie Davies; *Brontë* by Glyn Hughes; *Changing Heaven* by Jane Urquhart and *Catherine, Her Book* by John Wheatcroft. All of these except the Wheatcroft novel attempt to discern the personal motives of, or the dynamics between, the Brontë siblings. Wheatcroft's novel is a version of Catherine's diary which reveals why she chooses not to marry Heathcliff and, therefore it is the only one which attempts to demystify the novel rather than the author. I decided not to use any of these texts as I felt there was not a strong enough link between them to make a coherent, cohesive analysis.

My goal is to examine, within the context of Genette's theory of imitative hypertextuality, *Wuthering Heights* and, to a lesser extent, *Jane Eyre*, and their relationships to three contemporary novels or hypertexts: *Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights* by Lin Haire-Sargeant, *Heathcliff* by Jeffrey Caine and *The Return to Wuthering Heights* by Anna L'Estrange. Use of the text *Jane Eyre* only comes into play in the analysis of Haire-Sargeant's novel, for which it acts as hypotext along with *Wuthering*

Heights. In the analysis of these novels, I will also employ the Brontë legend. It is necessary to point out that in the reinscribing, especially in Haire-Sargeant's novel, the Brontës' fictional characters jostle with the "historical" authors and, often, all are reduced to the same verbal and, hence, ontological plane.

In my examination of the relationships between these texts, I shall employ specific criteria. The purpose of using these criteria is to make a structured analysis, the main goal of which is to bring issues to light, and to invite the reader to ponder his or her interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, as well as the subsequent texts. It is my hope that this method of analysis will not seem overly mechanical in its presentation; in fact, this method should test the validity of the contemporary texts, and thus, determine their character and worthiness as additions to the Brontë "canon."

One of my main concerns in the examination of the hypertexts is period authenticity of language. It is important to establish whether the contemporary author is using language inappropriate (i.e. too modern) to a Victorian text. Dialect, expressions and word roots are examined closely to determine whether the text contains anachronisms or other misuse. If these are detected, they alone can account for the text's failure to imitate Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë or the writing of any author of the Victorian period.

Victorian practices, mores and traditions as they are treated in the hypertexts will also be examined for accuracy. Errors and anachronisms will count as strikes against contemporary authors and their attempts to create credible nineteenth-century texts. For example, matters of sexuality will be analyzed to determine whether the filling in of sexuality constitutes the reason for the new novel, or creates a weakness in the new novel.

Also of concern is consistency between the characters of the original novel and those of the contemporary novels. This does not solely apply to the fictional characters, but also to any re-renderings of the Brontës themselves; there must be an adherence to the "facts" of the Brontë legend. It is important that the contemporary authors display some fidelity to the original models.

Various elements pertaining to the thesis and purpose of the hypertexts will be examined: whether the novel says anything worthwhile or simply borrows its interest from the prior one and explains or traduces it; whether the hypertext fills in a gap in the original story; and above all, how the hypertext affects our reading or re-reading of the hypotext. This last criterion holds the most importance, as it determines not so much whether the contemporary author made a respectable effort, but whether we view the contemporary novel as valid, or whether we dismiss it.

So that readers of this thesis can understand how a hypertext might be deemed successful, I have included a brief analysis of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and its relationship to *Jane Eyre*. This novel is quite unlike the three hypertexts I propose to examine for a variety of reasons. First of all, it is not a sequel, but rather a preceding text or "prequel," and in this way, stands up differently to the test of criteria. Furthermore, it is not set in England, but in the West Indies, a factor which certainly affects the reader's perspective. Rhys does not so much attempt to emulate Charlotte Brontë's style as to fill in the gaps concerning the Bertha Mason we meet in *Jane Eyre*.

Considered the most important work in the Rhys canon, *Wide Sargasso Sea* was finally published in 1966 after years of reworking. It traces the story of Antoinette Cosway, the woman we know as Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*. Told in three parts, the novel explores Antoinette's childhood in

Jamaica where she leads a troubled existence as a rich girl with Creole heritage, in a predominantly black community. Antoinette is not only ridiculed by those in the community, but she is also a black sheep in her mother's eyes. Mrs. Cosway prefers Antoinette's infant brother, Pierre, who has suffered some degree of brain damage. The firing of the Coulibri estate by blacks, Pierre's death, and Antoinette's mother's state of mental instability leave a distinct mark on Antoinette, which she carries throughout her adult life.

In Part II, Edward Rochester, of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, enters the story. He narrates a portion of this section, explaining that his father has arranged his marriage with Antoinette. This has been done in order to secure a handsome dowry for Edward, and to ensure that Rochester Senior can pass on his wealth to his favoured son. Rochester, although embittered, initially falls in love with his new wife but, finally, is so soured that he turns on her, treating her with unquestionable cruelty.

In Part I, the narration is handled by Antoinette, whereas in Part II, it alternates between Rochester and Antoinette. In Part III, Antoinette takes over once again, the novel ending with the firing of Thornfield, clearly instigated by her. This ultimately leads to her death, of which we learn more concretely in *Jane Eyre*.

One of the reasons the Rhys novel holds a certain credibility in terms of language is that we cannot know the speech patterns of Jamaicans in the Victorian period well enough to make criticisms. There are smatterings of *patois* throughout the novel, as well as broken English used with incorrect verb tenses. This is no doubt common to native Jamaican culture, and results from the fact that English is not the only spoken language. Furthermore, as

Antoinette is part Creole, her use of English has no doubt been influenced by her ancestry as well as her surroundings.

Since it was not conclusive to examine the speech of Antoinette or any other of the Jamaican natives, I began to concentrate on Rochester. His speech does not seem unVictorian, though perhaps it is not distinctly Victorian either. Because he is the narrator, and this is the first time we are exposed to him as such, it is difficult to assess his speech: we have nothing against which to make comparisons.

In terms of modern language creeping into the text, I found only one instance which raised suspicion. On page 74, Rochester uses the expression "up to the nines," which, according to Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Historical Slang*, came into usage between 1870 and 1880 (Partridge, 623). However, according to John Camden Hotten's *The Slang Dictionary*, published in 1865, it came into usage earlier (Hotten, 188). Although the Hotten source does not give the date the expression originated, it was most certainly before the publication of the dictionary. Clearly, there is some dispute over the origin of the expression. Therefore, in terms of its appearance in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, it presents a possible problem since *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847, and *Wide Sargasso Sea* supposedly took place even before then. Thus, the expression may have been developed too late for use in either novel.

Rhys sets up her novel so that abiding by Victorian mores, practices and traditions is not necessary. Given that most of the novel takes place in Jamaica, we cannot make a fair analysis of these elements. No doubt they were much different from those of Victorian England, so once again, we cannot draw comparisons. This leaves us with little basis for an argument.

However, when we consider the way in which Victorian novels were written, we can perhaps make some interesting observations. For example,

when Rochester has sex with Antoinette on page 136, although it is not described in any kind of detail, we nevertheless know that their involvement is physical and is taking/did take place. I am not certain we would be privy to much more than a kiss in a true Victorian novel, as *Jane Eyre* does in fact illustrate. Further to this, on page 139-40, we are party to an affair between Rochester and Amélie, which, in a Victorian novel, might simply be alluded to, but not so clearly stated. On page 164, Antoinette is described as wanting to "give herself," a term that may be seen as too explicitly sexual in a Victorian text.

In a British Victorian text, these arguments might be considered valid. But it can also be argued that they are invalid, for even if the novel were written in the Victorian period, it is after all written from a Jamaican perspective, which, depending on tradition, might actually allow for sexual detail. Furthermore, the Rhys text never claims to imitate the Brontë text, a fact which would account for a change in narrative technique.

When we evaluate character consistency, we realize that Rhys takes advantage of the fact that Charlotte Brontë does not provide us with every detail about her characters. For example, in the case of Antoinette/Bertha, it is difficult to determine whether there are inconsistencies since Charlotte provides us with few details of her life and character; we meet her in *Jane Eyre* when sanity has long since left her. *Wide Sargasso Sea* simply illustrates her demise.

Rochester, however, is somewhat easier to assess. Once again, the first-person narration offers a new perspective, for he tells us more about himself than we learn from the Brontë text, narrated by Jane. This works well, because the text is not emulating the Brontë text, but uses a new narrative technique. One might argue that this in itself is an inconsistency, but I believe it is a way

of lending credibility to the text because it creates no real grounds for comparison.

Comparison of character traits shows that there are indeed similarities. On page 102, Rochester asks himself "How old was I when I learned to hide what I felt?" This fits in well with the Rochester we come to know in *Jane Eyre*—a man who has difficulty expressing any depth of emotion.

The story of the "Bertha" moniker not only explains missing details in *Jane Eyre*, but it also gives context for the cruelty we see Rochester display from time to time in the Brontë text. Indeed, this can be called a consistency. Moreover, Christophine, on pages 152 and 156 draws attention to Rochester's hardened nature ("You young but you already hard" (152); "You are damn hard for a young man" (156)), once again offering a static historical perspective on his character, well in sync with the portrayal of his character in *Jane Eyre*.

Rochester himself ponders his own emotional state on page 161. He blames his father for putting him in this situation, and blames Antoinette and his marriage for robbing him of his youth. Then on page 171-172, he describes his hatred for Jamaica and his hatred for Antoinette. These passages are important in that they help us to understand Rochester's cynicism and bitterness in *Jane Eyre*.

As for the thesis of the hypertext, the novel only borrows its interest from the prior novel, in that the prior novel gives it a context. However, because Charlotte Brontë's novel does not discuss the events revealed in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the latter text remains original. Furthermore, the Rhys novel is worthwhile in that it solves the mysteries left to our imaginations in *Jane Eyre*. It is interesting to note that if it were not already clearly established

that *Jane Eyre* was published first, we might wonder that it had not been the Rhys novel.

The final question we must ask ourselves about Rhys' novel concerns how our reading of the hypotext, *Jane Eyre*, is affected. Thomas F. Staley, in his *Jean Rhys: A Critical Study* states: "Readers have quite naturally accounted for the way in which Rhys incorporated the Brontë material and how the reader's knowledge of *Jane Eyre* is fundamental to an appreciation of *Wide Sargasso Sea*; but equally important, I believe, is the way in which the latter novel enriches and even transforms our understanding of the former" (119). That this should happen, and is readily recognized by scholars, is an indication that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a credible addition to the Brontë canon. But why does it work? To this question, there are several answers.

Rhys' text would perhaps not be half as believable had it been written by a British author. Rhys' own background in Dominica makes her an authority on West Indian culture, and gives the text a kind of authenticity which is almost inarguable. None of us can properly debate discrepancies in the text because, firstly, we are not well enough acquainted with Creole culture, and secondly, because the text never claims to be in any way British, it can be said that there cannot possibly *be* discrepancies. To simplify matters, comparing the two texts becomes almost like comparing apples and oranges. Since they are not comparable, it becomes difficult to aptly criticize. In essence, this very element of incomparability is one of *Wide Sargasso Sea's* strengths.

Rhys, knowingly or unknowingly, capitalizes on this difference. If there are small inconsistencies in Rochester's character, they can surely be blamed on the seducing magic of the island, of the vegetation, of the weather.

It is important to note that the effect of the environment on Rochester is often mentioned throughout the novel:

- "It was a beautiful place—wild, untouched, above all untouched, with an alien, disturbing, secret loveliness" (87).
- "I feel that this place is my enemy and on your side" (129).
- "The trees were threatening and the shadows of the trees moving slowly over the floor menaced me. That green menace. I had felt it ever since I saw this place. There was nothing I knew, nothing to comfort me" (149).
- "But a lovely place in any weather, however far I travel, I'll never see a lovelier" (163).
- "I hated the mountains and the hills, the rivers and the rain. I hated the sunsets of whatever colour, I hated its beauty and its magic and the secret I would never know. I hated its indifference and the cruelty which was part of its loveliness" (171-2).

Indeed, there is nothing about the novel that attempts to emulate Charlotte Brontë's style, and perhaps Rhys was aware that this was a necessary tactic. As a result, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a novel which can stand alone or be read as a complement to *Jane Eyre*. However, one thing is certain: once we have come in contact with Rhys' genius, we will never regard Bertha Mason, Edward Rochester or Jane Eyre in the same way. Bertha embodies a taunted exotic beauty whose deserved name of Antoinette has been unfairly taken from her. Her behaviour in the Brontë novel seems only logical, for what else could possibly come of such gross maltreatment? Furthermore, when Bertha meets her death, we are relieved that she finds peace from her torment, and perhaps a little satisfied that Rochester is paid in kind. He himself is no longer the hard-done-by gentleman, but a thoughtless instigator of pain, whose wealth is hardly deserved. We even wonder whose mental

imbalances are more real—Bertha's or his own? He is able to hide his inner conflicts behind wealth and high society, while she is fated to a life as a caged animal. In fact, the Rhys text is so powerful that even our opinions of Jane are affected—we know the sources for her eventual wealth and social status, and their cost to Antoinette. We also see, in light of the black/white conflict in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, how inappropriate and racist are her attitudes towards Jews and French people.

One of the reasons this novel can be considered a successful hypertext may in part be due to the fact that it is not a sequel, but a prequel or preceding text—in other words, it has its boundaries defined for it by the text source, *Jane Eyre*, and therefore does not risk going beyond them. The idea of boundaries is one I have kept in mind in my examination of the hypertexts.

My thesis is divided into two main sections, one of which will discuss the selected hypertexts in Chapters 2, 3 and 4; and a final section, Chapter 5, which will incorporate an analysis of the Brontë legend and the influences Emily may have experienced when creating the character of Heathcliff. It is here that discussions of Branwell Brontë become pertinent. An examination of his work and of biographical material will reveal, to some extent, details of his character, which I shall use to determine whether the character of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* was in any way modelled after him.

There is certainly evidence to support this assumption, which can be found both in Daphne du Maurier's creative non-fiction account of Branwell's life, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë*, as well as in Charlotte Brontë's introduction to *Wuthering Heights*: Branwell was described as a person of unusual whim and fancy, and of an extremely volatile temperament. Charlotte, in her introduction, makes comments to this effect about Emily's character of Heathcliff and, without directly posing

the question, seems to wonder where Emily could have found the basis for such a character. In du Maurier's reading of the legend, a correlation is made between the two characters, and an independent examination may reveal evidence to this effect.

Through these various investigations, this thesis will attempt, insofar as is possible, to establish relationships among this body of texts, which spans almost 150 years.

Chapter 2
Lin Haire-Sargeant's *Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights*

In 1992, Lin Haire-Sargeant, a Tufts University Ph.D. candidate, published *Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights* (formerly titled *H: The Story of Heathcliff's Journey Back to Wuthering Heights*). The novel was her doctoral thesis, the subject of which was generated by her interest in the Brontës; and more specifically "in the mystery surrounding Heathcliff's origins, transformation and character" (Olendorf, ed., 166). "I would take a stab at solving that mystery," she explained to *Contemporary Authors*. "I began planning a conventional academic analysis, but it somehow didn't jell; Heathcliff's voice kept breaking through. Finally I just let him talk, and the unorthodox paper that resulted eventually became *H*" (*Ibid.*).

Haire-Sargeant, a lecturer at the University of Massachusetts, also explains that due to her lonely childhood, books and the characters within them came to life. To prolong the existence of those she loved best, she would write sequels (165). Thus, the precedent was set long before she embarked on the writing of her hypertext.

Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights is the ambitious melding together of the lives of the Brontës with the characters of both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. There are two basic threads—that Emily actually knew a real-life Heathcliff, and that when Heathcliff was absent from *Wuthering Heights*, he was living with Mr. Are of Thornfield, whom we presume, based on the appropriation of such characters as Blanche Ingram, Jane Eyre and others, is actually Mr. Rochester of Charlotte's novel. We learn of Heathcliff's origins, that he is the son of Mr. Are. The novel is something of an unsolved mystery. At the outset, Charlotte, while travelling home, meets Mr. Lockwood of *Wuthering Heights*. In his possession is Heathcliff's manuscript, a letter to Cathy, explaining "the lost years." Lockwood requests Charlotte's opinion, and the reader follows her through the manuscript.

Charlotte realizes that this must be the Heathcliff that Emily knew in their youth, but in terms of chronology, this makes no sense, since the Heathcliff of the manuscript existed 60 years before. As the novel culminates, Emily takes Charlotte to visit Wuthering Heights and is about to tell her more of the uncanny relationship she shared with Heathcliff. But in a characteristic volatile change of heart, she decides not to reveal more, leaving both Charlotte and the readers without an answer to this long-winded riddle.

Haire-Sargeant's connection with today's world is evident throughout her novel. For example, modern language slips into the text, a prime example being "we kept our mouths shut" on page 129. An expression typically of modern-day usage, it seems out of place in a supposed nineteenth-century work. A consultation of *Partridge's Dictionary of Historical Slang* reveals that this particular expression is not listed as having come into common use in the 1800's, but that "shut your mouth" originated in 1857 (Partridge, 840), ten years after the publication of both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*.

Haire-Sargeant also makes slips in habits of social convention that reveal her text as a contemporary one rather than a true nineteenth-century sequel. This revelation that the text is modern leads the reader away from accepting it as credible. For example, on page 63, Mr. Are makes the comment "I admit I have the vanity of a latter-day Pygmalion to satisfy." This remark is an anachronism, for the social way in which Mr. Are uses the Pygmalion myth applies to George Bernard Shaw's play, which did not reach the stage until 1913, well after the writings of *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. In that play, Eliza Doolittle is transformed into a lady by the teaching of Professor Higgins, much as Heathcliff is transformed into a gentleman by Mr. Are. Had the author made her reference pertain more to Pygmalion, the legendary king

of Cyprus, whose love for the beautiful statue led Aphrodite to give that statue life (Harvey, 355), Haire-Sargeant would not have appeared so unmistakably as a modern/contemporary writer.

Another example of a modern-day presence in the text is found on page 179, when after being slyly invited by Heathcliff, Blanche Ingram slips into the stable for a midnight visit. First of all, that Heathcliff would invite her might perhaps happen in the Victorian era, but that it would be reported in a Victorian novel by a woman author is unlikely. While Michael Mason, in his *The Making of Victorian Sexuality*, tells us that upper class women, of whom Blanche Ingram was certainly one, were often so flirtatious as to be sexually shameless and predatory (Mason, 117), H.L. Beales points out that texts that talked of sex in a direct way were considered "immoral," and were probably not as accessible among the upper classes (British Broadcasting Corporation, 353). Further to this point, Steven Marcus in *The Other Victorians* has taught us that representations of Victorian sexuality in "high literature" were conventionalized, and that pornography often made explicit what was otherwise suppressed or obliquely stated in the more public literature (*passim*). This suggests then, that while Blanche Ingram might have accepted Heathcliff's invitation, it would not have been fodder for discussion in a Victorian novel. One must also remember that when *Jane Eyre* was published, it was represented as having been written by Currer Bell, a deliberately androgynous name. Charlotte knew that her novel would be better received by the public as a scandalous text written by a man rather than a woman. And once it was known that Currer Bell was a woman, there were social consequences: that Jane's eyes were drawn irresistibly to watching Rochester was cause for reproaching the author of *Jane Eyre* as an immoral person (Rigby, 452-53).

One of Haire-Sargeant's greatest errors is her tendency to be inconsistent with the original characters' personality traits. For example, Mr. Are, the only character whose name varies from the hypotext ('Are' being perhaps the phonetic spelling of the letter 'R' for Rochester, or a variation on the spelling of 'Eyre'), is much more cheerful than Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. Evidence of this may be found on page 33 and page 149. It should be noted that in *Jane Eyre*, Mr. Rochester's good humour, when present, was often borne of a certain satisfaction at his own sardonic wit, but Mr. Are's good humour is simply that—cheerfulness for the sake of it, utterly inconsistent with the character in Charlotte Brontë's hypotext.

Secondly, Heathcliff, on page 53, describes himself as deeply absorbed in the writings of a Scots philosopher, who may have been Thomas Carlyle, David Hume or James Mill. This seems perhaps out of character, for the Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights* is not concerned with culture and learning in this manner. In fact, culture and literacy become the index distinguishing the second generation at Wuthering Heights from the first; we need only consider Catherine's contempt for Edgar's consolation in his books. One may wish to argue that this may be an acquired taste since residing with Mr. Are, but Haire-Sargeant provides no information to that effect, suggesting a gap in the storyline, or a deliberate inconsistency with Emily's character of Heathcliff.

Further to this, on page 118, Heathcliff implores Linton to keep the secret that they know each other. Firstly, Heathcliff, in his wild and forceful nature, would never so sincerely implore anyone, while Linton, spiteful and jealous, would never be so kind as to oblige. Once again, Haire-Sargeant falls out of step with the nature of her characters, lending a certain incredibility to her attempt at a credible hypertext.

Yet another example of this appears in the text when Blanche Ingram, the money-, status-hungry, potential wife of Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, shows a sensitive side inconsistent with her personality as it is portrayed in the hypotext. This occurs on page 143 when she apologizes to Linton for being pushy and admits impertinence. A woman who, in *Jane Eyre*, scorned poverty, sulked when unnoticed, and was loose-lipped with insults, would never even consider apologizing or admitting error. Once more, Haire-Sargeant has stepped outside the set boundaries of the hypotext, which, unaltered, should only aid her in creating a believable continuation.

Believing perhaps that her readers will not note inconsistencies, Haire-Sargeant alters somewhat the traits of the Brontë sisters so that they no longer completely resemble those we know from the legend. This begins as early as page 5, when she describes Charlotte "sobbing" after she butts heads with Mr. Lockwood on the train. Somehow, given Charlotte Brontë's reported nature and her strength of character (despite her sensitivity), it is difficult to imagine her "sobbing." Haire-Sargeant, apart from altering hypotext, is also reinterpreting the Brontë legend, giving traits to Charlotte Brontë that have no basis.

There is no doubt that Haire-Sargeant's novel is an ambitious undertaking. It is important to keep in mind when analyzing this hypertext that she was working towards a Ph.D. Throughout her novel, there are indications of a scholar at work, testing out her theories, editorializing the book's content based on her hypotheses. This is a risk on Haire-Sargeant's part, for her own voice has a tendency to become mixed in with those of her characters, contributing to the inconsistencies in the text. For example, on page 47, when Charlotte realizes that the Heathcliff whose letter she is reading seems to be the same one Emily knew in their childhood, she questions

Emily's mental state and "the sense of her own creations" (47). We know from historical and biographical accounts, as well as from the Brontë legend, that Charlotte admired Emily and was in awe of her talent ("Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell," by Currer Bell, preceding text of *Wuthering Heights*, 30); we also know that she found Emily's imagination to be very vivid and consuming, even dangerous ("Whether it is right or advisable to create things like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is," writes Charlotte in the 1850 preface to *Wuthering Heights*, 40), and that Charlotte felt compelled to protect her younger sister. When in the hypertext, Charlotte poses the question "What did that make of her sanity?" (Haire-Sargeant, 47), somehow the voice of speculating scholar echoes in the tone: it seems that she herself poses the question from a more academic standpoint, and editorializes the text with her speculation. Consequently, she casts a certain doubt in the mind of the reader regarding Emily Brontë's sanity. Thus, Haire-Sargeant's academic background may be one of the reasons for the alteration of the Brontës' traits.

Haire-Sargeant, in her attempt at a sequel, invites us to seriously consider whether her novel has anything worthwhile to say, or whether it does indeed borrow its interest from the two prior texts. It is interesting to note that in this sequel, *Wuthering Heights*, to an extent, except for the characters of Heathcliff and Linton, becomes the Brontë legend. Charlotte and Emily, by virtue of their encounters with Mr. Lockwood, Nelly Dean and Cathy, and the existence of *Wuthering Heights*, the house, become part of the hypotext, and hypotext becomes legend. *Jane Eyre* becomes the hypertext, since all the characters apart from Heathcliff and Linton are appropriated from *Jane Eyre*. The fact that all the characters come from hypotext indicates a certain lack of originality or overdependence on the part of Haire-Sargeant,

especially since, apart from systematic changes in circumstance and interpretation, Haire-Sargeant does not bring anything entirely new and never-before-seen to the novel. Rather than attesting to her cleverness at attempting a sequel, this causes us to question her credibility as a generator of original ideas.

While the purpose of this novel is primarily to fill in the gaps left by *Wuthering Heights*, it would nevertheless seem, however, as partly illustrated by some of my earlier points, that Haire-Sargeant may also be using the novel as a forum for the theories and doubts she has about both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. I will cite two examples to illustrate my point. On page 86, John offers hints to Heathcliff during their conflict as to his true identity, saying "If you want the truth, look at your face in the mirror!", suggesting a resemblance to Mr. Are. Once again, this is a clue to the reader more than a clue to Heathcliff (who, incidentally, seems somewhat thick about the matter), and lets us know what Haire-Sargeant's theory is. Then on page 130, Lockwood subtly, perhaps even unknowingly, suggests Cathy II is Heathcliff's daughter by remarking on her "extraordinary dark eyes," a clue unmissed by the reader because Heathcliff's eyes are often described as such throughout the hypertext. This represents yet another example of Haire-Sargeant's theorizing beneath the surface, revealing her own doubts about the hypotext. Although there is nothing wrong with an author using a text to subtly state opinions, my contrary reaction to this tactic comes more from the fact that the author's voice is too strong, mixing in with the voices of her characters so that the inconsistencies in their personalities make an unbelievable departure from the hypotext.

In terms of altering our reading or re-reading of the hypotext, *Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights* is not a success, but not only for

the reasons previously outlined. It also lacks credibility because, Haire-Sargeant, in her desire to create a Victorian text, has gone too far, to the point where certain elements in the novel seem almost outlandish. I will discuss some of these elements in the following paragraphs.

For example, it is somewhat stereotypical that Heathcliff should have a way with horses. That his masculine power can override the wild spirit of a roguish horse seems like an overused relationship of power/dominance. But worse yet is the fact that Mr. Are's horse Beelzebub, is black and a stallion, making a parallel to Heathcliff's character and appearance. Beelzebub, a name found in Matthew 12:24, is used to describe the Lord of the Underworld, the Prince of the Devils, analogous to descriptions of Heathcliff which focus on his evil nature, his demonic and uncontrollable temper. Physically, the horse is black, and uncut, filled with the virility and power of a young stallion, much like Heathcliff: his wild mane of black locks falls about him, and his youthfulness allows him to be propelled by his virility rather than his reason.

Haire-Sargeant's choice in the name Beelzebub is somewhat unoriginal, if not flashily gothic, easily found in Biblical references, and common in literature, used specifically in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Furthermore, it is a poor substitute for the highly original Mesrours, the name of Mr. Rochester's horse in *Jane Eyre*. It seems almost an act of desperation that she find a symbolic name even for the horse, and furthermore, that she stoops to such a common one with an easily translatable symbolic representation. Mesrours, harder to locate, is the executioner in *The Arabian Nights*.

The author's dilemma worsens as her text becomes more layered; she begins to have difficulty explaining her way out of the situations she has created. One telling example can be found on page 219, when Jane Eyre is

introduced, and the author inserts in brackets "(that fantastically being her name)". Haire-Sargeant is foolish to make such a parenthetical remark because it suggests that she herself is starting to find her own inventions incredible.

A detail even more difficult to digest, however, is found on page 253, when Heathcliff talks of the red parrot [which] he has seen, and which clearly belongs to Mr. Are's captive wife. This appearance represents but one thing: hypertext meets hypertext. The parrot from *Wide Sargasso Sea* finds itself in another spin-off text. With this, Haire-Sargeant goes too far from the hypotexts, leaving too many unexplained details. To understand the links, the reader has to be well acquainted with the gamut of Brontë hypertext.

Her final error, confirming our suspicions of the text's credibility, comes in the last scene, when Emily takes Charlotte to Wuthering Heights. That the place exists confuses the possibility of Heathcliff's place in Emily's life. We can no longer assume that he was a product of her imagination because he actually lived somewhere nearby. Yet, according to Charlotte's discussion with Lockwood on the train, he lived 60 years before. We then begin to wonder if Emily may have had a relationship with a ghost. This very possibility forces us to depend on the supernatural rather than the logical for an answer.

Despite the many flaws in this novel, I cannot say categorically that I disliked it. Haire-Sargeant took many risks and, her ambitious undertaking, although perhaps technically a failure, is still interesting in that she attempts an original approach to an explanation. Ironically though, her originality also represents a lack of originality because she appropriates so much from the hypotext. Indeed, the text is a veritable "mixed bag," and while it does not in

any way alter our re-reading of the hypotext, its contribution to the Brontë canon is worthy of consideration.

Chapter 3
Jeffrey Caine's *Heathcliff*

A British high school and college instructor of English, Jeffrey Caine wrote *Heathcliff* in 1977. Self-described as "fascinated by the bizarre, by obsession and the workings of obsessed minds" (Locher, ed., 94), Caine has appropriately chosen a character like Heathcliff for experimentation.

Caine's is a novel hardly so ambitious as Haire-Sargeant's—and hardly so flawed—yet its greatest flaw is its lack of ambition. In this hypertext, Heathcliff also recounts his years away from *Wuthering Heights* in a letter to Cathy. This letter, which has been found by Lockwood, explains that he has been taken in by a wealthy entrepreneur, Alex Durrant, and employed as Mrs. Durrant's companion, so that Alex can ensure that his wife is well-behaved. Once Heathcliff discovers that Durrant's business endeavours are less than honourable, he begins to side with Mrs. Durrant (Elizabeth). They make a kind of trade: she teaches him how to be a gentleman, and he allows her freedom from her husband's tight wraps.

When Durrant finds them in bed together, he throws Heathcliff out, and leads the police to him so they might convict him of a crime he committed prior to his association with Durrant. He is to be hanged, but Elizabeth saves him from that fate, and then leaves her husband to be with him. Heathcliff's letter to Cathy ends on the day of the hanging, and years later, Lockwood seeks out Elizabeth so that she might tell him the rest of the tale. She then takes over the narration, recounting that after the botched hanging, she and Heathcliff shared a relationship of convenience in high society France until it eventually soured, resulting in their return to England. She explains how at that point, she wanted to leave him, but Heathcliff would not allow it, keeping her prisoner. Finally, after much conflict, he let her go; she returned to her husband, who then plotted to murder Heathcliff as revenge. In the end, Elizabeth saved him once more, sacrificing her

husband in the showdown. Afterwards, Heathcliff disappeared, clearly to return to Wuthering Heights, Elizabeth only hearing of him again when Lockwood comes to visit her with his mysterious manuscript.

Before an analysis of the text, it is important to mention that the narration alternates several times throughout the novel. Each narration, however, is from the first-person point of view, which leads to some confusion until one has read a few paragraphs, at least. The first narrator is Lockwood; followed by Heathcliff: his manuscript to Cathy, which represents the bulk of the text; then a brief interjection from Lockwood; a 75-page explanation from Elizabeth Durrant; and then a short finale from Lockwood. Although using a variety of narrators is an interesting technique and one that is vaguely reminiscent of that used in *Wuthering Heights*, the reader quickly notices that the tone of the novel does not change with each narrator, suggesting that Caine was not successful in differentiating the voices of his characters.

One of my main concerns with the text deals with language. I suspect that modern usage creeps into the text, in that constructions are perhaps too familiar, resembling too closely today's speech patterns. For example, on page 28, Heathcliff says, "For all I cared..." which seems to have a modern ring. Then, on page 74 and 75, he refers to Elizabeth Durrant as "superior bitch" and "damned bitch", which I found suspiciously modern. However, my greatest concern with language is not so much quasi-modern-day usage, but rather, with Heathcliff's tendency, from the start, to use language that seemed too high-bred, too learned, or too witty for what we are led to believe of him in *Wuthering Heights*, in which he has a sardonic and morbid wit that is hardly convivial. This might be forgivable if there was a marked difference between his speech at the beginning of the book and his speech at the end.

For example, on page 39, he retorts to Durrant after they have a verbal disagreement: "And you may go post-haste to hell!" Then on page 63, he remarks to Elizabeth after she insults him, that he will answer her "in kind." He also uses such expressions as "quitted the room" (Caine, 69) and "I will not be your dupe" (90). Although none of these combinations is remarkably scholarly or bourgeois, they do seem to show more polish and sophistication than we expect of Heathcliff, leading us to question the development of his character from one novel to the next. All of the aforementioned vocabulary is used by Heathcliff *before* Elizabeth Durrant undertakes his "education."

Despite these minor slips, one cannot deny that the author has done a certain amount of research. He uses Victorian vocabulary correctly (*à la mode de Temple Bar*, fenced, fulhams, sharpening), and in some cases, footnotes their meaning under Lockwood's hand; this, unfortunately, seems artificial or posed. In the case of "*à la mode de Temple Bar*" (133), he lets us do our own research, which is as simple as consulting page 2146 of *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. He also invites us to consult *Grose's Dictionary of Vulgar Tongues* (1785) (Caine, 52), for clarification of vocabulary. It should be noted, however, that whatever he invites us to find in Grose's dictionary can also be found in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

To situate us historically, Caine mentions such figures as Barrington, Blackstone, Fielding, Locke and Tom Johnson. Furthermore, on page 144, he also includes Heathcliff in the "No Popery" riots, described in Altick's *Victorian People and Ideas* as led by the anti-Catholic Lord George Gordon in 1780 (Altick, 82). Caine has been careful with chronology; verification against Charles Percy Sanger's "Chronology of *Wuthering Heights*," suggests that Heathcliff did indeed leave *Wuthering Heights* during the summer of 1780 (Sanger, 296).

Caine also shows knowledge concerning Heathcliff's escape from the executioner. Although no source has proven the copper sheath worn by Heathcliff effective or even in existence, there is sufficient documentation to prove that individuals did attempt to outsmart the hangman, and that resuscitation did occur. John Deane Potter, in his book *The Fatal Gallows Tree*, writes of Ann Greene, who, executed on December 14, 1650, for infanticide, began to breathe again after having hung for half an hour (Potter, 78). Margaret Dickson, hanged for adultery in 1728, revived in her coffin while on the way to her burial (79). There are several other equally fantastic documented cases which help us to believe that Heathcliff's resuscitation was not entirely impossible.

Doctors were also interested in finding ways of outsmarting the executioner. One surgeon, Choret, attempted incisions in windpipes, so the hanging criminal could still breathe (he experimented on dogs first) (82). This method, known as bronchotomy, was successful only once, in 1767. Another way to evade death was to bribe the hangman to deliberately botch the job, making resuscitation more likely (*Ibid.*). This was a frequent trick, the hangman tying the knot at the back or front of the neck instead of behind the left ear, or simply by taking the victim down too early (*Ibid.*). Though these methods are not like the one Caine describes in the novel, they suggest that any number of methods might be possible, including Caine's.

In terms of character consistency, there are several points I would like to address. It is worth noting that in *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë did not attribute to Heathcliff a dialect, though it was assumed that he spoke with one. Perhaps Caine did not wish to dramatically affect his speech patterns because he did not wish to make a great departure from the original text. This

is somewhat unlikely, however, because in other ways, Caine indeed does make a great departure from the original text.

Other elements of Heathcliff's character requiring analysis are his naïveté, his honour and his sensitive human side. Given Heathcliff's apparent inability to fit into high society, one almost expects him to be worldly about street life and the underworld. However, on page 81, when he is sent to collect earnings from one of Mr. Durrant's brothels, he doesn't immediately understand the nature of what goes on there. It is here that we discover that Heathcliff does indeed have a sense of honour, of which he is extremely possessive. Although a romp with one of the young ladies is offered to him, he refuses, and then on page 89, confronts Durrant, accusing him of "the moral degradation of children." Somehow this morality does not seem in harmony with the Heathcliff created by Emily Brontë. Examples of this absence of morality are certainly abundant in the hypotext. For example, although Heathcliff feels no love for Isabella, he marries her simply to hurt Catherine. He does not even question the pain he inflicts on the innocent sister of Edgar Linton. Furthermore, he displays little or no reluctance to kill Hindley with his own boots, or to gain ownership of both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange through less than honourable means. Moreover, Catherine's descriptions of Heathcliff include phrases like "wilderness of furze" and "hard as granite," words which hardly suit the sensitive and moral individual portrayed by Caine.

Heathcliff's apparent taste, though sporadic, for the sentimental is another element inconsistent with the Brontë character. At times, he shows a sensitive side profoundly untrue to his character in the Brontë creation, and also unlike his character in the majority of Caine's book. On page 67, Heathcliff states that he "warmed" to Mr. Durrant, yet it is difficult to imagine

Heathcliff warming to anyone. On page 139, he shows the capacity for self-reflection, and a certain gentleness with Elizabeth, saying:

"I've been a monster too long Mrs. Durrant—Elizabeth. I've been too long degraded, too often spurned and hated, except from one, and not even from her now."

Attributing such attitudes to Heathcliff seems too self-conscious and perhaps too altruistic. In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff only changes at the end, giving up on revenge—and only then because he sees in Cathy and Hareton the shadow of his former love: he is reminded of the image of himself and Catherine alone against the world.

More out-of-character sentimentality is found on page 170 when Heathcliff describes his relationship with the young boy about to be hanged:

"He regards me as an older brother and urges me to sit beside him on the morrow, which I've agreed to do. He is afraid the crowd will jeer at him... I've managed to comfort him. Odd, is it not? I've substituted my fist for the rope in his terrified imaginings."

Caine, with these musings, has effectively added a new dimension to Heathcliff's character, suggesting that he has created more than just a sequel, but has reworked and recreated what Emily Brontë originally conceived.

Indeed, Caine's account of Heathcliff's missing years no doubt required laborious research. Nevertheless, the novel does not seem entirely believable due to an abundance of liberties taken by the author representing too dramatic a departure from the original text of *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff's "passion" has not been sufficiently elaborated in Caine's account. This passion, suggesting a sublimated sex, perhaps a kind of asceticism, becomes a fixation on one object—Catherine. In Caine's novel, there are so

many diversions, mainly Elizabeth, among which his passion for Catherine cannot possibly survive. It is hard to believe that after this three-year absence, he can return to his beloved with the fixated desire he shows in *Wuthering Heights*.

Furthermore, whereas Elizabeth Durrant teaches him to be a gentleman, the Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights* returns with a sophistication more rooted in gambling, knowing how to use the law to his own advantage, and knowing how to intimidate the young and use them as pawns for material gains. As a stand-alone text, Caine's is at best entertaining, but when inserted into the text of *Wuthering Heights* to fill the three-year gap, it introduces a Heathcliff we do not know and cannot recognize.

Chapter 4
Anna L'Estrange's *The Return to Wuthering Heights*

Rosemary Ellerbeck, a South African who has resided in England for a number of years, wrote *The Return to Wuthering Heights* in 1977 under the pseudonym Anna L'Estrange. The novel is unlike the other novels discussed in this thesis in that it can truly be termed a sequel—it continues the story of Cathy and Hareton from where it finishes at the close of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. It does not attempt to fill in Heathcliff's lost years as the other two hypertexts have attempted to do. Ellerbeck's work simply traces out the existence of the subsequent Earnshaw and Heathcliff generations as she imagines it.

The opening of the story imitates that of *Wuthering Heights*, but of course, a generation has passed. The year is 1840, and we meet David Lockwood's son, Tom, who has returned to the scene of *Wuthering Heights*, fascinated by a manuscript his father composed which describes the Earnshaw/Linton story and his involvement in it. Tom is anxious to find out what became of these enigmatic characters.

Like his father before him, Tom makes a journey to *Wuthering Heights*, only to be treated harshly by the latest generation of the Heathcliffs, Anthony. Tom recognizes Anthony's physical traits and churlishness as being part of the Heathcliff line, and wonders how it is that his small daughter, fair like the second Cathy, is also named Cathy. Anthony's wife, Jessica, does not remind him of anyone he has encountered in his father's manuscript.

After a brief illness, brought on in part, by a somewhat supernatural experience at the gravesite of Catherine, Heathcliff and Edgar, the narrator Tom Lockwood becomes overwrought with curiosity, and must know what has happened since the marriage of Cathy and Hareton in 1803.

Through the housekeeper at his temporary residence in Gimmerton, Tom learns of Agnes Sutcliffe, the great-niece of Ellen Dean, who once worked at Thrushcross Grange. He goes to see her, hoping to discover the outcome of the saga that has begun to consume him.

Agnes Sutcliffe is more than willing to share this strange story with Tom, in much the same manner as Nelly was willing to share it with Lockwood, his father. It is not surprising then, that much of the rest of the novel follows a pattern similar to *Wuthering Heights*.

Agnes commences her tale with the happy beginnings of Cathy's and Hareton's marriage. In time, they bring into the world two children, Rainton and Margaret. Not long after their births, Cathy becomes obsessed with her mother and with *Wuthering Heights*. This happens after she goes to the house to visit the ailing Joseph, who soon dies. Hareton then brings in tenants, Mrs. Ibbitson and her son Jack Ibbitson, a Colonel in the army who is not permanently residing with her. Cathy takes an unnatural interest in Jack, which ultimately leads to an affair.

As the story progresses, it comes to light that Jack is Heathcliff's son, conceived during Heathcliff's three-year absence from *Wuthering Heights*. Cathy becomes pregnant with his child, and slowly her mind begins to deteriorate. After giving birth while Jack Heathcliff is fighting in the war, Cathy becomes feverish. She wants to die in her mother's oak bed at *Wuthering Heights*, and this soon comes to pass. Hareton raises Anthony, and Jack does not learn that he has fathered a son until Anthony is an adult.

As all this has transpired, the first two Earnshaw children have grown up. Eventually, Margaret becomes smitten with Jack Heathcliff and secretly marries him. But it is a bad match, given that Jack's attraction to her is based

on her resemblance to her mother. Nevertheless, she stays with him, and bears him two children, the twins, Josiah and Elizabeth.

During this time, Rainton has been away in South America pursuing business ventures. Once he returns and hears of his sister's troubles, he intervenes. Jack has also been scheming Hareton out of his riches, as Heathcliff did to Hindley. Hareton is weakening in body and in spirit, and part of Rainton's anger is a result of these schemes. It has also recently come to light that Anthony is Jack's son, which has had a devastating effect on Anthony. Jack Heathcliff and Rainton decide to have a duel on the moors to settle their scores once and for all. But before Jack can fire his fatal shot, he falls backwards off a cliff and dies. Thus Margaret is freed and Rainton survives.

Hareton dies soon afterward, and Anthony goes through a metamorphosis. Having learned of his claim to the Heathcliff name, he begins to behave like Jack. He leaves Thrushcross Grange and takes up residence at the Heights.

Margaret eventually meets the nobleman John Tempest, whom she happily marries. In time, John's sister, Jessica, marries Rainton. But while Rainton is out of the country on business, Jessica has an affair with Anthony and becomes pregnant with the third Cathy. Rainton agrees to raise the child as his own, but in his disillusionment, turns to the Bible, and sets strict rules in his household. He never learns to love Cathy as his own.

Eventually, Rainton and Jessica divorce, and Jessica goes to the Heights to live with Anthony and to raise Cathy. Of course, Anthony has the same uneven temper as his father and his grandfather; thus Jessica and Cathy are destined to a hard, loveless life. It is during a moment depicting this harshness that Tom Lockwood meets them at Wuthering Heights. The

narrative parallel with its prototype is obvious—Lockwood arrives at the Heights during a moment of great tension. And so Agnes Sutcliffe finishes her story. Tom Lockwood reflects on it, and vows he will return in ten or twenty years to learn of the next generation's follies.

While this novel has both strengths and weaknesses, there are some elements which set it quite apart from the other two hypertexts. Some of these elements come to light in Ellerbeck's preface to the Pinnacle edition of the book.

Interestingly, Ellerbeck does raise and attempt to answer the question "Why attempt a sequel at all?" given the remarkable, inimitable qualities of both *Wuthering Heights* and Emily Brontë (*L'Estrange*, vi). She claims that "the novel cries out for it," (*Ibid.*) especially when one considers the number of scholars who, over the years, have speculated over "what happened next" (*Ibid.*).

According to Ellerbeck, she was approached by Andrew Ettinger, the editorial director of Pinnacle Books, who felt she was a good candidate to write the sequel. "He had read a previous novel of mine with a Yorkshire setting, and thought I might be the person he was looking for" (vii). Ettinger had pointed out that "three other writers had attempted to do this [write a sequel], all of whom had failed to capture the special magic" (*Ibid.*). These are indeed interesting details, more so in light of the fact that my assessments of the other two hypertexts were less than favourable. It is important to note, however, that Jeffrey Caine's novel, like Ellerbeck's, was published in 1977, Lin Haire-Sargeant's not until almost 20 years later. We cannot be sure to which unsuccessful sequels Ettinger is referring, or whether they were ever published.

In spite the fact that the novel is indeed flawed, this preface offers another dimension to the analysis of the hypertext. It allows us to understand that, for Ellerbeck, a profound consideration of purpose preceded the writing of this novel. That process is documented in the preface, and whether Ellerbeck was conscious of it or not, it has some bearing on how we evaluate her interpretation.

The first item of note in this preface is what Ellerbeck considers a need to connect with the supposed site of Wuthering Heights and the actual location of the Brontë Parsonage. She writes, "I went up to Haworth in Yorkshire, home of the Brontës, like a pilgrim in search of enlightenment. Perhaps something would get through to me—I would have a sign as to what I should do. I should add that I am not personally in the least inclined to the psychic, but was very hopeful" (vii). Ellerbeck continues that though she did not have the revelation she had hoped for, she did feel confident that she could write a sequel, and that it would not be wrong to try (*Ibid.*). It is worth noting here that financial gains in such a venture were no doubt tantalizing. This perhaps helped her with the moral issue whether continuing a more-than-100-year-old fiction would be right or wrong.

What also adds to Ellerbeck's credibility as the writer of such a sequel is the fact that she grew up not far from the Yorkshire/Lancashire border, where Haworth is located and, "much of my adult life was spent visiting Yorkshire, which I love best of all the counties of England" (ix). This suggests that her knowledge of Yorkshire settings and people, described in her words as a knowledge of "that dour and peculiarly unfathomable Yorkshire temperament" (*Ibid.*), is adequate background for the writing of such a novel.

Apart from all of this, however, is Ellerbeck's admission that her work was bound to be flawed, and that the best she could do in such a predicament

was to write a novel that did not so much imitate the style of Emily Brontë as simply continue the story. This awareness helps one assess this sequel with perhaps more openmindedness than would be employed if she claimed otherwise. Ellerbeck makes a point of distinguishing her own shortcomings in light of Emily's talent: "But the most important impediment, to my mind, was that Emily was a poet and a mystic and I am neither" (Ibid.).

Furthermore, "And that novel [*Wuthering Heights*] is really as much about the great metaphysical forces of creation, about Emily's poetic view of the universe as it is about the conflicting positions of the characters in it. The marvellous imagery, the facility of detail and expression is what has made *Wuthering Heights* a work of art and it would be quite impossible for me to emulate it and foolish of me to try" (Ibid.).

Ellerbeck claims that this realization was her "moment of truth" (Ibid.), and by the same token, it is somewhat the same for the analyst of her text. As I have already stated, knowing this very fact changes somewhat the critic's approach to *The Return to Wuthering Heights*. Ellerbeck elaborates further, saying that she would write a completely different kind of novel, her sole appropriation being Emily's characters, Hareton and Cathy. Hereafter, her concern would be "the interplay of human relationships, the development of character and the influence of natural and unnatural forces on human destiny" (Ibid.).

All of this having been acknowledged, Ellerbeck cannot quite be excused for the faults she does commit. For example, saying that she is not imitating Emily, does not quite square with the repetition of the *Wuthering Heights* theme found in her book. If Ellerbeck cannot be found guilty of imitating Emily's style, she can certainly be found guilty of borrowing her narrative formula. And although she does admit to extending "on more

human terms, Emily's twin themes of storm and calm, light and dark, Heathcliff versus Earnshaw" (x), this admission does not account for her lack of originality in portraying the next generations of Emily's characters. It would seem then, that stating her goal to do something entirely different from *Wuthering Heights*, thus clarifying her deviation from the path, has made her more vulnerable to criticism, especially in light of her absolute failure to follow through. It can be said then, that *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, though it may not pretend to achieve an imitation of Emily Brontë's style, simply perpetuates the state of non-resolution Ellerbeck rejects in the preface to the novel. Part of her motivation for writing the sequel, as she states in her preface, is because "the novel [*Wuthering Heights*] cries out for it" (vi). Furthermore, she acknowledges a dissatisfaction with Emily's text in the following sentence, "There is also the curious point I discovered in my reading that so many critics and writers on *Wuthering Heights* have speculated as to what might have happened next, as though they too were left unsatisfied" (*Ibid.*) It is interesting that Ellerbeck uses the word "too" in this sentence for it implies what she has not said outright: that she is somehow dissatisfied with the outcome of *Wuthering Heights*. That she has discerned scholars and writers also dissatisfied almost justifies her undertaking of a sequel, and implies that she will achieve the resolution that she feels Emily did not.

But is this in fact so? My opinion is that she achieves no more resolution than Emily, which leads to the question, "Then why bother with this sequel?" At the end of *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, Tom Lockwood, like his father before him, makes an unwelcome visit to the Heights, meets the unruly character of Anthony Heathcliff, the innocent Cathy and her mother Jessica. We, as readers of the sequel, are compelled to

ask: "What happens to Anthony and Jessica, and does Cathy somehow fall under the same spell as the Cathys before her?", hence, non-resolution. Even Ellerbeck in her preface asks similar questions about *Wuthering Heights*: "Did the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff haunt the Heights? Did the young Cathy and Hareton live happily ever after?" (*Ibid.*) Yet, ironically, while attempting to answer these questions, she causes others, of a similar nature no less, to be asked.

This leads to another layer of questions about the idea of resolution. If Ellerbeck finds *Wuthering Heights* unsatisfying and unresolved, one must question her very idea of resolution. While one can regard the hypotext as unresolved in the sense that we do not know what becomes of Cathy and Hareton, one can indeed regard it as resolved in that the cruel Heathcliff finally gives up his revenge, and is reunited with his beloved Catherine in death. Ellerbeck seems more preoccupied with the former issue than the latter, which suggests that she did not have a profound understanding of the spiritual element in Emily's novel. Furthermore, as for her question, "Did the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff haunt the Heights?", she herself does not seem very concerned with the answer as she eliminates the notion of ghosts early on, and includes only two such incidents in her 365-page novel: Tom Lockwood's connection with something supernatural at the gravesite, and Cathy's sighting of her mother's ghost in her bedroom at the Heights and her subsequent preoccupation with the apparition. Following Cathy's death, no element of ghostliness can be found in Ellerbeck's sequel.

Moreover, in trying to resolve the issues left hanging at the end of Emily's story, Ellerbeck brings little novelty to her work, except for an undue and unVictorian indulgence in issues of sexuality. Whereas the idea of union was both psychological and spiritual in *Wuthering Heights*, it becomes

mainly physical in Ellerbeck's. We are suddenly privy to sexual activity between Cathy and Jack, Jack and Margaret, Agnes and Roger and Jessica and Anthony, whereas Emily's idea of union transcends the physical. This suggests that Ellerbeck did not grasp Emily's sense of the spiritual, and also shows that the main way in which Ellerbeck deviates from Emily's narrative formula is by adding an overtly sexual dimension.

Notwithstanding this analysis of purpose, a fair and detailed examination must also be made of the novel's ability to imitate a nineteenth-century text, which it purports to resemble. It begins in 1840 and works backwards, and thus includes elements of both the Romantic and Victorian periods.

Language and Victorian mores, practices and traditions are the principle elements of this examination. What will also be taken into account, however, is a consistency of character and bloodlines, as well as the overall effect this novel has on our re-reading of the hypotext of *Wuthering Heights*.

In terms of period authenticity of language, Ellerbeck's novel is by far the most successful of the three hypertexts. This should not be surprising, especially since the author has not only been residing in England for many years, but she also lived not far from Yorkshire during her youth. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Ellerbeck claims to understand the peculiar Yorkshire temperament, and to be familiar with many of the region's common expressions. Nevertheless, it should be clearly stated that while Ellerbeck may be able to convince the average reader with her use of vocabulary, she fails upon closer inspection.

Before analyzing Ellerbeck's use of vocabulary, I would first like to describe the arduous process I undertook in examining her choices. Apart from verifying certain words and expressions in Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of*

Historical Slang (1972), as well as his *Dictionary of Clichés* (1966), I also consulted an edition of Oxford's *A New English Dictionary*, published in 1888. I chose this particular edition because it cites the meanings particular words took on during the Victorian period, and also reveals the first textual usage in literature of any given word. Through this latter itemization, knowing that Ellerbeck's text was to be taken by the reader as written in 1840 and covering the period from 1803 onwards, I was able to determine whether she had committed any anachronisms.

Generally, in terms of vocabulary, Ellerbeck's novel is very convincing. Firstly, she uses a number of expressions and words found in *Wuthering Heights*, such as "bairn,"¹ "cur"² and "deserts"³. The expressions "mind"⁴ and "mark"⁵ as colloquial forms of "reminded of" and "remarked that," used often by Nelly Dean, are also found in the speech of Agnes Dean. Compound expressions using the verb "waxing" are also found in both texts. In *Wuthering Heights*, it is more often "waxing livid"⁶ or "waxing cross,"⁷ while Ellerbeck uses "waxing fat."⁸ Using these words and expressions is actually clever on Ellerbeck's part; with words at least, she develops a familiar frame of reference.

¹ in *Wuthering Heights*, page 77; in *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, page 62

² in *Wuthering Heights*, page 97; in *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, page 281

³ in *Wuthering Heights*, page 98; in *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, page 113

⁴ in *Wuthering Heights*, page 81; in *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, page 22

⁵ in *Wuthering Heights*, page 97, 111; in *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, page 23

⁶ *Wuthering Heights*, page 111

⁷ *Wuthering Heights*, page 351

⁸ *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, page 245

Ellerbeck also uses some words which are rooted in dialects from specific regions of England. Examples are "gradely" (Thou art a right gradely lass, Agnes Dean..."(L'Estrange, 94)) and "canny" ("...for we are canny folk ourselves..." (51)). "Gradely," according to the 1888 edition of the Oxford dictionary, stems from a dialect, with its roots in Old Norse, meaning "promptly or readily," and was found in literature from 1340 onwards (Murray, ed., Vol. IV, 333). "Canny" is, according to Oxford, "a comparatively modern word, not found before 1700," and is taken from "can," meaning "to know how" or "be able." The word has apparently developed an extensive series of meanings, "some of which are common in English Literature to denote qualities characteristically Scotch" (Vol. II, 73). Not surprisingly, it was a word used often by Scott in novels like *Waverley*, *The Black Dwarf*, *The Antiquary* and *Guy Mannering*. This is interesting, given that Emily and her sisters were known to be great fans of Scott; perhaps Ellerbeck took this into account, thereby employing the Brontë legend. She also uses "berserk," ("He was almost berserk..." (L'Estrange, 272), another word commonly used by Scott, notably in *The Pirate* (Murray, ed., Vol. 1, 813).

Despite solid efforts, Ellerbeck does make some errors. For example, her use of the word "afeard" on page 42 is questionable. The 1888 edition of *A New English Dictionary* points out that it was "used more than 30 times by Shakespeare, but was rare in literature after 1700, having been supplanted by afraid" (Vol. I, 150). Ellerbeck ought to have been more aware of changes in usage. One can understand why she may have chosen to use this word, since it did survive in dialect (Ibid.), and her characters may use dialect. However, words from dialect are sparse in the text.

Another perhaps questionable choice is the word "easy" in the following context: "...but as he came close to me again I pushed him away, for

I did not want him to think I was 'easy' like the women who went with Captain Jack..." (L'Estrange, 98). Although the 1888 edition of Oxford cites Shakespeare's usage of the word in *Cymbeline II*: "Not a whit, Your lady being so easy" (Act IV, l. 47) and defines it as a euphemistic term for an unchaste woman (Murray, ed., Vol. II, 21), Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Historical Slang* defines it as a colloquialism from circa 1890, with a definition of "adj. (of a girl) easily picked up" (Partridge, 293). Partridge cites another meaning: "vi. To dispose oneself suitably to the sexual embrace: low coll. from ca 1900" (*Ibid.*). While it is clear that Ellerbeck has not entirely misused the word, one wonders whether she was aware of its changing meanings.

The word "nincompoop," found on page 112, was coined in 1676 with unknown etymology (Onions, ed., 1328), and although Ellerbeck does not misuse it, that it was a fashionable word at the time her novel took place is questionable. Partridge's *Dictionary of Historical Slang* cites "nincum-noodle" (noodle with no income) as a popular London term from 1820-1840 (Partridge, 622), the period during which *The Return to Wuthering Heights* took place.

Another word with questionable usage in Ellerbeck's novel is "palsy," found on page 245: "...and his hands trembled as though he had the palsy." According to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the phrase "to affect with palsy" came into usage in 1582, but chiefly figured around 1615 (Onions, ed., 1420) Once again, though the word is not misused by Ellerbeck, one wonders whether it was a fashionable term in the first half of the nineteenth century.

One error Ellerbeck makes is in the spelling of "quinsies" on page 295. Used to refer to food, "quinsies" is perhaps a variation on "quince," probably the same fruit, but miniature in size. The spelling Ellerbeck uses describes

"an inflammation of the throat or parts of the throat; suppuration of the tonsils; tonsillitis (Onions, ed., 1643). A possible variation on spelling was not revealed by any of the sources I consulted. If indeed "quinsies" is a variation of the spelling of quince, one wonders what the plural of quinsy would be.

Ellerbeck also employs several expressions in the text, many of which are of questionable usage. One of these, "live with it," found on page 104, ("Then they will have to live with it."), is too modern to be found in a novel dating from this period. *A Concise Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* cites it as coming into usage in 1928 if referring to sport: "to be able to play a person on level terms" (Beale, 266). The meaning "to accept" or "to endure," found Ellerbeck's novel, developed in the late 1940s (*Ibid.*).

One expression I found curious but could not locate was "two fleas in a pack of wool" in the following sentence on page 125-26: "Aye we'll be wed...and maybe I'll leave the army and we'll get a small farm of our own; oh, nothing much, maybe a sheep or two, and we'll raise our children and be happy as two fleas in a pack of wool." The only expression I could find that used any of these words and referred in any way to togetherness was "catch one's fleas for," defined in Partridge's *Dictionary of Historical Slang* as "to be very intimate with: of a man with a woman." It is denoted as a low colloquialism used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though obscure (Partridge, 328). Definitely an original expression that rings of the period, "two fleas in a pack of wool" seems to be Ellerbeck's own invention.

Another interesting expression Ellerbeck uses is "would have made a cat laugh" on page 247: "The thought of him putting a whip to the strapping Colonel, as last I'd seen him, would have made a cat laugh." This expression, which means "extremely funny, droll, ludicrous" is described by Partridge as a colloquialism that was coined by English playwright James Robinson Planché

in 1851 (Partridge, 158). If, in fact, Partridge does cite the first usage, Ellerbeck's use of the expression is an anachronism.

On page 356, we find the expression "bald as a coot" in the following sentence: "Honestly it was hard to believe they had issued from the same womb, for the boy was strong and comely and the girl scraggy and downright ugly and until twelve months I wondered if she would ever have a hair on her head for she was as bald as a coot..." A coot, according to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, was a name vaguely given to various diving birds. Eventually, the term Bald Coot came into usage for the bird *Fulica atra*, "a web-footed bird, having the bill extended so as to form a broad white plate on the forehead (whence the epithet bald)" (Onions, ed., 390). Partridge cites bald coot as "an elderly old man who, in gambling, is plucked: fast life" and notes that it was known to exist in 1823 and was probably used prior to that date (Partridge, 42). None of this information reveals the exact source of the expression, but suggests from where Ellerbeck might have extrapolated it.

Also of significance when assessing the credibility of Ellerbeck's text is her respect or lack thereof for Victorian practices and mores concerning matters of sexuality, marriage, divorce and social grace. It is among these elements that we are able to find fault with Ellerbeck's portrayal of Victorian society.

The author's inaccuracies might easily be glossed over by a reader who is uninformed about the Victorian period. Furthermore, a modern reader might be so accustomed to reading about matters of sexuality that these elements would not seem out of place in Ellerbeck's text. However, a close reading of sources on the Victorians reveal that, indeed, Ellerbeck has made some serious errors.

The first instances which require interrogation concern Cathy's affair with Jack Heathcliff. While H.L. Beales and Edward Glover in their essay "Victorian Ideas of Sex" posit that "female unchastity, especially that of wives and daughters, has never been tolerated in this country" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 362), Michael Mason in *The Making of Victorian Sexuality*, puts forth something entirely different. He describes how a student of aristocratic morals in the 1830s annotated a *Burke's Peerage* with information on adulteries, the results showing a "nearly universal immorality" and a "regular transfer of husband and wife" (Mason, 112). Mason comments: "It is at least plausible that for many wives in this group, 'chastity is not considered the most important of the Cardinal virtues,'" a statement he borrows in part from W.B. Adams' *The Rights of Morality: An Essay on the Present State of Society, Moral, Political and Physical, in England* (1832). However, he also points out that behaviour like this would be locked under explicit codes of secrecy (*Ibid.*). In these sources, we do find two opposing views, but in terms of adultery, Mason's research at least confirms that no matter what the common practice, secrecy was imperative. Ellerbeck's text, though it may not be wrong in suggesting that adultery was possible, it was perhaps wrong in portraying it as conducted with relative openness. There is also the matter of whether this would have even been written about in a Victorian text, which will be addressed in an upcoming passage.

The second point I dispute with Ellerbeck concerns Agnes' behaviour with the young Roger Sutcliffe. Again, one can refer to the Beales and Glover essay and find that this would not have been an acceptable portrayal of a young couple's antics during the Victorian period. References to pages 96, 101 and 126 in Ellerbeck's novel reveal kissing as well as fondling and petting. Mason suggests that this may have been common among the

upper classes and some of their social inferiors, as "a formal betrothal did not have to be ratified before a couple could detach themselves from the ruck of young things and have an exclusive intimacy" (118). Mason also posits that young girls of this period were often so flirtatious as to be sexually shameless and predatory (117).

It is worth mentioning, however, that both Jack Heathcliff and Roger Sutcliffe were men of the military. This is significant in its way, especially since Lecky posits in his *History of European Morals* that men in this situation were greatly tempted by vice as their careers encouraged the postponement of marriage (Lecky, Vol. 1, 146). Ellerbeck may have played off of this to make elements of her story more acceptable.

In spite of all this, Mason confirms that Victorian prudishness, which is referred to in his book as "the worst Victorian hypocrisy" (Mason, 9), would not allow any of this to be found in a novel written during the period. He makes specific reference to William Hazlitt having to clean up his letters to his friend Patmore for publication in *Liber Amoris* (128). Furthermore, had Ellerbeck's novel been published as such, it would most certainly have been referred to as "immoral literature" as H.L. Beales describes in his essay "The Victorian Family" (British Broadcasting Corporation, 353). Immoral texts, he explains, were those which dealt with sex in a direct way, such as Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or George Meredith's *Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (Ibid.).

Mason's discussion, however, goes deeper, and thus helps to address the faults of Ellerbeck's novel on more than one level. He mentions that it was incorrect to allude to a woman's pregnancy (Mason, 127) as Agnes does on page 326 in Ellerbeck's text: "...for my dear mistress Margaret soon became *enceinte* after her marriage..."; and again on page 347 in "...as the date for her

second confinement drew near..." Ellerbeck commonly makes references such as these in her novel, the most notable and shocking one involving the word "nipples": "...as my mistress began to feed the babies, that her chest was bruised and that she winced as they vigorously attacked her nipples" (L'Estrange, 299). If, as Mason points out, even the word "perspire" was avoided in conversation (Mason, 130), it is hard to fathom that Agnes would have used such a word in front of Tom Lockwood, and yet harder to fathom that Tom Lockwood would have written it into his manuscript, which is reported to date from 1840.

Ellerbeck's gravest mistake, however, is found in her treatment of her divorce. She writes of Rainton's divorcing his wife Jessica so that she might go and live with his half-brother Anthony Heathcliff. This event probably took place not long before Tom Lockwood's unwelcome arrival at Wuthering Heights in 1840. Ellerbeck seems to have ignored the fact that divorce didn't become legal until 1857, prior to which it "was possible only by means of an act of Parliament introduced for the individual case" (Altick, 58). This may seem minor since it is so obviously an anachronism but, including it serves to emphasize my point that errors like this one make it difficult for the reader to regard the text as a credible extension of the hypotext.

While Ellerbeck may not have paid close attention to Victorian practices and mores, she cleverly and accurately uses real events to situate the reader historically. These events include the battle at Waterloo, in which Napoleon is defeated by the British army (L'Estrange, 196); the introduction of the Combination Acts (250); and the Butterworth Panic (251). She also mentions popular authors of the day, including Sir Walter Scott (223) and Lord Byron (*Ibid.*), who, in point of fact, were believed to have been read by the Brontës, Scott having been a particular favourite.

Culturally, Ellerbeck also tries to give her reader a context. For example, on page 328, she describes Rainton's furniture as being from collections by Chippendale and Hepplethwaite, whose pieces would have been available at the time. She does make one error, however, when she discusses the waltz. In a letter to Agnes dated July 29, 1823, Margaret describes the waltz as "a daring new dance in which the partners actually hold each other around the waist" (237). According to *The 1995 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia on CD-ROM*, the waltz dominated social dancing from 1750-1900, so it was hardly new in 1823. Perhaps it was new to Margaret, but this Ellerbeck should have specified.

One element I found particularly curious in the novel was Ellerbeck's choice of names, not so much for her main characters, but for some of her peripheral ones. While onomastics specialist W.F.H. Nicolaisen argues in his paper "Names in Derivative Literature and Parodies" that "name consciousness, name power, name mischief are everpresent" (Nicolaisen, 53) in *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, I find that because Ellerbeck borrows names common to major characters in English literature, this appropriation undermines her credibility. For example, Margaret's first suitor John Fairfax calls to mind both Mrs. Fairfax of *Jane Eyre* and Jane Fairfax of *Emma*. Furthermore, Margaret's daughter Emma Jane Tempest, a name so layered with literary identity, reminds the reader of Jane Austin's *Emma*, Jane Austin herself, or perhaps *Jane Eyre*, and the surname of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Here, Ellerbeck seems to try too hard to convince her readers of authenticity, a tactic which results in the contrary.

Ellerbeck's ability to build consistency between the characters in *Wuthering Heights* and the characters in her own novel merits commentary. Also worthy of examination are the new characters spawned from Emily's

characters, more specifically Agnes Dean and Jack Heathcliff. These characters, of course, can only be assessed based on what one might reasonably expect a future generation to inherit in terms of character traits.

In the first category, what is called into question immediately is Cathy's complete transformation from happy bride to reincarnation of her willful mother—or sometimes a character we do not recognize. For example, she falls in love with Jack Heathcliff after only a few visits, which, given what we know of both her and her mother, seems out of character. The love Catherine felt for Heathcliff was forged during a lifetime, and was not moved even by Edgar Linton; thus we find no basis for Cathy's behaviour in her mother's. Furthermore, Cathy's love for Hareton was borne of a deep affection, an eternal patience, and a need to nurture. One cannot but question the rapidity with which Ellerbeck evolves her appropriated character. Moreover, Cathy in *Wuthering Heights* hardly manifests an obsession with her dead mother, and seems far too pragmatic to be caught up in ghosts and their wanderings. Yet in *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, her practical nature becomes overshadowed by her mother's impractical nature, in that she becomes obsessed with something she cannot have—her mother's love. When one regards the steadfastness of the characters in *Wuthering Heights*, it is hard to believe that Emily would have mutated her characters in this way had she written a sequel herself.

The character of Hareton also undergoes a dramatic mutation. Ellerbeck portrays him, through Cathy's reaction to his new-found social position as a judge, as somewhat of a snob. Given his unpretentious beginnings, this aspect is hard to envision. But as Cathy becomes more wayward, like her mother before her, Hareton's comportment begins to resemble Edgar Linton's, in that he withdraws into the world of learning to

avoid dealing with his wife's problems. While this might make sense because the narrative formula of *Wuthering Heights* is being conveniently rejuvenated in Ellerbeck's sequel, it is not as credible as Cathy's bearing resemblance to her mother, since Hareton and Edgar are not related.

With her newly-spawned characters, Ellerbeck is, on most counts, faithful to the bloodlines established in *Wuthering Heights*. For example, Agnes Dean, though somehow softer and kinder than her aunt, still manifests some of her traits. In the hypotext, Nelly is self-serving, often doing things to ingratiate herself with the right people; Agnes, although in a different way, is also self-serving. For instance, she agrees to bring baby Anthony to see his grandmother Mrs. Ibbitson, in exchange for news about her sweetheart Roger (L'Estrange, 190). Agnes also resembles Nelly in another way; she feels sympathy for Jack Heathcliff in a manner that is reminiscent of her aunt's soft spot for Heathcliff. On page 270, Agnes describes the sorrow she feels for Jack because he cannot keep the love of Margaret. This calls to mind Nelly's response to the emotional turmoil Heathcliff experienced before his death.

Jack Heathcliff, Heathcliff's son, and another of Ellerbeck's creations, sometimes manifests traits exhibited by his father, and at other times is wholly inconsistent with that character. On page 261, when Jack talks of Margaret as though she is a breeding cow, ("Aye, a fine house to bring up my family in; for now the cow's in calf and we know she's capable we'll keep her that way ..."); and on page 298-99, where we learn he has abused her physically, we cannot but be reminded of the cruelty of which Heathcliff was capable in *Wuthering Heights*. Nevertheless, Heathcliff did not display this part of his nature with his beloved Catherine (with the possible exception of the deathbed scene), but saved it for others he considered more deserving.

One can then argue that Jack's treatment of Margaret represents an inconsistency. On the other hand, Margaret was not his first love—Cathy was—and this frustration is perhaps tied in to the mistreatment of his wife.

In some ways, it would seem that Ellerbeck is not sure as to how she wants to paint the character of Jack. In a later passage on page 273, Jack apologizes to Margaret for his poor behaviour, which can be viewed as inconsistent with the character of Heathcliff—and with the character of Jack, as Ellerbeck has so far established him.

After such a multi-layered analysis of *The Return to Wuthering Heights*, which offers numerous reasons why this can be seen as a credible hypertext, and numerous reasons why it cannot, one might be hard-pressed to make a concrete decision. However, Ellerbeck's novel, although certainly stronger than the other two attempts, is still insufficient. While we may be swayed by her convincing grasp of language, her knowledge of culture and history as well as her ambitious creation of new characters, we still must ask ourselves how this novel affects our reading of the hypotext. What separates Ellerbeck's text so entirely from *Wuthering Heights* is the overtly sexual dimension she includes. It is this modern element that constantly reminds us that *The Return to Wuthering Heights* cannot be read as a nineteenth-century text.

In spite of her failings, however, Ellerbeck does achieve a kind of resolution in the novel. While we still may wonder what will become of Anthony, Jessica and the latest Cathy, we can at least concede that Ellerbeck was successful in bringing some of her characters away from the moors, and exposing them to a more cultured, worldly environment. This is to perhaps ensure that the cycle does not repeat itself for all the characters. Whether

Emily Brontë would have done the same thing is an entirely different question.

Chapter 5
The Brontë Legend:
Branwell, as Sibling and Author,
and His Role in the Creation of Heathcliff

The character of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* remains an enigma, perpetually puzzling and confusing us because of the questions he makes us ask ourselves. For example, why do we sympathize with a man whose acts of cruelty would normally evoke categorical condemnation? Does the fact that his actions are borne of an unbreakable bond, a passionate love, make us forgive him his wrongful deeds? Do we sympathize because he has been the victim of social stratification? Do we identify him as hero or villain? Why do we more often see him as a ghoul or fiend than a human being with profound emotions? While these are valid questions, those which interest me interrogate the role of biography, and the role of the Brontë legend. For instance, how did Emily Brontë conceive of Heathcliff? Was he based on someone real or imaginary? Who served as his model?

To these last three questions, scholars and writers of hypertext have developed many credible answers. Some of them may choose to identify Heathcliff as a local, external person, perhaps even Emily's unknown lover. Others interpret him as part of Emily's inner self, or the aspect of masculinity she had in her personality. I, however, have chosen to argue that Emily's brother Branwell had a significant influence on the creation of Heathcliff, in terms of his role as a sibling and his role as an author. Because this thesis attempts to measure emotional resonance, there may be a sometimes tentative tone; this is simply because what I am arguing cannot be put into concrete terms with a fixed equation. I will now examine several ways in which Branwell may have served as an influence, acknowledging candidly at the outset that on the surface, these two characters may seem wholly unrelated, but a closer analysis reveals parallels perhaps too strong to be coincidental.

It is important to establish that on a physical level, Branwell and Heathcliff had little in common. Branwell was fair-skinned, small, frail and unassuming, his most memorable feature being his striking red hair. Drawings of his profile indicate a long nose with a bulbish tip, which he seems to have inherited from his father. Heathcliff, on the other hand, from what we can glean from various descriptions in *Wuthering Heights*, was tall with a flowing mane of black hair, and was dark-skinned with heavy eyebrows.

Their upbringings were also very different in that Heathcliff was evidently an orphan and had no family until he went to live with the Earnshaws. Branwell, although not born into a well-to-do family, was nevertheless born into one with an inherent social position, his father having been a respected clergyman. In terms of education, Heathcliff had little formal instruction and, to an extent, scorned books and learning, whereas Branwell, under his father's tutelage, was a fine pupil.

Furthermore, while they were both bitter men, Heathcliff because of losing Cathy first to Edgar Linton and then to death, and Branwell because of his failed career as writer and artist, they handled their misfortune very differently. Heathcliff became vindictive and vengeful, and made all those who wronged him suffer in one way or another, whereas Branwell turned to opium and alcohol for solace. Essentially, Heathcliff was active in the face of adversity, and Branwell was passive.

Although comparing these two men on a superficial level serves only to emphasize their differences, one need only look a little deeper to start identifying parallels. Using onomastics, an analysis of the construction of their names provides an adequate starting point.

The first thing worth noting about the names of these two men are their dual purposes. Branwell was the surname of his mother Maria, but also served as Branwell's Christian name. That the name was used as both gave it a kind of inherent duality. In the name Heathcliff, we find the same duality, as it serves as both his first and last name. Another interesting point is that Heathcliff was the name of a dead child, born to Mrs. Earnshaw years prior to the subsequent Heathcliff's arrival. This represents another kind of duality.

Another unusual similarity is found in the construction of the names. Both are compound words, which, when separated, stand adequately alone: bran, well, heath, cliff. Also of note is the fact that the names, when dissected, can be clearly related to the land. "Bran" represents grain husks separated from the flour (Allen, ed., 134), while the second part, "well", can refer to a mineral spring, or in archaic usage, a water spring or fountain (1393). A "heath" is an open wasteland, usually having sandy, acid soil and scrubby vegetation, also known as a moor (Avis, ed., 541); this is interesting, given that Heathcliff felt at home on the moors and spent much of his time wandering them. A cliff, evidently, is a steep rock-face, especially at the edge of the sea (Avis, ed., 210). It is interesting to note that F.B. Pinion in his essay, "Scott and *Wuthering Heights*," posits that the names Heathcliff and Earnshaw were derived from the character Earncliff in Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Black Dwarf* (Pinion, 315). His hypothesis is based on the assumption that Emily would have been well-acquainted with Scott's works. While this is an interesting and perhaps valid consideration, I believe Emily had multiple reasons for making the choices she made, a point I will argue herein.

In these compound names, we find contrasts and dichotomies that make for interesting analysis. The "bran" in Branwell perhaps symbolizes the

potential for growth in grain husks, or its capacity to nourish. This potential or capacity stands for Branwell's creative spirit, which, if properly exploited, could nourish his tortured soul. The "well" in Branwell can be interpreted in two different fashions, both of which suggest elements of Branwell's character and situation. First, it is important to point out that the water and the grain can reveal the opposing forces in Branwell. If used to quench thirst, the water promotes the growth of Branwell's creative spirit. If overused or misused, as it so often was, the over-watering and eventual drowning of that spirit, both literally and figuratively, is the eventual result. Interestingly, Branwell did drown that creative ability by abusing alcohol and becoming addicted to opium.

In the case of Heathcliff, the contrast is more stark, but the inherent struggle for growth suggests that there is always conflict, and that a balance can never be struck. For example, the scrubby vegetation on the heath represents Heathcliff's struggle for acceptance, love and emotional growth. But the presence of acid soil suggests that this potential is not being fed enough, or being fed the right food, to develop or flourish. In other words, Heathcliff will never move beyond the struggle; his nature simply does not allow for it. The cliff identifies the flint-like hardness and inflexibility of Heathcliff's nature, and the danger he poses not only to himself, but also to all those around him. The presence of a cliff suggests that while he pushes toward evolution (i.e. the vegetation trying to grow on the moor), his quest will always be thwarted by obstacles.

For Catherine, the cliff in Heathcliff seems to represent something entirely different, perhaps strength and steadfastness. She describes her feelings for him: "My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath—a source of little visible delight, but necessary" (Brontë, 122).

Interestingly enough, when Catherine tries to alert Isabella to Heathcliff's nature, she describes him in a way that can be linked to both the "heath" and "cliff" in his name: "an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone" (141): furze grows on a heath (Allen, ed., 479), while whinstone is a hard, dark, balsamic rock or stone (1397).

Consideration of these similar elements in the natures of Branwell and Heathcliff leads to an assumption about Emily's intention when she developed the character of Heathcliff. She has built into Heathcliff an unwillingness to change throughout his youth, and does so while being well aware of Branwell's perpetual, though unused, chance for rehabilitation from his substance addiction. Heathcliff, while remaining fixated on his childhood throughout his adult life, does undergo a change in attitude when he realizes that Cathy and Hareton, in their struggle for love, mirror him and Catherine in their struggle. His hatred dissipates, not out of kindness towards them, but rather out of tenderness for the memory of himself and Catherine. He develops a "selfish unselfishness," in that although he changes his perspective for his own purposes, it serves Cathy and Hareton well. In a way, it seems that with Branwell as a model, Emily has created a more romantic version of him in Heathcliff; Heathcliff's failings are somehow made more noble by the fact that they are predetermined by his nature, and by the fact that, even if only a short time before his death, he is able to distance himself from his own misfortune. Branwell, on the other hand, could also change, but is unable to acknowledge his problems and what he must do to solve them. It is interesting that although their paths are very different, their bitterness hinders them both from achieving any kind of longterm happiness.

As with Branwell, there are opposing forces in Heathcliff. The struggle for growth on the heath represents his struggle against his natural hardness, the result of which can be found in his tenderness towards Catherine and, at times, towards Nelly. The cliff represents the cruelty in his nature and his incapacity for kindness, hence his treatment of Edgar, Isabella, Hareton, Cathy and his own son Linton.

That Heathcliff's name has more than superficial significance is not surprising. In fact, many family and place names in Emily Brontë's novel suggest a link to nature and the land that can hardly be coincidental, given the high number of instances. The following list of definitions identifies these relationships:

wuthering: wuther: (dialect) a blow with a roar, as a strong wind; bluster (Avis, ed., 1301)

heights: a) a high place or area; b) rising ground (Allen, ed., 547)

thrush: any small- or medium-sized songbird of the family Turidae, especially a song thrush or mistle thrush (1273)

grange: a country house with farm buildings, or in archaic usage, a barn (514)

dene¹ (dean): a) a narrow, wood valley; b) a vale (310)

dene²: a bare sandy tract or a low sand hill by the sea (Ibid.)

lint: a fabric, originally of linen, with a raised nap on one side, used for dressing wounds (perhaps f. OF linseed f. linen flax) (690)

linter: (US) a machine for removing the short fibres from cotton seeds after ginning or, in the plural, these fibres themselves (Ibid.)

shaw: the stalks and leaves of potatoes, turnips, etc. (6115)

The repeated use of land/nature themes suggests a self-consciousness and a deliberateness on the part of Emily in choosing such names. This may have been inspired by the unusualness of Branwell as a Christian name.

Similarities between Heathcliff and Branwell can be found on other levels as well. As stated in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, there is little physical resemblance between the two men, but I am prepared to argue that their physical traits tends to mirror their temperaments in similar ways. Perhaps Emily built the personality and character of Heathcliff keeping in mind that Branwell's physical traits were to some extent in harmony with his personality and character. Or perhaps she deliberately made them so physically unlike one another in hopes that no one would make a connection between them, especially Branwell.

Like Heathcliff, Branwell's physical characteristics were striking. While Heathcliff's sinister nature was in harmony with his "eyes full of black fire" (Brontë, 135), "his depressed brows" (*Ibid.*), black hair (77) and dark skin (47), Branwell's physical appearance was also in harmony with his high-strung, sensitive character. Winifred Gérin, who published her biography of Branwell in 1961, describes Branwell's "carroty" hair, and in a subsequent paragraph, points out a tendency towards violent rages (Gérin, 19). Daphne du Maurier too, in her creative non-fiction biography, writes of Branwell's hair as a "fiery crest" (du Maurier, 32), and also describes his tendencies towards bouts of hysteria (29) and melancholy (30). It is interesting that Branwell's hair, so noted by his biographers, should be in tune with his hot temperament, and should illustrate and foreshadow to an extent, the extremeness of his nature.

Apart from this parallel between appearance and character, Branwell and Heathcliff share other similarities. For example, du Maurier writes: "the boy seemed at times to take on his own moods, be melancholy when he was melancholy, or gay when he felt robust" (30). Heathcliff, too, was remarked upon by Lockwood in a similar fashion; when he first meets him, Lockwood

describes him as "rather morose," yet a little later during the same visit, Heathcliff's mood lightens:

"Heathcliff's countenance relaxed into a grin... relaxed, a little, in the laconic style of chipping off his pronouns, and auxiliary verbs, and introduced what he supposed would be a subject of interest to me" (49-50).

Lockwood is struck by the extremes of the man's nature, especially later when Heathcliff visits him at Thrushcross Grange during his illness and does so bearing gifts (Brontë, 130). What we can glean from this is a similar propensity for extreme changes in mood, suggesting a kind of dual nature.

This dual nature is further expanded upon by Gérin in her biography. She recounts a time when Branwell lost his spectacles upon his return from a local fair with his friend, a fair to which he had not been given permission to go. Fortunately, before his father learned of the loss, Branwell's glasses were returned to him by a friend. Gérin writes:

"The story does not make it clear whether Mr. Brontë's "displeasure" was feared on the lost score of the spectacles alone, or upon that of his son disporting himself at the fair. Part of the thrilling experience, one senses from the story, came from Branwell's sense of stolen pleasure. Authority to play in the streets with other boys may not have comprised permission to frequent public places of entertainment! Successful thus early in evading disagreeable consequences, the habit would be confirmed with the passing years, and something like a dual life achieved under the very nose of authority. For there was very early a dual nature in Branwell, the one as guileless as the other was crooked" (Gérin, 23).

The duality she describes in Branwell's character can also be found in Heathcliff's. While Heathcliff was always ready to preserve his relationship with old Mr. Earnshaw and with Catherine, he was also ready with schemes

to cheat Hindley out of Wuthering Heights, and to direct the Linton inheritance into his own hands by first marrying Isabella and, secondly, by forcing Cathy to marry Linton.

This dual nature continues to present itself in the characters of both men. Both were secretive, hiding from their loved ones significant details of their lives, and presenting only that which was presentable, or that which helped achieve their goals. In Branwell's case, this meant that while he was away in London, pursuing a career as a portrait painter, he chose to share only a portion of the details with his family. Of this, Gérin writes: "As Branwell's letters would shortly show, from his father and his aunt, he systematically hid the shady side of his life" (139). Similarly, Heathcliff's secretive nature evoked comments from Nelly regarding his three-year absence: "Honest people don't hide their deeds. How has he been living? how has he got rich? why is he staying at Wuthering Heights, the house of a man whom he abhors?" (Brontë, 142). Indeed, circumstances such as these seem too similar to be coincidental.

While we find parallels in their natures, we also find them in their temperaments. Gérin gives examples of Branwell's tendency for tantrums, another trait shared by Heathcliff. When Branwell taught in the Sunday school, "he was chiefly remembered afterwards for his violent temper and impatience" (Gérin, 122). Gérin explains that at times, his students made him so angry, he could barely keep his hands off them (*Ibid.*) This brings to mind Heathcliff's treatment of Hindley, Hareton, Isabella, Linton and Cathy. During his tantrums, Nelly was known to describe him as looking wild: "a peculiar look of trouble, and a painful appearance of mental tension" (Brontë, 322). Branwell, too, was described in a similar manner: "a wildish, dejected

look... he felt that want, that restless uneasy feeling with which rest is torment, and ease begets stupor" (du Maurier, 52).

Given that their temperaments were similar in some ways, it should then, not seem surprising that they may have shared similar interests. Significant, then, is the role the military played in the bearing of one man and the preoccupation of the other. For Heathcliff, this association with the military was found in his bearing and carriage, which Nelly describes after not having seen him for three years: "His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army" (Brontë, 135). Although a simple detail, this creates a link between Branwell and Heathcliff in that Branwell entertained a fascination with soldiers and the military all his life, which began on his seventh birthday when his father gave him a box of toy soldiers. These soldiers led Branwell to write many stories and poems about the military life, the most important of which was "The Life of Field Marshal the Right Honourable Alexander Percy," a long work depicting the life of a soldier capable of great deeds of cruelty. That Branwell was so fascinated with this kind of character, and that Heathcliff himself was a man of military bearing, also capable of great acts of cruelty, suggests a parallel. In fact, University of Leeds professor Everard Flintoff points out that words associated with Percy in Branwell's writings are also associated with Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*: bitter, brutish, contempt, cruelty, demon, derision, fiend, repulsive, sarcasm, Satan, satanic, scorn, scowl, sneer and sneering (Flintoff, 248). Flintoff suggests, furthermore, that Branwell and Emily made direct literary imitations of one another's work (*Ibid.*). To support his assertion, Flintoff, cites Percy's kicking a little dog and Heathcliff's attempted hanging of Isabella's pet dog (*Ibid.*). What Flintoff posits falls in line with my own theory, outlined at the beginning of this chapter: if Branwell did not directly

serve as the basis for Heathcliff, he, as an author, may at least have influenced the creation and development of characters and circumstances in *Wuthering Heights*, particularly that of Heathcliff.

In assessing Branwell's possible influence of Emily and the writing of *Wuthering Heights*, it is helpful to survey the childhood of the Brontës and determine, insofar as is possible, the events which may have led to this influence. In Gérin's biography, she discusses the recurring appearance in the Brontë juvenilia and in their mature works, of an orphaned, abandoned black boy (Gérin, 37). She notes, in particular, Charlotte's use of such a character in "Green Dwarf" (1829) and "African Queen's Lament" (1833), who is "found by the Duke of Wellington lying under a tree by the dead body of his mother. The Duke takes the boy home and adopts him, thus causing bad blood with his own sons—a theme which Emily was to develop to its ultimate limits when in *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. Earnshaw brought home the black changeling from Liverpool" (31). My point in including this material is that perhaps Branwell has been identified by Emily as the changeling in their childhood because he is the only boy, and as such is favoured by the father. The bad blood that may have been caused between the children because of this favouritism may have inspired Emily to write *Wuthering Heights*, to recreate the circumstances, and by doing so, creating Heathcliff. This speculation, if true, would explain the numerous similarities between Heathcliff and Branwell, and would also suggest that the juvenilia writings, in which Branwell played a major role, influenced and inspired Emily in her work.

Although all of the aforementioned evidence makes a strong case for my argument, there is yet another dimension which denies the role of mere coincidence. The clearest parallels between these two men can be found

when we examine the effect of sister Maria's death on Branwell; through this, we find Heathcliff's reaction to Catherine's death was in fact much like Branwell's reaction to Maria's death. Furthermore, some of Branwell's poetry, said to be based on his closeness to Maria and the profound loss he felt at her death (12), seems to echo the tone and the content of some of Heathcliff's monologues after Catherine's death. Other times, physical circumstances or emotional elements of these relationships seem uncannily similar. By examining what is known of Branwell's relationship with Maria, passages from the poetry and passages from Heathcliff's ramblings, we can compare the emotional deterioration that settles in prior to each man's death, and find that, once again, the men do resemble one another.

Similarities between these relationships come to light when we consider Branwell's childhood development after Maria dies. Once entirely dependent on her for affection and education, Branwell suddenly finds himself in the care of Aunt Branwell. Gérin writes: "Her [Maria's] loss was going to deprive Branwell not only of that maternal love without which his unstable nature could not stand, but of the comfort of that very religion which had been her chief purpose in life to implant in his heart, and which, in dying, she firmly believed she had bequeathed to him forever. Through no fault of her own, this was not to be" (10-11). Gérin refers here to the different religious beliefs held by Aunt Branwell, which were very extreme: any straying from the path of righteousness meant entry into hell (11).

Similarly, when old Mr. Earnshaw dies, Heathcliff is deprived of paternal love, and is relegated to the role of servant by the jealous and spiteful Hindley. Suddenly, instead of being the object of affection, he falls under the control of Joseph, who, unusually enough, is constantly quoting

the Bible in a pious fashion that recalls Aunt Branwell. And again, like Branwell, Heathcliff chooses a path that is more sinful than righteous.

More important, Branwell's loss of Maria can also be likened to Heathcliff's loss of Catherine. Not only does he suffer the pain of losing Mr. Earnshaw, who played a father figure, but Heathcliff also loses Catherine, who represented family, friendship and romance. Furthermore, he loses her in life, and then, finally, to death itself. First, during their youth, Catherine abandons her wild games with him to become a prim and proper young lady and acquaintance of the Linton children. This loss turns into a lifelong emptiness when she then rejects him as a suitor and husband, which is followed by permanent separation through her death. Branwell too, is affected for the rest of his life, missing Maria to the extent that she appears repeatedly in his adult writings, as will be seen in an upcoming analysis of some of his poetry.

Gérin also discusses the longterm effect of Maria's death on Branwell's developing personality. She suggests that his separation from Maria "was yet to be further heightened by the fear of his own personal unworthiness and damnation" (11), of which he became convinced through Aunt Branwell's radical religious teachings. Gérin posits, furthermore, that the outcome of his separation "from his too-perfect sister and the consciousness of his own unworthiness was almost to provoke and certainly to exaggerate every failure in his life..." (*Ibid.*) This possibility recalls a situation in which Heathcliff, because of Catherine's rejection, focuses on his own inadequacies: "His childish sense of superiority, instilled into him by the favours of old Mr. Earnshaw, was faded away. He struggled long to keep up with Catherine in her studies, and yielded with poignant though silent regret: but he yielded completely; and there was no prevailing on him to take a step in the way of

moving upward, when he found he must, necessarily, sink beneath his former level" (Brontë, 108).

The similarity of these circumstances suggests that both the conscious and unconscious behaviour of these men was greatly influenced by Maria and Catherine and, furthermore, that Emily may have used the attachment between Branwell and Maria as a basis for attachment between Catherine and Heathcliff.

That influence can be further identified through an examination and comparison of Branwell's poems "Misery I," "Misery II" and the "Caroline" sequence, to a selection of Heathcliff's monologues from *Wuthering Heights*. This analysis will not only identify the similar influences of Maria and Catherine, but will also illustrate that the reactions of the men are similar, suggesting furthermore, a likeness of their characters. It is important to note that if indeed, Emily did use Branwell as a model for Heathcliff, she probably gleaned elements of his inner workings not only from reading his poetry, but also from observing him.

Much like Heathcliff during his desperate ramblings, Branwell's poetry is largely self-indulgent. Nevertheless, we are able to place his work within a contemporary literary context, also shared by *Wuthering Heights*. Branwell, as the content of his poetry suggests, seems to be well-acquainted with the gothic tradition, and particularly the works of Byron and Wordsworth. In the poems I have selected for analysis, there seems to be a strong parallel with Byron's "The Giaour," specifically the opening on horseback in "Misery I." Echoes of Wordsworth's "Ode: Imitations of Immortality" are also present, particularly in "Misery II," where Branwell talks of the soul's descent from heaven. However, to describe the soul's descent, Branwell uses a metaphor of the moon, Wordsworth the sun. These references simply confirm that the

gothic genre, often used in the Brontë juvenilia writings, continued in Branwell's adult writings, and in Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, in that the characters in each of their works resemble a humour character—of an obsessive nature, and therefore lacking well-roundedness.

However, the genre in which the siblings' writings can be placed is not their only commonality. I have grouped similarities between Branwell's poetry and Heathcliff's monologues into three main areas: a) tone and feeling, b) physical circumstance and c) phraseology, imagery and wording.

For tone and feeling, comparisons can be drawn using Branwell's poems "Caroline" (1836), "Misery I" (1837-38) and "Misery II" (1838), and the Heathcliff passages. In the Caroline sequence quoted in Gérin's biography of Branwell, parallels are evident when the young protagonist, Harriet, observes her dead sister Caroline in her coffin before the burial. Her mother lifts her to see Caroline's face, and although Harriet is frightened, this fear turns into unexpected relief that there is beauty in what she sees. This sentiment is illustrated in the following passage:

For hardly I dared turn my head
Lest its wet eyes should view that bed.
"But Harriet," said my mother mild,
"Look at your sister and my child
One moment, ere her form behind
For ever 'neath its coffin lid!"
I heard the appeal, and answered too;
For down I bent and bid adieu.
But, as I looked, forgot affright
In mild and magical delight.

(Gérin, 13)

Like Harriet in this passage, Heathcliff finds a kind of peace when, after digging up and opening Catherine's coffin, he rests his eyes upon her form. He describes his reaction to Nelly as:

"A sudden sense of relief flowed, from my heart, through every limb. I relinquished my labour of agony, and turned consoled at once, unspeakably consoled" (Brontë, 320).

These passages are similar in other ways, which, too parallel to be coincidental, can be grouped in the physical circumstances category. It is important to mention these elements here as they represent the only ones in this category. In both scenes a coffin is the focal point, and its presence has a profound effect on each of the protagonists. Both of them also experience a heightened contact with the supernatural. An uncanny similarity can also be found in the characters' names: the names of the living, Heathcliff and Harriet, both begins with the letter 'h', while the names of the dead, Catherine and Caroline, both begin with the letter 'c' and end in 'ine.' A small detail perhaps, it is nevertheless an important one.

A continued analysis of "Caroline" reveals more common points in terms of tone and feeling. In a later passage, Harriet seems reluctant to believe that her sister is actually dead, her words suggesting a resistance to the truth:

And though her bed looked cramped and strange,
Her too bright cheek all faded now,
My young eyes scarcely saw a change
From hours when moonlight paled her brow
(Gérin, 14)

This sentiment is also one expressed by Heathcliff, who, despite the fact that Catherine has been dead for many years, is certain that he feels her presence. The following passage illustrates this possibility:

"There was another sigh close at my ear. I appeared to feel the warm breath of it displacing the sleet-laden wind. I knew no living thing in flesh and blood was by—but as certainly as you perceive the approach to some substantial body in the dark, though it cannot be discerned, so certainly I felt that Cathy was there, not under me, but on earth" (Brontë, 320).

While Harriet is convinced that Caroline's features have not been altered by death, and entertains the idea that she might therefore still be alive, Heathcliff does not doubt that Catherine, though physically absent, is spiritually present. Their reluctance to face reality creates a parallel between the two texts.

This reluctance to accept Caroline's death is once again evident when Harriet implores her:

In fright I gasped, "Speak, Caroline!"

And bade my sister to arise;

(Gérin, 14)

This imploring tone is also common in some of Heathcliff's dialogues with Catherine, especially during her final illness. More than once, he pleads with her, filled with intense emotion. For example, he, like Harriet, is reluctant to accept Catherine's coming death: "O Cathy! Oh, my life! how can I bear it?" (Brontë, 194). In an ensuing passage, again with a tone not unlike Harriet's when she implores her sister, he begs her to be calm :

"Hush, my darling! Hush, hush, Catherine! I'll stay. If he shot me so, I'd expire with a blessing on my lips" (199).

Both Harriet and Heathcliff experience intense grief and express their despair over their loved ones' deaths in similar fashions. This is significant even though Harriet's emotions are raw and Heathcliff's are the result of 18 years of grieving and loneliness. However, we must not look at this last detail as a dissimilarity; instead we must remember that Branwell was writing these poems 12 years after Maria's death (Gérin, 114), a timeframe comparable to Heathcliff's 18-year grieving. Harriet describes the effect of her sister's death as:

I could not think or see:
I cared not whither I was borne:
And only felt that death had torn
My Caroline from me.

(15)

This reaction is like Heathcliff's in two ways. First, it is physical, in that it has an effect on the body, even though this effect seems to negate physicality; for example, Harriet does not feel or exist without Caroline. For Heathcliff too, there is a physical backlash, as he is unable to function normally on a physical level:

"I have to remind myself to breathe—almost to remind my heart to beat! And it is like bending back a stiff spring... it is by compulsion, that I notice anything alive or dead..." (Brontë, 353).

The second manner in which Harriet's response to Caroline's death resembles Heathcliff's to Catherine's concerns the way they relate to their respective environments. Harriet clearly feels she is no longer whole since death has "torn" Caroline from her. This can be read as Harriet's feeling physically torn and suffering imbalance because of it. Heathcliff also experiences imbalance due to the intensity of his grief, which affects the way

he perceives the world around him: "The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!" (Ibid.)

Given the various examples cited here, it seems difficult to deny the fact that there are marked similarities between Harriet and Heathcliff which would in turn suggest similarities between Branwell and Heathcliff. More parallels can be found in Branwell's poems "Misery I" and "Misery II," which will now be examined. This analysis also concerns tone and feeling.

The "Misery" sequence recounts the trials of Lord Albert, the only survivor of a bloody battle. He is riding back to his castle, where his beloved waits. This sequence of poems also reincarnates Maria (Gérin, 115), and thus once again echoes Heathcliff's feelings after losing Catherine. Not surprisingly, Lord Albert finds his lover dead when he arrives at the castle. In his anxiety over reaching her quickly and his total devastation over finding her dead, we find the most solid links to Heathcliff.

In both "Misery I" and "Misery II," Branwell spends much time describing Lord Albert's desperation. When he finds her in the castle in "Misery I," he has difficulty accepting her death, and implores her just as Harriet did in the "Caroline" sequence:

Speak, Maria!—speak, my love!

Let me hear thy voice.

Nought on earth or Heaven above

Could make me so rejoice

Speak, o speak, and say to me

I am not come to late to thee

(Chitham, 76)

This, along with his cry "For where, Maria, where art Thou/Lost, though I seem to see thee now?" (82) in "Misery II" recalls Heathcliff's "O Cathy! Oh,

my life! how can I bear it?" (Brontë, 194). More desperate than these lines, however, is Lord Albert's plea to God:

God, if there be a God, look down,
Compassionate my fall!
Oh clear away thy awful frown
And hearken to my call!

(Chitham, 86)

This puts in mind Heathcliff's pleading with the dead Catherine:

"You said I killed you—haunt me then!... 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! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!" (Brontë, 204).

Apart from the desperate, imploring tone, there is a similar emphasis on the spiritual in these two passages, which is significant. While Lord Albert is calling upon God, Heathcliff is calling on Catherine in a way that gives her the power of a god. For example, he believes she has the supernatural ability to haunt, and also sees her as the keeper of his life and his soul—a power normally bestowed on non-mortals. Thus, to make the parallel clearer, Heathcliff and Lord Albert are imploring their respective gods.

The desperation felt by both men seems to manifest itself in part through the asking of questions, questions which somehow do not beg an answer. Rather, they are asked in what seems to be a frenzied state of emotion, rendering the questions themselves rhetorical. Lord Albert, looking once again to his unresponding God, asks, "Where is the rest beyond the tomb?/Where are the joys of his heavenly home?" (Chitham, 85), while Heathcliff, desperate perhaps to ignite her will to survive by provoking her, asks the dying Catherine:

"Are you possessed with a devil to talk in that manner to me, when you are dying? Do you reflect that all those words will be branded in my memory, and eating deeper internally, after you have left me?... Is it not sufficient for your internal selfishness, that while you are at peace, I shall writhe in the torments of hell?" (Brontë, 196).

Yet another parallel can be found in the above passage: the idea of torment. Both Lord Albert and Heathcliff go on at length about their tormented souls. Besides the use of the word "torment" in the above passage, Heathcliff talks on page 320 of Catherine's haunting him over the years, saying, "I've been the sport of that intolerable torture. Infernal—" Lord Albert expresses similar sentiments with:

O could I untormented die
Without this gnawing agony
That wrings my heart so—!
Heavily and slow

(Chitham, 80)

Once again, the men express parallel ideas with a melodrama and intensity that is indeed comparable. The link becomes even more evident when the parallels go beyond tone and feeling, and begin to include phraseology, wording and imagery. It can be argued that the words discussed below are merely commonly-used gothic words, but I believe their repetition in Emily's novel and Branwell's poetry is significant, and therefore worthy of analysis and commentary. For example, even in the aforementioned passages, the use of the words "torture" and "torment" suggest a relationship between the texts. More specific examples can be found.

In "Misery II," Branwell uses worm imagery, as does Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. Although the worms are not used in the same context, it

is an interesting commonality nevertheless. Branwell mentions worms in connection with graves and the earth:

Thou within thy grave must dwell—
I, here, black'ning in the storm—
Both as a blanket to the worm;

(83)

and:

Since we have had our sunshine, we must have our storm
If once with an angel, then now with a worm (84),

while Heathcliff uses worms as an analogy for the exacting of his revenge:

"I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is as moral teething, and I grind with greater energy in proportion to the increase of pain" (Brontë, 189).

While this imagery is not used in similar contexts, other images are. For example, Lord Albert uses the word "abyss":

—and if my mind
Survives, it will not lag behind,
And if indeed—I truly die,
Lost—in the abyss of vacancy,

(Chitham, 81)

The phrase "abyss of vacancy" recalls Heathcliff's pleading with Catherine's ghost:

"Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! Only do not leave me in this abyss where I cannot find you!" (Brontë, 204).

Both men refer to an abyss in conjunction with being lost. One is inclined to posit that, with the great number of parallels between these four texts, coincidence is too simple a solution. Branwell, who probably suffered until

his death from the loss of Maria, projects himself into his poetry; that Heathcliff should at times resemble the poet and at other times resemble the poet's creation seems too constant a circumstance. What this constancy suggests is that Emily did indeed observe her brother's behaviour and meld it with her reading of his work.

Furthermore, that Branwell was obsessed with Maria throughout the rest of his life is certainly believable; he was known to have an obsessive nature, as his fixation on the married Lydia Robinson was to prove. His inability to cope with losing her fostered his opium addiction and increased alcohol intake, both of which serve to further prove that his capacity for obsession was real, and that he was susceptible to depression. His bouts with depression show a certain mental instability.

Interestingly enough, one Brontë scholar, Joan Quarm, suggests in her article "Arming Me from Fear: Branwell Brontë's Contribution to *Wuthering Heights*," that Heathcliff was also an opium addict. She posits that this accounts for his tantrums, his loss of appetite, his complete obsession with Catherine, and his eventual madness (Quarm, 282). Although this theory provides yet another parallel in the relationship between Branwell and Heathcliff, and is an interesting point, I believe that the strongest parallels are discussed in this chapter. As my analysis has shown, both men slowly become mentally unstable, and under all too similar circumstances. While Heathcliff loses touch with the real world and exists on a spiritual plane with Catherine, Branwell loses touch with reality through substance abuse.

There is a fundamental difference, however, in their emotional instability. Branwell always tries to escape his misery by avoiding consciousness. Jealous of his sisters' accomplishments, he makes them feel guilty for surpassing him. In this way, he refuses to accept the consequences

of his actions, and instead must find someone to blame for his failure. The opium also represents a way of avoiding the need to face his own inadequacies. In essence, he is always a victim. Heathcliff, on the other hand, inflicts pain, is cruel so that others can pay for his pain: he is vengeful. Furthermore, in death, therefore in giving up, Branwell achieves the ultimate failure, whereas Heathcliff finds peace in death, and achieves his goal of being reunited with Catherine. Suddenly, for him, nothing, not even the years of plotted revenge, matters anymore.

These fundamental differences, I believe, were well planned on Emily's part. According to scholar Richard Benvenuto, of the sisters, Emily was the most sympathetic to Branwell's plight, and wanted nothing more than for him to find peace (Benvenuto, 12). I suspect then, that in writing *Wuthering Heights*, and in creating Heathcliff, Emily wanted to recreate her brother's sorrowful existence in a light that did not solely focus on his weaknesses or his failures. Recreating Branwell in the body of Heathcliff enabled Emily to give her brother, through fiction, the dignity he lacked in life.

Conclusion

The concept of hypertext is an interesting one but, as this thesis has attempted to prove, is not always successful in explaining or providing an alternative reading of the hypotext. Caine, Haire-Sargeant and L'Estrange, all authors of *Wuthering Heights* hypertext, make similar errors in their attempts to extend Emily Brontë's novel: they all set new parameters, develop new boundaries, ironically making the hypotext no longer capable of providing context. Except for a few common elements, the hypertexts can exist separately from the hypotext. In the case of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the hypertext for Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, the two novels meld together in a way that transcends culture and time. We can no longer accept Rochester's tenderness towards Jane without first considering his cruel treatment of Antoinette Cosway. We can no longer believe that Bertha Mason is simply a madwoman in the attic. Suddenly she has history, a history that is provided by Jean Rhys more than 100 years later. This is what a successful hypertext can do: change forever our reading of the hypotext. So far, hypertext authors have not succeeded in altering our interpretation of *Wuthering Heights*.

As for the power of legend, Brontë enthusiasts everywhere will continue to debate the validity of one theory over the next. Indeed, the textual and biographical origins of *Wuthering Heights* will remain forever tangled. But for me, the threads have loosened somewhat simply because of the possibility that Branwell and Heathcliff are entwined.

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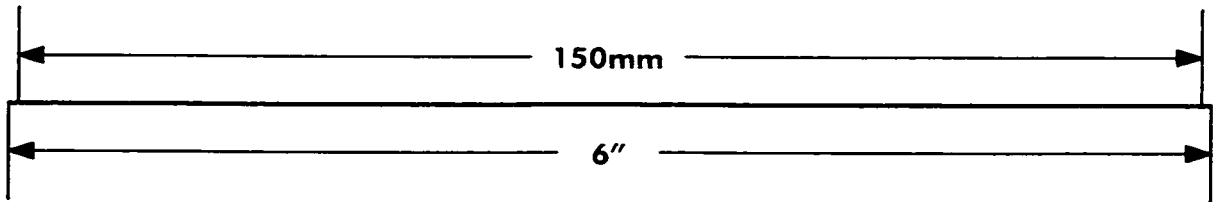
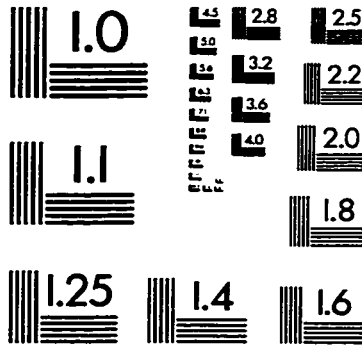
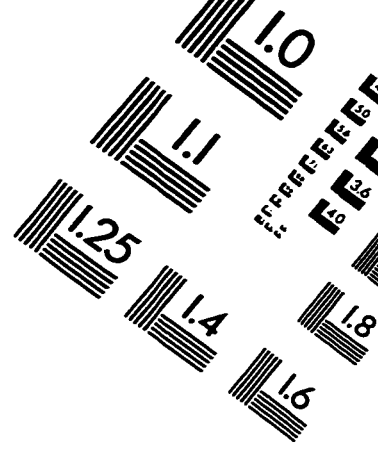
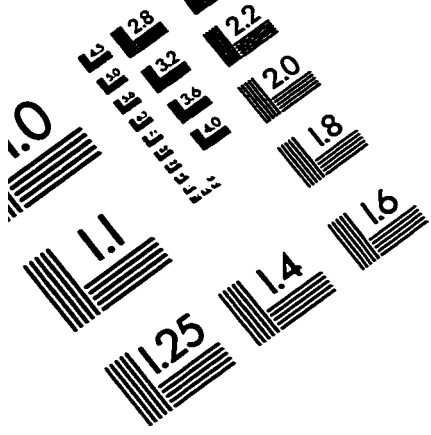
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