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“ENOUGH OF THOUGHT, PHILOSOPHER!”: EMILY BRONTË’S INTERROGATIONS OF DEATH

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**“ENOUGH OF THOUGHT, PHILOSOPHER!”:
EMILY BRONTË’S INTERROGATIONS OF DEATH**

BY

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Bachelor of Arts, Music, University of New Mexico, 2003
Master of Music, University of New Mexico, 2005
Master of Arts, English, University of New Mexico, 2009

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
English**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2018

DEDICATION

For my parents, my children, and my grandson

My father Raymond is remembered as a “Steward of the Soil,” poet, and a man of wisdom, while my mother Marion is known for her great contributions as a teacher and innovator in education with a focus on children with special needs. My son Raymond David is an artist who works in multiple media in his renditions of people and places, and my daughter Michelle is a linguist, educator, and performing artist in both song and dance. Grandson Levi’s story is yet to be told.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to my studies with Professor Gail Turley Houston, preeminent Victorian scholar and former chair of the Department of English, I have been fortunate to expand my perspectives on both the literary and philosophical dimensions of Emily Brontë. Without Dr. Houston's erudite insights and guidance, this study would not have reached completion. I wish also to acknowledge other faculty members from the Department of English Language and Literature at The University of New Mexico who provided invaluable advice. Included are Romanticism scholar and Professor of English, Gary Harrison, Carolyn Woodward, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scholar and Director of British/Irish Studies, and Aeron Haynie, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Victorian specialist. All provided invaluable advice. I gratefully acknowledge Sarah Laycock and Ann Dinsdale of the Brontë Parsonage Library in Haworth for the advice and assistance provided in my research of the Brontë archival material housed there. Another special acknowledgment is in order for the Joseph C. Gallagher Foundation in appreciation for grant awards providing for several research trips to Ireland to recover Irish connections of the Brontë family. While in Dublin at the National Library of Ireland and at The McClay Library at Queen's University in Belfast, I gathered useful material supporting Irish folkloric inspiration for the multifaceted *oeuvre* of Emily Brontë. I extend my gratitude to the library staff at both locations for their help. Carolyn Black of the Brontë Homeland Interpretative Centre in Drumballyroney, Northern Ireland provided a plethora of anecdotal material about the Brontës in Ireland. Sources housed at University of New Mexico Libraries have also proven invaluable. I offer

gratitude to the librarians and staff there and to all who provided guidance in the creation of this study. Finally, an emphatic thank you to the moors, on whose rolling hills I walked, and Emily Jane Brontë, whose spirit continues to wander there.

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ABSTRACT

The year 1847 marked the appearance of *Wuthering Heights* on the literary scene. Writing under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell, Emily Brontë soon became known as the “Sphynx (sic) of Literature” following the publication of the culminating masterpiece of her literary career. Although she was not a trained philosopher, her drawings, poems, letters, *devoirs*, and only novel offer an organic approach to philosophical matters, particularly in her engagements with the meanings of time and space and her interrogations of death.

Surrounded by the pervasive presence of death from her earliest years and beyond, Brontë moved to rigorous interrogations of the afterlife in her writing beginning with explorations of the Bible and organized religion. Not finding answers there, she turned to Nature and the tenets of Stoicism that self-sufficiency, delayed fulfillment, and an afterlife in which the spirit is not restricted to an unfathomable heaven. Ultimately, she envisioned a world where any gap between the spatio-temporal and spiritual could be traversed thus eliminating the barriers between the

two realms. The cosmos that Brontë constructs is an immanent space where any divine presence is manifested in the random workings of Nature. The wild moors behind the Haworth Parsonage represented this space, both literally and metaphorically. She often features windows to mark permeable barriers between two spaces and powerful storms to move her characters through time and space. Thus, a powerful storm on the moors transports Catherine Earnshaw, Brontë's conflicted heroine of *Wuthering Heights*, from the afterlife back to her childhood home where she discovers a male visitor in her ontological space. When he shatters the window glass, she grasps the opportunity to intervene in her own story. This is the extraordinary event that sets the tone for the discussion that features major developments in Brontë's intellectual and artistic journey as well as her protofeminist and protomodern contributions to literature.

No scholar to date has examined the life and *oeuvre* of Emily Brontë in this manner. This study offers an enriching exploration of the powerful framework that she constructs in her philosophical interrogations of death.

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Preface

My first encounter with Emily Jane Brontë occurred when I was in eighth grade in the late 1950s. My mother saved the index cards from which I presented my book report on *Wuthering Heights* to the class. Emily Brontë's novel captivated me then and has continued to do so over the span of many years. At that time, I was not familiar with Brontë's writing in other genres such as poetry, *devoirs*, or her now famous "Diary Papers," all of which add to the intrigue surrounding her. It is then no surprise that I should decide to focus my study on the *oeuvre* of this enigmatic writer and, as I argue, philosopher.

The popularity of *Wuthering Heights* diminished following its initial publication in 1847 and regained scholarly attention in the early twentieth century. New discoveries offered archival information not available previously. Before her premature death in December of 1848, Emily had lost two sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, years earlier and her only brother Branwell in September of 1848. Her sister Anne died in May of 1849 to be followed in March of 1855 by her remaining sister, Charlotte, who had married Arthur Bell Nicholls just a year earlier. Their father Patrick Bronte survived until 1861. Following Emily's death in December of 1848, her sister Charlotte became the archivist for her papers. Upon Charlotte's death in 1855, the papers went to Arthur Bell Nicholls, Charlotte's widower. Many of Emily's writings were transcribed and edited not only by her, but also by Charlotte and Arthur Bell Nicholls. Unfortunately, they were literally cut apart, perhaps by Nicholls, who also began to sell them off piece by piece, more often than not, to collectors not

trained in archival work. Therefore, the reliability of sources has become a major challenge for scholars of her work.

Biographies as well as textual and theoretical studies on Emily Brontë abound. In her 1857 publication, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Elizabeth Gaskell offers early biographical material, mostly through the perspective of the Reverend Patrick Brontë. Although Gaskell focuses primarily on Charlotte's life, her volume offers abundant information regarding the other siblings, including Emily. Other early accounts include J. Horsfall Turner's *Bronteana*, published in 1879, Francis A. Leyland's *The Brontë Family* of 1886, Clement K. Shorter's *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle*, published in 1896, Angus Mason Mackay's *The Brontës: Fact and Fiction* of 1897, *The Brontë Society Transactions* from 1895, and finally *The Brontës' Reading*, a comprehensive compendium, available on line at www.thebrontes.net/reading/, of all material believed to have been read by the family including comments from Ellen Nussey, Charlotte's childhood friend, and Charlotte herself.

Published in 1914, Mrs. Ellis H. Chadwick's *In the Footsteps of the Brontës* offers valuable anecdotal commentary not available from other sources. Winifred Gérin, who actually lived in the village of Haworth for a number of years, offers first-hand knowledge of original manuscripts in her biography of Emily. Others considered in this study include Lucasta Miller who analyzes and challenges the myths concerning the Brontës. In *A Chainless Soul*, Katherine Frank writes about Brontë as an original thinker who cared very little about the opinions of others. In her unsentimental account, Frank stresses the misfortune and loss that Brontë experienced while, at the same time, acknowledging Brontë's inflexible will and great courage.

Edward Chitham presents a strong case for the influence of Horace and Virgil, whose works she translated, in the construction of *Wuthering Heights* in his volume entitled *The Birth of Wuthering Heights*. He continues his focus on Emily Brontë in his investigative biography of 2010. This work provides an overview of Brontë's life and commentary on people and events influencing her work. *Western Winds—The Brontë's Irish Heritage* is Chitham's reevaluation of the sources providing information about the Brontë's Irish background. Although many scholars of the Brontës argue that the family was isolated from the outside world, Patricia Ingham demonstrates that they were indeed fully engaged in the world around them in *The Brontës*.

Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars offer a volume cataloguing *The Art of the Brontës* providing information on the provenance and location of extant and lost artwork of the entire Brontë family. In another study, *The Brontës*, Alexander presents a compelling study of "Glass Town," "Angria," and "Gondal," all youthful experiments in imitation and parody and wild romance inspired by Wellington, Scott, and Byron whose feuds and love affairs captivated the people of England. With Margaret Smith, Alexander also produced an historical account of the Keighley Mechanics Institute, a primary source of reading material for the Brontë family. Terry Eagleton's *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger—Studies in Irish Culture*, offers an in depth discussion of *Wuthering Heights* in the context of the famine in Ireland as it highlights the Irish connections of the Brontë family. His commentary on Heathcliff offers valuable speculations on the mystery of the being who enchanted Catherine Earnshaw. In his chapter on "The Brontës" in *The English Novel—An Introduction*,

Eagleton highlights contributions of the Brontës to the genre of fiction.

Marianne Thormählen's publication, *The Brontës and Education*, offers an extensive commentary on the Brontës' education and upbringing in the milieu of mid-Victorian England. Her earlier publication, *The Brontës and Religion*, offers a guide to the theological and ecclesiastical world in which *Wuthering Heights* and the other Brontë sisters' novels were written. Finally, Juliet Barker offers a lengthy study of *The Brontës--Wild Genius on the Moors: The Story of a Literary Family*. Barker was curator of the Brontë Museum for six years during which time she gathered significant historical accounts of the family based on first-hand research among the extant manuscripts. Simon Marsden's *Emily Brontë and the Religious Imagination* argues that Brontë's poems and her only novel dramatize her visionary faith, based on her individual experiences, offering an eschatological fulfillment beyond the text itself. In *Emily Brontë: Heretic*, Stevie Davies celebrates the paradoxes in both Brontë's works and her nature and also argues that Emily's self-sufficiency reached the point of solipsism as she found freedom at home on the moors.

Twenty-one of Emily's poems, together with those of her siblings, were first published pseudonymously in 1846 under the title *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell* at the family's own expense. In the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte published nine more of Emily's poems. Modern editions of what is believed to be the entire collection of her poems include that of C.W. Hatfield, *The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë*, and Derek Roper and Edward Chitham's definitive edition, *The Poems of Emily Brontë*. Janet Gezari has also done extensive work on the poems in her edition, *Last Things: Emily Brontë's Poems*.

Ann Dinsdale, curator and librarian at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, continues to write and lecture on details of the lives of the Brontës. Her volumes include: *The Brontës at Haworth* and *The Brontë Parsonage Museum*.

Emily Brontë would have had access to a variety of reading materials in the Parsonage Library and may have found reading materials at Ponden Hall, home of the Heaton family and also the location of the largest private library in Yorkshire.¹ Scholars regard Ponden Hall as the model for Thrushcross Grange, the Linton Home in *Wuthering Heights*. Emily and her siblings may also have had access to materials at Keighley Mechanics Institute, a library that provided resources on theology and science, history, biography, and poetry, as well as fiction, including the novels of Walter Scott and the eighteenth-century novelists.

There is no evidence to indicate that she read the work of major philosophers, even Immanuel Kant, whose transcendental ideas dominated the age (Guyer and Horstmann).² However, she may have gleaned the details of prominent systems through her study of literary pieces found in the Parsonage Library, Ponden Hall, and Keighley Mechanics Institute.³ It is well known that Brontë and her sisters listened in on their father's instruction of their only brother Branwell in the Bible, the classics, and philosophical readings. The daughters of the Reverend Brontë were as astute intellectually as their brother. All of the siblings had access to the most prominent periodicals of the day, *Blackwoods's* and *Fraser's Magazines*, where they were introduced to major poets and writers of their time. Living on the Yorkshire moors was not a disadvantage for they could combine intellectual developments with the traditional culture of Haworth. Emily deftly combines both in her writing.

Although it is difficult to determine everything that Emily would have read, we do know that she translated excerpts from Horace's *Ars Poetica* and also sections of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Nature writers read and copied by the Brontës included Thomas Bewick (*Birds*) and Gilbert White (*The Natural History of Selborne*). Never to be disregarded in the experience of the Brontës is the *Bible*. The Brontë library collection contains numerous copies in several languages. Many of the editions are well marked, especially by Patrick Brontë's referencing of the subject matter for his sermons. The siblings, including Emily, would have been present for his services.

Emily Brontë herself did not speak of her favorite authors, poets, and philosophers. However, I shall demonstrate that her appreciation for these writers, though not directly stated, is reflected in her choice of literary references and philosophical themes and techniques. William Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott are favorites in the fiction and drama categories. The poetic offerings of Byron (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *Don Juan*, and *Cain*), Wordsworth (*Lyrical Ballads* of 1800, *Descriptive Sketches*, and "An Evening Walk"), and Milton (*Paradise Lost*) also receive notable mention. Other favorites include the philosophical works of Thomas Carlyle (*Sartor Resartus*), which the Brontës read in serialized form in *Fraser's Magazine* between November 1833 and August 1834. Brontë's nod to themes of Romanticism reflects her reading of the poetry of that era. Jonathan Wordsworth believes that she sought inspiration from William Wordsworth in her calmest moments while appealing to Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley in her more excitable moments (85). Samuel Taylor Coleridge, as Dorothy Cooper maintains, offers a model for the expression of sorrow (4-5).

Emily Brontë's innate talents as a writer and artist are well documented. However, her proto-modernist ideas on philosophical matters have yet to be explored and highlighted in depth. Since she preferred to remain silent about her intentions for the most part, the only clues to her belief system may be found in her works. Initially she questioned the origins of phenomena that she observed in Nature, particularly those producing storms. Were these meteorological occurrences directed by an omnipotent deity or did they occur randomly? Certainly, such questions may have been on Brontë's mind in her early youth. However, as I argue, they also may also have prompted her explorations of ideas on the dimensions of time and space culminating in her focus on death and the afterlife experience. With the moors as her literal and metaphoric universe, she moved away from transcendence and created a world of immanence in her poetry and prose.

Determined to make some sense of the death experience following the early losses of her mother and two sisters, Brontë began to look at the world as a philosopher would. She endeavored to discover the first principles of being, knowing, cause, identity, time and space. My analyses of her stitchery, artwork, poetry, and prose demonstrate her tenacious need to find a means to connect the worlds of the here and the hereafter. I present her as an organic philosopher who articulated her ideas in a multitude of literary genres including poetry, diary entries, essays, and fiction based primarily on her observations of Nature in its purest unadulterated state on the moors adjoining the parsonage where she grew up.

No scholar to date has examined Emily Brontë in this way. I suggest that this is a means of enriching study of her work and providing more complex frameworks

for adequately analyzing her profoundly complicated intellectual work. Although Emily Brontë defies classification, a number of her ideas, most notably those dealing with the dimensions of time and space, find their origins either in her readings of ancient, medieval, and modern philosophical works or obliquely from her consumption of literary works, as supported by *The Brontës Reading* mentioned above. There is no evidence that she had any direct familiarity with Plato or, for that matter, Aristotle. However, as Heather Glen suggests, the Brontës may have read a translation of Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, a work emphasizing the random workings of Nature without the intervention of a deity (See *The Brontës.Net*).⁴ While this Epicurean philosopher may have influenced Brontë in the construction of her cosmos, Margaret Maison's study establishes Brontë's apparent familiarity with the work of Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, in Elizabeth Carter's translation. Important to Brontë are the views of the Stoics regarding chained and chainless souls, attitudes to love, liberty, duty, fame, riches, poverty, pain and death that appear in Brontë's work (230).⁵ Epictetus also provides support for a world of immanence rather than transcendence, a view akin to those of pantheism.⁶ Key points that seem to have attracted Brontë to Stoicism are self-sufficiency, delayed fulfillment, and the continual flux of elements. In Epictetus's system, all external events are determined by fate; such events must then be approached with calmness and self-discipline because each individual is responsible for his or her own actions (230). Several poems featured in this analysis support Brontë's familiarity with the tenets of Stoicism described above: "The Old Stoic" (No. 83, March 1, 1841), "Anticipation" (No. 121, June 2, 1845), and "No Coward Soul Is Mine" (No. 125, January 2, 1846).

Characterizing herself as a chainless soul, Brontë stresses the benefits of delayed fulfillment, the fleeting nature of riches and the need for liberty. Throughout her writing life, she explored dimensions of time and space as she developed a sophisticated use of paradox in her use of language that does not fix temporal dimensions such as the present participle, the gerund, conditional clauses, and ellipses in her creation of parallel worlds.

I contend that her reading of the Romantic male poets, especially Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, contributed to her thoughts about an immanent universe based on their interpretations of the works of Baruch Spinoza. Coleridge, who could read German, shared Spinoza's ideas with William Wordsworth. Both were accused of being pantheists at the beginning of their poetic journeys. Some scholars also place Brontë in this category in varying degrees. Charles Algernon Swinburne refers to her "pantheistic imagination" as "earth for earth's sake" (763) while Edward Chitham believes that her unusual spirituality might demonstrate a form of pantheistic atheism (156 LEB) or even nature mysticism, more specifically pantheism couched in Stoicism (211). Both Sharon Wiseman and Edward Chitham present Brontë as a pantheistic atheist for whom imagination is more important than the word of God (1-3; 162). More recently, John Waddington-Feather claims that she came near to being a pantheist in her search for truths about life and death in the world of nature around her (246).

Always an original thinker, Emily Brontë considered many diverse ideas as she developed her own unique system, a system formulated on her own observations and readings. The result was her creation of a cosmos of immanence situated in a

rhizomatic tapestry of events and people characterized by impermanence. Her ideas offer a mirror into modernist thinking. In applicable moments in this study, I reference the work of twentieth-century poststructural philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, who posited an immanent world where being is always becoming.⁷ Rather than view time as a continuum of past, present, and future, Deleuze follows the Stoics in his separation of the present from the past and future. In his system, *Chronos* represents the limited living present while the *Aiôn* is the domain of the unlimited past and future. Brontë appears to be teasing out such considerations of time in her portrayal of Catherine Earnshaw who returns to the present from the future and also the past.

Brontë's considerations of representation may have begun in her writing of poetry where she considers a concept akin to the simulacrum as demonstrated in several lines from her second extant poem: "Shadows on shadows advanceing and flying / [...] Comeing as swifly and fadeing as soon" (No. 2, December 13, 1836). It appears that each shadow demonstrates "a becoming always another" (Deleuze LS 258). Thus the shadows as simulacra are not bad copies of their original, but rather a deviation from it. This idea also hinges on Brontë's continuation of parallel realms as shown in her "Diary Papers" discussed at length in Chapter Three here.

Throughout this study, I argue that Emily Brontë's motivations for her explorations of time and space originated in her fascination regarding the being or beings who control the workings of the universe, her preference for existence on the moors, and the constancy of death in her world beginning with her mother and two sisters, then her brother, and ultimately, her own final encounter with death. She literally interrogates death in her creation of artwork, poetry, essays, and fiction.

Another factor worthy of consideration is Brontë's fervent writing style in the "enthusiastic tradition," which Emma Mason suggests may have been the result of Brontë's absorption of the doctrines of Methodism, specifically those dealing with the close connection of man and animals before and after the fall (2). Although Emily resisted the Methodist leanings of her mother and Aunt Branwell, her writing conveys an acceptance of some of the doctrines, especially those dealing with the spirituality of animals whom John Wesley believed shared in both the pain and pleasure of humans. The excitement and vibrancy characteristic of this tradition are often seen in Brontë's poetry and finally in *Wuthering Heights* in expressions of *jouissance*. My attribution of this term to Brontë in the forthcoming analysis gains support from Gwendolyn Audrey Foster who notes that Emily may have experienced some of the *jouissance* associated with female writing in her need to perform herself through her creation of strong women (73). A few words from Hélène Cixous help to frame this concept; Cixous speaks of "writing on the inside of myself [...] as if the page were really inside" (105). In a passage appearing in Chapter Two of this study, Emily laments her inability to produce only a few "precious lines-- the fruits of one hour's most agonizing labour between ½ past 6 and ½ past 7 in the evening of July—1836" (qtd. in Gérin 67). Also important to the consideration of Brontë's literary life is Cixous's view that the *écriture féminine* could be both feminine and non-essentialist. This ties in well with Brontë's view that women could write irrespective of gender considerations or gender constructions.

Always an original thinker, Emily Brontë's considered many diverse ideas as she developed her own unique system, a system formulated on her own observations and

readings. The result was her creation of a cosmos of immanence situated in a rhizomatic tapestry of events and people characterized by impermanence. Her bold interventions in literature offer a mirror into modernist thinking thus translating to the formulation of an organic philosophy, albeit loosely constructed.

Throughout this study, I argue that Emily Brontë's motivations for her explorations of time and space originated in her fascination regarding the being or beings who control the workings of the universe, her preference for existence on the moors, and the constancy of death in her world beginning with her mother and two sisters, then her brother, and ultimately, her own final encounter with death. She literally interrogates death in her creation of artwork, poetry, essays, and fiction.

Editions

Novel

Wuthering Heights. Ed. Richard J. Dunn. London, UK: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003. Print. (WH)

Poems

The Poems of Emily Brontë. Derek Roper and Edward Chitham.

Eds. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1995. (P)

Last Things: Emily Brontë's Poems. Janet Gezari. Oxford UP, 2007.

The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë. C.W. Hatfield. Ed. Columbia UP, 1941.

Diary Papers

Christine Alexander. Ed. *The Brontës—Tales of Glass Town,*

Angria, and Gondal. Oxford, UK: Oxford UP, 2010. Print. 485-493. (DP)

Devoirs

Lonoff, Sue. Ed. and Trans. *The Belgian Essays*. New Haven: Yale

UP, 1996. (D)

Artwork

Alexander, Christine, and Jane Sellars. *The Art of the Brontës*.

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print. (AB)

Emily Brontë Chronology

- 1818 July 30: Emily Jane Brontë born at Thornton, near Bradford, Yorkshire
- 1820 April: the Brontë family moves to Haworth
- 1821 September: Maria Brontë dies
- 1824 September 2: “Earthquake” on the Moors
- 1824 November: Emily Brontë enrolls at the Cowan Bridge School
- 1825 May 6: Maria Brontë dies; June 1: Patrick Brontë brings Charlotte and Emily home from Cowan Bridge; June 15: Elizabeth Brontë dies
- 1826 June: Patrick Brontë brings home twelve wooden soldiers for Branwell--the start of the Brontës' oral literature and imaginative games
- 1829 January 19: Emily Brontë produces “The Mullioned Window” her first extant drawing
- 1829 March 1: Emily Brontë produces “Sampler” based on Proverbs 30:1-5
- 1831 Emily and Anne begin the Gondal saga
- 1834 November 24: First “Diary Paper”-- the earliest dated Emily Bronte manuscript--mentions the Gondals discovering Gaaldine
- 1835 July—October: Emily Brontë is a pupil in Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head; is sent home after alarming Charlotte with her physical decline.
- 1836 July 12: the earliest dated poem, the first in a series of three poems introducing Augusta Geraldine Almeda, A.G.A.
- 1837 June 26: Second “Diary Paper”—features Anne and Emily writing in the drawing room
- 1837 September: takes a position as teacher at Law Hill School, near Halifax; remains there for about six months--the exact dates of the Law Hill period are disputed.
- 1838 Over half of Brontë’s surviving poems written.
-1842
- 1841 July 30: Third “Diary Paper”—features the Gondalians at the Palace of Instruction

- 1842 February--November, at school in Brussels with Charlotte to study music and foreign languages; writes *devoirs* in French; returns to Haworth after the death of Aunt Branwell
- 1843 Alone at Haworth with her father--a time of creativity and freedom
- 1844 Begins to arrange her poems into two notebooks, dividing the Gondalian from the non-Gondalian material
- 1845 July 31: Fourth "Diary Paper"—Emily and Anne walk home from Keighley--Emily's is hearty and content, reunited with Anne and as enthusiastic as ever about the Gondalians
- 1845 The Brontës give up hopes for a school of their own; Branwell, working on a novel, tells his sisters of the profitable possibilities of novel writing; October, Charlotte discovers Emily's poems and convinces her sister to collaborate on a volume of poems; December, *Wuthering Heights* begun
- 1846 May, *Poems by Currer Ellis, and Acton Bell* published, with the Brontës paying for costs; July, *Wuthering Heights* finished and begins to make the round of publishers, along with *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte and *The Professor* by Charlotte; September 14, last dated complete poem
- 1847 July, T. C. Newby accepts *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* but delays publishing until the success of *Jane Eyre* arouses interest in the "Bells"; December, *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* published.
- 1848 Confusion in the literary world over the identity and number of the Bells; Anne publishes *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*; Emily withdraws more resolutely into herself; September 24, Branwell dies; October 1, Emily leaves home for the last time to attend Branwell's funeral service--catches a severe cold which develops into inflammation of the lungs; December 19, Emily Brontë dies
- 1850 *Wuthering Heights* reissued, with a selection of poems, and a biographical notice by Charlotte
- 1893 The Brontë Society established.
- 1941 C.W. Hatfield's edition of *The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë* published
- 1995 Derek Roper and Edward Chitham's edition of *The Poems of Emily Jane Brontë* published

THE PHILOSOPHER

Enough of Thought, Philosopher;
Too long hast thou been dreaming
Unlightened, in this chamber drear
While summer's sun is beaming—
Space-sweeping soul, what sad refrain
Concludes thy musings once again? (1-6)

*O for the time when I shall sleep
Without identity—
And never care how rain may steep
Or snow may cover me! (7-10)*

*No promised Heaven, these wild Desires
Could all of half fulfill—
No threatened Hell--with quenchless fires
Subdue this quenchless will! (11-14)*

--So said I and still say the same,--
--Still to my Death will say—
Three Gods within this little frame
Are warring night and day— (15-18)

Heaven could not hold them all, and yet
They all are held in me
And must be mine till I forget
My present entity— (19-22)

O, for the time, when in my breast
Their struggles will be o'er—
O for the day when I shall rest
And never suffer more! (23-26)

--And even for that Spirit, Seer,
I've watched and sought my lifetime long;
Sought Him in Heaven, Hell, Earth, and Air,
An endless search—and always wrong! (41-44)

-- Emily Brontë, February 3, 1845 (No. 115)

¹ For a detailed listing of collections found at Ponden Hall in Emily Brontë's time, see "The Library at Ponden Hall," published by Bob Duckett in *Brontë Studies* 40:2 (2015). Duckett argues that there is no documentary evidence the Brontës used the library at Ponden Hall. However, it is probable, based on references found in their writing, that they did take advantage of this well stocked library eight miles from their home.

² In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant endeavored to justify metaphysics as a legitimate subject of inquiry as he set out to determine the limits and correct use of reason. He attempted to rectify the impasse between the rationalists represented by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz and René Descartes and the empiricists represented by John Locke and David Hume. While the former claimed that the fundamental principles upon which knowledge is based are known primarily the intellect, the latter claimed the precedence of sense perception. Metaphysics for him concerns a priori knowledge, or knowledge whose justification does not depend on experience; and he associates a priori knowledge with reason. The project of the *Critique* is to examine whether, how, and to what extent human reason is capable of a priori knowledge. Perhaps the central and most controversial thesis of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is that human beings experience only appearances (*phenomena*), not things in themselves (*noumena*); and that space and time are only subjective forms of human intuition that would not subsist in themselves if one were to abstract from all subjective conditions of human intuition. Kant calls this thesis transcendental idealism. His investigations show how the mind imposes principles upon experience to generate knowledge (Guyer and Horstmann Nos. 3 and 4).

³ Keighley's Mechanics Institute was founded in 1825, and Patrick Brontë joined in 1833. The library provided resources on theology and science, but the young Brontës could also find there history, biography, and poetry, which would be more to their taste, as well as fiction, including the novels of Walter Scott and the eighteenth-century novelists (C. Alexander KMI).

⁴ Heather Glen suggests that the Brontës may have read John Mason Good's translation, *The Nature of Things: a Didactic Poem translated from the Latin of Titus Lucretius Carus* (London, 1805) and compares his version of Book I, 52–53:

*How nature all creates, sustains, matures,
And how, at length, dissolves ...*

to Emily's "No Coward Soul Is Mine" (2 Jan. 1846): With wide-embracing love

Thy spirit animates eternal years
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears.

⁵ Fortune is an evil chain to the body, and vice to the soul. For he whose body is unbound, and whose soul is chained, is a slave. On the contrary, he whose body is

chained, and his soul unbound, is free. (Epictetus, Fragments, vii, qtd. in Roper and Chitham 252).

The last chapter of the third book of *The Discourses of Epictetus* concerns the fear of death. The following is Elizabeth Carter's popular translation of its final paragraph (1758):

Why, do you not know, then, that the origin of all human evils and of the mean-spiritedness and cowardice is not death, but rather the fear of death? Fortify yourself, therefore, against this. Hither let all your discourses, readings, exercises tend. And then you will know that thus alone are all men made free. (199)

⁶ From Epictetus: Immanent rather than transcendent, Zeus inheres in, and may indeed be identified with, the natural order. As such he is in theory fully accessible to human comprehension in the same way as all objects and events are accessible to our comprehension. With effort, rational beings can come to understand Zeus as a person, a rational being with thoughts and intentions like ours. That recognition inspires awe and gratitude, a "hymn of praise" that it is our duty to offer in each occasion of life (1.16.19).

God is the creator of humankind as of all else, and his attitude toward us is one of complete benevolence. It is by his gift that we are rational beings, and our rational nature qualifies us as his kindred. More: our minds are actually fragments of Zeus's mind, "parts and offshoots of his own being" (1.14.6, 2.8.10–12). When we make choices on our own account, we exercise the very same power as governs the universe. Hence it can be said that Zeus has ceded to us a portion of his governance (1.1.12).

⁷ Gilles Deleuze offers a critique of Western metaphysics in terms of its focus on identity. Calling himself "A Pure Metaphysician," he develops an ontological system based on difference and repetition, thus featuring becoming in and of itself. Embracing the theoretical perspectives offered by Baruch Spinoza, Deleuze rejects transcendence as his ontological system posits immanence wherein the domains of the virtual and the actual reside. His eschatological beliefs are centered on the concept of the "eternal recurrence," a concept that Friedrich Nietzsche presented in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. His epistemology finds expression in the notion of the rhizome. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, with whom Deleuze collaborated in his later works, employ the term rhizome to describe a non-hierarchical approach not only to knowledge, but also to being as becoming. The rhizome has neither beginning nor end and spreads without a central root. It always has a middle from which it grows and overflows. The concept of rootlessness represented by the rhizome offers freedom from constraint in expression.

Introduction – “Let me in—let me in!”: “An Endless Search”

This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir-bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause; but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; [...] I must stop it, nevertheless!” I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch: instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!

The intense horror of nightmare came over me; I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed—“Let me in—let me in!” “Who are you?” I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself. “Catherine Linton,” it replied shiveringly (why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for Linton). “I’m come home, I’d lost my way on the moor!”

--Mr. Lockwood
Emily Brontë (WH 20)

Emily Brontë’s startling introduction of Catherine Earnshaw, her protagonist in *Wuthering Heights*, delivers one of the most powerful proclamations in Victorian literature. Begging “Let me in—let me in!” (E. Brontë WH 20), Catherine has indeed found her way back to Wuthering Heights, her childhood home. Yet, she cannot gain entrance because a male visitor unknown to her occupies her personal space. The narrative of *Wuthering Heights* begins in 1801, about twenty years after Catherine’s physical death, as the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange makes his way to Wuthering Heights in an unforgiving storm to visit Heathcliff, his landlord.¹ Shivering “through every limb,” Mr. Lockwood “knocked vainly for admittance” ejaculating “Wretched

inmates! -- you deserve perpetual isolation from your species for your churlish inhospitality.[...] I don't care—I will get in!” (WH 7). He does get in--and when the storm does not permit him to return home, Heathcliff sneeringly agrees to offer accommodations for the evening. His time in Catherine Earnshaw's childhood bedroom begins with an observation of letters scratched into the ledge: “Catherine Earnshaw—Catherine Heathcliff—Catherine Linton” (20).

This inscription is particularly important because it shows Catherine's own reflection on her fragmented self. In her physical state, she clearly struggles with her identity as she identifies first as Earnshaw, her patriarchal family name, then as Heathcliff, a representation of her unconventional metaphysical relationship, and finally, Linton, her legal name after marrying Edgar Linton. On one hand, the masculine/patriarchal names both anchor and suppress her as she lives in a conflicted state on the earthly plane, a space to which I refer as the domain of the actual in this analysis. On the other hand, her different surnames may also have allowed her freedom to choose her preferred signification depending on the moment and her mood. Thus, even in her physical body, she has the power to breach the boundaries associated with each identity as she partially escapes societal repression. However, following her physical death, she has the opportunity to escape fully from the constraints of society. Now existing in an alternate state, the incorporeal, she wanders the moors often randomly transported by the wind. Despite her freedom to move through time and space, she seems determined to return to the source of her being resulting in “An endless search” similar to that described by Emily Brontë in her

poem, “The Philosopher” (No. 115, February 3, 1845, 44) where she describes a search “in Heaven, Hell, Earth, and Air” (43).

Catherine’s ontology is embedded in her own story—her private reflections. Brontë’s literary technique allows Catherine to penetrate the narrative intermittently to ensure the accuracy of her own story. These points of penetration are generally in accordance with events in Nature manifested often by the wind-blown conditions created by storms on the moors. On this particular night, “the gusty wind” and “the driving of the snow” (WH 20), together with what Graeme Tytler identifies as homesickness and nostalgia (229-230 HHW), propel the spectral Catherine through the winter darkness to *Wuthering Heights*, both the title of Brontë’s novel and home for her protagonist. Catherine’s own proclamation at the window-- “I’m come home, I’d lost my way on the moor!” (E. Brontë WH 20) — sets the stage for events to follow.

Meanwhile, Lockwood, the intrepid intruder, takes full advantage of his occupancy of Catherine’s room. Taking special note of the dilapidated state of her library, he declares that it had been “well used, though not altogether for a legitimate purpose; scarcely one chapter had escaped a pen and ink commentary—at least the appearance of one—covering every morsel of blank that the printer had left” (WH 16). Revealing his arrogant attitude toward the enigmatic Catherine, he allows no room for her commentary, but, in the same moment, appears to be titillated by her spirited autobiographical material. She fills every blank space with her own story just as Emily Brontë does in her “Diary Papers” which I discuss in Chapter Three of this study.

We initially learn about Catherine from Lockwood's "invasion" of her book through his account of her appearance at the window. The words are hers, at least attributed to her as Lockwood attempts to report them. He is left to explain that which he cannot possibly understand. In other words, who or what is this apparition? Catherine's plea, "Let me in," may be construed in several ways. Although she may have been pleading to be let in from the cold, more likely she is begging to get into her own narrative now being communicated by Lockwood. After all, Lockwood appropriated the very private space of her early childhood and also her very personal story. Nevertheless, no longer in physical form, she finds a convenient amanuensis in Lockwood, whose appearance, seemingly out of nowhere, allows her story to be revealed, albeit by an initially unwilling narrator who has little understanding of her plight. Equally important, Catherine's intermittent penetrations of Lockwood's recounted narrative allow her to challenge his ejaculations.²

As the air swarms with Catherines (Catherine in her tripartite identities of Earnshaw, Heathcliff, and Linton), Lockwood begins his voyeuristic invasions into the narrative that she inscribed in her Testament—her most intimate thoughts. Her Testament has a dual purpose: first, it is her copy of the Bible, the Judeo-Christian creation story; and secondly, the margins are filled with her own testament--her own creation story. Her placement of her story alongside those offering spiritual doctrine directly challenges the patriarchal religious material in which she was trained in her early years. She considers her story just as important—or perhaps more important for she has vehement critiques of organized religion. Neither Emily nor Catherine intended to present her material for public consumption; however, both harbored the

desire to write their own lives rather than have them constructed by male observers. As J. Hillis Miller suggests, Emily initially published under the gender-neutral pseudonym of Ellis to protect her solitude and visions (162). Catherine, on the other hand, had no specific long-term plan other than wanting to be free to roam the moors—preferably with Heathcliff. While there are many differences between the author and her creation, the control that each wants over her own narrative offers a powerful similarity.

Although Lockwood has now effectively appropriated both the physical and spiritual space rightly belonging to Catherine-- as well as her story, a jarring shock awaits him. Drifting in and out of sleep, he is not able “to stir a limb” (E. WH 21), literally every limb, as his name indicates (lock-wood), when he experiences the “extraordinary event” at the center of the narrative in Emily Brontë’s novel.³ Despite his being inside, Lockwood is the intruder. Catherine must move quickly to grasp a random opportunity! Her room had been closed since her death thus not allowing her to return home. However, in a brief moment to follow, she will re-enter her private space if only metonymically when she penetrates the window opening that ironically Lockwood creates when he “knocks his knuckles through the glass” (20). As he remains in a state of stasis, the fir-bough beating actively at the window soon appears as Catherine Earnshaw’s icy hand thus catapulting her into her own narrative in the shocking metonymic moment quoted in the epigraph. Is Mr. Lockwood seizing a branch or the shivering hand of Catherine Earnshaw? Why can he not rid himself of the clinging ethereal waif?

It is no surprise that he, as a disciplinary male, would never let Catherine in. After all, he has situated himself in the narrator's position, and essentially, he has locked her out of her own selfhood—her own being. Brontë mitigates this problem by placing Catherine in a realm not limited by space and time thus enabling her protagonist to move freely following her physical death. However, the solution is complicated and involves a wrestle beyond death for Catherine as she attempts to regain her power.

Proclaiming that terror made him cruel, and, “finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off,” he “pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and and soaked the bed clothes” (20-21). The blood may actually have been his since it is inconceivable that a specter should be able to shed blood. Brontë provides no clue here. Next, in an apparent state of confusion and denial after shuddering in fear, Lockwood brushes off Catherine's shivering spirit in a statement of aloof dismissal: “The spectre showed a spectre's ordinary caprice; it gave no sign of being” (23 WH). When she begs entrance, Lockwood shouts, “I'll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years” (WH 20-21). Little did he remember that he had already provided the opportunity for her entrance upon shattering the windowpane himself. Nor does he seem to recall that he sought entrance earlier in the day and was initially refused by Heathcliff. His unimaginative and limited thinking process allows for little reflection regarding the “extraordinary event” that he had just experienced.

Although Brontë would not have used such terminology, I argue that she may have been in the process of teasing out such an idea in her explorations of space and

time regarding the death experience. The snowstorm that blows Lockwood and Catherine across the moors thus offers the expositional material contributing to the rising action and resultant climactic event. There is no way to predict that both would meet at a specific intersecting point: her childhood bedroom. In Brontë's world, such random events would have been regarded either as providential or simply as anomalies. Emily is literally playing with the game of chance in her framing of Catherine's return to her own story thereby offering an "extraordinary event," not definitionally, but rather through her ability to connect the unpredictable storms on the moors to occurrences in human lives. Catherine here, like the fictional incident itself, captures what Gilles Deleuze would describe as an event outside the frame of established rules that involves shifting to another frame or new rules (LS 32). In *Wuthering Heights*, the fenestral scene provides the focal point for Brontë's fictional interrogations of death and the afterlife.

Given Brontë's adamant refusal to accept death as an end in itself, it makes sense that the rules of engagement would need to be adjusted. Thus, she created a new frame. Storms on the moors are regularly occurring events. However, a storm that catapults a being, in this case, Catherine, from the framework of the afterlife back to the corporeal realm required a different set of rules, not those found in conventional theories of time and space with which she may have been familiar. Seldom worried about boundaries or the rules of polite society, Brontë accordingly devised her own scheme to eliminate the impassable gap between the afterlife and the living. Although she may not have been able to bring back her loved ones in this manner, she achieved the ability to do so in her dynamic writing. Manipulating

temporal and spatial dimensions, she created a fictional space that allowed Catherine, in her ethereal form, to return from both the past and the future to a continual present that may be considered a self-designed “space of death,” as Albert Myburgh argues (25). Adamantly not wanting to be transported to heaven following her death, Catherine declares her preference for the afterlife is the “middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights” (E. Brontë 63 WH). Thus, as Myburgh suggests, embracing her exclusion from heaven, Catherine has rendered the dichotomy between heaven and hell irrelevant, thereby destabilizing generally accepted beliefs of major supporting characters in her story (25). By creating a marginal realm in which her protagonist might dwell in both life and death, Brontë allows Catherine to generate a new space of death from which she can return to the narrative at crucial times.

Lockwood becomes an ideal foil in Brontë’s narrative plan primarily because he appears to lack both imagination and any glimmer of sensibility. He describes himself as a “snail” who “shrunk icily into himself” when he attempted to court a beautiful young woman whom he had met on the sea-coast (E. Brontë WH 5). Yet, he feels he is in a position to best convey the story. Brontë presents him as the embodiment of the typical upper-class male hailing from the center of sophistication and learning in London perhaps of the same origins as some of her male critics. As Terence McCarthy explains, Lockwood, a Southerner, is an intruder whose presence in the north may be for no other reason than sport or the need for isolation. In his case, it is the latter. Offering a traditionally rustic culture as opposed to the more bookish atmosphere in London, Wuthering Heights and the milieu in which it exists are alien to him. Therefore, his narration should be considered suspect (48-49).

Lockwood is actually recording Catherine's story as recounted by Ellen (Nelly) Dean, the devoted family servant who is also Catherine's most intimate confidante. While he listens attentively to Ellen Dean, who is simply in the moment, he spins the tale in accordance with his perspective. A detached interpreter of Catherine's stories, he would have had little understanding of a setting or the people whose emotional and moral relationships align with Nature in the form of violent storms on the moors. Nelly offers an account based on her personal recollections of the tragic lives of the Earnshaws and the Lintons. Lockwood, on the other hand, is the urbane observer who is literally drawn into the story by Catherine herself in the fenestral scene. Peter J. Donnelly observes that Brontë creates a duologue between Nelly, the insider, and Lockwood, the outsider, thus lending a hidden dynamic to the story (142). Lockwood by himself could not have told the story without Nelly's contribution. Brontë's three-layered narrative often becomes heteroglossic when other minor characters, such as Joseph, the long-winded, fanatically religious servant, and Zillah, who is aware of all developments in Gimmerton, join the discussion.

While McCarthy's interpretation pays close attention to Brontë's narrative, Nicholas Frangipane argues that Lockwood is not a puppet of either Ellen Dean or Brontë herself and that Lockwood fully understands this in his presentation of what he believes is a fictional narrative (29-30; 37). I contend that Lockwood's interest in the story is voyeuristic at best; therefore, he could not have been aware of any narrative technique. Another ironic and tragic point here is Lockwood's refusal to let the subject of the narrative that he is constructing into her own story. Neither Catherine nor Brontë is about to let Lockwood have the upper hand in the narrative

because Catherine wants to tell her own story. As a woman, Catherine resists being constructed by a would-be male writer. Each time she appears in the story, she intercepts the flow thereby facilitating a different look at his account.

Brontë frames this issue in yet another manner: Catherine deftly uses the surname Linton to identify herself to Lockwood. Her choice of her married name demonstrates her ability to speak to the intruder in his language—language accepted by the prevailing legal system. Earnshaw may have resonated similarly; however, Heathcliff would have been unacceptable. Catherine is not only in command of her own story, but also appears to understand what is needed to be credible in her communications with other characters. Now at the center of her own story, Catherine, in her ghostly presence, is more vivid and alive than the real man Lockwood, who is thrown entirely off balance as he tries to understand and to reconstruct in a linear manner what has happened. In this moment, Brontë offers an extraordinary event that not only sets the narrative in motion, but also speaks to the development of her philosophy—an organic philosophy whose primary purpose is to create a space where life and death may converge.

Indeed, the dramatic scene at the window telescopes and captures all of the philosophical interventions found in the rest of her work (visual and written, as well as in her masterpiece, the novel *Wuthering Heights*), which I analyze in more detail in the following chapters. Dissolving the boundaries between man and Nature, Brontë presents physical death as a productive experience providing a metamorphosis for continued life on a plane of immanence. I argue that in thrusting herself into the masculine world of writing and philosophy (as literally depicted in her presentation of

Catherine in the window scene), Brontë throws a radical protofeminist gauntlet into the masculine world of the literati that still holds extraordinary impact. That all these layers of meaning are to be found in this one window scene is suggestive of her powerful abilities to write and philosophize

My analysis thus far acts as a prolepsis of the kind of analyses I perform throughout this study. Throughout the remainder of this introduction, I will lay out the assumptions that are central to this examination. Although Emily Brontë was not a trained philosopher, her drawings, poems, letters, *devoirs*, and fiction illustrate complex interrogations particularly in her engagements with the dimensions of time and space, the powers of Nature, interrelations of process, the definition and function of God or god, and finally, boundaries of death and life. In a lifelong project centering on finding her and humanity's place in the cosmos, Emily Brontë offers vivid interrogations of the death and the afterlife in her only novel.

When *Wuthering Heights* appeared on the literary scene in 1847, Emily Brontë gained entrance into that world as Ellis Bell, her masculine pseudonym, thus reframing the grounds of her discourse and upsetting gendered spaces. For many years, the literary public believed that *Wuthering Heights* was written by a man. A review dated circa 1847 found in Emily's writing desk describes her novel as it places her in the masculine gender:

[...] a work of great ability [...] to the production of which talent of no common order has contributed. At the same time, the materials which the author has placed at his own disposal have been but few. In the resources of his own mind, and in his own manifestly vivid

perceptions of the peculiarities of character in those, in his knowledge of human nature—has he found them all.” (“Review from Emily Brontë’s Desk”)

This review recognizes Brontë’s brilliance as an author with few resources—a male writer. It also compliments her abilities as a thinker—a male philosopher. The male was regarded as superior in profound intellectual matters in mid-Victorian England. Nevertheless, brilliant women such as Brontë produced writing considered equal to their male counterparts. In mid-Victorian England, women struggled to be validated, their highest duty so often to suffer and be still for most men know “not half the foolish fears that agitate her breast” and “still less to understand the intensity of her capability of suffering. [...] But women do what their sex is formed to suffer” (Stickney Ellis 176).

I contend that Mr. Lockwood, Catherine’s amanuensis, may also have been a symbolic presence representing the challenges that female authors faced as they tried to write themselves as women. He could not have been expected to have any understanding of Brontë’s need as a woman to experience freedom and independence, or, for that matter, to be heard or even to tell her own story. Their repression resulted in strong literary statements that challenged current conditions whether through political commentary, fiction, or poetry. Emily Brontë was no exception in this world where “silenced or negated feeling was valued over affirmed feeling” (Kucich 3).⁴ She created a character who was openly outspoken, perhaps making statements that Emily herself could not or did not. Brontë was an anomaly both in her family and in the literary community of the mid-nineteenth century. Angus Mason Mackay, one of

the earlier commentators on the Brontës, notes that “the mystery enshrouding her [Emily Brontë] is, indeed, partially accounted for when we learn how almost absolutely impenetrable was the reserve in which this lonely soul clothed herself” (22).⁵ He dubbed her “The Sphynx of Literature,” a moniker that has held firm to the present time (21).

Brontë’s grasp of concepts dealing with the dimensions of space and time was unusual for many authors of her time whether they are male or female. She constructed a world in which Catherine can exist in two realms, both of which are real for her: the spatio-temporal where Catherine existed before her death, and the incorporeal where she continued her existence.⁶ Throughout *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë creates extraordinary events in her narrative where the two domains converge randomly. These encounters may include meteorological moments, non-human life, and human interaction and relations. In Emily Brontë’s case, the moors become a physical space and also a metaphorical space in which events may or may be actualized. In Catherine Earnshaw’s case, it is the storm that causes the actualization or the convergance of time and space at a particular moment.

Brontë’s placement of a powerful woman at the center of her narrative sends a bold message to her readers. The woman writer can be creative and authoritative, and also, she can philosophize. Could she also be a seer? In her poem “The Philosopher,” Brontë presents a dialogue between the philosopher and a seer. The poem begins with a direct challenge from the seer: “Enough of Thought, Philosopher / Too long hast thou been dreaming / Unlightened in this chamber drear” (No. 115, February 3, 1845, 1-3). While the philosopher has explored space, heaven, and hell, and may yearn for

death, the seer is more attuned to a space where “summer’s sun is beaming--” (4). These lines may well demonstrate the dual aspirations of the poet. However, in Brontë’s purview, the seer and the philosopher may be one and the same; her relationship with Nature has been a major factor in the organic philosophy that she embeds in her writing.

Brontë’s love of Nature may be found in her presentation of Catherine, who, in both her physical and ethereal forms, finds unrestricted freedom on the moors. In her final illness, she proclaims, “I’m sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills” (E. Brontë WH 98). While her patriarchal home may be said to represent the hierarchical systems of her time, imprisoning her spirit, Nature is free of such man-made constraints. On the moors, events are determined by Nature’s own machinations, not by a deity from above or outside. This observation provides the foundation for what I maintain is Brontë’s construction a cosmos of immanence where any divine presence is manifested in the material world.

Raymond Williams offers definitional guidance on this widely construed term explaining that two principles of Nature can be seen simultaneously: the principle of order and the principle of creation (CC 127).⁷ For Brontë, it seems to be both with certain qualifications: Nature for her finds explanation in the day-to-day events on the Yorkshire moors. Offering a more indepth perspective that may better assist in the interpretation of Brontë’s conception of her natural surroundings, Kate Soper defines Nature as “that which Humanity finds itself within, and to which in some sense it belongs, but also that from which it seems excluded in the very moment in which it reflects upon either its otherness or its belongingness” (49). This idea ties in well with

Emily Brontë's organic philosophy that I propose explores humanity's true place in Nature, albeit subliminally through references to the moors in *Wuthering Heights*. Similarly, Margaret Homans argues for a difference in writing about Nature and scampering on the moors. Claiming that these are mutually exclusive activities, Homans believes that Catherine Earnshaw demonstrates Nature may be diminished by being represented. Thus, Brontë makes an effort to preserve Nature from the effects of symbolization (BW 73); she embeds the unpredictable moods of Nature in the characters that she creates and

All of these interpretations point to Nature's being a loaded term with many complex meanings for theorists of many disciplines, particularly regarding the perspectives of the Romantics. It is not the purpose of this dissertation to cover the myriad of theoretical meanings of this vexed term. Therefore, I feature Anne Mellor's foundational feminist work on gender and Romanticism as a key to my explorations of Emily Brontë's approach to Nature. Mellor helps us to understand how the human interaction with Nature in the Romantic era is thoroughly gendered; masculine Romanticism viewed Nature as something to be conquered in a subtle denial of female difference (29).⁸ In her mapping of a new literary terrain, Mellor argues that "masculine" and "feminine" Romanticism are not binary opposites, but exist on a continuum (11). She suggests that Brontë identified with her multiple creations in her refusal to confine herself to the role of the woman in literary discourse (189). I see Brontë's fluid views of Nature mirroring this idea. In particular, I argue that Nature is also a dynamic space of potentiality that Brontë occupies in her own ingenious imagination. It is not a static space, but rather a space of generative creativity that

finds parallel representation in the characteristics and manifestations of flux on the moors. Brontë similarly constructs a personal space in which she is embedded literally in Nature while roaming the moors and metaphorically when writing in the parsonage with her siblings.

Ivonne Defant's presentation of Brontë as an ecological self supports my view that Nature is the mediator in her narrative, not as a passive presence, but rather as a powerful voice through its "changing physicality" (45). There is little argument among scholars that although Brontë's novel unfolds within the interiors of *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*, it is her ability to embed her characters in Nature that conveys her deepest regard for her "dear moorlands" (E. Brontë, 19, No. 39, November 11, 1838 P) that offer "The wind in its glory and pride!" (20) and "call me from valleys and highlands / To walk by the hill-rivers side!" (21-22). Eventually, "the loved and the loving / Shall meet on the mountains again" (69-70). These lines demonstrate Brontë's alignment with the dynamic powers of Nature. Her fascination with the elements of process and force lies not in a sense of containment, but rather one of unpredictable transformation and expansiveness. Graeme Tytler argues that both Lockwood and Nelly Dean often comment on the extreme weather conditions on the moors to symbolize the turmoil within the primary characters (WWH 19). Notice that both narrators are merely observers of the tempestuousness that Brontë literally embeds in the mercurial temperaments of Catherine and also Heathcliff. The moody weather conditions in the wild space of the moors are a good match also for Brontë's temperament"-- [...] more sombre than sunny, more powerful than sportive [...]" as described by her sister, Charlotte (BN 314).

As Graeme Tytler notes, Brontë's realistic focus on the treatment of weather offers a touch of meteorological authenticity because of her ability to capture the contradictions and incongruities between seasons in the unpredictable northern climate (46). I argue throughout this study that weather is more than a touch. Rebecca Chesney, who reinterpreted the work of Abraham Shackleton, early nineteenth century meteorologist, determined that indeed the weather in Brontë country shaped the landscape not only of the moors, but also of the minds of the Brontës.⁹ As Chesney notes, "it can be harsh, brutal, beautiful, and vital" and "directly affects our daily routines, our moods, and inspires our ideas and thoughts" ("Brontë Weather Project"). Often the wind is the power that prompts actualization of any storm events. However, the wind does not determine how the power is actualized--rather, that it may or may not be actualized in a moment and then move on to another moment. This idea forms the basis for extraordinary event prompting Catherine's return to *Wuthering Heights*. The wind and storms thus become predominant themes whose manifestations appear initially in the pounding at the window of the "importunate fir-bough" (E. Brontë WH 20) that becomes the phallic arm of Catherine Earnshaw. These unpredictable conditions also find representation in Brontë's poetry and in the other genres with which she experiments, such as the diary paper and *devoir*, all culminating in her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*. All the while, she promotes the cause of the thinking woman and the woman writer. Just as importantly, in her journey, she challenges the patriarchal and theocentric beliefs of her time.

Brontë's philosophical interrogations began with her questioning of who holds the power in determining events in Nature and proceeded accordingly to her

examination of death and the death experience. All of her explorations culminated in her presentation of her powerful heroine who is no longer in her physical body. Catherine's early death provided an opportunity for explorations not only of the death experience, but also occurrences following physical death. In Brontë's characterization of Catherine, we see a self who has successfully discovered how to move between two realms or domains. When she was alive, she had a choice to bond with Nature in a possible relationship with Heathcliff or with societal expectations in her relationship with Edgar Linton, the well-established rich man whom she married. Her efforts to live in both worlds literally destroyed her. As she lived on the physical plane, her body became a site for the paradoxical states of the wild and the domesticated. However, in death, she became free to roam the moors, a space outside of the juridical proscriptions of society. There, she experienced a decentered existence in her rhizomic meanderings that allowed for the multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points that Brontë features in her narrative; Catherine's liberty may have been complete had she not felt the need to return to civilization to participate in her own story.

Generally, the people of mid-Victorian England regarded the Bible as a guide to moral living; heaven and hell were always on their minds; and, the dead had some existence beyond the physical plane. They were often thought to be in some incomprehensible better place where the living could have no further contact with them. These are the doctrinal principles with which Brontë grappled in her quest for answers that might have offered more tenable explanations. Soon, she developed her own conclusions adopting a view closer to the Stoics who believed that the antidote to

death is immortality. While in Christianity, the afterlife is spent in either heaven or hell, the Stoics veered in a different direction. They believed that the spirit indeed “maintains its own cohesion for a period of time” (Rubarth). However, in their system, “the time to live one's life and to perfect one's virtues is in the present” for there is no heaven or hell in Stoicism (Rubarth).¹⁰ Margaret Maison argues that Emily Brontë may have accessed Elizabeth Carter's translations of the works of Stoic philosopher Epictetus (230). Perhaps this view explains Catherine's fervent desire to return to the origins of her being—her existence in what Brontë portrays as a continual present.

Especially applicable to her philosophical interrogations of death are Epictetus's proclamations regarding the fear of death rather than death itself: “Fortify yourself, therefore, against this. Hither let all your discourses, readings, exercises tend. And then you will know that thus alone are all men made free” (Epictetus 199). Although the trauma indicated by Brontë's continual exposure to the deaths of loved ones may not have been totally assuaged by Epictetus's guiding thoughts, she nevertheless frequently looked at death as a pathway to freedom. It can be argued that Brontë adamantly rejected organized religion and any notion of heaven as a space for the afterlife replacing it in a similar sense as a chainless soul on her beloved moors--the center of her existence. For her, this seemingly infinite space behind the parsonage provided the inspiration for her writing and her existence on the physical plane as well as a preferred space for the afterlife. Her writings feature a world of immanence in which spiritual presence is manifested in the material world. As Edward Chitham notes, Emily's unique spirituality appeared as a form of nature

mysticism, or pantheism, a view that denies the existence of a transcendent, personal God, which is the God of traditional theism (210 LEB).¹¹

Despite her approach in valuing Nature as opposed to organized religion, she continued to attend church, at least for a while (210 LEB). While the Anglican pulpit from which her father preached offered a hierarchical structure, she preferred a cosmos of immanence, as promulgated by Epictetus (1:16:19—See Note 7, “Preface”). Mary Taylor, a childhood friend of Charlotte Brontë, noted that Emily sat “upright and motionless as a statue” during the services (qtd. in Lock and Dixon 368-369). I suggest that her careful passivity concealed what we later learn may have been deep frustration. The only possible avenue for the release of her passions and artistry would have been through her verbal and visual expressions. This idea may explain the intensity with which she presents the characters in her literary works and the subjects in her artwork. She sought honesty and originality in her portrayals as she demonstrated her understanding of the inhabitants of the Yorkshire moors. Now the area is more densely populated; however, in Brontë’s time and in the milieu in which she places *Wuthering Heights*, the moors would have been a more lonely and wind-blown space, an endless expanse of rolling hills and heather where untamed Nature prevailed.

As this study will show, from the environs of those open moors, Emily Brontë’s arises “Unlightened, in this chamber drear” (“The Philosopher,” February 3, 1845, 3) to contemplate basic questions about the nature of the universe and the process of human thought. As Tim Madigan argues, Brontë’s writing offers a triumph of the imagination over stultifying social conditions (1). These included the rapidity

of changes during the Industrial Revolution; England was dealing with the “great unwashed,” the crisis of faith, the woman question, and the quality of life.¹² Also, affected by the wide-ranging philosophical movements sweeping England, Brontë may be mirroring major issues confronting the Victorians. She certainly grappled with the issue of flux, and thus began looking for an ontological basis on which to position her beliefs.

The chapters that follow focus on major extraordinary events contributing to Emily Brontë’s unique interpretations of the universe at specific points in her life. Her initial explorations connected with her early life at Haworth Parsonage. They focused on the paradoxical relationships between life and death, heaven and earth, and reality and fantasy eventually moving to notions of simultaneity in her “Diary Papers.” As she left home to study at Cowan Bridge, Roe Head, and Brussels, and teach at Law Hill, she accordingly redirected her focus to a deeper understanding of the cosmos. Her familiarity with the poets of Romanticism is evident. However, she reframed the ideas that she found interesting as she wrote her own poetry. Similarly, Thomas Bewick’s engravings guided her early artwork; but soon she developed her own techniques and fluidity. She eventually rejected masculine godhead in the redirection of her focus to the power of the feminine. All the while, Nature, represented by her beloved moors, served as the ultimate guide for the development of her philosophy. Retaining her acknowledgment of the power of Nature, she guided her fictional protagonist Catherine Earnshaw from a life on the physical plane to an afterlife on the moors.

Following a lifetime of progressive explorations of the meaning of life and the afterlife, Emily Brontë's existence on the physical plane ended all too early. Nature, represented by the moors, consistently provided the foundational space in which she preferred to exist—a continual present. It is in this space that the multi-centered explorations of this “stormy genius” converge in extraordinary events, the most important of which is Catherine's metonymic entrance into the narrative following Mr. Lockwood's shattering of the window glass.

Chapter One offers an initial look at the development of Emily Brontë's thinking processes. The discussion identifies and analyzes the visual and written works of her childhood and adolescence as well as influences contributing to her early philosophical development. Of value, in particular, were her innate curiosity and early experiences including the early deaths of her mother and sisters. Beginning with material familiar to Brontë such as quotations from the Bible, daily life at the parsonage, and her life of freedom on the moors, the analysis then focuses on her early preoccupations with the concepts of time and space as well as death. She found some answers in the philosophy of Stoicism. Centering her initial explorations on an omnipotent masculine deity, Brontë's attention soon moved to the power of Nature demonstrated on the untamed moors adjacent to the parsonage. Eventually, she will embed this power not in a masculine protagonist, but in A.G.A., the potent and regal woman at the center of *The Gondal Poems* discussed in Chapter Two of this study. Challenging the masculinist philosophies of her time, Brontë has thus conceived an unorthodox approach to answer her queries regarding the foundations of her world as her interrogations of the death experience commenced.

Chapter Two features analyses of selected verses from the first generation narrative of *The Gondal Poems*, Emily Brontë's fantastic paracosm featuring Augusta Geraldine Almeda, A.G.A. Following a period of disconsolation, Brontë burst forth in voluminous verses and artwork reminiscent of the storms that so fascinated her. Limiting my commentary primarily to A.G.A. herself and the lover whom she most adored, Alexander of Elbë, I argue that Brontë embedded her developing philosophical ideas in A.G.A. and meteorological events on the moors, a world of immanence characterized by the fluidity of becoming. Taking her position as a protofeminist, Brontë presented A.G.A. as the prototype for Catherine Earnshaw. It was this authorial decision that launched her poetic masterpiece.

In many cases, Brontë's writing indeed dealt with literal images of the moors and the wind. In her poetic maturation process, Brontë adopted not only these themes, but also the symbols connected with them such as the death/life experience, time and space, and impermanence or perpetual becoming. She will write poetry until the year of her death.

Chapter Three explores and analyzes the unusual features of style, language, spelling, and punctuation through which Emily Brontë attempted to find answers to spatiotemporal questions in her "Diary Papers." In her "Diary Papers," where Brontë's explorations of time and space move to expanded philosophical dimensions in her intense examinations of the concepts of simultaneity and delay as she created parallel universes thus bringing her closer to some answers regarding death and the afterlife. This idea manifests in the simultaneity, two or more events occurring at the same time, in Brontë's narratives. Her initial "Diary Papers," written when she was in

late adolescence, demonstrate her need to confront the world on her terms. The “Diary Papers” also provide glimmers of the backstory for the Gondal poems.

Chapter Four offers a discussion and analysis of four of the *devoirs* that Emily Brontë’s composed under the tutelage of Professor Héger during her time in Brussels. The four include two dealing with the mysteries of nature in terms of the relationships non-humans, specifically animals, with their humans the the resultant spirituality of these creatures of the almighty. The first two include “Le Chat,” which in which Brontë’ severely critiques polite society. In the next, “Le Papillon,” she provides the embryonic model for her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*. In “Le Palais de la Mort,” she presents Death as a strong, but evil feminine presence who collaborates with Civilization and Intemperance as harbingers to the demise of humanity. Finally in “Lettre—Ma Chère Maman,” a revelatory piece that poignantly conveys mother loss and loneliness in a very intimate manner, she reveals something of herself not previously seen in her works. Although Emily was with her mother when she died, this is the only piece in her body of work where she writes about her need for a mother in her time of illness.”

Chapter Five presents commentary and analysis on three extraordinary events that contribute to the tempestuous relationship of Catherine and Heathcliff. The initial appearance of Catherine featured in the introduction sets off the chain of events that long time family servant, Ellen Dean, relates to Mr. Lockwood. In the beginning, the two revel in Nature on the moors as their elemental energies converge. However, civilization in the form of the Linton family soon intervenes and the two separate with Catherine’s death soon to follow. Many years later, Heathcliff joints Catherine in her

incorporeal life on the moors. Meanwhile, their physical remains mix with the earth of the moors. The next intervention occurs when Catherine dies, and the final event features Heathcliff's death. Each occurrence changes the framework in the narrative and drastically alters the lives of the characters that Brontë creates.

Emily Brontë lived and wrote in Victorian England, a milieu in which young women were very limited in their aspirations. As the daughter of a clergyman, she had access to literature and learning. Never conventional in her pursuits, she bore little resemblance to other middle-class young ladies in her world. Using her powerful imagination to embed herself in the flux of Nature, she created a dynamic liminal site for traversing corporeal and incorporeal spaces as well as constructing time as a fluid entity that allowed her to experience and limn parallel spaces and times. As one Romantic scholar suggests, she is the “master of liminality.”¹³ In her creative journey, she challenged existing dichotomies such as those dividing Nature and culture, man and animal, and life and death as she sought to elude the boundaries created in their rigid definitions. My explorations of her body of work, including her poems, Diary Papers, *devoirs*, and her novel, as well as her drawings and paintings, demonstrate the progressive development of an organic philosophy in which she presents an intermingling of spaces often manifesting in a simultaneity of space and time. Embracing chaos and fluidity, while also brilliantly exhibiting the need to design and control her art, she effectively destabilizes conventional gender expectations and the beliefs of organized religion as she invents her own space of death. This study offers a vivid discussion of the powerful framework that Brontë

constructs in her protofeminist and protomodern contributions to literature. No scholar to date has examined the life and *oeuvre* of Emily Brontë in this manner.

¹ In his genealogical chronology of the Earnshaw and Linton families, A. Stuart Daley concludes that Catherine Earnshaw was born in the summer of 1765 and died on March 20, 1784 (337). Catherine would have died a few months before she reached the age of 19.

² Brontë uses some form of the verb ejaculate/ejaculation eleven times in her novel. Although modern readers of *Wuthering Heights* may interpret her use as part of the sexual experience, she most likely used it to describe a sudden and vehement utterance. The word derives from the Latin deponent verb ejaculor, ejaculari, ejaculatus sum meaning “to hurl out.”

³ Gilles Deleuze offers a distinction between what he regards as the ordinary event, an occurrence within an established set of rules, and extraordinary event that involves shifting to another frame or new rules (LS 32).

⁴ John Kucich’s work on repression during the Victorian Era applies generally to women authors and to some male authors as well. Although Emily Brontë may have lived her life in reserve or constraint, her protagonist Catherine Earnshaw does not.

⁵ Angus Mason Mackay’s *The Brontës: Fact and Fiction* was originally published in 1897. It was an attempt to present what was known of this literary family at the time.

⁶ The work of Gilles Deleuze offers some guidance for possible terminology here. The actual for him is the physical domain whereas the virtual is a domain of pure becoming (LS 163-165).

⁷ Raymond Williams notes that “nature” is one of the most complex words in the language. “Nature,” in the broadest sense, is the natural, physical, or material world or universe (CC 127). The term is twofold in that it includes the phenomena of the physical world collectively, including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the earth, as opposed to humans or human creations as well as the physical force regarded as causing and regulating these phenomena (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

⁸ See Annette Kolodny’s *The Lay of the Land*.

⁹ Abraham Shackleton of Braithwaite near Haworth compiled a series of weather diaries showing rainfall (with rain days), wind strength and direction, and barometer

measurements and temperature on the moors from 1801 to 1857 (Chesney “Weather Diaries”).

¹⁰ Dying is not the end of a person's existence, according to the Stoics. Once the soul has separated from the body it maintains its own cohesion for a period of time. Chrysippus and Cleanthes disagreed regarding the fate of the soul after death. Cleanthes held that the souls of all men could survive until the conflagration, a time in which the divine fire totally consumes all matter. Chrysippus, on the other hand, held that only the souls of the wise are able to endure. The souls of the unwise will exist for a limited time before they are destroyed or reabsorbed into the cosmic *pneuma*. The souls of irrational beasts are destroyed with their bodies. In no case is there any indication that the survival of the soul after death had any direct benefit to the individual or that the Stoics used this as a motivator toward ethical or intellectual behavior. There is no heaven or hell in Stoicism; the time to live one's life and to perfect one's virtues is in the present.
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/stoicmind/#SH2c>

¹¹ The term ‘pantheism’ is a modern one, possibly first appearing in the writing of the Irish freethinker John Toland (1705) and constructed from the Greek roots *pan* (all) and *theos* (God). But if not the name, the ideas themselves are very ancient, and any survey of the history of philosophy will uncover numerous pantheist or pantheistically inclined thinkers; although it should also be noted that in many cases all that history has preserved for us are second-hand reportings of attributed doctrines, any reconstruction of which is too conjectural to provide much by way of philosophical illumination.

At its most general, pantheism may be understood positively as the view that God is identical with the cosmos, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers God as distinct from the universe (Mander 1).

¹² See Herbert F. Tucker’s *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* for in depth explorations of conditions in Victorian England. Thirty leading Victorianists from around the world collaborate here in a multidimensional analysis of the breadth and sweep of modern Britain's longest, unruliest literary epoch.

¹³ Gary Harrison. Katherine Alexander’s Dissertation Defense of July 9, 2018.

Chapter One – “How well my spirit knows the path / on which it ought to wend”: Early Explorations of Death, Religion, and Nature

Only at her window sitting
While the evening stole away
Fitful winds forbodeing flitting
Through a sky of cloudy grey (1-4)
--Emily Brontë
Undated Poem (No. 147)

I have sat lonely all the day
Whatching the drizzly mist descend
And first conceal the hills in grey
And then along the valleys wend (5-8)
--Emily Brontë
Undated Poem (No. 188)

When days of Beauty deck the earth
Or stormy nights descend
How well my spirit knows the path
On which it ought to wend

It seeks the consecrated spot
Beloved in childhoods years
The space between is all forgot
Its sufferings and its tears (1-8)

-- Emily Brontë
Undated Poem (No.183) ¹

Emily Brontë emerged as one of the most enigmatic personalities in literature following the publication of *Wuthering Heights*, her only novel, in 1847 under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell. Although interest in her work waned following her death, Ellis resurfaced as Emily Brontë upon rediscovery of her only novel and continual recovery of her work in other genres. Since then, biographers and critics have examined her life and *oeuvre* in microscopic detail attempting to unlock her secrets.

Yet, to this date, she remains the “Sphynx of Literature” (see Mackay 21), a “self-created being centered in the universe of her imagination ” (Spark 11).

For this reason, I believe that only Brontë’s works speak to her innermost thoughts. In the lines from a few of her undated poems, shown above, several themes emerge: loneliness, “fitful winds / forebodeing flitting / through a sky of cloudy grey” (“Undated Poem,” No. 147, 3-4). Allusions to “days of Beauty” decking the earth followed by “stormy nights” descending (No. 183, 1-2) demonstrate her interest in the unpredictable weather conditions on the moors, while her emphasis on the “space between” (7) points to her interest in space/time as philosophical principles. Her interest in what lies beneath finds expression in the “hills in grey” (No. 188, 7) concealed by the “drizzly mist” (6) descending. “Sitting lonely all the day” (5), she reflects on the changes in Nature demonstrating her fascination with process and change. In the initial stages of her professional development at this point, the young aspiring writer and artist already conveys original thinking and writing with emphases on her dislike for boundaries and her mission to explore the “space between” (“Undated Poem,” No. 183, 7).

No critical work has provided a substantive analysis of Emily Brontë’s drawings as they connect to her major writings, which has limited our ability to understand Brontë’s intellectual labor. I suggest that her poetry and artwork act as a compendium of her forceful engagement with philosophical matters, which, during her age, were considered men’s area of concern. The questions for which she sought answers in her early life provide a pathway for the complex philosophical perspectives presented in her later work.

In her early years, she lost her mother and two sisters perhaps accounting for her initial interrogations of death. She began to search for some space of existence providing a passage between the states of life and death—a portal. The process started with her early explorations of the dimensions of space and time and the entity, God or god, who held the power to control the universe. This chapter identifies and analyzes the visual and written works of Brontë's childhood and adolescence as well as the influences contributing to the development of her early philosophical explorations from her earliest years through about 1829 when she was eleven years old. Specifically, I examine a number of topics that impel her thinking during this early period, including her early traumas surrounding death, her early training, and Nature as manifested in the unpredictable meteorological conditions on the moors. Although there is no extant writing from Brontë in her earliest years, she did produce stitchery and artwork. My inclusion of verses that she composed after 1829 provides retrospective clues to what may have been on her mind.

The Trauma of Death

Many factors contributed to the uniquely modern views that Emily Brontë conveys in her writing and artwork. I contend that both the tragic and the joyous events in her early life account for her unusual perspectives on being. Examinations of death and life in Brontë's own life initiates my study of her development as a thinker. The life-to-death cycle is a reality with which all mortals must deal, and for the young Brontë, death manifested early and often. The first recorded event in her life occurred when, at the age of three, she witnessed her mother's death. It is reported that she, her siblings, and their nurse, Martha Wright, were at the foot of

Maria Brontë's bed at the time of the event. Later, in keeping with the traditional spiritual doctrines of the Anglican Church, Patrick Brontë writes that his wife died if not triumphantly, at least calmly and with a holy yet humble confidence that "Christ was her Savior and heaven her eternal home" (Dinsdale 20). Emily did not leave any account of her response to her mother's death, nor is there any direct evidence in her *oeuvre* of how this major loss affected her personally. Notably, nonetheless, protagonists in her fiction and poetry have either lost their mothers to death or died in childbirth.

Death did not relent, but continued to be a ubiquitous presence Emily's life. Three years after her mother's death, she was to suffer the loss of her two older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, who were sent to the notorious Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge in 1824. Maria died at the school and Elizabeth at home in May and June of the following year, respectively. Both Emily and Charlotte spent time at the school as well, but were fetched home following their sisters' deaths. The poor food, unbearable living conditions, and harsh religious regime, at the school, coupled with an outbreak of typhoid fever in 1825, proved devastating for the Brontë family (Gaskell 97-103; Gérin 7-10). The cause of death for the young girls was actually tuberculosis, a condition that may have been exacerbated by circumstances at the school, which Charlotte famously represented in *Jane Eyre*. Winifred Gérin explains that Emily may have experienced a "happy isolation in the midst of general misery" because she, a "darling child," was the "pet nursling of the school" (8). Emily's early exposure to the punitive religious training at Cowan Bridge may have sown the seeds for her later rejection of formal religious practices.

As Charlotte Brontë, who left far more personal and professional writings, informs us, the losses were disabling to the point where Emily could “scarcely breathe or be fed away from home” (C. Brontë, qtd. in Davies 18). Likewise, Stevie Davies notes that mother-loss, coupled with the loss of her sisters, most likely accounted for Emily’s need to be at home in future years (18). Her self-preservation thus depended on her being at home on the moors where both the environment provided strength for her writing and drawing. Not only did she experience the work of the grim reaper first hand, but also she was reminded of the losses in her school reading for untimely death was a regularized feature of Victorian life. During her short time at the Cowan Bridge School, required reading included Reverend William Carus Wilson’s *Child’s First Tales*. These are stories of death accompanied by gruesome woodcuts of punishment and death as demonstrated in the passage below:

There is a church yard. And there is a poor girl gone to see a grave.
She looks sad, and she is sad. Her mother died some weeks ago. All
that she loves is laid in that deep grave. Oft she goes, and shedding her
tears there. Fain would she bring her mo-ther back. But none can
come back from the grave. (Wilson 96, qtd. in Dinsdale 31)

This is quite a foreboding message for any young child. Indeed, Wilson’s passage is very close to Brontë’s own story. His church-yard filled with graves could easily have been the cemetery at Haworth Parsonage where a sea of graves directly adjacent to the parsonage provided a grim reminder of the specter of death. Other than a few flowering bushes and a small grass plot the parsonage garden, in Emily’s time, was not much more than final resting place for more than twenty thousand bodies (Gérin

2).² While the gravestones offer a metonymic presence, death itself proved to be very real in Brontë's world.

Cemeteries represented by the graveyard at the parsonage and the church-yard described by Wilson symbolized venues of traditional Christian burial. Without direct commentary from Brontë herself, it is difficult to determine if Wilson's words contributed to her rejection of teachings and rituals about the afterlife. However, they certainly offered little reassurance to a young girl who had lost a mother and two sisters. Further, as Brontë moved away from the doctrines of Anglican Christianity, Wilson's allusions to sleeping in Christ may have provided little comfort. As her thoughts of life and death manifested in her literary work, she confronted prescribed Christian burial traditions and defiantly buried her fictional creations in the wilds of the moors in spaces where there are no special boundaries—only wild wind and heather. I suggest that her vivid imagination and self-authorization would have grappled with Wilson's determination that "none can come back from the grave" and rejected it, allowing her to create a more inclusive enactment of being with the meanderings of the female protagonists in the poetry and prose written in her ensuing years. Important to Brontë's thinking is her rejection of Anglican views regarding the individual's relationship with their God and her refusal to accept traditional Christian views regarding physical death.

Pervasive reminders of death continued to follow Emily following her departure from Cowen Bridge. Back at the parsonage, the Reverend Brontë continued preaching about the afterlife as many of his sermons focused on the prophets and the power and wrath of God. As Tom Winnifrith observes, the elder Brontë strove to terrify rather than encourage. Themes of the last judgment, unquenchable fire never-ending woe, ever-living worm opening hell, and deathbed thoughts of demons predominated his subject matter (37). Although grim reminders of death seemed to be everywhere, even beyond the sea of gravestones adjacent to the parsonage, there were also reminders of

the sublime. In what Ellen Nussey describes as an austere and comfortless home, several paintings of John Martin



adorned the walls of the elder Brontë's

Figure 1.1. John Martin. *The Deluge*. Oil on Canvas. 1834. Yale Center for British Art. Paul Mellon Collection. New Haven, Connecticut.

study. These include *Belshazzar's Feast*, *The Deluge*, and *Joshua Commanding the Sun* ("Brontë Parsonage Museum" 16). A deist who believed in natural religion, Martin produced artistic renderings of fantastic and catastrophic biblical events. A favorite of the siblings was *The Déluge*, a depiction of the Great Flood (Barker 229).³ This painting features a swirling vortex amidst which a diminutive Noah's

Ark is thrown about. Beyond the vortex is light thus demonstrating the power of Nature to be both gentle and violent. Concentrating on end-time dramatic and fantastic events recounted in the Bible, Martin's paintings could well have frightened and fascinated the children, in much the same way Wilson's descriptions of death did. They may well have contributed to Brontë's initial fears of and attempts to control the beyond.

These first exposures to matters of life and death—both with Brontë's direct experience of loss and her encounters with artistic renderings of death's sublime power--within the framework of Anglican Christianity directly affected the development of her philosophical views. Her need to make some sense of the gaps between life and death resulted in unusual explorations that moved progressively to an exploration of the origins of power and then to the paradoxical nature of the domestic and the wild. Brontë herself was a site of paradox-- a fusion of the domestic and the wild. Ellen Nussey notes that Emily had "very beautiful eyes; but she did not often look at you; she was too reserved" (qtd. in Gérin 35) while Nancy Garrs, who with her sister Sarah was a servant in the Brontë home, characterized Emily as having "the eyes of a half-tamed creature and cared for nobody's opinion, only being happy with her animal pets" (E.A. Chadwick qtd. in Chitham 36). Brontë was inwardly oriented, self-possessed appeared not to have the need to be mannerly. Day-to-day pedestrian tasks expected of women were not appealing to her for she preferred to be in thinking mode. Simultaneously, she came alive when she found herself in Nature without the need to follow social conventions. In this setting, she had the freedom to observe and think.

It is no surprise that she literally existed in two worlds with the parsonage representing the point of passage in between. As Katherine Frank observes, the parsonage itself

is perched on the edge of the village, belonging neither to the human community it culminates nor to the boundless natural world which rises up behind it [...] the house is precariously balanced between the two, a boundary, an indeterminate zone, between two well defined realms [...] (9).

While the front of the parsonage was and is hemmed in by death represented by the gravestones, the back, in contrast, offers “a liberating access to the natural world

beyond human needs, cares or

dreams” (9). Later, in a poem

composed in 1841, Brontë writes

about “tombstones grey” /

“Stretching their shadows far

away—“(No. 86, 1-2) a sight

that she sees around her.

“Beneath the turf that “her

footsteps tread” (3), “Lie low and lone the silent dead” (4). The space “beneath the

mould” (5) is ““forever dark, forever cold” (6).⁴

In this ominous view of death, the dead are left in the dark and cold with no voice. This hopeless and gloomy view of the afterlife may have prompted Brontë’s need to find another approach for existence in the afterlife. Day after day, she would



Figure 1.2. “Brontë Parsonage Cemetery.”
Katherine Alexander. Photograph. July 2013.
JPG.

have seen a sea of graves in close proximity to the front entrance to the parsonage. Figure 1.2 shows the preponderance of grey tombstones with a faint view of the parsonage in the distance. In a cemetery where between twenty and sixty thousand bodies found their final resting place, many graves are covered with flat markers while others have standing monuments. This grim physical reminder, coupled with endless untimely deaths in her family and community, offers nothing of hope following physical death—only cold and darkness as evidenced in the last line of her poem. She enhances the starkness and loneliness of the situation in her repetition of “forever.”

Early Religious Training

In the beginning, Emily Brontë looked to the Bible, life at the parsonage, events on the moors, and the lives of birds and animals for guidance in her explorations. A primary goal in her early explorations was to identify the source of power in the universe. She began with the Bible. Was it a higher power who ruled the world from above or was it Nature’s own workings that governed events? On March 1, 1829, she stitched a sampler with themes emphasizing her increasing preoccupation with the power behind Nature’s mysterious and unpredictable moods.

A textual excerpt appears below:

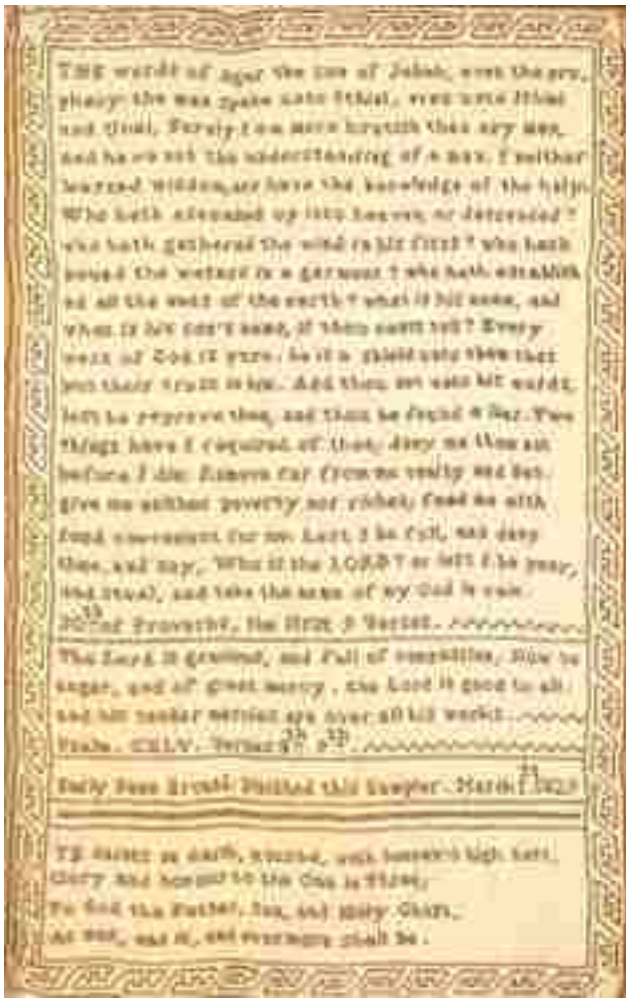


Figure 1.3. “Sampler.” Emily Brontë. March 1829. The Brontë Parsonage Museum. Haworth, England.

Who hath ascended up into heaven,
 or descended? Who hath gathered
 the wind in his fist? who hath bound
 the waters in a garment? who hath
 established all the ends of the earth?
 What is his name, and what is his
 son’s name, if thou canst tell [...]

(*King James Bible*, “Proverbs” 30:1-5).

There is no evidence to suggest that Emily was directly involved in the selection of this passage. However, as Winifred Gérin suggests, this passage

may demonstrate the young writer’s taste at the age of eleven (20). The biblical verses shown here became

crucial to her engagement with philosophy because they consider the questions that she poses throughout her life and career as a writer. These include considerations of God’s identity, the most important ontological consideration, and ultimately, epistemological questions such as how we know what we know. She is already delving into what determines reality, a concept for her that will eventually include both the plane of physical existence and the unknown hereafter.

Whether chosen by Emily or not, the passage from “Proverbs,” in its array of rhetorical questions, appears to have launched her investigations of the divine. Although there is no direct evidence that she was questioning the gender of the purveyor of power, this passage may well suggest such a possibility. In her time, power generally resided in the realm of a masculine divinity, a being who not only directed all events in the universe, but also served as judge in the afterlife. Not finding this idea palatable, Brontë will eventually move power to the feminine realm as her philosophical theories develop further in her *Gondal Poems* and ultimately *Wuthering Heights* where her feminine creations prevail.

The verses from “Proverbs,” rich in hyperbolic language, focus on an omnipotent being who has control over every aspect of the physical world. This paradoxical being has the ability to ascend into heaven or descend hence demonstrating an ability to traverse the gap between the physical and spiritual domains. Concurrently, the same being also has the power to “hold the wind in his fist” and “gather waters in a garment.” Finally, this being determines the “ends of the earth”—the boundaries of the physical or actual domain. Eventually, rejecting the concept of a masculine deity, Brontë will challenge the attribution of such great omnipotence to a being regarded as the godhead for Christianity. Her poetry, prose, and artwork reveal that she believed the machinations of Nature produced wind, the powerful motivating force providing the momentum for certain aleatory events that she witnessed. In her world, it is Nature that binds the waters in a garment--the clouds in the sky are the collection point for the evaporative waters of the oceans and the seas. Brontë will also challenge the notion that a masculine being established “the

ends of the earth.” She favored spaces with no boundaries as shown by her fixation on the seemingly endless moors behind the parsonage. Her quest eventually manifested in the acknowledgment of the power of Nature itself, a space where life happens without the intervention of a deity.

Already manifesting the stubborn determination for which she was known, Brontë did not cower, but directly confronted the power of the godhead and Nature. A true aspiring philosopher, she launched initial investigations into the origins of the driving force of the universe. For her Nature as an unyielding force eventually took precedence over the divine proclamations of the Bible. I argue that although Brontë is not regarded as a deist, she eventually moved toward a universe centered in the power of Nature. Thus, another paradox became the center of her investigations: does omnipotence reside in the godhead or in Nature? Although she considered her relationship with her god to be a private matter, she appeared to be considering a more liminal gendering of god-- that is to say, a being for whom gender was not specific, but rather one who defied the boundaries of gender assignment. At this earliest time in her life, she rejected the God of Anglican Christianity and moved toward Nature for her answers.⁵

The belief system that she will eventually convey in much of her poetry and prose is unconventional in the mid-Victorian age despite her growing up in a home where the Reverend Brontë, her father, offered instruction in the tenets of Evangelical Christianity, an amalgamation of the beliefs of the Anglican Church and Methodism. Algernon Charles Swinburne, a great admirer, describes her as a person of “infrangible self reliance and lonely sublimity of spirit” in his essay of 1883 (763).

Quite unconventional himself, Patrick Brontë ascribed publically to the teachings of Anglicanism. Privately, however, he more closely aligned with the Dissenters as he incorporated elements of Methodism and Evangelical beliefs in his view (Lock and Dixon 13). Essentially, as Marianne Thormählen notes, the Evangelicals concentrated on the crucifixion and death of Jesus as atonement for the Father's wrath, rather than the Incarnation. Although Jesus's sacrificial act extended the possibility of salvation to all people, it needed to be embraced through a life of piety and effort (15 BR). Religious piety certainly would have found no space in the development of Emily's philosophy or her personal spirituality.

Marianne Thormählen notes that Emily appears to have never acknowledged any spiritual authority outside of her own consciousness (73 BR). As Charlotte Brontë noted, Emily's "nature stood alone" ("Biographical Notice" BN). Hoxie Neal Fairchild notes, she "cared nothing about Christianity, broad or narrow" (qtd. in Lock and Dixon 406). There is very little direct commentary from her, and only she knew the reasons for her rejection. Mary Taylor, Charlotte's friend from Roe Head, offers a first-hand account of Emily's views on religion, one of the few instances where Brontë's powerful spiritual sovereignty finds manifestation in her own words:

Someone asked me what religion I was of (with the view of getting me for a partisan) and that I had said that that was between God and me. Emily (who was lying on the hearthrug) exclaimed, "That's right." That was all I ever heard Emily say on religious subjects. (E. Brontë, qtd. in Lock and Dixon 368)

Earlier in her life Brontë did attend church and also taught Sunday school though perhaps not willingly. Mary Taylor observed that Emily sat upright and motionless as a statue when she did attend services. Her “compressed mouth and drooping eyelids, and indeed her whole demeanor, appeared to indicate strong innate power” (qtd. in Lock and Dixon 368-369). Although she resists letting people into her innermost thoughts, her silence appears to bespeak her resolve. While also being supervised and disciplined under the regime of conventional religious dogma, Brontë was clearly frustrated by it and took potent intellectual measures to withdraw her mind from its influence.

Despite her objections to formal religion, Brontë’s foundational point would have been the spirituality with which she was most familiar. Indeed, very early in her life, her views may be said to represent attitudes prevalent in Evangelical religious thinking of the time (Marsden 19). Ultimately though, Brontë believed in an almighty everpresent divine force within her own being, not the orthodox God of the New Testament. In fact, attempts to place her into any category of beliefs or values consistent with the milieu of mid-Victorian England would be in vain (Thormählen BE 26). Thus, for her, it was not a matter of resisting established religion, but rather finding a way to express and systematize her own beliefs and spirituality. This penchant strongly suggests a philosophical intent. Stevie Davies believes that the Reverend Brontë’s greatest gift to Emily was the capacity to reject what he stood for (19). It is therefore no surprise that his children were original thinkers.

Emily’s early training in critical thinking was a foundational element in the philosophical inquiries that occupied her as she matured. Eventually she stopped

attending church on a regular basis and also refused to teach Sunday school. Moving away from the teachings of the Evangelical Church of England, she began to look for a more personal deity (Marsden 19). While Anglican religious dogma placed God at the apex of the spiritual hierarchy, the divine presence in Brontë's life was inclusive of everything that lives; her body of work consistently suggested that she found solace in systems rooted in Nature. Among these were the animism of her Irish heritage, transmitted by her father, her reading of works from the Romantic poets, and an affection for the beliefs of the Stoics. A reference from Epictetus best explains the trajectory of her religious development: "God himself is within you, and hears and sees all" (*Discourses* II, viii). Brontë's god is boundless.

Nature

Having explored all means available to her in her earliest years, Emily Brontë appears to have found little satisfaction in the restrictive systems of religion and learning offered to her. Her efforts not to be contained or categorized prompted her to consider Nature in the most unrestricted space available to her: the moors. I argue that her investigations eventually focused on the mysteries and splendor that the moors offered; she reveled in this virtually untouched space behind the parsonage—a respite without apparent boundaries. These explorations developed into her intense inquiries of movement through the dimensions of time and space demonstrated in her writing and artwork. I contend that she eventually discarded the linear theories of space and time offered in her time in favor of a system of greater fluidity resulting in a continuum of being.

Whereas activities in the parsonage itself were usually predictable given the duties assigned to the children, the seemingly endless moors behind the dwelling offered a space where Brontë could experience and write about the unpredictable moods of Nature. In her writing there is a connection between the two seemingly paradoxical worlds. With the power of her pen, she discovered the ability to write her world as a rhizomatic tapestry of people, places, and events all happening simultaneously thus eliminating conventional ideas on time and space. On the moors, the untamed power of Nature prevailed, and the sublimity of Nature residing in John Martin's paintings found actualization in an "earthquake" occurring on September 2, 1824.

Brontë was on the moors with two of her siblings and their caretaker Sarah Gars when a cataclysmic event alarmed the entire village of Haworth and surrounding areas. This meteorological event, occurring a month prior to Emily's being sent to Cowan Bridge School, was initially thought to be an earthquake. It was, in fact, a bog explosion that J. Horsfall Turner describes as the Crow Hill bog eruption. The event caused a torrential release of water throughout the surrounding areas and created a chasm of between four and ten feet in depth (150-151).

Although Patrick Brontë was not on the moors when the eruption occurred, he later described the event both in an article in the *Leeds Intelligencer* and also in a sermon in church. I quote his description extensively because it is so crucial to my argument:

The heavens over the moors were blackening fast. I heard muttering of distant thunder, and saw the frequent flashing of the lightning [...]!

I heard a deep, distant explosion, something resembling, yet something differing from thunder, and I perceived a gentle tremor in the chamber in which I was standing, and in the glass of the window just before me, which at the time, made an extraordinary impression on my mind, and which, I have no manner of doubt now, was the effect of an Earthquake at the place of eruption. This was a solemn visitation of Providence [...]. (P. Brontë, "Sermon")

In the midst of what he initially described as an earthquake and "visitation of Providence," Patrick Brontë hurried "to locate the children whom he described as being profoundly frightened as they hid under Sarah Garr's cloak ("Sermon"). His is the only account of Emily's reaction to the power of Nature at this point in her life. She would have been six years old at the time of the eruption. There is evidence as she matured that Nature's violence and terrible beauty imprinted indelibly on her imagination following this event. Much of her work contains references to the conditions of the heavens over the moors manifesting in the "distant thunder" and the "frequent flashing of lightening" ("Sermon"). In particular, the storm in process fascinated her.

While she does not directly speak of this event in her future work, descriptions of violent storms on the moors make their way into much of her poetry and prose. Later, in her *Gondal Poems*, discussed in Chapter Two of this study, Brontë poeticizes, "But the heaven may shake with thunder" (No. 1, July 12, 1836, 3) and "Lightening bright flashes the deep gloom defying / Comeing as swifly and fadeing as soon" (16-17). At this early point in her life, the young writer appears to have

accepted divine Providence as the cause for the meteorological events on the moors. Later, contrary to her father's attribution of the storm to Providence or the Godhead, Emily considers storm events as the unpredictable outcome of unsettled meteorological conditions as seen on the moors. The storm that blows Catherine across the moors to her childhood home is such an example. Emily will eventually scorn her father's God and move toward a presence represented by the sovereignty of Nature of which she is an integral part. Again, as Charlotte explains, "Emily's native hills were not just a spectacle, but rather what she lived in and by" ("Editor's Preface" 314).

For Brontë, then, the moors became a "consecrated spot" (No. 183, 5), a metaphor for her own being—a state as wild and unpredictable as the moors where she found refuge, both literally and metaphorically. Charlotte Brontë best describes her sister's reverence for this "remote and unreclaimed region" ("Editor's Preface" 314): "[...] her native hills were far more to her than a spectacle; they were what she lived in, and by, as much as the wild birds, their tenants, or as the heather, their produce" (314).

Although traversed by many aficionados of the worlds created by the Brontës, the moors, those rolling uninhabited spaces, appear to remain untouched—lingering in time to the present day. That the "earthquake" occurred on the moors increased the importance of the symbolism of this setting. The eruption was a momentous occurrence in both the history and lore of the residents of Haworth. The account of this event is important because it speaks to the power of Nature that Brontë observed on that day in 1824. There would have been no sophisticated philosophical

interpretation of the cause or nature of such an occurrence in her time. Such an assessment is left to Brontë who employs the storm motif in much of her poetry and prose with its culmination in the opening scene of *Wuthering Heights*.



Figure 1.4. Katherine Alexander. “Storm on the Moors.” Photograph. July 2013. JPG.

Demonstrating her precocious abilities as a thinker, Brontë latched onto the unpredictable weather conditions on the moors early in her life as a means to express her philosophical explorations. Eventually moving away from the edicts of formalized religion, she found great fulfillment in her activities on the moors. The unpredictable weather conditions there provided a model for the meteorological events that she portrays in her writing. Whereas the passage in “Proverbs” that she stitched earlier in her life provided an abstract view of power in the universe, storms on the moors allowed Brontë to directly experience the intensity and power of Nature in process. The moors are a site of “moody” weather conditions that have the possibility of changing at any moment despite any weather reports. Having visited the moors on more than one occasion, this writer can attest to the moodiness of this untainted space.⁶ At one moment the sun shone, and in the next moment the clouds appeared and thunder rumbled in the background. There was an immediate change in the power of the wind. As the clouds gathered, a violent storm emerged reminiscent

of the weather conditions that Brontë herself wrote about. In her earliest poems, she spoke of [...] “those dark cloudy days / That sometimes come in summers blaze / When heaven drops not when earth is still” (E. Brontë, No. 30, June 1838).

The photograph shown in Figure 1.4 was taken near Penistone Crag on the moors. This personally witnessed meteorological event suggests that the wind is one of the phenomena that results from a change in temperature and/or air pressure. So it too is a symptom of the unseen forces at work in the natural world thus adding to the sense of the mystery of the moors. By the time, one begins seeing the effects of those unseen natural forces, they are already manifest. Thus, the wind becomes a symptom of Nature’s processes. The main point is that the wind is not the cause that “prompts unpredictable weather events” but rather is itself one of the symptoms of those processes. While Percy Bysshe Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind” refers to the wind as a “breath” manifesting as an “unseen presence” (1; 2),⁷ Brontë discerns its language through its whispers: “I needed not its breathing / To bring such thoughts to me / But still it whispered lowly / How dark the woods will be!--” (“The Night Wind,” No. 79, 9-12). Roper and Chitham suggest that the final line shown here may have the power to represent the primitive, untamed wooded valleys near Haworth (279).

Atmospheric conditions on the moors often matched the crescendos and diminuendos in the moods of her characters and scenery. Her fascination rests in the storm process when “Death comes on every wind” (32, No. 31, July 11, 1838) presenting in “Roard thunder loud from that pitchy cloud / Drowns it the torrents flow? / Or woke the breeze in the swaying trees” (33-35). The moors offered an

uninhabited and seemingly desolate space where one might be alone with Nature. Brontë reveled in her walks there.

In her measurements of meteorological conditions on the moors in 2011 and 2012, Rebecca Chesney found great similarities in the accounts of Abraham Shackleton who studied rainfall, wind strength and direction, barometric pressure, and temperature in Haworth and the surrounding areas from 1801 to 1859.⁸ Chesney's project focused on the connection of weather conditions to the writings of the Brontës and their moods on particular days ("The Brontë Weather Project"). In a poem composed years later, Emily writes about a moment that is "calm and still and almost drear / so utter is the solitude;" (Roper and Chitham, August 20, 1842-February 6, 1843, No. 92, 9-10). While she luxuriated in the "utter" [...] "solitude" (10), she sought to match her "mood to nature's mood" (12). In her early life, this desire may have been unselfconscious; the fact that she is poeticizing about later emphasizes the importance of her natural surroundings and may hint at her ability to perceive herself as an observer. This capability later became a theme in her "Diary Papers," discussed in Chapter Three of this study.

It is also no secret that Emily was fascinated by the wind and the random processes in nature that it created. Years later she confirms her obsession as she swears "[...] that glorious wind / Has swept the world aside / Has dashed its memory from my mind" (No. 85, July 6, 1841, 9-11). For her, the wind brushes everything away "Like foam-bells from the tide" (12). Her *simile* speaks to impermanence in a figure featuring its most short-lived manifestation; bubbles burst as fast as they emerge. For Brontë, time and space on the moors changed just as quickly with the

catalyst's being the untamed wind there. Ascribing an otherworldly characteristic to the wind, she proclaims, "And thou art now a spirit pouring / Thy presence into all--" (13-14); and finally, it becomes "A universal influence / From Thine own influence free--" (17-18). At this stage in her life, seven years before her death, Brontë appears to have found an answer to the queries regarding "Who hath gathered the wind in his fist?" (*King James Bible*, "Proverbs" 30:2). It is the wind itself holding the power—not a hierarchical divine presence. She also expresses her belief that "[...] when that breast is cold / Thy prisoned soul shall rise" (21-22). Death thus no longer is limited to mingling "with the mould--" (23); instead, there is hope for freedom after death.

Just as she became fascinated by the continual motion that the wind created, she may also have been titillated by its random nature in the creation of storm events. The entire process is aleatory. It is important to remember that variations in pressure lead to the development of winds, which in turn influence weather occurrences. What is significant about the moors is how rapidly these changes occur. When the air pressure is high, the moors remain placid; however, when the pressure changes suddenly, weather conditions become more active resulting in some type of movement such as increase in winds and possibly storm conditions ("Air Pressure and Wind").⁹ It is the rising and falling of air pressure that affects moods, both of Nature and those in Nature's midst. Brontë seems to be tuning in to these variables. Her sensibility emanates from her love of the pristine and may, in fact, have some connection also to her role as an accomplished musician. Although she had just begun her study of piano in her early life, she immediately connected with music just as she was particularly attuned to sounds and sights in the universe. George Rogers expands

on these ideas in his commentary on the Pythagorean expression of “Harmonia,” a term referring to the music of the spheres and involving the integration of musical harmony and the principles of order in the universe (41). Even as a young girl, Brontë sought to be in tune with the vibrations of her universe on the moors.

In this seemingly endless space, she was closest to the foundations of the universe. Nature also provided an escape from the rigidity of her religious training, much of which she later rejected in her construction of a system reflecting her own beliefs. Charlotte Brontë helps us understand just exactly what Nature and the moors provided Emily:

My sister Emily loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her; out of a sullen hollow in a livid hillside her mind could make an Eden. She found in the bleak solitude many and dear delights; and not the least a best loved—was liberty [...] Liberty was the breath of Emily’s nostrils; without it, she perished (“Biographical Notice”).

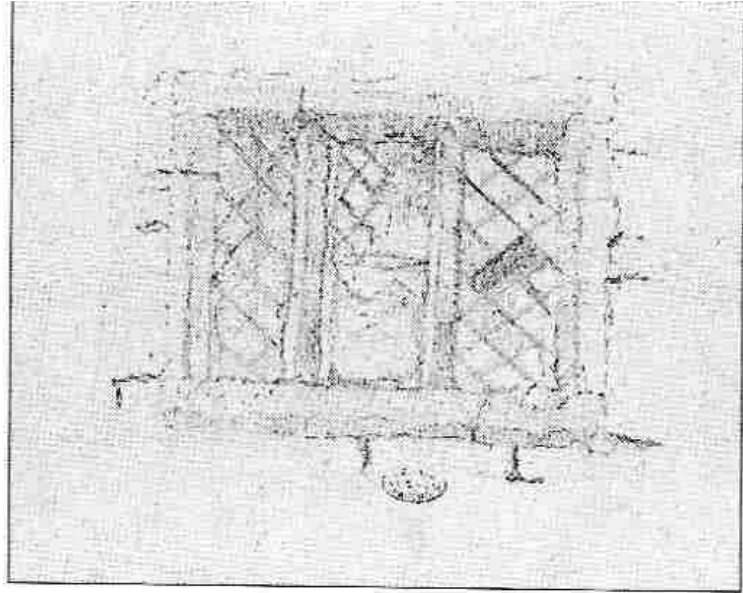
In her use of *anadiplosis* (the repetition of a word in succession for emphasis), Charlotte emphasizes “liberty” as Emily’s lifeline. Her wish may be interpreted as freedom from bondage, and in the theological realm, and freedom from the bondage of sin. Liberty from the constrictive and restrictive regimes of mid-Victorian England was often at the center of Emily’s visual and written creations. Protesting the fixing of boundaries, she writes, “Shake off the fetters Break the chain / And live and love and smile again” (Roper and Chitham, “August 7, 1837,” No. 7, 71-72).

Normally quite reserved, except in her writing and drawing, Brontë found a space for the release of her inhibitions in the delights of Nature. This curiosity may be construed as a development of her concerns about the ideas of creation and destruction as well as the center of the power of the universe. It is evident that she was interested in immersing herself in Nature as a being and informing herself of the its being through physical interplay. Ellen Nussey explains that when Emily was in Nature, her reserve for the time vanished.” Emily’s delightful rambles included traversing the moors and experiencing the glens and ravines that broke their monotony. Nussey continues her narrative describing Emily playing “like a young child with the tadpoles in the water, making them swing about, and then fell to moralizing on the strong and the weak, the brave and cowardly, as she chased them with her hand” (*Reminiscences*). This episode suggests that Brontë not only reflected philosophically on the natural activities that she observed, but also integrally immersed herself in the activities. This early display of self-referentiality resurfaces in her writing and artwork as her craft matures. She will frequently appear both as a subject and observer in her creations thus easing the gap between two seemingly impassible spaces. As she developed her preliminary thoughts on philosophical matters, Emily Brontë also strove to be an artist.

In 1829, the same year in which she stitched her piece featuring the Biblical text from “Proverbs,”

Brontë produced the first extant drawing attributed to her, “Mullioned Window,” shown in Figure 1.4.

Scholars agree that it is difficult to determine which of the Brontë children may have produced this drawing.



It is attributed to Emily because of her authenticated signature and

Figure 1.5. Emily Brontë. “Mullioned Window.” January 19, 1829. Pencil on paper. Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth. U.K.

the date of inscription (C. Alexander 370 AB). It shows a window in three sections with the glass and lead in the middle section broken and gaping. There is the suggestion of an arm protruding through the broken glass in the top right of the central panel. This visual rendition of two spaces separated by the glass pane, with the window itself leading in and out, eerily foreshadows the pivotal scene in *Wuthering Heights* described in my introduction. Brontë’s concentration on the shattered glass again implies a focus on the need to traverse gaps between boundaries, in this case, the space inside and outside of the glass itself. Serving as a portal allowing Catherine to move from the virtual to the actual, the shattered pane allows passage between the opposite realms. Christine Alexander suggests that the window may have been drawn from life because of the inaccuracies in lighting and

perspective (109 AB). A review of Brontë 's artworks indicates that she preferred to draw "from life." However, she frequently drew from copies in her early drawing days.



Figure 1.6. Emily Brontë. "The Whinchat." April 1829. Pencil on paper. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Following her earliest work, she and her siblings enhanced their study of art by copying from works from masters such as Thomas Bewick. The drawings are actually portraits of

birds native to the moors.



Figure 1.7. Emily Brontë. "Ring Ouzel." April 1829. Pencil on paper. Houston Library, Harvard University.

The birds are not flying or in a larger landscape, but rather isolated figures representative of the loneliness of the moors, symbolic of her own condition. Depicting each bird as unique and distinct, she treats them as scientific specimens



Figure 1.8. Emily Brontë. "The Farmer's Wife" April 15, 1829. Pencil on paper. Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, U.K.

while simultaneously creating a personal interaction with them as though they are presenting their distinctive characteristics just to her. The drawings offer likenesses that are scientific and mythical as well as realistic and spiritual.

In April of 1829, she produced two drawings of birds, both copied from Bewick whose volume of *British Birds* was a favorite in the parsonage library.

She is the only sibling to demonstrate an interest in drawing Bewick's birds. Whereas she expressed herself in the medium of the visual, Charlotte Brontë famously employed the verbal as refers to Bewick's book on birds in the first paragraphs of *Jane Eyre*. Emily produced two drawings of birds, her first signed drawing entitled, "The Whinchat." (C. Alexander 370 AB). As Bewick notes, the whinchat is a solitary bird of the heaths and moors whose has no song but a simple "unvaried note" (241). Brontë's choice of this bird for replication in pencil may be a reflection of her own state of existence. The bird's unvaried song may well represent the endlessness of the moors where vast expanse appears to remain the same. Even an unvaried note is subject to changes in timbre thus implying that simplicity is not always what it seems. The second drawing, "Ring Ouzel," depicts a dark speckled bird with a pointed beak and distinctive white band under the throat (370). This bird may be found in the more remote areas of the moors and would have been familiar to her. Later, the drawing became known as Emily Brontë's starling (372). Another drawing, "The Farmer's Wife," was also copied from Bewick, depicts a miniature landscape of farm buildings, trees and haystacks in the background (372). There is also a woman holding a stick as she fends off an attack by a goose that is pulling her skirt (371). This drawing captures the immediacy of an active scene. She will later employ this technique in both her poetry and prose.

During a time when there is no extant writing from Brontë, her early artwork provides insights into her developing love for Nature and animals as they also illustrate her engagement with a developing ontology including birds and animals in addition to humans. There is an immediacy in these drawings despite their being

copied from Bewick. The drawings convey her regard for the flora and fauna in her life as integral to her being, not separate, thus accounting for her preference of a world of immanence rather than transcendence. Although Brontë may not have been familiar with these terms, she would have understood their meanings in terms of her existence. She used art to connect with Nature – to become part of it!

Also, given the Irish perspectives transmitted subliminally by her father, she may have found comfort in the animism that is characteristic of Irish thought. As Mary Eirwen Jones notes, this aspect of Irishness, originating in early Irish history, show that Nature is imbued with more power than man himself. There is no real difference between humans and the rest of the world. Therefore, inanimate things were endowed with thought and feelings (177). Jones's observations about this aspect of Irishness provide an important perspective from which to consider Emily Brontë's spirituality. Eventually, Brontë's *oeuvre* will include drawings from life of her own pet birds, cats, and dogs.

The few extant works of Emily Brontë featured in this chapter provide glimmers of her future explorations. The origins of her beliefs may be found in what Terry Eagleton describes as the Brontë sensibility: a "combination of Romantic fantasy and astute rationality, quivering sensitivity and extraordinary common sense" (129 EN). His assessment is indeed accurate, but I suggest that her sensibility also has everything to do with her intellectual and mystical engagement with the philosophical aspects of life around her. Her keen observational skills contributed to her ability to abstract major themes relating to the development of her complex thoughts. As successive chapters in this study demonstrate, she will expand her world as she begins

to consider a philosophical approach couched in her observations on the moors. She would not have understood her system in these terms, but she did demonstrate an understanding of their import and meaning in an organic sense.

¹All poems quoted in this study feature Emily Brontë's original spellings as anthologized by Derek Roper and Edward Chitham in *The Poems of Emily Brontë*. Brontë spelled as she saw fit. This is an inimitable characteristic of her earlier poems and often found in her later works as well.

² Today, at the edge of the cemetery is a proclamation indicating that Queen Victoria closed the cemetery in 1883 because it was a major source of pollution. It is estimated that there are not only twenty thousand, but perhaps even sixty thousand bodies buried there.

³ John Martin was preoccupied with apocalyptic themes. The Brontës would have been familiar with his earlier paintings, but were already dead when Martin produced a series of paintings based on the Book of Revelation. Other paintings familiar to the Brontës include: *Belshazzar's Feast* (1824), *Paradise Lost* (1827), and a number of renditions of *Passage of the Red Sea* (circa 1824).

⁴ I see around me tombstones grey
Stretching their shadows far away—
Beneath the turf my footsteps tread
Lie low and lone the silent dead—
Beneath the turf, beneath the mould—
Forever dark, forever cold— (No. 86, 1-6)

⁵ Although Emily Brontë was indoctrinated in the precepts of the Anglican faith and its masculine godhead in her early life, she eventually rejected these patriarchal monotheistic ideas and turned to the Nature surrounding the parsonage for spiritual inspiration. Thus, God will be capitalized throughout this study when referring to the spiritual head of the Christian world in which Brontë exists. However, when referring to her personal god, lower case form will be employed.

⁶ Two research trips to Haworth coupled with walks on the moors verify that this place, sacred to Brontë, is indeed unpredictable.

⁷ O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,

Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear! (Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to the West
Wind," l)

⁸ See Rebecca Chesney's study, "The Brontë Weather Project," for additional details. Abraham Shackleton of Braithwaite, Keighley kept daily records from 1801 to 1857 on meteorological conditions in Haworth and surrounding areas.

⁹ See Chapter 18, "Air Pressure and Wind" in *Earth Science* for comprehensive information about air pressure and its effect on the atmosphere to either create or alter winds (551-575).

Chapter Two – “Bursting the fetters and breaking the bars”: Emily Brontë’s

Poetic Revolution

The night is darkening around me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow,
And the storm is fast descending
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond Clouds above me
Wastes beyond Wastes below
But nothing drear can move me
I will not cannot go

Emily Brontë, November 1837
(No. 16)

--So said I and still say the same, --
--Still to my Death will say—
Three Gods within this little frame
Are warring night and day—

Heaven could not hold them all, and yet
They all are held in me
And must be mine till I forget
My present entity—

Emily Brontë, “The Philosopher”
February 3, 1845 (No. 115, 15-22)

While *Wuthering Heights* is often considered the crown jewel in Emily Brontë’s *oeuvre*, it is her writing of poetry that filled most of her life. Although her manuscripts have been literally cut apart and sold in pieces in addition to many interpretations and reinterpretations by multiple scholars, Brontë’s central ideas persist in extant works dating from July 12, 1836 to the end of her life on December 19, 1848 with many poems published after that date.¹ Charlotte, who discovered her

sister's poems, found them to be "not at all like the poetry women generally write" and describing them as "condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine [...], she noted that "they also had a peculiar music—wild, melancholy, and elevating" (C. Brontë BN 307-308). Charlotte notes that "it took hours to reconcile her [Emily] to the discovery [...] and days to persuade her sister that such poems merited publication" for "a mind

like hers could not be without some latent spark of honourable ambition, and refused to be discouraged in my attempts to fan that spark to flame"

(308). Prior to that time,

Emily struggled grievously in

her attempts to write poetry—a process that she later documents.



Figure 2.1. Emily Brontë. "Forget me not." Watercolor on paper. c. 1830. New York Public Library: Berg Collection.

There is no extant writing from Emily until 1836. However, an 1830 watercolor painting illustrates the loneliness she may have felt. I present this painting as an analogue to the words that she will later pen in her poetry and even her prose. The tropes of loneliness and disconsolation appear in nearly all of Brontë's works. However, at this point, her pen produces art. Inscribed with her signature and entitled "Forget Me Not," the painting depicts a young woman with brown hair fastened in a bun and curling around her face, which seems lined with anxiety. It has been suggested that this work was actually painted by Branwell who may have inscribed her name on it. Christine Alexander notes that it possibly offered a commentary on Emily's mood, implying that she resembled the disconsolate maid in Figure 2.1 (372-373). I suggest that during these years in Brontë's life, she may have seen herself in this condition. A visionary artist and evolving philosopher, even at the age of twelve, she should not be underestimated in her abilities. Both her poetry and art not only reflected her lonely existence during this time period, but also demonstrate her growing proficiency in both genres. Eventually, her inimitable imagination prevailed as her trademark *jouissance* shone through.

The year 1836 marked a time of disconsolation when Emily's questioning mind moved deeply into philosophical investigations while she simultaneously questioned her abilities as a poet. In a damning critique of her poetic abilities, she writes:

I am more terrifically and infernally and idiotically and brutally
STUPID than ever I was in the whole course of my incarnate
existence. The above precious lines are the fruits of one hour's most

agonizing labour between ½ past 6 and ½ past 7 in the evening of July—1836 (qtd. in Gérin 67).

Emily's deliberate use of polysyndeton here rather than the comma to separate her chain of self-deprecatory adverbs provides an emphatic statement conveying the desperate frustration in her early attempts as a poet. The most important message to be gleaned from this passage is that Brontë has begun to be self-conscious about her writing. Yet her poetry to this point presents more closely to the naïve than the sentimental and will continue to do so for quite some time despite her self-criticism.²

In August of the following year, she recaptures her frustration, this time in verse reminiscent of her reading of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode."

I asked myself, "O why has heaven

Denied the precious gift to me,

The glorious gift to many given

To speak their thoughts in poetry?" (No. 9, August 1837, 11-14)

At dusk, she sits alone watching as the "summer day / Had died in smiling light away" (No. 9, 1), a stunning paradox. She herself is stunned because, though "thoughts in my soul were gushing" (5) she "could not speak the feeling" (8) despite the unmediated "joy" of the moment. The poem ends in the next stanza with a question: why has heaven "denied" the "glorious gift" of "speak[ing] thoughts in poetry" (11-14)? Here is a paradox in tone (joy/despair), light (light/dark), and the inability to speak expressed in beautiful words! ³ Dejection soon became fulfillment for Brontë: in surges similar to those of storms on the moors, her verses began to burst forth in tandem with her philosophical interrogations.

Derek Roper and Edward Chitham, on whose authentication and order of Brontë's poetry this study relies, include two hundred poems and fragments in their edition, one hundred sixty-eight in holograph and one as a printed text based on a holograph ("Introduction" 1). Roper and Chitham present the poems in their original spelling thus demonstrating Emily Brontë's desire for immediacy. She spells as the moment dictates. Therefore, each spelling is often not consistent with prior iterations. Her earliest poems, sixty-seven in number, provide the history and development of Gondal, the fantasy kingdom that she and her sister Anne created (3). At the center of Emily's poetic narrative is Augusta Geraldine Almeda (A.G.A.), the regal Queen of Gondal, who is the prototype for Catherine Earnshaw. A.G.A. occupies the first generation narrative in *The Gondal Poems* just as Catherine takes that position in *Wuthering Heights*.

In this chapter, I analyze selected poems from the first generation narrative of Emily Brontë's Gondal poems featuring A.G.A. Limiting my commentary primarily to A.G.A. herself and the lover whom she most adored, Alexander of Elbë, I argue that Brontë embeds her developing philosophical ideas in A.G.A. and meteorological events on the moors, a world of immanence characterized by the fluidity of becoming. Brontë includes lyrical descriptions of alternate and opposite worlds, interrogations of time, space, and the locus of power in her philosophical interrogations focusing on the blending of opposites and domains, as well as ideas on the simulacrum, all leading to her intense preoccupation with death. Brontë demonstrates a strong stance on the fluidity of temporal and spatial conditions in a world that is in constant motion. At the center of her development is Nature centered

on the moors where the circle of life presents as a tapestry of variable and unpredictable meteorological conditions. Never stagnant, this space behind the parsonage corresponds to Emily's deep emotions and their expression in her poetry.

Brontë situates power in the realm of the feminine through her portrayal of A.G.A., who exhibits characteristics that defy gender codes. My analysis focuses on the development of a thinking process that establishes Brontë as the originator of a unique organically conceived philosophy not recognized as such by either her contemporaries or modern scholars of her work. Many of her ideas find philosophical elucidation in the work of the poststructuralists, specifically Gilles Deleuze, who couched his early studies in the writings of the Stoics. Coincidentally, Brontë developed an early fascination with the tenets of Stoicism, in particular, the idea of the transience of life. The majority of Emily's poems feature the wind and the fierce storms on the moors followed by placid conditions and sunshine. She is particularly interested in the aleatory nature of these events and their meteorological processes. Beyond paradox and process, themes of captivity, dungeons, confinement, along with the absolute need for freedom, permeate her verses. Interrogations of death mounted by A.G.A. figure prominently in Brontë's powerful protofeminist poetic narrative.

To enhance the discussion in the chapter, I return to motifs of Stoicism that reflect Brontë's reading of Epictetus whose primary concerns are integrity, self-management, and personal freedom (Maison 230). In her poem of 1841, "The Old Stoic," she speaks of "the lust of fame" vanishing "with the morn" (No. 83, 3-4). She prays, "Leave the heart that now I bear, / And give me liberty!" (7-8) calling herself "a chainless soul" in life and death (11).⁴ All of these options are fleeting at best and

point to her need to escape from all restrictions and to live as she chooses never giving up her need for independence. Communing with Nature was her idea of living well; coincidentally, living well was a major focus of the Stoics, along with self-sufficiency demonstrated in the development of an independent way of living and a philosophy of one's own. Janet Gezari observes that there are no equivalencies in Emily Brontë's cosmos where lives or loves are at issue. Brontë rejects conventional religious "balancing of accounts" in the afterlife as determined by judgments of the living (71). Eventually, in her characterization of Catherine, Brontë invented an afterlife where the spirit is free to roam. However, Catherine's prototype, A.G.A., was not so fortunate. Brontë's process required deep philosophical consideration before her invention of Catherine.

Brontë's approach was organic and based on her experiences on the moors, a chthonic space not fixed by traditional dimensions. She began with studies of paradox, traditionally defined as a statement seeming to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet actually interpretable in a way that makes sense (Abrams 201). Brontë did not directly define paradox, but demonstrated her fascination for this figure in her earliest stitchery projects and poetry through her inquiries regarding time and space. In other words, this early work ponders whether or not it is possible for a being to exist in two dimensions simultaneously. She focused her earliest inquiries on the origins of the universe with emphasis on the omnipotent being who controls the wind and the seas in her stitchery project of 1829. She then strove to discover a means with which to describe a blending of opposites such as heaven and earth and death and life. As in the theory of Deleuze for whom paradox is the affirmation of both directions at

the same time (LS 1). Brontë's early works posit a point of convergence of disparate elements that does not reduce one to the other, nor keeps them apart (May 104). Her preference for a world of immanence in which time and space are not fixed, but always becoming, began the process. She imagined a preternatural space, comparable to Deleuze's domain of the virtual, from which both Catherine and A.G.A. could enter the domain of the actual by means of powerful storms dependent upon prevailing meteorological conditions.⁵ For her, storms on the moors provided the inspiration and impetus contributing to the plot and action in her writing. Both A.G.A. and Catherine embody characteristics of the storms resulting from these meteorological conditions, as does Brontë herself.

Whereas Catherine returns to the domain of the actual in the pivotal scene portrayed in *Wuthering Heights*, A.G.A. enters the actual for the first time—out of nowhere without any history; both are propelled by a storm on the moors. In her earliest work beginning with stitchery and art, and *The Gondal Poems*, Brontë began pondering on what happens after physical death; by the time she wrote the famous fenestral scene in her novel, her ideas on the afterlife had evolved and coalesced. The poems support her interest in process—the idea of becoming rather than identity, a term that fixes time and space. As might be expected from a poet who valued fluidity and non-labeling, the majority of her poems do not have titles, perhaps her way of allowing them to float without being anchored by definition. I show them by number and date as determined by Roper and Chitham. Preferring her own phonetic iterations to any standardized system, she relied on her own intuitive spelling, which also reflects a philosophy of presence and the specificity of each moment—thus requiring

a different, organic spelling for each unique occasion. Indeed, the most exquisite and unique highlights of her poems are their immediacy and original spelling. Likewise, she frequently relies upon conditional clauses, the present participle, and the gerund, none of which fixes time. Most notable are her engagement with her material and her *jouissance* in presentation. Following a brief presentation of background information pertinent to the origins of the Gondal series, I delve into analyses of the selected poems with a particular focus on Brontë's developing system embedded in the being of A.G.A.

The background for the development of these poems strongly supports Emily's unique journey featuring alternate and opposite worlds, interrogations of time, space, and death, and the locus of power. Games with a box of soldiers, received by Emily's brother Branwell in 1826, piqued the children's imaginations and also provided ideas leading to their creation of alternate worlds—a key concept in Emily's *oeuvre*. While Branwell and Charlotte invented Glasstown and Angria, Anne and Emily, inspired by *J. Goldsmith's Grammar of General Geography*, a volume found in the parsonage library, designed maps and devised names for the places in their imaginary world of Gondal.⁶ Gondal is a fictional North Pacific island whose landscape resembles the Yorkshire moors and whose politics focuses on the friction and civil war between the Royalists and the Republicans. Initially written in prose that has not survived, the stories are available today only in their poetic form. Following their landing on the shores of Gondal, the inhabitants discover Gaaldine, another island with a tropical climate and environment—the opposite of the wind-

driven world of Gondal. Here, Brontë creates paradoxical worlds to be traversed by her characters.

Both regions represent what might be considered the “end of the world” in Brontë’s time. Her curiosity on this topic dates back to her stitchery project of 1829 in which she was concerned about the being who determined the “ends of the earth.” Her predilection for regions unknown was most likely nourished by Thomas Bewick’s haunting pictures of the Arctic and Sir William Parry’s *Voyages to the Arctic Region* (Barker 189) whose purpose was to locate the a passage between two oceans. Brontë, who continually surfed between binaries of thought, might have been attracted to envisioning the physical gap between the two oceans. Hence, she created two meteorologically opposite regions in her Gondal narrative. The notion of endlessness is also referenced here. For Brontë, this same idea may have been reflected in the moors where a sea of rolling hills and heather provide the scenery. The unadulterated death-white realms of the North offered a space of wildness even more untamed than the moors. These desolate sites of sublimity contributed to her sense of Nature as a powerful presence, a sense that she communicates in her stories of the Gondals.

While Branwell and Charlotte chose male protagonists, Emily decided to introduce a violent and passionate, swashbuckler in her Queen of Gondal, A. G. A., Augusta Geraldine Almeda, instead of a Byronic male lead. Brontë’s emancipated woman, who is both a queen and a rebel, bears the name refused young Queen Victoria by her uncle George IV (Augusta) (Gérin 22). In creating this character, Brontë is already playing with the categories of male and female while she pays

homage to the young queen who is both a powerful monarch and a doting mother thus demonstrating her abilities to survive in two worlds simultaneously⁷ In some sense, this was also Brontë's life story. She was the sibling who often remained at home to care for the drunken and defeated Branwell, whom she also loved, and her hypochondriac father whose behaviors were often bizarre. Although seemingly imprisoned, her imagination prevailed. In many ways, she belonged to dual worlds. Christine Alexander suggests that Brontë's life-long fascination with Mary, Queen of Scots may also have influenced her creation of A.G.A. The tragic and adventurous life of the beautiful Scottish queen involved multiple lovers, murder, intrigue, imprisonment, and death (TG "Introduction"). As an aspiring philosopher and writer, Brontë could not actually live in the worlds of the two queens whom she admired, but she had the ability to recreate them in the fantasy world of her poetic verses. While Emily was dutifully loyal to her family obligations, she still found time to walk on the moors to reflect on her own ideas about process and being. From what many may have considered adversity, she rose and proclaimed her victory through her powerful female characters, Catherine and A.G.A. In her personal life, she was just as strong. Even in her final illness, she did not waver.

A ruthless and formidable woman, A.G.A. has a series of lovers, many of whom she imprisons and abandons, including Alfred Sidonia and Fernando De Samara. There is one lover Alexander, Lord of Elbë, whose death she will mourn. Always in power, she sleeps in the heather and drinks from a spring, habits that are replicated metaphorically in Catherine Earnshaw. While Victoria's tender aspect can be seen in her love of Prince Albert, A.G.A. found quiet delights in Nature. To

characterize, A.G.A., Brontë features tropes of meteorological events such as violent storms on the moors characterized by thunder and lightning followed by either the shining moon under which the moors stretch or warming sunshine. The moors for Brontë are not only a literal space that she intensely experiences, but also a fictional location in which she places her Gondal characters. The shining light and loneliness representative of the moors, together with the wind, take precedence in many of these poems. Further, she examines paradox, uses unusual spellings, gerunds, and the present participle, and repeatedly uses the conditional clause, a technique for eliminating any fixation of time or space. Examples of this practice follow presently in my analysis of selected poems from the Gondal series. All of these characteristics point to my central argument: that Emily is, through aesthetic choices, engaging in philosophical debates about the nature of being in the contexts of space and time. Important to her construction of the real are her recognition of the physical world in tandem with a world beyond the physical. She does not separate them, but instead explores the means to connect them. This innovative idea permeates her *oeuvre*.

As I argue throughout this study, Brontë's artwork is deeply connected with her writing. She frequently creates drawings and paintings as analogues for her characters and places. Although she does not identify the regal woman featured in Figure 2.1, the elegant figure might well be representative of A.G.A. as Christine Alexander suggests (384). Drawn several years after the introduction of A.G.A., the young woman has classic features that might be found in a Roman or Greek goddess. Supporting this view is evidence that Emily translated small portions of Virgil's *Aeneid* including some passages from Books IV and VI where Dido takes center stage (Chitham 17-23 BWH).⁸ The drawing features a classically beautiful woman, in profile, with long, curling hair that is loosely arranged and pulled back from the face by a tiara, perhaps leather or metal. Her strong features include a pointed chin and nose along with an intensity that might characterize



Figure 2.2. Emily Jane Brontë. "Woman's Head with Tiara." 6 October 1841. Pencil on Paper. Brontë Parsonage Museum.

A.G.A. Brontë prominently features her subject with no background to distract from the larger-than-life magnificence that she conveys. There is an appearance of worry or even sadness that can be detected in her gaze in which she appears to be looking beyond her worldly existence. She wears a simple free-flowing garment loosely draped around her shoulders signifying her unrestricted preference in attire. While Emily's painting technique is delicate and almost carefree, her pencil technique in this drawing is firm and a bit heavy. I would like to suggest that this might represent the ponderous nature of the body in its corporeal form. This idea does not find full development until Brontë writes Catherine's death and her afterlife in *Wuthering Heights*.

Brontë introduces her Gondal heroine in a series of three poems. I show several of the selected poems in full text to demonstrate both the visual and verbal effect in their arrangement. Both an artist and writer, as well as an accomplished musician, Brontë values form as much as content. I begin with A.G.A.'s glorious entrance.

The Entrance of A.G.A.

“Will the day be bright or cloudy” (E. Brontë No.1, 1--July 12, 1836)

Will the day be bright or cloudy?
Sweetly has its dawn begun
But the heaven may shake with thunder
Ere the setting of the sun

Lady which Appollos journey
Thus thy first borns course shall be--
If his beams through summer vapours
Warm the earth all placidly

Her days shall pass like a pleasant dream in sweet tranquility
If it darken if a shadow

Quenche his rays and summon rain
Flowers may open buds may blossom
Bud and flower alike are vain

Her days shall pass like a mournful story in care and tears and pain
If the wind be fresh and free
The wide skies clear and cloudless blue
The woods and feilds and golden flowers
Sparkling in sunshine and in dew

Her days shall pass in Glorys light the worlds drear desert through (1-21) ⁹

In Brontë's first extant poem, the arrival of an important female personage is only a possibility held in the imagination of her creator. I show the entire text of the poem here to convey the visual effects as well as the words in Brontë's creation of her first extant poem. In the poem, A.G.A. is never mentioned; we learn her name in the third poem of the series. It is through Brontë's descriptions of Nature that the reader is led to speculate under which conditions entry will take place. The poem prophesizes the birth in a series of conditional clauses featuring the fleeting meteorological possibilities on the moors. It is important to remember that the conditional clause neither fixes time nor space, but offers only multiple possibilities. Resorting to rhetorical questions, similar to those displayed in her stitchery project of 1829, she begins her poem with a question, "Will the day be bright or cloudy" (No.1, 1). Either element may be possible depending on chance when A.G.A. enters the scene. Meteorological conditions on the moors are very changeable with bright sunshine in one moment, and in the next, overpowered by storms as "the heaven may shake like thunder" (3).

In the succeeding stanzas of her introduction of A.G.A., Brontë continually uses the conditional clause thus featuring the possibilities regarding her heroine's emergence on the scene. Invoking Apollo, god of the sun, truth, and prophecy, Brontë predicts that her heroine's life "shall pass like a pleasant dream in sweet tranquility" (9) given certain conditions. Not fixing time or weather conditions, she offers a conditional clause, "If his beams through summer vapours / warm the earth all placidly" (6-7) A.G.A.'s "days shall pass like a pleasant dream in sweet tranquility" (9). However, the situation might be different if conditions change as shown in the next stanza introduced by yet another conditional clause, "If it darken if a shadow" (10), "sweet tranquility" will be transformed into "a mournful story in care and tears and pain" (14). Events in the last stanza are dependent on the wind, an important agent of change in nearly all of the works in Brontë's *oeuvre*. If it be "fresh and free" (15), A.G.A.'s "days shall pass in Glorys light the worlds drear desert through" (19). Thus, with the interrogative and conditional modes of grammar, Brontë opens up possibilities seldom allowed to women of the age. Instead of following the conventions dictated to the feminine gender regarding thought patterns and writing, she is creating her own. She presents A.G.A. as a site of paradox: A.G.A. is adamantine, like her creator, but also absolutely flexible and open to changes in time/space and event.

"Earth riseing to heaven and heaven descending" (E. Brontë No. 2, 4--
December 13, 1836)

High waveing heather 'neath stormy blasts bending
Midnight and moon light and bright shining stars
Darkness and glory rejoiceingly blending

Earth rising to heaven and heaven descending
Mans spirit away from its drear dongoen sending
Bursting the fetters and breaking the bars.

All down the mountain sides wild forests lending
One mighty voice to the life giveing wind
Rivers their banks in the jubilee rending
Fast through the vallys a reckless course wending
Wider and deeper their waters extending
Leaving a desolate desert behind

Shineing and lowering and swelling and dieing
Changeing for ever from midnight to noon
Roaring like thunder like soft music sighing
Shadows on shadows advanceing and flying
Lightening bright flashes the deep gloom defying
Comeing as swifly and fadeing as soon (1-18)

In the second poem of this introductory series, Nature appears to be the narrator in a presentation of the fluidity or constant becoming in that realm. I show the entire poem here to demonstrate Brontë's process. Janet Gezari suggests that the poem offers the reader an experience rather than describing one (9). I show it in its entirety to emphasize Brontë's presentation of a scene on the moors that is in continuous motion with no fixation of time or space. Still not named, A.G.A. the glorious Queen of Gondal, dramatically enters the story at the bewitching hour of midnight, the threshold between night and day, amidst "high waveing heather" and "stormy blasts blending" (E. Brontë No. 2, 1). A threshold is that point where something starts, and midnight is the beginning of the new day. Meanwhile, "moon light" (2) and "bright shining stars" (2) intensify the grandeur of A.G.A.'s entrance, which, concurrently, creates a cataclysmic event on the moors with "Darkness and glory rejoiceingly blending" (3) and "Earth rising to heaven and heaven descending" (4). The latter passage here features a prominent motif that Brontë repeats throughout

her poetry and prose: the elimination of any gap between the here (earth) and the hereafter (heaven). Her poetic lines describing A.G.A.'s entrance echo descriptions of the "earthquake" of 1824, otherwise known as the Crow Hill Bog explosion.

Important to my argument is the fact that Brontë chooses to introduce both A.G.A. and Catherine similarly. They do not enter quietly, but rather burst into her narratives during lightning, thunder, and wind on the moors whose conditions bear a likeness to the "earthquake" of 1824 described earlier in this study. The earthquake was actually a bog explosion manifesting in a shaking of the earth along with thunderous conditions. The Reverend Brontë observed that "The heavens over the moors were blackening fast. I heard muttering of distant thunder, and saw the frequent flashing of the lightening [...]!" ("Sermon"). While the elder Brontë characterized the event as "a solemn visitation of Providence [...]" ("Sermon"), his intrepid daughter became energized during exciting meteorological events attributing them to the randomness of Nature. At six years of age, Emily experienced Nature's wild fierceness first hand. A.G.A. is a shining and swirling presence--an integral part of the storm itself. Thus, she may have actually contributed to the intensity of the storm upon her dramatic and electrifying entry.

Initially musing on the possibilities surrounding A.G.A.'s entrance in her first poem, Brontë's second poem sets Nature's stage in accordance with an actual event on the moors on the same date. A storm at night with a very high southwest wind and an abundance of rain was recorded at Keighley, on the date of the poem's composition (Roper and Chitham 224). She does not yet present A.G.A., but rather describes the storm based on her personal observations. In three stanzas, she captures

features of wind and electrically charged weather conditions on the moors as they are in process. Demonstrating her enthrallment with abrupt changes in Nature, Brontë creates a poetic picture of “High waveing heather ‘neath stormy blasts bending” (No. 2, 1) under “bright shining stars” at “midnight and moon light” (2). The blasting power of the wind not only causes heather to bend, but also contributes to the blending of “darkness and glory” (3) with “earth riseing to heaven and heaven descending” (4). Written six months after the first poem, this poem appears to be answering the questions posed in that piece. Under what conditions will A.G.A. burst onto the earthly plane? How can we know what they might be? Does a sunny morning give way to a stormy afternoon? Are these two as distinct as we think they are? Brontë’s iteration of the extraordinary event describes the violent storm on the moors that precipitated the event itself with no mention of A.G.A. I believe this is way of situating her heroine as a direct metaphor for the storm: A.G.A. is the storm.

In spelling again uniquely hers, she employs language that does not fix limitations or being in her use of two verb forms in one. For example, note that in spelling the present participles of “riseing” and “waveing” she retains the imperative form of the verb instead of deleting the “e,” thus retaining a mode of originary action (“rise” and “wave”) while also including a sense of moving forward in time (“riseing and waveing”). Similarly, her use of “bending, blending, riseing, descending, sending, bursting,” and “breaking” suspend time by offering continual motion to be interpreted as infinitely becoming and never fixed. Likewise, the word “rejoiceingly” is spelled so as to retain the idea of action in essence (rejoice) while allowing for its ability to describe other actions at the same time. Indeed, she may have read her

father's copy of Epictetus who refers to "atoms, inward essences" (Maison 230). The paradoxical terms "riseing" and "descending" harken back to her stitchery project of 1829 in which the verses from "Proverbs" question the origins of the masculine godhead: "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?" ("Sampler").

With her creative imagination and the power of her pen, she is "bursting the fetters and breaking the bars" (No. 2, 6) thus releasing her spirit from the restrictions of the world in which she lives, just as she is bursting the bonds of grammar and spelling. She clearly wants to explore her universe in her own manner with no fetters or bars preventing her self-expression. Beginning to find her space as a philosopher, Brontë links the unharnessed power of Nature demonstrated by the midnight storm on the moors to the elimination of the gap between heaven and earth. However, in this instance, it is a woman who holds the power. A.G.A. remains at the center of *The Gondal Poems* until her death and burial on the moors many years later.

In the same poem (No. 2), Brontë continues to emphasize her idea of blending without boundaries. Clearly and adamantly not wanting to be contained within the limitations of traditional thought, she reflects: "All down the mountain sides wild forests lending / One mighty voice to the life giving wind" (7-8). For her, it is the wild forests, not a transcendent deity, that lend one voice to the wind, a life force that she includes in more than half of her poems (Roper and Chitham 224). Further, as Christine Alexander suggests, the pounding dactylic meter in this poem suggests the "onslaught of natural forces and the excitement of the storm" (574 T). In the last stanza, Brontë again demonstrates her hypnotic interest in thunder and lightning in the context of the binaries demonstrated by Nature during a storm. In an interesting

juxtaposition of thunder and soft music with no punctuation, Brontë uses the present participles of roaring and sighing to imply a continual present without the limitation of tense. Well qualified to speak of musical matters, she had not only studied music, but also eventually became an accomplished pianist.

Her concept of “shadows on shadows” (E. Brontë No. 2, 10) demonstrates her interest in representation—what is real? A shadow is generally regarded as a dark area or shape produced by a body coming between rays of light and a surface. Brontë’s shadows appear to have no connection to a specific body thus supporting her desire not to be anchored. Further, there is not just one shadow, but many, each with its own momentary appearance. The work of Gilles Deleuze on the simulacrum aids in the understanding of Brontë’s “shadows.” Acknowledging the inadequacy of the definition of the simulacrum as a copy of a copy whose relation to the model is based on “presence or absence of internal essential relations of resemblance to a model,” Deleuze postulates that the simulacrum does not become an equivalent of the model, but “turns against it and its world in order to open a new space for the simulacrum’s own mad proliferation. Thus, the simulacrum affirms its own difference” (Deleuze 52-53 PS; Massumi 90-91). Brontë credits the wind as the force that, in this poem, causes movement or proliferation, in this case, the “advanceing and flying” (10) of the shadows. Furthermore, the wind is not only the meteorological phenomenon that creates activity on the moors, but also a metaphor for the *anima* or spirit. In effect, the wind becomes a life-giving force in her verses along with the “bright flashes” of lightning / Comeing as swifly and fadeing as soon (E. Brontë No. 2, 16-17). Stasis finds no place in her observations of a world of impermanence whose features

manifest quickly and then fleetingly disappear. Also, important to Brontë's body of poetry is its lyricism, a quality not sacrificed as she delves deeper into philosophical concepts.

Thus, in her first poem, Brontë introduced the possible meteorological conditions on the moors that might prevail over A.G.A.'s birth, while in the second poem, she describes the wild, dynamic storm that raged over the moors when the Queen of Gondal actually makes her entrance. In an unusual move, Brontë does not mention her heroine in either poem. Perhaps, this unusual introduction speaks to A.G.A.'s oneness with the world that she will enter. In other words A.G.A. is Nature and is one with the storm—very much like her creator.

“Vision of Glory—Dream of light!” / “Holy as heaven—undimmed and pure...” (E. Brontë No. 4, 2-3--March 6, 1837)

When the reader finally meets A.G.A. in the third poem, it is under unusual circumstances. A.G.A. herself fills the role of narrator as she provides a retrospective account of her earlier years when she was in love with Alexander, Lord of Elbë, who died violently—fortunately not at A.G.A.'s hand nor as a result of A.G.A.'s inconstancy in love. She is reminiscing and mourning his death in the context of earlier times. Notably, A.G.A. is in prison as she speaks. She presents the moon as a metaphor for herself proclaiming:

There shines the moon, at noon of night.

Vision of Glory—Dream of Light!

Holy as heaven—undimmed and pure,

Looking down on the lonely moor—

And lonlier still beneath her ray

That drear moor stretches far away (1-6)

Figure 2.2 features this poem, the frontispiece for the *Gondal Poems*, in Brontë's own hand. It is the first poem in which A.G.A. speaks, endowing A.G.A.'s voice with power. This decision intensifies the power with which A.G.A. is endowed. Although she is in prison, neither her imagination nor her strength of conviction is diminished by the sorrow she is experiencing. These qualities are also typical of Brontë herself.

Gradually escaping the imprisonment of Anglican Christianity, Brontë became unusually self-sufficient as she developed her own ideas on life and death as well as strength against all odds. Yet, a few Biblical themes still found a place in her work as she moved closer to ideas of the animism found in the Irish material that she either read or absorbed from her father. The bravado that she expresses in her need to be independent is often countered by the loneliness that she continually experiences. Always on her mind is the consideration of shining glory as a feminine presence. There are several sources that I suggest may have been

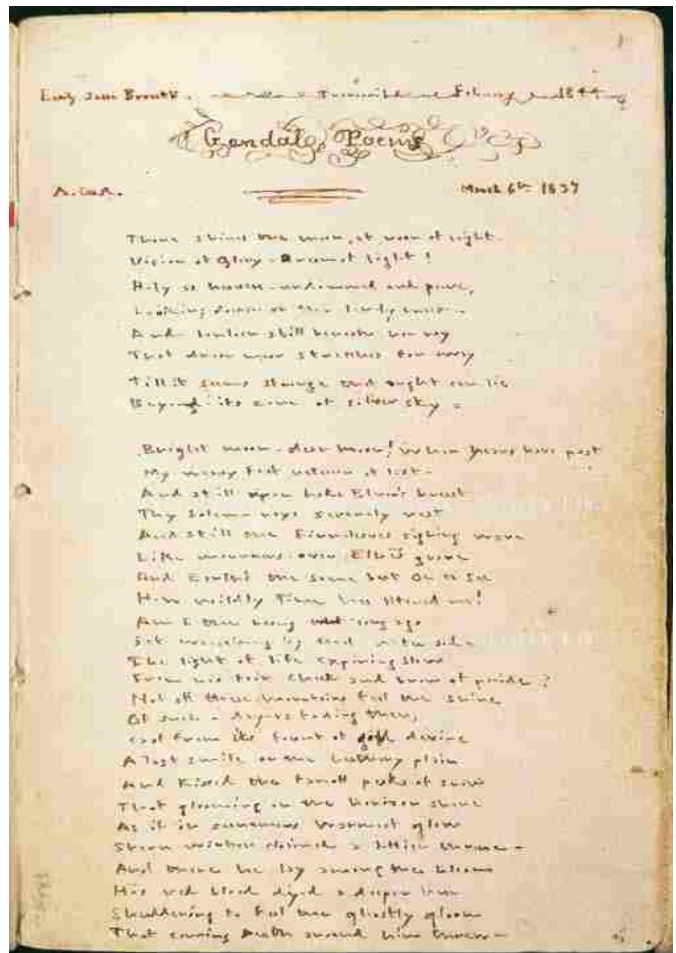


Figure 2.3. Emily Jane Brontë. Frontispiece to *Gondal Poems*. 1837. Pen and Ink on Paper. The British Museum.

influential based on marked passages in archival material held at the Brontë Parsonage Library in Haworth, UK.

Indeed, A.G.A. enters in shining glory as did the goddess Emily read about in the Reverend Patrick Brontë's well-marked text of James MacPherson's *Poems of Ossian*, a work housed in the parsonage library.¹⁰ Consider the following excerpt describing "Dar-Thula," MacPherson's powerful feminine protagonist:¹¹

O moon! They brighten their dark-brown sides. Who is like thee in heaven, light of the silent night.! The stars are ashamed in thy presence. They turn away their sparkling eyes. [...] The stars will then lift up their heads: they, who were ashamed in thy presence, will rejoice. Thou are now clothed with thy brightness (353).¹²

MacPherson's work demonstrates the animistic characteristic of Irish folklore as well as the feminine presence to which Brontë is turning at this point in her explorations of being in terms of gender.

A. G. A.'s shining glory may also have been influenced by Reverend Brontë's marking of biblical texts referring to Shekinah (Zechariah 2:5): "For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (*Bible Old Testament*).¹³ The use of "her" in this passage connects the shining glory to a female, not a male. The Shekinah glory, as described by Fred Miller, is known as the feminine face of God and a feminine noun in the Hebrew ("Shekinah Glory"). In her presentation of A.G.A., Brontë appears to be combining descriptions of the Irish mythological goddess and the biblical passage quoted above. A.G.A. now

reflects on the loneliness of night on the moors a space made “lonlier still beneath her ray” (E. Brontë No. 4, 5).¹⁴

She contemplates the endless panorama of “that drear moor” (6) at night when the expanse appears even greater, stretching “far away” (6). Again, her foundational metaphor, rooted in temporal reality, offers the space of the moors for speculation under the gaze of the “undimmed and pure” moon. In this instance, however, she moves “beyond its zone of silver sky” (8) perhaps to a boundlessness not to be defined in the domain of the actual. Significant in this passage is Brontë’s mention of heaven as related to the moon as she mixes day and night in “noon of night” (1), an alliterative paradox--not surprising considering Brontë’s proclivity for simultaneity. This phrase occurs in Lord Byron’s *Childe Harold* in the “eve of Waterloo” passage, a move indicative of Brontë’s admiration for Byron.¹⁵ While she admired his swashbuckling nature and his imagery, she chose what she felt useful to her and incorporated short excerpts in her work. Her adaptation of the Byronic personification of the moon emphasizes the loneliness on the endless moors, a domain that becomes incomprehensible in terms of traditional concepts of space.

Addressing the “Bright moon—dear moon!” (9), A.G.A. announces her return: “when years have past” (9), “My weary feet return at last” (10). Reflecting on how the passage of time has altered her, she concurrently seems to feel that no time has passed as she sits with her lover, Alexander, Lord of Elbë, in his final moments. Considering “Time” in its variable interpretations, A.G.A. notes that “Earth’s the same, but Oh to see / How wildly Time has altered me!” (16). She wonders if she is

the “being who long ago” (17) “Sat whatching by that water side” (18) as “The light of life” was “expiring slow” / “From his fair cheek and brow of pride?” (19-20).

Throughout this poem, in addition to her considerations of time, Brontë also returns to her reflections on vastness offered by Nature: “Wide, swelling woodlands seemed to rise / Beneath soft, sunny, southern skies” (41-42). In this alliterative passage, her use of the “s” conveys a gentle approach to her continual search for a means to close the gap between the heavens and earth. A “gush of golden sunshine” (48) illuminates the “whole, wide world of cloudless air” (52) “stretched below” (51) in a panorama to which she herself will return as Alexander predicts before his death. In keeping with Brontë’s developing ideas on the afterlife, following death, “the heath alone will mourn” (65).

The Reflections of A.G.A. on Death and Life

“Indeed ‘twas not the space / Of earth or time between” (E. Brontë No. 5, 36-37--June 10, 1837)

Indeed ‘twas not the space
Of earth or time between
But the sea of deaths eternity
The gulph o’er which mortality
Has never never been (35-40)

The storm motif continues to permeate Brontë’s poetic lines as she observes: “The night of storms has past / The sunshine bright and clear / Gives glory to the verdant waste (No. 5, 1-3). Death is still a perplexing abyss with no more explanation than eternity. Here, she appears to be referring to a space, “The gulph o’er which mortality / Has never never been (39-40). I suggest that she may be trying to define a

realm comparable to Deleuze's virtual, a domain of potentiality that may or not be fulfilled in the domain of the actual depending on random conditions. She is becoming bolder in what appears to be an attempt to eradicate the gap between mortality and the afterlife. Insisting that "Indeed 'twas not the space" / "Of earth or time between" (36-37), Brontë prefers to look at "[...] the sea of deaths eternity" (38).¹⁶ It is only through a revisionist view of time and space that she will find answers to what happens after death.

Interrogations of death mounted by A.G.A. figure prominently in Brontë's powerful proto-feminist poetic narrative. As discussed in all of the chapters of this study, the untimely death of Maria Brontë when Emily was but three years of age resulted in a trauma described by friends and family who knew Emily. Characteristically, she expressed her "mother-want" in her poetry and prose. The need for "mother" is inextricably connected to "mother-god-want" (Houston 1). It is precisely this connection that accounts for Brontë's creation of her shining goddess of the moors, A.G.A.

"Death never yeilds back his victims again" (E. Brontë No. 8, 20--
August 19, 1837)

But thou art now on a desolate sea—
Parted from Gondal and parted from me—
All my repining is hopless and vain,
Death never yeilds back his victims again—(17-
20)

Continuing to grieve the death of Alexander of Ælbe, A.G.A. muses, "Bright are the fires in thy lonely home / I see them far off, and as deepens the gloom" (No. 8, 9-10). The pervasive theme of loneliness reemerges through A.G.A.'s reflections on

the hopelessness of any reunion with Alexander: “All my repining is hopless and vain” (19). Brontë’s ideas on death remain heavy on her heart as she continues to dwell on its finality in another poem continuing the Gondal saga. In this poem, A.G.A. reflects on the futility of “Death [who] never yeilds back his victims again” (No. 8, 20). Lamenting that her love is “Parted from Gondal and parted from me” (18), she envisions his afterlife on a “desolate sea” (17). The finality of death that Brontë observed when her mother and sisters died continues to occupy her; she continues to use the metaphor of the sea to describe life’s inexplicable end. There is yet no solution for the elimination of the gap between death and a possible afterlife. Brontë’s inquiring mind looks to the dimensions of space and time in hope for answers. Her use of the double dash, as she often does, indicates that there is no finality in the event that she is describing. Brontë is just developing these ideas in *The Gondal Poems* through her manipulations of time and space and her portrayal of A.G.A.

“The dead around were sleeping / On heath and granite grey” (E. Brontë No. 10—August 1837)

The battle has passed from the height
 And still did evening fall
 While heaven with its hosts of Light
 Gloriously canopied all

The dead around were sleeping
 On heath and granite grey
 And the dieing their last whachs were keeping
 In the closeing of the day (1-8)

In this poem of only two stanzas, Brontë moves closer to finding some solution for her interrogations of the finality of death. Literally, A.G.A. is describing the battle in

which Alexander of Ælbe is killed. As Roper and Chitham note, the actual battle is depicted in Poem No. 4 where we first meet A.G.A. (226). Again, Brontë is experimenting with space and time. In this poem, she describes the aftermath: “The battle had passed from the height” (No. 8, 1) “while heaven with its hosts of Light / Gloriously canopied all” (4). In a few words, she presents a world canopied under heaven apparently with no separation between heaven and earth. I suggest that the implication here is a world of immanence. Notice that she does not capitalize heaven, but saves that distinction for Light, a theme repeated throughout the Gondal series especially when connected with A.G.A. Light, lightning, and glory represent Brontë’s fascination with storms on the moors—features that she embeds in A.G.A.’s being and presentation. Meanwhile, A.G.A. describes the terrible aftermath of the battle, “The dead around were sleeping / On heath and granite grey” (5-6) “And the dieing their last whachs were keeping / In the closeing of the day” (7-8). These powerful images suggest that A.G.A. is somewhere above the event following its dreadful conclusion. I believe that Brontë is describing the actualization of the battle in terms that she understands. Her reference to the battle passing from the height is similar to Deleuze’s description of events as floating or hovering above the battle until they are actualized (100-101 LS). The event originates in the domain of the virtual (the unrealized potential space), and enters the domain of the actual (the spatiotemporal) by means of a random occurrence. This idea is a recurring theme in Brontë’s work. Both Catherine and A.G.A. enter actual during storms on the moors. Now A.G.A. is philosophizing about the battle that cost her love his life.

“A.G.A. The Death of” (E. Brontë No. 81—January 1841—May 1844)

[...] no tongue save thine can tell
The mortal strife that then befell;
But, ere night darkened down
The stream in silence, sang once more
And, on its green bank, bathed in gore
Augusta lay alone! (249-254)

In her longest poem, Brontë writes the three hundred forty-four lines that end A.G.A.’s physical life. Both the title and the number of years in process attest to the importance of Brontë’s obsessive need to understand death. Noteworthy also is Emily’s decision to foreground her poem with a title at all. Her preference had been to write lines without any titles whatsoever. Characterizing herself as “A wanderer, all my life” (No. 81, 32), A.G.A. speaks of living “upon this weary Earth” (31) where “men and Laws have tortured me / till I can bear no more” (35-36). Brontë’s reference to “men and Laws” (35) is one of her most powerful and outspoken statements in her rejection of the patriarchal systems of her time, both secular and spiritual. A.G.A., embodying a power and autonomy typically associated with men, like Brontë herself masquerading as a male writer, is as free as the wind and chooses how she will live. However, her body of work suggests that power may be proscribed for, at many intervals, A.G.A. is in prison as in Poem No. 4. However, she consistently and flamboyantly is “bursting the fetters and breaks the bars” (No. 2, 6) of her male captors. The men in her life do not fare well—with the exception of Alexander of Elbë, the lover whom she mourns in the same poem.

A.G.A insists that “The guiltless blood upon my hands / Will shut me out from Heaven” (37-38). In these lines, Brontë focuses on ideas that she later refines in her presentation of Catherine Earnshaw. Both characters profess their need to leave

their corporeal lives for an afterlife not in Heaven. While A.G.A. is considering possibilities when she “can not find a haven” (40) “in all space, and in all time, / and through Eternity” (41-42), Catherine is adamant about spending the hereafter on the moors.

Meanwhile, the outlaw Douglas lies in wait for the Queen of Gondal predicting, “And Gondals’ royal race shall rue / This day on Elmor Hill”— (217-218). Augusta (A.G.A.) enters the battle “With hurried step and panting breath / and cheek almost as white as death” (221-222). Facing the possibility of her own death, she exclaims, “Give life, give vigour now” (229) as she stoops “by the waters side” (230) and “drank its crystal flow” (231). Taking her strength from Nature, she “meets the Murderer’s gaze” (240). Prior to A.G.A.’s death, Brontë describes her heroine in figures consistent with her depictions of Nature rather than her physical appearance. However, upon her death, we learn that she has “coal-black hair” (243). As “blood streams down her brow” (242), she is “bathed in gore” (253). Tragically, “Augusta lay alone” (254)! While A.G.A.’s intriguing existence never failed to be exhilarating, even in her most poignant moments, she was alone in her times of imprisonment. In her tragic death, she “lay alone!” (No. 81, 254). Loneliness is one of the key themes that Brontë expresses in both her poetry and prose. In my estimation, the pervasive isolation that she conveys is necessary for optimal artistic expression and also for the good life emblematic of the Stoics. In A.G.A.’s death, life’s challenges vanish “with the morn” (E. Brontë, “The Old Stoic” No. 83, 3-4).

Brontë speculates on the death experience: [...] was her Spirit really gone? / And the cold corpse, beneath the moon / Laid like another mass of dust and stone?”

(No. 81, 263-265). Death is cold and impersonal in a manner similar to that described in the text of Carus Wilson that Emily read at Roe Head. There is “no wandering gleam below” as Douglas kneels “Looking into Death!” (283). A.G.A. had been murdered when “her passionate youth was nearly past’ (337). “So adored, so deified” (330), she is now “Cold as the earth, unweeting now / Of love, or joy, or mortal woe—(332). In some sense, death provides relief for A.G.A. in what Brontë regards as a “life, so stormy and so breif” (335). Yet, there is a lack of finality for she reinvents A.G.A. in a second generation narrative; her name is A.G. Rochelle. In a similar manner, young Catherine is the reincarnation of Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*. Both characters are the progeny of their pioneering predecessors. Janet Gezari points out that many of Brontë’s poems demonstrate a formal resistance to endings and a fondness for circular structures and outcomes that are more like .articulation of a world of characterized by becoming rather than any fixation of time or space.

I end this chapter with a few excerpts from the poem, quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, that might be considered Brontë’s manifesto at this point in her life. The poem opens with an ominous scene in which the poet imagines herself amidst a storm on the moors, a metaphoric representation of the challenges that she faced and that she expressed in her characterization of A.G.A. Bound by a “tyrant spell,” she describes a “night darkening around” her (E. Brontë No. 16, 1-3, November 18, 1837.) accompanied by “wild winds” (No. 16, 1), “giant trees bending” (5), and “bare boughs weighed with snow” (6). This poem may represent the poet’s adamant strength of will that empowers her as she stands firm in the face of danger

(C. Alexander 576 T), while also representing the challenges Brontë faced as a woman writer. Throughout her life, she does not equivocate for she “cannot, cannot go” (No. 16, 4), “yet cannot go” (8), and “will not cannot go” (12). Emily seems to take strength in her own situation when she writes about A.G.A.’s bravery in battle. This strength is confirmed in Charlotte Brontë’s description of Emily on her deathbed:

Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone. [...] the spirit was inexorable to the flesh; from the trembling hand, the unnerved limbs, the faded eyes, the same service was exacted as they had rendered in health. (BN 311).

Emily’s resolve was complemented by the *jouissance*, emanating from the place that writes and underpinning her writing. Again the words of Hélène Cixous offer support for Brontë’s expression of *jouissance* (*avant la lettre*): “When I begin to write, it always starts from something unexplained, mysterious and concrete” (Cixous 47). Not surprisingly, Emily features seemingly endless “Clouds beyond Clouds (E. Brontë No. 16, 9) in opposition to “Wastes beyond Wastes below” (10). Her choice of the preposition “beyond” conveys her desire not to fix limits on aspects of the universe around her. Such paradoxical expressions resurface many times in her writing as she places herself and her creations in the space between, the immanent space of earth represented by the moors rather than above or below. It might be said that she is an awakened soul who struggles to blend with the storm by which she is swayed (Roper and Chitham 252). Known as the “Stormy Genius,” Emily Brontë refers to the turmoil within her own being: “Three gods within this little frame / are

warring night and day” (No. 115, 17-18) exclaiming “--So said I and still say the same, / --Still to my Death will say--” (15-18). Philosophically, the three gods may refer to heart, soul, and mind or even the tripartite division of the soul in Plato’s *Republic* (Roper and Chitham 265).

In the last poem of the Gondal series, dated May 13, 1848, seven months before her death, Brontë poses a question central to her theme of the evanescence of time and space: “Why ask to know what date what clime / There dwelt our own humanity” (No. 127, 1-2). A.G.A. lived life to the fullest and died honorably. She entered in the splendor of an exciting storm on the moors and died just as gloriously in battle. As these lines convey, events such as birth and life events prompted by certain conditions, in Brontë’s case, meteorological. It is her way of articulating a cosmos in continual motion.

¹ Following Emily Brontë’s death, her manuscripts were kept by Charlotte and then by Charlotte’s widower, Arthur Bell Nicholls. In 1895, Nicholls sold all but one to Clement Shorter who represented Thomas Wise. Neither had archival training thus resulting in the confusion and identification problems concerning the poems. In 1941, C.W. Hatfield helped to correct wrong attributions (Roper and Chitham 13). Then, in 1995, Brontë scholars, Derek Roper and Edward Chitham published the most comprehensive volume to date.

² As a major figure in the development of German Romanticism, Schiller’s ideas also became important to the development of English Romanticism. The Brontës most likely encountered Schiller’s writings in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* where they read back issues from 1818 to 1831 (“Brontë Reading”).

³ The full text of the poem follows:

Alone I sat the summer day
Had died in smiling light away
I saw it die I watched it fade
From misty hill and breezless glade

And thoughts in my soul were gushing
And my heart bowed beneath their power;

And tears within my eyes were rushing
Because I could not speak the feeling,
The solemn joy around me stealing
In that divine, untroubled hour.

I asked myself, “O why has heaven
Denied the precious gift to me,
The glorious gift to many given
To speak their thoughts in poetry?” (No. 9, 1-14)

⁴ The full text of the poem:
“The Old Stoic”
Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn:

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, “Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!”

Yes, as my swift days near their goal:
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze will later describe the event in terms such conditions that offer random possibilities for weather conditions. He theorizes the event as the penetration of Chronos/the actual (the present) by the Aion/ the virtual (the past and future) in an aleatory singularity.

⁶ J. Goldsmith’s *Grammar of General Geography*, a volume located in the Reverend Brontë’s library, contains Anne’s inscriptions of Gondal place names (Roper and Chitham 6).⁶ The children’s interest in geographical locations beyond Haworth was probably due to their father’s influence and instruction. Patrick Brontë began to tell the children bedtime stories to illustrate a geography or history lesson. He then required them to write out what they had learned the following morning (E.A. Chadwick qtd. in Chitham 35). This is an observation apparently from Nancy Garrs, who, with her sister Sarah, was a servant in the Brontë home. According to Mrs. Chadwick, Nancy was later concerned that she had not given the children more notice in view of their later fame (35). Garrs’s comment supports the idea that the young siblings may not have been regarded as geniuses in their younger days, but later became revered for their work.

⁷ See Gail Turley Houston, *Royalties—The Queen and Victorian Writers*, for a detailed analysis of Queen Victoria as the embodiment of both femininity and power.

⁸ See Edward Chitham, *The Birth of Wuthering Heights*, for a more complete analysis of Emily's unique interpretation of Latin grammar (17-23).

⁹ All spelling and grammar in this poem are shown in Emily Brontë's original iterations. She preferred to spell and present grammar moment by moment depending on her mood.

¹⁰ Yet another volume appears to have influenced the young philosopher's ideas. A well-worn heavily marked copy of the 1819 edition of James MacPherson's *Poems of Ossian* occupied a prominent space in the collection of books read by the Brontë siblings. Originally published in the 1760s, MacPherson's volume was initially presented as a translation of an ancient Scottish Gaelic manuscript in Scottish Gaelic that he had discovered ("The Poems of Ossian"). Although many scholars attempted to challenge the authenticity of the work, it was never fully discredited in the end. Later scholarship, such as that offered by Howard Gaskill, has shown that the work is based partly on genuine Highland traditions (13).

¹¹ The names of MacPherson's characters are derived from the Old Irish. The extensively marked passages in the Brontë Parsonage Museum include those poeticizing the wind and those dealing with feminine power. "Dar-Thula" features the entrance of the "Daughter of Heaven," who is the Irish Deirdre of the Sorrows while "Temora" is Tara, the ancient seat of the high kings of Ireland ("Mythical Ireland"). Dar-Thula is a name derived from the Old Irish meaning "Deirdre of the Sorrows" ("The Poems of Ossian"). Although it is not clear which of the Brontë children marked this passage, it is evident that MacPherson's language is strongly reflected in Emily's descriptions of her strong poetic creation.

¹² The full text of this passage follows: Daughter of heaven, fair art thou! the silence of thy face is pleasant! Then comest forth in loveliness. The stars attend the blue course in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy presence. O moon! They brighten their dark-brown sides. Who is like thee in heaven, light of the silent night.! The stars are ashamed in thy presence. They turn away their sparkling eyes. Whither dost thou retire from thy course when the darkness of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall, like Ossian? Dwellest thou in the shadow of grief? Have thy sisters fallen from heaven? Are they who rejoiced with thee, at night no more? Yes! They have fallen, fair light! and thou dost return often to mourn. But thou thyself shall fail one night, and leave thy blue path in heaven. The stars will then lift up their heads: they, who were ashamed in thy presence, will rejoice. Thou are now clothed with thy brightness, Look from thy gates in the sky. Burst the cloud, O wind! That the daughter of night many look forth; that the shaggy mountains may brighten, and the ocean roll its white waves in light (353).

¹³ The Brontë Parsonage Library houses a number of Patrick Brontë's bibles. The first is the Lord Wharton Bible, an edition that is a mixture of English and Latin along with an inscription from the Reverence himself expressing a resolve to read passages to this family thus supporting that his children would have had exposure to many passages from the bible. Dated circa 1829, another bible begins in middle of St. Matthew, Chap. III, 12. In Latin, it features pencil sketches in style of the Reverend Brontë. This bible also has a note in back describing the vision of the Sage Branwellius on the afternoon of April 12, 1833 in which he beheld Lord Althorpe walking out of a room in consequence of this singular apparition he was told positively that the said noble lord had on that day and had been dismissed from his Majesty. Council-board. The last of Patrick Brontë's bibles to be mentioned here is an Old-Testament version featuring Jeremiah to Malachi only. It is dated c. 1820 and is heavily annotated by the Reverend with reference to his sermons annotated with respect to specific dates and themes. It is in this bible that we find the reference to Zechariah dated 1833.

¹⁴ The full text of this excerpt follows:
There shines the moon, at noon of night.
Vision of Glory—Dream of light!
Holy as heaven—undimmed and pure,
Looking down on the lonely moor—
And lonlier still beneath her ray
That drear moor stretches far away
Till it seems strange that aught can lie
Beyond its zone of silver sky—(1-8)

¹⁵ See Canto III, xxvi as shown below:
And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering' rose,
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes:
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears
(Byron, *The Project Gutenberg*).

¹⁶ Indeed 'twas not the space
Of earth or time between
But the sea of deaths eternity
The gulph o'er which mortality
Has never never been (No. 5, 36-40)

Chapter Three – “There cast my anchor of desire / Deep in unknown Eternity”:

Studies of the Dimensions of Time and Space

Because, I hoped, while they enjoyed,
And by fulfillment, hope destroyed—
As children hope, with trustful breast,
I waited Bliss and cherished rest. (19-22)

.
This I foresaw; and would not chase
The fleeting treacheries
But with firm foot and tranquil face
Held backward from that tempting race;
Gazed oe’r the sands, the waves efface
To the enduring seas—

There cast my anchor of Desire
Deep in unknown Eternity
Nor ever let my spirit tire
With look for *What is to Be*. (27-35)

--“Anticipation” Emily Brontë
June 2, 1845 (No. 121)

Following nearly a decade of death events in the 1820s, the Brontë children were at home for several years before dispersing in various directions. Together with chores and study, their activities included writing, drawing, and acting out their dramatic creations. There is very little extant work from Emily Brontë during this time other than the pencil drawings and stitchery projects featured in Chapter One of this study. However, in the next decade, she created a large number of poems and drawings still available today. Chapter Two traces the development of Brontë’s poetry including her *Gondal Poems*, an epic work telling the story of A.G.A., the dauntless heroine who became the prototype for Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*. Beginning in 1834, Brontë also produced the only autobiographical material offered in her own hand—her “Diary Papers.” Of the six diary papers, Anne and

Emily wrote two jointly between 1834 and 1837. Subsequently, each sister composed two more separately in 1841 and 1845. Anne and Emily Brontë's "Diary Papers" offer first hand accounts of their daily writing sessions as well as life at the parsonage and events in their fantasy kingdom of Gondal.

As Christine Alexander notes, the pen-and-ink sketches hastily drawn by Brontë show how closely she valued the connections between visual and written media (AB 103). She effortlessly intertwined the two forms thus eliminating any temporal gap between them. Important because of their immediacy and unselfconscious presentation, these hastily prepared accounts also demonstrate Brontë's dislike for conventional punctuation and spelling. She grapples with the limitations of language, space, and time as her narratives move freely through multiple domains in a demonstration of simultaneity, a term that describes a concept of time and space where two events appear to be happening at the same time.

Continuing her explorations, Brontë expressed her thoughts in the media available to her. An important feature of these brief accounts is her ability to be both the subject and observer of her thoughts and drawings as well as a critic of her own progress and work. Critical self-assessment is often the result of deep thinking. In Brontë's case, this development demonstrates major growth not only in her grasp of literary skills, but also in her philosophical growth in the multidimensional spaces that she creates.

Her fusion of reality and fantasy demonstrates her defiant determination to take charge of her own story and record events as she saw fit. She will employ this technique throughout her life as a writer and artist. In addition to using almost no

punctuation between thoughts, she fills every available blank space on a page no matter the direction in which she is writing. This practice, although probably more innate than deliberate at this point in Brontë's life, demonstrates her dislike for boundaries other than those she establishes. Brontë, demonstrating her independent nature, does not follow suit, but rather uses the genre in her own fashion when and where she desires; she employs the term "Diary," ordinarily meant to imply the innermost thoughts of one person, to write about both herself and Anne. The papers were to be read only by the two sisters and opened again at specified later dates. Given Emily's need for privacy, she may never have intended to share her private thoughts and emotions. Writing about her inscrutable sister, Emily, Charlotte Brontë later describes her as "not a person of demonstrative character, nor one, on the recesses of whose feelings, even those nearest and dearest to her could, with impunity, intrude unlicensed" ("Biographical Notice" 308). Without the "Diary Papers," modern scholars of Emily Brontë would have had few insights into the intimate details of her philosophical development. "Anticipation," the poem featured in the epigraph conveys Brontë's understanding of the concepts of simultaneity and delay that she employs in her "Diary Papers." The poem, written three years before Brontë's death, glorifies Earth as a place of Happiness—a respite to be treasured in its evanescence. Asking "Why dost thou hold the treasure fast / of youth's delight, when youth is past / And thou art near thy prime?" (No. 121, 8-10), she professes her belief that fulfillment destroys hope (20). Delaying fulfillment, Brontë notes that happiness can be attained only by eternal expectancy. She hoped, "while they enjoyed" (19) and "by fulfillment, hope destroyed" (20). This aporetic view delays meaning as well thus

transporting the individual to the sublimity of time represented by the “sands” and the “enduring seas” (30-31). She prefers to cast her “anchor of Desire / Deep in unknown eternity” (32-33). Infinite being is just that—any anchor would be located in unknown eternity suggesting that being is located in perpetual becoming. Stevie Davies points out that the poem demonstrates Emily’s principles of non-commitment and “voluntary self-retardation” (41-43). In the rhizomatic world that she envisions, delaying gratification creates an overflow of imaginative thought and creativity as well as a continuation of being in different dimensions. This is the alternative that she offers in *Wuthering Heights*.

This chapter explores and analyzes the unusual features of style, language, spelling, and punctuation through which Emily Brontë sets forth answers to questions regarding the concepts of space and time in her “Diary Papers.” Her unique use of these elements speaks loudly to her views regarding the death experience. The ephemera in her brief diary entries occupy an important space in this study because of the intimate look they provide into her thinking process. As Lucasta Miller notes, these “spontaneous un-selfconscious scraps of prose [...] have a disarming realness about them which makes them uniquely attractive” ...and, at the same time “slippery and incomplete” (186). While Brontë’s earliest extant works focused on paradoxical situations that interested her such as stormy and placid weather conditions on the moors, death and life, light and darkness, and heaven and earth, she next concentrated on the fusion of these opposites. These explorations did not preclude themes that consistently arose in her *oeuvre* such as loneliness, progress in her writing projects, the state of domestic chores, political events, aspirations, and finally, expansiveness

in her thoughts. Emily's fragmentary diary entries show that she was involved in writing and drawing, feeding the animals, and preparing food simultaneously. Suddenly with no transition, her narrative moved to descriptions of the activities of the Gondals, the inhabitants of her fantasy kingdom.

As she created parallel worlds in her writing, she also spent most of her life in two very opposite spaces. The moors provided an unadulterated and unbounded domain affording an opportunity for the construction of her theories on the foundations of the universe. Alternatively, her home environment offered a space in which she was able to compose her thoughts as she also reluctantly attended to the mundane domestic chores that she was assigned. Practicing at the piano was also included in the day's activities; eventually, Emily became nearly virtuosic in her piano proficiency. This accomplishment is important because it demonstrates her dedication to both the technique and artistry needed to be a successful musician. Similarly, she applied herself to the development of her philosophical ideas. Meanwhile, when life within the confines of the parsonage became too constrictive, the aspiring philosopher shifted her attentions from cleaning and cooking to matters of the intellect and the imagination.

In her "Diary Papers," Brontë's approach to simultaneity offers a framework in which there is no permanent fixation of time or domain. Using little or no punctuation between thoughts in her "Diary Papers," she effectively interrupts the flow of time as she cryptically describes a variety of activities within and without of the Brontë household not happening in succession, but rather simultaneously. The "Diary Papers" also provide glimmers of the backstory for the Gondal poems.

In her “Diary Papers,” Brontë includes anecdotal snippets of future and past events from her worlds of fantasy and reality—always juxtaposed. Initially, in her organic fashion, Brontë dwelt upon paradoxical situations with which she was familiar in an effort to discover a means to traverse the gaps between them. Then, as we have seen in the passages from *The Gondal Poems* featured in Chapter Two of this study, she began to manipulate time and space by using language that does not fix limits. Gilles Deleuze demonstrates that language could also transcend limits when it restores these limits to an “infinite equivalence of an unlimited becoming” as in the use of the conditional clause (LS 2-3).¹ As I have demonstrated in Chapter Two of this study, Brontë very effectively employs this technique when speculating on meteorological conditions that may or may have been present when A.G.A. entered the world. Eventually, in her “Diary Papers,” she more emphatically demonstrates the power of language in the fusion of events and spatiotemporal dimensions. Her methods for delimiting the fixation of time are the present participle and the gerund, forms that Brontë uses liberally in her poetry; the gerund is a verb that also masquerades as a noun thus suspending action—it does not fix time or space in and of itself. The present participle similarly suspends time in a continual present.

In Emily Brontë’s early life, a conditional clause may have been constructed as follows: “If you complete your domestic chores, you will be able to write.” This is not merely speculative in her case, but rather features the conditions that she faced every day when her true passion was in the poetry and prose that she looked forward to creating. There is an anecdotal material in Emily’s life that demonstrates how this particular conditional clause might apply. Her dislike for chores, as well as her

stubborn nature and flair for drama, actually began to develop a few years before her extant writing appeared. Edward Chitham recalls an incident not normally included in biographies of Emily Brontë; it occurred in March of 1829 when Emily was “in the parlour brushing it,” a task she did not enjoy. Suddenly screaming and shouting in temper, she threatened to stab herself and may have been making noises like a bull. Branwell Brontë apparently wrapped her up in a red coat from which she extricated herself. Dashing up to the bedroom, she sulked or slept until the housework was done (70 LEB). Poeticizing this event in 1833, Branwell, using a Yorkshire dialect, presents “Eamala” as “a gurt bellaring bull” (1), who “aat of her pocket a knoife did pull” (4). Eamala, “doffed her mantle of red” (11) and “went an’ shoo liggid her daan aent bed” (12). “An’ theare shoo slept / Till the haase wor swept” (13-14) (70 LEB).² Brontë also expresses her disdain for chores autobiographically in her “Diary Papers,” a narrative space where she felt free to write about the multiple aspects of her existence. These accounts also reveal her high-spirited nature and her desire to spend her time writing and drawing to the exclusion of what she considered to be menial responsibilities. This particular incident demonstrates that Brontë is performing a lack of punctuation. Her being must not be punctuated by meaningless, pedestrian chores while her mind is engaged in the fluidity of philosophical matters. She becomes one with herself through the power of her pen --a power that allows her to create and destroy as she passes between the parallel universes that she envisioned and sought to traverse. As Gwendolyn Audrey Foster suggests, Emily, in a display of the *jouissance* associated with female writing, could not resist the need to perform

herself both as a being and a spirit in conflict with Victorian constructions of the self (80). Simply put, she did not care to “brush” the parlor, but preferred to be alone.

While Brontë clearly grappled with similar concepts in her early work, her “Diary Papers” demonstrate a more in depth understanding of time as only she saw it. These considerations reach a rich culmination in *Wuthering Heights* when a meteorological event propels Catherine Earnshaw from the past and the future into the present as described in the “Introduction” to this study. In her use of simultaneity, Brontë created interruptions and delays in temporal flows. Through her abilities to manipulate language, she was able to present what we know as past, present, and future as coexisting realms. The rigorous scholarly activities of the Brontë siblings always included experimentation with new and exciting forms and genres of writing.

Edward Chitham notes that the sisters may have consulted Thomas Moore’s 1830 *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron* and appropriated an idea from which to launch their “Diary Papers” (80). Moore’s edition is a combination of Byron’s letters, journals, notices, poetry, and anecdotal accounts, as well as Moore’s commentary. Although in Moore’s work, events are arranged in an uninterrupted thread with commentary following, there is punctuation. However, within the chronological organization is a rambling array of material seemingly presented at random.³ While it is entirely possible that the resolute Emily gathered inspiration from the sophisticated and unpredictable Byron and her reading of Moore’s life of Byron, given her proclivity for originality, it is also likely that she interpreted the life of one of her great heroes in her own manner. In using this as a model, she is also showing that

diaries and letters cannot explain the limited, bounded self, but rather suggest the fluidity of ontology.

The “Diary Papers” appear to be directionless autobiographical accounts of a creative genius. Indeed they are that; however, more importantly, they also offer a window into thought processes that are more modern than of mid-nineteenth-century England. The excerpts and analyses appear in chronological order beginning with the “Diary Paper” of 1834 and closing with the final paper of 1845. I show them in this order to demonstrate the exponential progress of her philosophical interrogations.

“Diary Paper” of 1834

Now sixteen years of age, Brontë presents her world as a combination of the actual space in which she exists and the fantasy space that she creates as demonstrated in the following excerpt from the “Diary Paper” of 1834:

I fed Rainbow, Diamond Snowflake Jasper pheasant (alias) this morning Branwell went down to Mr. Driver's and brought news that Sir Robert Peel was going to be invited to stand for Leeds Anne and I have been peeling apples for Charlotte [...]The Gondals are discovering the interior of Gaaldine Sally Mosley is washing in the back kitchen (Emily Jane Brontë -Ann Brontë “Diary Paper,” November 24, 1834)

Although signed by both siblings, the narrative is primarily in Emily’s script and language. Anne’s signature is her own as she omits the final “e” from her name. Emily’s thoughts begin with her daily activity of feeding her animals, all of which have names and many of which she has rendered in pencil or other mediums. Without

punctuation, a grammatical move that fixes space and time, her narrative wanders immediately to Branwell Brontë's report that Robert Peel may be invited to stand for Leeds. Again with no punctuation, her diary account moves to peeling apples for Charlotte. Meanwhile, the Gondals are exploring Gaaldine as Sally Mosley washes in the parsonage kitchen. Brontë reports five events, all occurring simultaneously. She juxtaposes Gondal, the fictional North Pacific island whose landscape resembles the Yorkshire moors with Gaaldine, another island with a tropical climate and environment—the opposite of the wind driven world of Gondal. In this instance, Brontë has created paradox within simultaneity. I suggest that Brontë's blurring of time and space as reflected in her disdain for punctuation reflected her strong desire to simultaneously exist in two domains. This idea harkens back to the death events recounted earlier in this study. Although death was and is regarded as an end to life, she preferred to think of this inevitable trauma as a continuation of life. It is not only the continuation of life on which she chooses to dwell, but also the coexistence of difference spaces in variable dimensions of time.

As her narrative demonstrates, her invention of fantasy worlds in no way precludes her astute grasp of local or national news for political events often make their way into her early writings. A theme throughout is her need to write. Her pen becomes a weapon in the "Diary Paper" of 1834, which also includes commentary on a variety of daily activities including the famous "pill a potato" anecdote as shown below:

It is past Twelve o'clock Anne and I have not tidied ourselves, done our bedwork or done our lessons and we want to go out to play we are

going to have for Dinner Boiled Beef, Turnips, potatoes and applepudding. The Kitchin is in a very untidy state Anne and I have not done our music exercise which consists of b major Taby said on my putting a pen in her face Ya pitter pottering there instead of pilling a potato I answered O Dear, O Dear, O dear I will directly with that I get up, take a knife and begin pilling (finished) pilling the potatoes papa going to walk Mr. Sunderland expected. ⁴

While Abraham Sunderland was the music master for the Brontë siblings, Taby was, Tabby (Tabitha) Aykroyd, the beloved housekeeper and caregiver for the children. Offering the children love and attention but little discipline, Tabby was particularly fond of Emily, the one who was in most need of her love (Gérin 7). Emily's preference for writing, described as "pitter pottering" by Tabby, instead of chores is quite obvious as she puts "a pen in Taby's face." Eventually obeying Taby, she begins "pilling the potatoes." As the subject of the incident that she describes, Emily is both inside and outside of her narrative thus demonstrating her facile ability to exist simultaneously in two spaces. Not only that, the "Diary Papers" demonstrate Brontë's ability to employ the stream of consciousness technique later credited to Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. In her modernist approach, she presents a flow of thoughts and images that appear to have little organized structure vis-à-vis time, place, incident, or domain. Her intention to be a writer is clearly demonstrated as she clings to her pen instead of getting on with the chores. Sarah Wood, wife of the Haworth village carpenter, who helped out at the parsonage once in a while, remembers that Emily "were always scribblin' and writin' . Many is the

time I've seen her in t' kitchen, waitin' for t' kettle t'boil, or t'bread t' bake, scribblin' away on bits o' paper (Marsden and Jack 446). Most notable in the passage from the 1834 "Diary Paper" is Emily's use of the pen as a weapon both figuratively and literally; it is her means of power in whatever domain she exists in the moment. She also describes her own stubborn nature—both a blessing and a curse as she tries Tabby's patience.

In this brief glance into her daily life and her imagination, the aspiring writer presented the nascent ideas for a philosopher of her own invention. In her words and immanent flow of images, Brontë created events, evanescent or fleeting in nature—in other words, always becoming but also real whether in the virtual or actual domain. This idea manifests in her preference for drawing and writing from life. Her literary creations were as real to her as the experiences in which she and her Gondal characters existed. The models would have been her day-to-day activities and her imagination whereas the works that she created may be regarded as copies of her worlds of reality. Based on her deliberate choice to run together without punctuation statements and observations about diverse thoughts and occurrences, it appears that she did not distinguish between the space in which she lived and that which she created.

As Figure 3.1 shows, the penmanship is dotted with inkblots and appears to wander in many different directions. Emily begins with a description of the family pets and then moves to a chain of unconnected thoughts. The "Diary Paper" is as untidy as the "kitchin" described by Emily, who writes most of the paper in her small block script.

November - the 24
 1834 Monday
 Copying your Anne
 Anne Brontë
 I had found my, Darning
 Susan Hark, I say a pleasant
 this morning, Bramwell went down
 to Mr. Briggs, and brought news that
 Mr. Robert Peel was going to be made
 to stand for the Duke of Devon and E
 have I am feeling
 Apples, Charlotte, to make
 an apple pudding, and the
 pudding perfectly fine
 was it a quick but simple
 intellect, if any, said just now
 Anne pillophite (a pill - prob
 sent her some in the kitchen just
 now and said where are your feet
 have Anne moved on the
 floor Anne says opened the post
 door and said A gave Bramwell a
 letter saying how Bramwell read this
 and how to say - Anne and
 Charlotte - The Charlotte and
 assuming the intention of continuing
 fully writing is well up in the week
 kitchen
 23/11/34
 4901 176 27 229111007

Figure 3.1 (Page 1). Emily and Anne Brontë. “Diary Paper.” 24 November 1834. Pen and ink on paper. Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, U.K.

It is past twelve o'clock Anne
 and I have not finished our work
 but we must do our lesson and we
 want to go out to play we are going
 to have for dinner Baked Beef
 Turneps, potatoes and apple pudding the
 kitchen is in every body's state
 Anne and I have not done our house
 exercise which consists of 6 imper
 tible said on my putting a pen in her
 face you please probably Anne instead of
 filling a piece I answered O Dear
 O Dear O Dear I will do it with
 but I get up late a knife and
 begin pulling & mending pulling the
 paper going to work and mending
 paper
 Anne and I say I wonder
 what we shall be like
 when we are old and what we shall be
 doing and when we shall be there
 and when we shall be there
 year 18 1/2 - in which year
 I shall be in my 54th year
 Anne will be going to be 56
 year Bramwell will be going in
 his 58th year and Charlotte
 in her 57th year hoping we
 shall all be well at that time
 we close our paper
 Copying and Anne
 November the 24
 1834

Figure 3.1 (Page 2). Emily and Anne Brontë. “Diary Paper.” 24 November 1834. Pen and ink on paper. Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, U.K.

However, there are also a few instances of her and Anne’s conventional handwriting as well. Whereas Anne, places an umlaut above the final syllabus of the family surname, Emily does not thus perhaps demonstrating her need for immediacy; she may have wanted to get on the next thought before moving to the next after that. A blot at the left has been reworked into “a bit of Lady Juliet’s hair” by Anne (90).

On two pages, Emily, who does most of the writing, provides a hodgepodge including pet information, political happenings, the activities of the day not completed because of her preference for writing, dinner selections, the time of the day, and the movement of the Gondals in Gaaldine. In her customary need for immediacy, perhaps because of Tabby's insistence on the completion of chores, Emily signs the "Diary Paper" both at the bottom and the top of the first page and crosses out the bottom signature. This instance harkens back to Edward Chitham's note regarding Emily's faint dyslexia with respect to her first extant stitchery project of 1828. He bases this argument on Emily's stitching in which she shows the "v" before the "u" (LEB 65). Another possibility is that she may have been rushing to complete the required regimentation of stitching and was not paying attention. Clearly, Emily was either in a rush or was not aware that she was signing in two places. It may or may not have been due to Chitham's diagnosis. Anne's contribution of the drawing of "Julet's hair" indicates that the children were familiar with Shakespeare.⁵ The random insertion of this drawing and comment add one more dimension to the already multidimensional commentary that they present. They did not find their being solely in one time and one space, but rather looked to other dimensions for ontological definitions.

The 1834 "Diary Paper" offers the earliest known reference to the kingdom of Gondal. The original tales were written in prose that no longer survives. Another important consideration in this diary paper is Brontë's perspective regarding time. Following her anti-chronological account of parallel events and universes, she dwells on the future as she considers where she and her siblings will be in 1874, quite a few

years hence. She seems a bit confused as she indicates that she “shall be in my 54th year Anne will be going in her 55th year Branwell will be going in his 58th year And Charlotte in her 59th year hope we shall all be well at that time we close our paper (“Diary Paper” 1834). Although Emily was older than Anne, she appears to portray Anne as older.

Emily Brontë is clearly not interested in conventional concepts, but prefers to eliminate distinctions between before and after, or of past and future, thus pulling in several directions at once. Her protomodern ideas place her in a category of her own—ideas that she reinforces and expands in her next “Diary Paper.”

Diary Paper of 1837

Writing in the afternoon was not an anomaly in the Brontë household, but rather a daily activity as shown in above excerpt from the “Diary Paper” of 1837. As in the “Diary Paper” of 1834, Emily demonstrates her ability to merge domains: one in which she lived and another that she created. This fusion eventually becomes a predominant characteristic in her *oeuvre*. While Emily mentions the time, she soon expands space and time to other dimensions. The paper of 1837 begins with the following:

A bit past 4 o'clock [...] Anne and I writing in the drawing room –
Anne a poem [...] and I Augustus-Almedas life I-vol –4th page from the
last a fine rather coolish thin grey cloudy but Sunny day [...] Aunt
working in the little room the old nursery Papa gone out Tabby in the
kitchen—the Emperors and Empresses of Gondal and Gaaldine
preparing to depart from Gaaldine to Gondal to prepare for the

coronation which will be on the 12th July Queen Vittoria ascended the throne this month. (“Diary Paper,” Monday Evening, June 26, 1837 Emily Jane Brontë -Ann Brontë).

The narrative of the “Diary Paper” of 1837 begins with the description of a writing moment on a “coolish thin grey cloudy but Sunny day.” Again, Emily combines two weather conditions that ordinarily occur separately. In her eyes, they are visible at the same time. She then sketches herself writing about events in the parallel domains that she experiences. Important to her sketch is that her back is to the audience almost as if she were directing a film of her own life. In her customary manner, she is both within and without her writing and drawing.

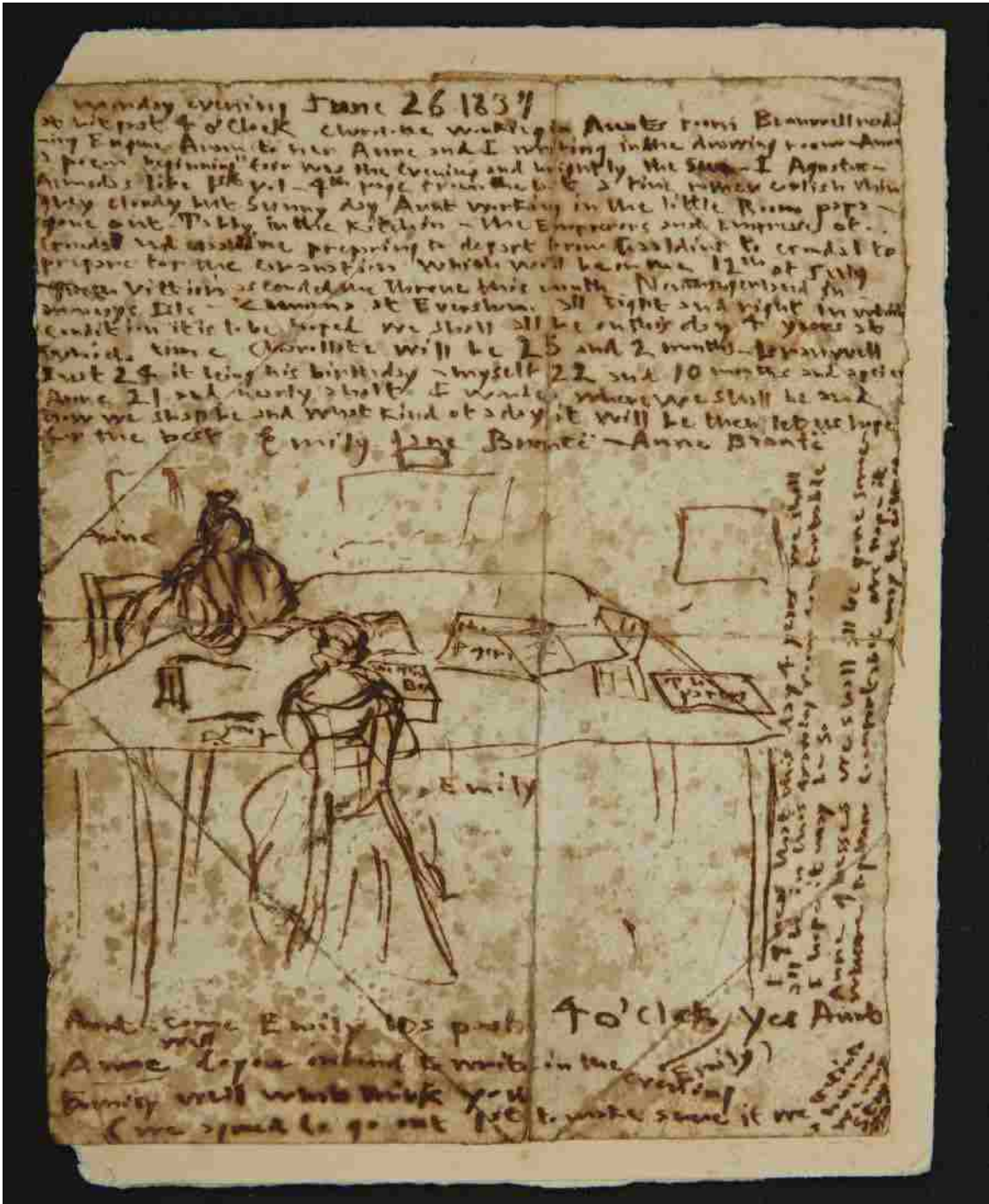


Figure 3.2. Anne and Emily Brontë working at the dining-room table, "Diary Paper." 26 June 1837—sketch by Emily Brontë. Pen and ink on paper. Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, U.K.

The sketch shown in Figure 3.2 depicts Emily in the foreground with her back to the viewer and her name inscribed to the right; Anne faces the viewer with her name similarly inscribed. The dining room at the Brontë Parsonage appears in a more expansive representation almost as if she were seeing the space through a wide-angle lens. Emily is the major contributor to the “Diary Paper” of 1837 hence authorizing herself as her own biographer and also giving birth to her legitimacy as an author. Important in this sketch is Emily Brontë’s position. In what I call her meta-sketch, she is simultaneously sketching herself and Anne in their frequent afternoon activity as they are engaged in drawing and writing. She is both an active observer and an active participant. Emily’s head is bent toward the paper while her pen rests on the left. Anne, on the other hand, is immersed in thought as her head rests on her hands. Emily writes the narrative framing her artwork thereby demonstrating that she wants to have full control of her project and its boundaries. In her unselfconscious narrative, she also illustrates her being as a creator and thinker who actively engages the world. She manages to articulate multiple thoughts and provide many hints about herself in the artwork and descriptions that she provides in the limited space of one quarto.

Both the scarcity of paper at the time and her dislike for limitations may have contributed to the design. Neither she nor Anne is noted for outstanding penmanship at this point. Also, as Edward Chitham notes, Emily did not do well with a pen. Quite a number of her manuscripts show where the pen has penetrated the paper or the ink has run dry (BWH 10). Perhaps the holes in the paper, regarded by Charlotte as unholy to say the least, may indicate Emily’s passion to discover a pathway amidst her paradoxical explorations. Although she could not attain simultaneity of domains

in her physical state, she could accomplish this in her writing. Not to be deterred in her unselfconscious approach, she never allowed the pen and ink to get in the way of her need for immediacy of expression. Noteworthy is that the medium of pen and ink also fixes boundaries. She was most likely using the means available to her.

Edward Chitham suggests that the pen's resting on her left indicates that she may have been left-handed. This orientation may have been a cause for her dislike of school where right-handedness provided the model (BWH 11-12). Rather than acclimate to the demands of the educational system of her time, the young author clung to her individuality and continued to write with her left hand. In addition to her left-handedness, Brontë's other unconventional physical attributes include being the tallest person in her family except for her father.

In this "Diary Paper," she again demonstrates fluidity between occurrences at the parsonage and events in the lives of her *Gondal* characters. Updating her progress on her largest poetic project, she indicates that she is "4th page from the last" of Volume I in the composition of *The Gondal Poems*. She would already have completed her poem of July 12, 1836, a work in which she prophesizes the birth of her alter ego, Augusta-Almeda (A.G.A.). Although Brontë initially introduces A.G.A. in her poem of March 1837 using only the initials, her readers do not yet know the full name of her powerful heroine. Augustus-Almeda appears for the first time in Brontë's "Diary Paper" of 1837. It is interesting that Brontë uses her own spelling with the masculine nominative ending in the "Diary Paper" and later in her poetry, Augusta-Almeda, the feminine. This may have been mistaken or intentional, or perhaps, Brontë may have simply been catering to her whim of the moment in her

pattern of unselfconscious writing in these early days. She often spelled as she saw fit and then offered variant spellings of the same words.

Derek Roper explains that Brontë was very sensitive to the sound of words and less to their appearance—her unorthodox spellings fit well with her general approach to life and learning (21). Notice Brontë’s spelling of “Vittoria” in the same excerpt as she moves her discussion to the political and historical arena. Whereas the “Diary Paper” of 1834 mentions the possibility of Robert Peel’s standing for Leeds, the paper of 1837 shows the “Emperors and Empresses” of her fantasy kingdom preparing for the “real” event of Queen Vittoria’s (sic) ascension to the throne. The actual date of the ascendancy was June 20, 1837. The young author actually uses a period to end this thought, perhaps in tribute to Victoria, and then quickly moves on to another entry pertinent to the inhabitants of parallel kingdom. Needless to say, Emily again is in charge of most of the text displayed in the “Diary Paper.” Queen Victoria offered a powerful and regally peaceful persona inspiring women and particularly the women writers of her time. The Queen was both a wife and mother and portrayed herself to the public as such. Yet, at the same time, she was a powerful ruling monarch. Emily Brontë’s fascination with the young Queen is purported to be due to their closeness in age. However, she may also have been interested in the incongruity of the Queen’s dual roles requiring her to be in both simultaneously. Similarly, Emily could care for her animals and reluctantly complete her domestic chores while creating characters who embody her dreams who are both regal and domestic. Daily life on the moors did not offer magical kingdoms and swashbuckling characters. Therefore, she created them.

“Diary Paper” of 1841



Figure 3.3. Emily Jane Brontë. “Diary Paper,” July 30, 1841. Pen and ink on paper. Formerly in the collection of Sir Alfred J. Law. Present location unknown.

In the third of her “Diary Papers,” written in 1841, Emily Brontë again uses no punctuation as she combines weather events with her loneliness, both recurring themes. She creates a narrative simultaneously describing at least seven different situations in her life and imagination.

It is Friday evening--near 9 o'clock—wild rainy weather I am seated in the dining room ‘alone’—having just concluded tidying our desk-boxes—writing this document—Papa is in the parlour. Aunt upstairs in her room—she has been reading Blackwood’s Magazine to papa—Victoria and Adelaide are ensconced in the peat-house—Keeper is in the kitchen—Hero in his cage—The Gondalians are at present in a threatening state but there is no open rupture as yet—all princes and princesses of the royal royaltys are at the palace of Instruction—[...] I

have just made a new regularity paper! and I mean sap—to do great things—(“Diary Paper,” Friday Evening, July 30, 1841)

Combining meteorological conditions, “wild rainy weather,” with her loneliness, “I am seated in the dining room alone,” she shared that she has just tidied up her desk-box. Although she is alone she uses the plural “our desk boxes.” She could be using the rhetorical plural, but also she may also be speaking about herself as a narrator of the story in which she is also the subject thus producing two events happening simultaneously in two domains. As she writes “Papa is in the parlour. Aunt up stairs in her room—she has been reading Blackwood’s Magazine to papa.” Suddenly, another parallel world emerges as the young author provides a reference to “Victoria and Adelaide ensconced in the peat-house.” Queen Adelaide, Victoria’s favorite aunt, was married to King William IV, Victoria’s predecessor on the English throne. Both were affected deeply by the King’s death (Woodham-Smith 140). The young princess and the dowager queen provided the inspiration for the names of the Brontë pet geese, Victoria and Adelaide who were indeed ensconced in the peat house. Although Emily could not be queen, she appropriated something precious to the queen-- her name and that of the dowager queen—as she honors her beloved pets. In her world, both are meaningful.

Figure 3.4 has inkblots and is barely decipherable because of the tiny script often characteristic of Emily and her siblings. The scarcity of paper did not allow for large representations, at least in the early days of their creativity. The Brontë children initially wrote their stories, poems, and adventures in tiny little matchbook-size books

that they stitched themselves. Emily continues that tradition in the script that she offers in her third “Diary Paper.”

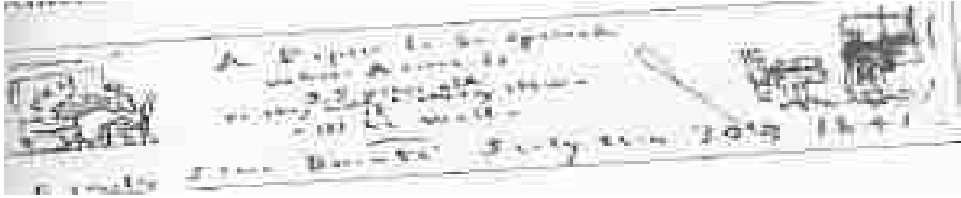


Figure 3.4. Emily Jane Brontë. “Diary Paper,” July 30, 1841. Pen and ink on paper. Enlargement of center section.



Figure 3.5. Emily Jane Brontë. “Diary Paper,” July 30, 1841. Pen and ink on paper. Enlargement of drawing left of center.

In their volume cataloguing the artwork of the Brontës, Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars present enlarged versions of parts of the third “Diary Paper.” At the center of Figure 3.5, Brontë announces the paper itself as she takes the position as narrator. Simultaneously, she becomes the subject as well when she includes thumbnail sketches at either end of the initial narrative. In the first, she is sitting at her writing table, and next, she is standing at the window gazing outwardly with the barrier of the window pane between her and the world outside. In the center portion, she writes: “A Paper to be opened when Anne is 25 years old or my next birthday afterif-all be well-”

Here, she addresses her fascination with barriers perhaps musing on how she will defy them in her writing. She is again both within and without the paper drawing herself in the process of writing.

In her graphic autobiographical visual representation, her confidence as a writer emerges. She draws her dreams, and life

seems to follow suit for her. The drawing on



Figure 3.6. Emily Jane Brontë. “Diary Paper,” July 30, 1841. Pen and ink on paper. Enlargement of drawing right of center.

the left features Brontë working at a small table with her writing desk, drawn larger than it really is, placed on top. As in her previous “Diary Paper” drawings, the room appears more expansive than it actually is. In fact, she draws no walls or doors, but only windows suggesting a kind of meditation upon and erasure of boundaries. Her choice of windows is significant because they offer only semi-barriers to spaces on the other side. Doors, on the other hand, offer little opportunity for entry. In the drawing on the right, she and her cat are gazing out of the window perhaps evaluating plans for the future featured in the text. The cat was only one of several creatures that appear in this diary paper.

In another display of simultaneity, Brontë quickly moves to her next subject:

“Keeper is in the kitchen—Hero in his cage.” Notice the double dash joining her



Figure 3.7. Emily Jane Brontë. “Keeper-from life.”
24 April 1838. Watercolor on paper. Brontë
Parsonage Museum.

thoughts. Keeper is her
large mastiff and Hero
(Nero) is her pet hawk.⁶

Experts have not been able
to determine the actual
spelling of the bird’s name
because of Brontë’s nearly
illegible handwriting—thus
the alternate spellings of
Hero and Nero. This entry
demonstrates yet another
example demonstrating her
preference for immediacy of

in her thinking process. She is clearly able to exist in several domains simultaneously and writes accordingly. Drawing her beloved canine “from life” reveals her need for capturing him without any intermediary. Christine Alexander notes that Brontë employs a light touch in her watercolor painting whereas she is very heavy-handed in

her pencil drawings (AB 384).

Brontë's command of tones and shading is evident in Figure 3.8. Keeper is resting with his head on his paw and his coat gives the impression of a silky short fur as Christine Alexander notes (380 AB).

The paints are water based thereby seeping beyond the lines. They are slow to dry and

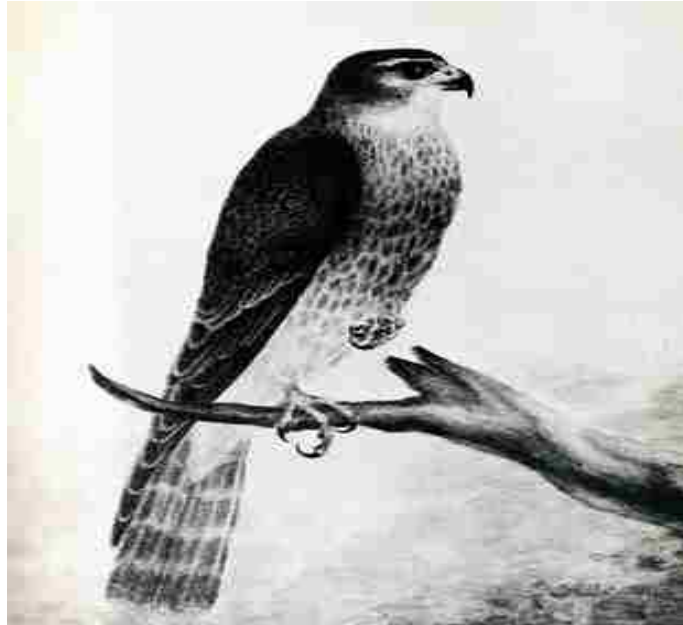


Figure 3.8. Emily Jane Brontë. "Hero [or Nero]." Watercolor on card. 27 October 1841. Brontë Parsonage Museum.

offer the opportunity for change or becoming during the process of creation of a work. It is then no surprise that the young artist would prefer painting in watercolor because of the fluidity the medium offers.

Her rendering of Hero (Nero) demonstrates the same attention to detail offered in her painting of Keeper. The merlin hawk is perched on a broken tree stump. With one claw on the stump, the other claw is withdrawn into the bird's breast. The painting demonstrates care and delicacy in the coloration and textures of the different parts of the bird. Christine Alexander notes that Brontë probably executed this painting from life as opposed to her copies of Bewick's birds eleven years earlier. Sadly, when she returned from her studies in Belgium in 1845, the hawk, along with the geese had been given away. She presumed that they were probably dead (385 AB). Emily's painting of Keeper appears to view him as a very

sentient being with great wisdom and complexity of character. She was probably more aware and respectful of the being of animals than she was of most humans. In most of her drawings, animals are featured in poses conducive to reflection.

In addition to her fixation on her beloved pets, there is yet another concept that receives mention in this diary paper. Charlotte had been in charge of plans for the siblings starting a school. However, the concept never materialized (Barker 421). Nevertheless, Emily imagines a scenario four years hence when “Anne and I—‘shall’ all be merrily seated in our own sitting-room in some pleasant and flourishing seminary having just gathered in for the midsummer holydays our debts will be paid off and we shall have cash in hand to a considerable amount. papa Aunt and Branwell will either have been—or be coming—to visit us—it will be a fine warm summery evening” (“Diary Paper,” July 30, 1841).

While Brontë and her siblings are planning a school, the characters in the kingdom of Gondal are engaged in political strife while their children are in school. She writes: “the Gondalians are present in a threatening state but here is no open rupture as yet—all the princes and princesses of the royal royaltys are at the palace of Instruction.” Adding one more dimension to this concept, Brontë brings the subject of educational progress back to her own life’s experience. She offers a rare self-assessment while looking to the future:

I have a good many books on hand but I am sorry to say that as usual I make small progress with any—however I have just made a new regularity paper! and I mean very sap—to do great things—and now I

close sending from far an exhortation of course courage! To exiled and harassed Anne wishing she was here”(“Diary Paper,” July 30, 1841).

Despite the unrest in the Gondalian kingdom, the “royal royaltys” are receiving instruction in a space parallel to her own autodidactic work. In their world, the palace of instruction is a reality whereas the Brontë school is only a dream. Brontë’s drawings of herself as a writer coincide with her prophetic statement that she means “to do great things” (“Diary Paper,” July 30, 1841). Great things for her may be defined by the fulfillment that she describes in her writing and drawing.

In this passage, Brontë mounts a multidimensional interrogation of time and space. Beginning with the idea of a school about which she and her sisters dreamed, she moves the idea to the future as if it had happened. If it had, she and Anne would have been living in a financially secure space. She then moves to another dimension as she situates the Gondal royal children at the Palace of Instruction. Then, returning to her life, she reflects on her progress and her plans for the future. In this passage, she moves from a possible past to a possible future in her own life, then to the Gondals, and back to her own life again demonstrating the notion of simultaneity. While her reader may be confused by the rapidity of her movement through time and space, she appears to navigate the multiple realms effortlessly. In the end, there is no solid fixation of time. Hence, Brontë has created a world defined by possibility and becoming.

Diary Paper of 1845

In her last “Diary Paper,” composed on her birthday in 1845, Emily Brontë shares that the “school-scheme had been abandoned.” Instead, she went with

Charlotte to Brussels to study in “February 1842” to return in November of the same year following her Aunt Branwell’s death. While in Brussels, she developed her skill in *devoir* writing while only there for a few months. Her *devoirs* are the subject of the next chapter in this study.

Meanwhile, this last diary paper demonstrates her increasing proficiency in the articulation of simultaneity. Punctuated primarily by a series of double dashes connecting her commentary on a variety of subjects, she leads her reader through different dimensions of time and space. I show the entire passage below to demonstrate how she uses the double dash in a visual manner as it is sprinkled throughout her seemingly endless narrative:

My birthday—showery—breezy—cool—I am twenty seven years old today—this morning Anne and I opened the papers we wrote 4 years since on my twenty third birthday—Anne and I had our first long journey by ourselves together—leaving Home on the 30th of June – Monday sleeping at York—returning to Keighley Tuesday evening sleeping there and walking home on Wednesday morning—though the weather was broken, we enjoyed ourselves very much except during a few hours at Bradford and during our excursion we were Ronald Macelgin, Henry Angora, Juliet Augusteena, Rosobelle Esualdar, Ella and Julian Egramont Catherine Navarre and Cordelia Fitzphnold escaping from the palaces of Instruction to join the Royalists who hard driven at present by the victorious Republicans—The Gondals still

flourish bright as ever I am at present writing a work on the First Wars— (“Diary Paper,” Thursday, July 30, 1845 Emily Jane Brontë)

Commenting on the “showery—breezy—cool” day, Brontë soon projects herself and Anne into the Gondal narrative. As the sisters walked from Keighley to Haworth, they enjoyed themselves immensely as they were joined by the characters from the Gondal series, “Ronald Macelgin, Henry Angora, Juliet Augusteena, Rosobelle Esualdar, Ella and Julian Egramont Catherine Navarre and Cordelia Fitzphnold,” all of whom were “escaping from the palaces of Instruction to join the Royalists who hard driven at present by the victorious Republicans” (“Diary Paper” July 30, 1845). Geographically, Bradford is a village in West Yorkshire about ten miles east of Haworth, while Keighley is about four miles northeast. Therefore, the walk from Keighley would have provided sisters more than ample time to live in the fantasy world as their characters thereby eliminating any distinction between worlds. The sisters were in the story, not outside.

Although Brontë does not provide a context for her statement about the Royalists and the Republicans, she may have been considering the change in government four years earlier. In 1841, Lord Melbourne, the famous Whig statesman who had been at Victoria’s side as Prime Minister for years, was defeated by Sir Robert Peel, the conservative candidate who was considered a “liberal wolf in sheep’s clothing.” Whereas, Melbourne, a liberal, supported the supremacy of Parliament and was eventually succeeded in the 19th century by the Liberal Party, Peel, a Tory, was in favor of the supremacy of the Crown (Barker 419). The Brontë siblings would have been well aware of political events because of their avid reading and their father and

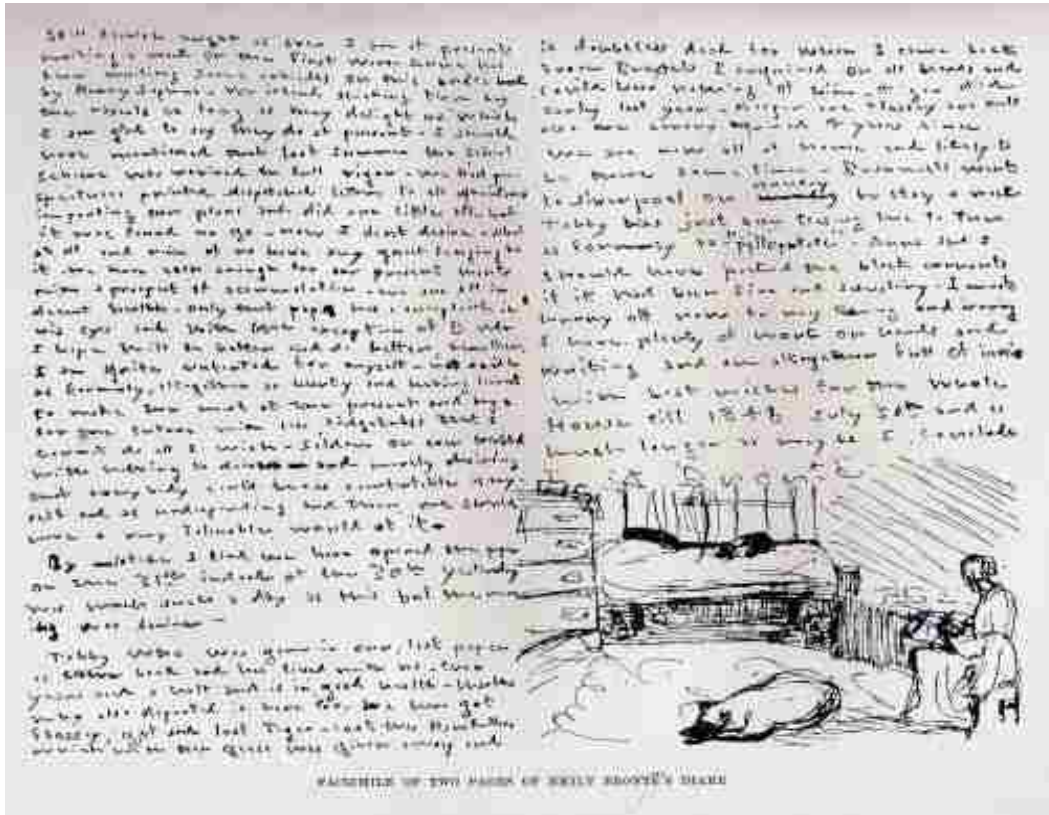


Figure 3.9. Emily Jane Brontë. “Diary Paper,” Thursday, July 30, 1845. Pen and ink on paper. Previously part of the Clement K. Shorter collection. Present location unknown.

Branwell’s political activities. Emily proclaims her intention to stick firm by the rascals (the Gondalians) “as long as they delight us which I am glad say they do at present—(“Diary Paper” July 30, 1845). Once again she is both author and perhaps also an unnamed character supporting the “rascals.” She then adds a third perspective as she takes on the role of a critic assessing her own work when she expresses delight in the Gondalians. Very quickly moving to her domestic duties, she declares, “I must hurry off now to my taming and ironing I have plenty of work on hands and writing and am altogether full of business with best wishes for the whole House till 1848 July 30th and as much long as may be I conclude” (“Diary Paper” July 30, 1845).

Figure 3.10 demonstrates Brontë's fusion of the visual and the written; her autobiographical sketch complements her account. Surrounded by her animals, she is writing—again with her back to the reader in her customary directorial position drawing with what later will be regarded as a wide-angle lens. The room in which she depicts herself, the old nursery at the Parsonage, is extremely small in reality. However, as she does in her other diary paper drawings, she creates a visual effect to demonstrate her expansive self and her need to move beyond the strictures of both space and time. She is not in the room by herself, but is surrounded by her animals.

In this chapter, I have identified themes in Emily Brontë's idiosyncratic "Diary Papers," the only autobiographical accounts of her adolescence and adult life in both the realms of fantasy and reality. The "Diary Papers" offer clues to the thinking of the young philosopher as she developed her skills. Both epigraph poem and her "Diary Papers" demonstrate her concern with concepts related to the convergence of space and time and also her understanding of the aporetic concepts of and simultaneity and delay

By 1845, Emily Bronte had composed a large body of poetry, including the poems of the Gondal series, and completed a number of paintings and drawings. She would also have had the experience of considering her philosophical views in greater depth during her time in Brussels where she learned to write in the *devoir* genre a topic to which I turn in Chapter Four.

¹ Lewis Carroll's *Alice and Through the Looking-Glass* provides Deleuze's inspiration for the formulation of pure events. Deleuze posits a simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present. The essence of becoming to move and pull in both directions at once is exemplified in Alice's becoming larger

than she was while at the same time, becoming smaller than before (LS 1-2). She thus eludes the present.

² Edward Chitham believes that this anecdotal account may have been recounted in Branwell Brontë's poem, *The Foundling*, composed in May and June of 1833. The poem depicts a foundling who arrives from Africa where he finds the small men. These creatures amuse themselves by singing in a Yorkshire dialect. Excerpts follow:

Eamala is a gurt bellaring bull,
Shoo swilled and swilled till she drank her full;
Then shoo rolled abaat
Wi' a screemam an' shaat
And aat of her pocket a knoife did pull.

.

A sooin shoo doffed her mantle of red
Shoo went an' shoo ligged her daan aent bed,
An' theare shoo slept
Till the haase wor swept (70 LEB)
And all the goid liquor wor groan fro her head (qtd. in Chitham 70).

³ Thomas Moore's *Life, Letters, and Journals of Lord Byron* is available in the Brontë Parsonage Library and also in the public domain at <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=TLdcAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.PR5>

⁴ As Juliet Barker notes, Abraham Sunderland was the organist in Keighley and also the music master for the Brontë siblings. Patrick Brontë was one of the supporters of the Keighley Mechanics Institute. Established in 1825, the institute provided fortnightly lectures on developments in science. The lectures were open to all. However, the library was available only to those who joined for a fee. The Reverend Brontë became a member in 1833, at which point, his children had access to the books not contained in the Parsonage Library (171-172).

⁵ Charlotte Brontë's letter to Ellen Nussey dated July 4, 1834 recommends omitting Shakespeare's comedies and reading the rest fearlessly (LCB, I, 130). This supports the siblings' familiarity with Shakespeare at the time of the first diary paper. Yet, the only copy of Shakespeare's works found in the Brontë Parsonage Library is Anne's 1843 edition.

⁶ Despite his ferocious nature, Keeper was utterly devoted to Emily. He followed her coffin to her grave and then mourned for days outside of her bedroom door. There is a story describing Emily's savage punishment of the dog for his habit of lying on her

bed. After hurting the dog, she ministered to him. As in the incident portrayed by Branwell, she indeed must have had a terrible temper if the account is true.

Chapter Four – “So this globe is the embryo of a new heaven and a new earth”:

Ontological Articulations of Death in the *Devoirs*

As the ugly caterpillar is the origin of the splendid butterfly, so this globe is the embryo of a new heaven and a new earth whose poorest beauty will infinitely exceed your mortal imagination. And when you see the magnificent result of that which seems so base to you now how you will scorn your blind presumption, in accusing Omniscience for not having made nature perish in her infancy.

Emily Brontë, 1842
“Le Papillon” (178)

In her “Diary Paper” of 1841, Emily Brontë alludes to a scheme “in agitation for setting us up in a school of our own as yet nothing is determined but I hope and trust it may go on and prosper and answer our highest expectations.” As Edward Chitham notes, Emily may not have wanted to go to Brussels, but agreed to join Charlotte for study in order to improve chances for establishing a seminary in Haworth (151 LEB). Emily says very little about this time in her life, mentioning the trip to Brussels only briefly in her “Diary Paper” of 1845 reporting that “Our school-scheme has been abandoned and instead Charlotte and I went to Brussels on the 8th of February 1842.” The Brontë sisters, indeed, spent nine months at the Pensionnat Héger in Brussels beginning in February of 1842 as indicated in Emily’s diary paper. There, under the guidance of M. Constantin Héger, they became proficient in their command of the French language as they also furthered their abilities in the essay form. Sue Lonoff notes that the Brontës, who were already prolific writers by this time, “encountered a professor who also broke the mold, a man whose energy to teach matched theirs to

learn” (xiii). M. Constantin Héger provided a specific form in which essay writing provided the foundation—the *devoir*.

Technically, *devoir* translates as “duty”; however, it is also the common term for homework in the educational systems of France and Belgium (Alexander and Smith 158). Rather than using conventional drills, Héger adopted a system that he called “synthetical teaching” to immerse his students in the language. The method involved his reading excerpts from French writers on certain subjects and then asking students to express their views in a corresponding manner (158). Héger’s method of teaching through practice, an *imitatio* used in British schools during the Renaissance, may be compared to the early learning experiences offered by the Reverend Brontë: after instructing his children in a certain subject, he would ask them to write about it. These daily exercises figured prominently in their preparation for future study and writing. The *devoir* assignments in Brussels provided opportunities for refinement of the Emily’s skills in logical thinking and contributed to her reverence for process. Gaining more authority with each project, she would not have been satisfied with the amateurish dabbling relegated to young ladies of her station.

Thus, the importance of Brontë’s *devoirs* must not be underestimated. Héger’s assignments allowed Emily to display her knowledge of both current and past events as well as the diverse philosophical movements sweeping England and Europe. These writing exercises not only offer windows into her emotional state and philosophical investigations, particularly the development of her ideas on death, but also allow her readers to observe her stubborn refusal to capitulate to genre and societal expectations. Fiercely autonomous with few previous restraints on either her writing

or her imagination, Brontë, surprisingly, did not entirely resist despite Héger's more than enthusiastic corrections. Despite her love of independence and freedom, she actually acquiesced to the assignments to a degree often deciding to complete them on her own terms.

In this chapter I analyze four of Emily's eight *devoirs* focusing on "Lettre—Ma Chère Maman," "Le Palais de la Mort," "Le Chat," and "Le Papillon" to show how she attained a kind of sage status in her command of this form of writing, thus further empowering her to authorize herself and her developing organic philosophy.¹ Further, I argue that Emily, in her nine-month period in Brussels, experimented with many ideas about life and death that underpin the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*, ideas she developed in the *devoir* format. Under Héger's tutelage, her fiery spirit was reawakened in a strict form of writing that also allowed for experimentation and exploration. With startling clarity, Emily's views on a number of philosophical matters converge: her impatience with societal hypocrisy, including the relationships between animals and humans, and finally her unique ontology of death itself. She was not alone in her need to explore where the dead are, the fate of the body, and the event of death as these were major nineteenth-century concerns. However, she not only mounts inquiries, but also eventually constructs a pathway between life and the afterlife in *Wuthering Heights*. Her *devoir* explorations allowed her to formulate the premises for the fictional representation of her organic philosophy which offers a world beyond death that is a continuation of life not in the heaven of the religious authorities of her time, but, rather, in the world in which she felt most comfortable and spiritually connected: Nature situated in the solitude of the moors.

Her time in Brussels eventually resulted in homesickness and ill health. However, her strength of will sustained her until she was called home following the death of Aunt Branwell. Years later Charlotte recollected that her sister was indeed energetic and capable in her studies with Professor Héger. Bearing the alien atmosphere of the Pensionnat better than schools at home, Emily's progress had not been achieved without a struggle as Charlotte remembers:

After the age of twenty, having meantime studied alone with diligence and perseverance, she went with me to an establishment on the Continent: the same suffering and conflict ensued [...]. Once more she seemed sinking, but this time she rallied through the mere force of resolution: with inward remorse and shame she looked back on her former failure, and resolved to conquer in this second ordeal. She did conquer; but the victory cost her dear. She was never happy till she carried her hard-won knowledge back to the remote English village, the old parsonage house, and desolate Yorkshire hills ("Prefatory Note" 753).

Unlike Charlotte, who approached the lessons in a compliant manner owing to both to her desire to please Héger, with whom she had fallen in love, and to excel in her grasp of learning, Emily initially balked at the idea of writing to imitate. Always an autonomous thinker, she may not have appreciated supervision and corrections on her work. Recognizing her "strong and imperious will," the professor persisted (Gaskell 230) and noticed that she had a strong facility for imagery and logic. Likewise, she preferred topics on which she knew as much or more than Héger

(Lonoff xiviii). In each *devoir*, she challenges existing orthodoxies in both the religious and secular spheres in her explorations of death and life. She also makes a strong case for the unregulated workings of Nature (in the form of the cat and the butterfly) as opposed to the fabricated world of humans in her search for liberty. Although life may have been difficult for her in Belgium, her work reveals a significant maturation. Her continued explorations of time and space, the boundaries of life and death and the “space between,” the powers of nature, interrelations of process, being as becoming, and actualization reached a level of sophistication that places her in the realm of unconventional thinkers. Examining Nature’s paradoxes, she perfected her abilities to develop arguments using a series of antitheses. Her thought processes regarding the human / non-human relationship suggest that both exist in cosmos where with no barrier between them. At the same time, she deftly incorporates her views on the hypocrisy of social conventions, her moral severity, and her misanthropic tendencies. Indeed, the entire *devoir* project demonstrates her deep desire to circumvent hierarchical categorizations and break barriers, an approach that prepares her to write her greatest *opus*, *Wuthering Heights*.

M. Constantin Héger admired Emily’s style and command, observing that Emily had a head for logic and a capability for argument, unusual in a man, and rare indeed in a woman. He writes:

She should have been a man—a great navigator. Her powerful reason would have deduced new spheres of discovery from the knowledge of the old; and her strong, imperious will would never have been daunted by opposition or difficulty; never have given way but with life. Her

faculty of imagination was such that, if she had written a history, her view of the scenes and characters would have been so vivid, and so powerfully expressed, and supported by such a show of argument, that it would have dominated over the reader, whatever might have been his previous opinions, or his cooler perceptions of its truth (qtd. in Gaskell 151).

Rating Emily's genius higher than Charlotte's, Héger saw Emily as "egotistical and exacting compared to Charlotte, who was always unselfish; and in the anxiety of the elder to make her younger sister contented, she allowed her to exercise a kind of unconscious tyranny over her" (151).

As Héger notes, she was more like a man in her rational capabilities and her fearlessness in the face of challenges. He not only admired the authority that she achieved as a result of her imperious will, but also felt that her "stubborn tenacity" impaired the expression of her formidable gifts. As with her practices in her poetry and diaries, Emily also frequently transgressed codes of "syntax, politeness, hierarchy, family sentiment, and discourse appropriate to young ladies" (Lonoff 67). While Héger genders her as a man and her sister Charlotte describes her as "stronger than a man" and "simpler than a child," Stevie Davies points out that such stereotypes had no place in Emily's vocabulary (34). Emboldened by her personal courage, Emily chose to live, write, and die in her own way regardless of how others constructed her. This strength of will allowed her to explore the space of humans and animals in the cosmos. As in her entire body of work, in the *devoirs*, she authorizes herself as the

subject of her own experience, especially in her “Lettre—Ma Chère Maman,” with no thought regarding her eccentricities or what others may regard as unimportant.

I begin my analysis by looking at two seemingly innocent *devoir* projects on the cat and the butterfly and their meanings, which I see as key documents in the development of her organic philosophy. In Brussels, Brontë was away from her animal menagerie at the parsonage, which included dogs, cats, and birds, whose company she preferred. As shown in previous chapters, her drawings and paintings of her cherished animals and birds convey the tenderness that she felt for her fellow creatures. In her “Dairy Paper” of 1845, she reports that Tabby had returned to the parsonage. However, lost were her kitty Tiger and her beloved “Hero which with the geese was given away and is doubtless dead” (Diary Paper, July 30, 1845). Though she “enquired on all hands and could hear nothing of Hero,” she notes that “Keeper and Flossey are well also the canary acquired 4 years since” (“Diary Paper”).

These personal accounts convey her emotions regarding her animals, some of which were domesticated, while others were wild, but cared for by her. Unlike many proper Victorian ladies, her animals were not ornamental accessories, but her dearest companions. As I show, in the *devoirs* she all but envisions a non-hierarchical world where animals and humans live together in harmony. She does not see them as pets, but rather as companions in her journey; therefore, her interrogations of the dimensions of life and death include animals as well. In her navigation of the spaces of civilization and the wild, she refused to differentiate.

Dated May 15, 1842, “Le Chat.” purportedly is about cats—and indeed it is. While she believes cats are mysterious and subtle in their manipulations, she

concludes that dogs are more forthright and have no agenda other than love of their human. The cat, on the other hand, is more secretive in its agenda. This leads to her using the cat as a metaphor for human behavior, in this case the behavior of humans, who tout their own civilized behavior and “humanity,” while committing violence against animals, such as in the sport of fox-hunting. Brontë minces no words, opening her *devoir* with a strong thesis statement: “I can say with sincerity that I like cats; also I can give very good reasons why those who despise them are wrong” (“Le Chat” 56). Her straightforward, sardonic approach demonstrates her disdain for those who dislike cats. She argues that “a cat is an animal who has more human feelings than almost any other being [...] the cat, although it differs in some physical points, is extremely like us in disposition” (56).

Her critique of polite society and the conventions of the upper eschelons continues. Moving to the crux of her hard-driving argument in this *devoir*, she notes that the cat becomes the symbol for the hypocrisy of polite society acting “in its own interest” and sometimes hiding “its misanthropy under the guise of amiable gentleness” (56). The cat does not tear “what it desires from its master’s hand”; instead, it approaches with a caressing air, rubs its pretty little head against him, and advances a paw whose touch is soft as down” (56). Brontë emphatically argues that “in cats, this behavior is classified as hypocrisy, while in humans, it is politeness” (56). In an astonishingly unladylike move, she asserts that this “politeness” manifests in “the affectionate murder of lapdogs by delicate ladies, the murder of foxes during the hunt, and the crushing of a beautiful butterfly between a child’s eager fingers”

(56). Brontë's powerful critique delivers a strong blow to those who participate in the murder of her fellow creatures.

She considers these behaviors, generally acceptable in polite society, to be "just as cruel as the cat with a rat hanging from its mouth" (56). She talks about the ingratitude of cats because they guess our motives for granting them favors. She cunningly concludes that cats owe all their misery and all their qualities to their great ancestor-- humankind. Her cutting assault on humans vis-à-vis cats is to announce that the cat was not wicked in Paradise (58). This proclamation is reflective of Wesleyan theology regarding life before the Fall when humans lived in perfect harmony with God and animals lived an animal-perfect life. After the Fall, animals destroyed each other and were "exposed to the violence and cruelty of him that is now their common enemy—man" (Wesley 4).²

Using cat behavior to get at human culpability, Brontë scorns traditional orthodoxies and revolts against behavior that is disingenuous. In the end, if cats are to be condemned for their behaviors, humans who engage in hypocritical behavior need to suffer the same consequences, she argues, seeming to view them as co-equal in feeling and culpability. It is important to Brontë that felines and other animals seem to decide their own hierarchical structure but are influenced by human behavior as well. Here, again, she seems to suggest the elimination of barriers between the human and the non-human, so that cats, in fact, may learn the behavior of the humans who love them. Her harsh commentary on the most undesirable qualities of civilization leads her to write in a similar manner regarding views of the life and death cycle, specifically addressing the violence of existence, and the afterlife in "Le Papillon."

In her *devoir* on the butterfly, Emily grasps the opportunity to produce a piece that rigorously conveys the foundation for her philosophical and theological ideas thus setting the stage for *Wuthering Heights*. Perhaps the most anthologized of her *devoirs*, “Le Papillon,” dated August 11, 1842, Brontë continues her philosophical explorations of Nature and death. Offering speculations on the predator/prey relationship, she regards death as a continuation of life not necessarily an afterlife in a heavenly place envisioned by the Anglican church. In fact, I see Brontë as demonstrating little credence for anything of traditional spirituality or even humanity, but rather she offers scorn even for the Christian God of creation. In contrast to her essay on “Le Chat,” in “Le Papillon” Brontë articulates a process of existence that is impersonal and based on the clash of elemental energies (see Miller 163). Her hyperbolic perspectives find their origins in Nature’s seeming brutal cycle of events on the moors where air, earth, fire, and water meet in displays of elemental phenomena such as thunder, lightning, rain, and volcanic-like explosions. Brontë then embeds features of these events in Nature in the people and animals that she creates in her writing. Nussey remembers that Emily “especially had a gleesome delight” in Nature’s “nooks of beauty” with particular attention to “moralizing on the strong and the weak” and the “brave and the cowardly” (*Reminiscences*).

Now, more emphatically unrelenting and, in fact, demanding, she literally places the almighty on notice: she does not let up questioning why a benevolent God would have created such a violent world. She writes complexly about the nightingale who had just begun her vespers. Her choice of the bird traditionally known for her beautiful song presages a connection between love and death, specifically the mother

bird's love for her offspring and her possible death if not in body, but of her voice. The nightingale's voice is her means of expression—of delivering her message to those who would listen. However, there is a paradox here: her voice calls her young to her and simultaneously alerts the hunter to kill her. Offering two possible outcomes, Brontë writes, "Poor fool, is it [the song] to guide the bullet to your breast or the child to your brood that you sing so loud and clear? Silence that untimely tune, perch yourself on your nest; tomorrow, perhaps, it will be empty" (176). Following her empathetic guidance to the bird, Brontë ardently proclaims, "All creation is equally mad" (176). Not only does she see the universe in terms of its interconnectivity and impermanence, but also she recognizes the violence that occurs as one being tramples another.

An early anecdotal account confirms Brontë's curiosity regarding the relationship between humans and non-humans. Occupying different, fluid positions regarding Nature's violence and emphasizing what she regards as the "principle of destruction" in Nature, she concludes:

Behold those flies playing above the brook; the swallows and fish diminish their number every minute. These will become, in their turn, the prey of some tyrant of the air or water; and man for his amusement or his needs will kill their murderers. Nature is an inexplicable problem; it exists on a principle of destruction. Every being must be the tireless instrument of death to others, or itself must cease to live, yet nonetheless

we celebrate the day of our birth, and we praise God for
having entered such a world. (“Le Papillon” 176)

Brontë concludes that nature is an “inexplicable problem” in which life paradoxically depends on death. In a cosmos existing “on a principle of destruction, every being must be the tireless instrument of death to others” (176). J. Hillis Miller describes this principle as Nature’s constant act of suicide, through which the life of each being depends on the death of others (164). In effect, the cosmos must tear itself apart to prolong its own life. For Brontë, humans are part of this annihilistic equation for they wantonly indulge in inflicting pain on other human beings. Animals, on the other hand, do not premeditatively do this. For them it is a matter of survival. Recognizing that religion, as she understands it, barely deals with such issues, Brontë offers a surprise by asking us to “praise God” for being in a world that is counter to Christianity. She appears to be positioning herself on the many sides of the argument in order to get to the crux of her argument—the creation of her own cosmos. It is only through the destruction of the current hierarchical systems her new world will prevail. Her critique of the artificial barriers that civilization has created between humans and between humans and Nature forecasts, or perhaps synthesizes, her views on the new cosmos that she envisions. At this point, she continues her active investigations of life and death that will evolve into her interpretations of the interstices between two states ordinarily regarded as separate. In Emily’s mind, creation could only be described, not understood.

In another example of this interrogation of Nature's paradoxes in the butterfly *devoir*, she asks why the worm was created; she follows with the gnawing question that had prompted her life-long philosophical investigations: "Why was man created? He torments, he kills, he devours, he suffers, dies, is devoured—there you have his whole story" (178). Believing that the universe is a "vast machine constructed only to produce evil," Emily crushes the caterpillar under her feet (178) proclaiming that the world should have been destroyed in a similar fashion. But, in a kind of morbid miracle, suddenly, as soon as she crushes the caterpillar, a butterfly appears—"symbol of the world to come" (178). At this moment in her *devoir*, she decides that "the ugly caterpillar is the origin of the splendid butterfly" (178). This unusual move departs from process, which, I argue, has been a great part of her investigations. The caterpillar was never allowed to metamorphize. Janet Gezari claims that annihilation sustains regeneration and renewal in Nature can be assured only by "a putrefaction that is full of life" (125). So must the living die violently to assure future existence? No scholar has provided an answer to this question. Perhaps it is simply one of the mysteries of Nature that Brontë, the "Sphinx of Literature" leaves to her readers' imaginations.

In a more reflective section of "Le Papillon," Brontë presents a powerful metaphor comparing her imagination to the bleakness of winter in a continuation of the pessimism that we see in her *devoir*. She is in

one of those moods that everyone falls into sometimes, when the world of the imagination suffers a winter that blights its vegetation; when the light of life seems to go out and existence becomes a barren desert

where we wander, exposed to all the tempests that blow under heaven,
without hope of rest or shelter—in one of these black humors, I was
walking one evening at the edge of a forest. (“Le Papillon” 176)

Conveying her hopelessness, she embeds the winter of her mood into the stark conditions created by the tempests and barrenness characteristic of the season. The deadness that she experiences in her walk matches her own “black humor” (176). Here, again, she does not see Nature as separate and different from her being. Continuing her reflection, she moves from winter to summer, a time when “the sun was still shining high in the west and the air resounded with the songs of birds. All appeared happy, but for me, it was only an appearance” (176). Nature’s paradoxical themes resembling life and death allow her to create a narrative in her imagination. Although she is writing an exercise for the professor here, she appears to be delving into her innermost soul to express her deep connection with Nature’s seasonal moods, perhaps the only basis she can find to convey her own emotions. Seldom does Brontë allow such intimacy.

Although she had obdurately dismissed any connection with traditional religious practices years ago, she still allowed for the presence of a “God within my breast / Almighty ever-present Deity” (E. Brontë, No. 125, January 2, 1846, 5-6). She has long intimated that she has no intention of reviving any spirituality long lost; she is inventing her own spiritual experiences based on her love of Nature. For her, heaven can be encountered in the world and does not need to be raised to an existence beyond human life. She views heaven and earth as spheres not separate, but overlapping and interlocking, and, ultimately, immanent rather than transcendent (see

Marsden notes 38 RI). In other words, Nature's dependence on violence and destruction does not seem to make her afraid of Nature or discontinue her urgent need to be in Nature. Having personally observed the destructive qualities of Nature, she accept them as part of her being just as she accepts the creative energy of the storms that she so exhilaratingly describes in her poetry.

Her vividly active imagination takes charge as she ends the *devoir* with a complex and dramatic rendition of the Christian apocalypse:

then surely, every grief that he inflicts on his creatures, be they human or animal, rational or irrational, every suffering of our unhappy nature is only a seed of that divine harvest which will be gathered when, Sin having spent its last drop of venom, Death having launched its final shaft, both will perish on the pyre of a universe in flames and leave their ancient victims to an eternal empire of happiness and glory. (E. Brontë, "Le Papillon" 178)

Notice that it is a masculine god who "inflicts grief on his creatures." "He" is a hierarchical figure who is separate from his creatures, not among them. In a cosmos of transcendence and in the religious doctrines that Brontë rejects, this would be the case. I argue that her narrative here sets out to create a scenario where destruction and death move to annihilate the present world—including the "last drop of venom" (178) that sin brings-- to bring forth world that she envisions, a world of immanence. When Death "launches its final shaft," sin and suffering will be eliminated in the ensuing conflagration resulting in a new world. This renewal can happen only with the total destruction of past lives, ideas, and ideals. This idea may presage Brontë's preference

for an eschatological afterlife the moors following physical death. Only after the physical world has been reimagined, can such a heaven be possible. In the immanent world that Brontë suggests in this passage, there would be neither sin nor the moral judgment resulting from it. This premise suggests a kind a pantheistic communion. Death and life would be on a continuum.

In contrast to the Christian notion of endings and beginnings, of Apocalypse and redemption, Brontë provides a mere caterpillar as her sign and image of Nature's cycle of life and death. She writes

As the ugly caterpillar is the origin of the splendid butterfly, so this globe is the embryo of a new heaven and a new earth whose poorest beauty will infinitely exceed your mortal imagination. And when you see the magnificent result of that which seems so base to you now how you will scorn your blind presumption, in accusing Omniscience for not having made nature perish in her infancy. (178)

While we consider the elegant language that Brontë presents here, it is important to remember that she, as writer of this *devoir*, crushed the caterpillar in a violent and destructive act probably because of its ugliness. Could it be then that she is using a lowly creature in Nature as symbol for the ugliness that she sees in civilization, her code word for polite society? Surprisingly, although she crushes the caterpillar, a beautiful butterfly appears, not necessarily the result of metamorphosis. Could she have missed a premise in her argument? It appears so. However, if we compare the “annihilation” of the caterpillar to the conflagration necessary for her embryonic idea of a “new heaven and a new earth,” such symbolism seems necessary although

directly conflicting with Brontë's previous iterations of the natural relationships between creatures. There is no explanation except her recognition that death must occur in some manner for a new and magnificent life to begin in her "genesis" story.

It is difficult to come to a conclusion as to her meaning when she writes of "Omniscience" in this passage. Although one of the characteristics of the Christian god, Omniscience is not ordinarily one of the terms by which this deity is addressed. More characteristically, Brontë would apply this term to Nature's brilliance and wisdom. She scolds those, who, in their "blind presumption" (178) would have preferred the destruction of Nature in her infancy. In some sense, Brontë recognizes the paradoxical import of her statement. If Nature had perished in her infancy, there would have been no corporeal world for Emily or for her writing. She depends on the juxtaposition of the corporeal to the incorporeal in her interrogations of the death experience. Nature must be free to nature herself (*natura naturans*) in Brontë's conception of the cosmos. The corporeal existence of humanity provides a portal of sorts to the afterlife. However, there is no direct line of communication between the two realms, at least in the religious indoctrination to which Brontë had been subjected. Nevertheless, without this training in her childhood, she may never have had the opportunity to disagree. Perhaps then, this experience should be regarded a foundation from which to develop her grand thinking process and her articulation of a world in which the gap between the living and the dead might be traversed.

It is important to add here, that in this *devoir*, Brontë firmly establishes one of the major premises that she argues in *Wuthering Heights*, which should be presented in her own words: "so this globe is the embryo of a new heaven and a new earth

whose poorest beauty will infinitely exceed your mortal imagination” (178).³ Indeed, as will be discussed further in the final chapter of this study, the first generation of the *Wuthering Heights* narrative, destruction and gloom prevail; in the second generation, she eventually arrives at a world where there is hope for the future. Thus, Brontë shows the capacity to hold both conflicting ideas as possible in her narrative and philosophical world. Catherine’s corporeal death, an event that is necessary for Brontë’s vision of a new world, is the cataclysmic event that sets all activity in motion. Catherine must die to continue living in the incorporeal realm that Brontë creates philosophically in “Le Papillon.” Her hope for a cosmos of immanence does not manifest fully until she reaches the final scene in *Wuthering Heights* when Mr. Lockwood returns to the gravesite where Catherine, Heathcliff, and Edgar Linton, are buried in adjoining graves. Although the scene appears to be peaceful, the remains of Catherine, Heathcliff, the representative of untamed Nature, and Edgar, who represents civilization, are mixing among themselves and with the soil beneath the surface. They no longer are physically individual, but become one with the moors. This is a major move toward which Brontë is working in “Le Papillon.”

Turning from “Le Papillon” to “Lettre--Ma Chère Maman,” we encounter the depth and complexity of Brontë’s familial and personal emotional landscape. Emily’s ability to write to her mother as though she were alive also speaks to her ability to use the imagination to navigate the complexity and fluidity of life and death. Although the details of Héger’s assignment are murky, it appears that he assigned a *devoir* in response to Alexandre Soumet’s poem about “La Pauvre Fille” (The Poor Girl).⁴ The

poem features a young girl who asks, “Oh! why do not I have a mother?” (9)

Comparing her situation to a young bird whose mother brings “sweet food” (7), she appears in a state of total dejection uttering “Nothing belongs to me on earth. I do not even have a cradle” (12-13). The poor girl in the poem was left on a stone in front of the church and has returned there to wait for her mother. The girl’s recollections of the tombs and coffins surrounding her may have evoked her own memories of the starkness of death as her front garden had not flowers, but a sea of graves. Death was nothing new in either permeated her existence as she responded to Héger’s prompt. While Charlotte completed this assignment quickly, Emily’s response was delayed perhaps because of the need for her to further refine her skills in French and also her illness while in Brussels. When she was able to write her *devoir*, one wonders what emotions she may have experienced as she composed a letter to a mother whom she could scarcely remember except as a lack. It had been more than twenty years since Maria Brontë died. She was described as “something of a bluestocking” and a devout Methodist, many of whose thoughts represented Evangelical religious thinking of the time (Dinsdale 19). Maria’s daughters came to know her through her writing. In particular, they may have been influenced by her work entitled “The Advantages of Poverty in Religious Concerns” an essay reflecting on the prides and prejudices of learning and philosophy (qtd. in Shorter). Maria argued that poverty should not be regarded as an evil in itself. Rather, she believed that the poor are more able to live a religious life because of the lack of diversions made possible by wealth. Maria accentuated life beyond the physical, a conception that many of the English people grasped, at least those without adequate means of survival.

Although there is no evidence that Maria valued Nature over more traditional spirituality, she ardently embraced Methodism, an offshoot of Anglicanism. Emily appears to have embraced the “enthusiastic tradition,” an important feature conveyed through Methodism as Emma Mason notes (2). Despite Patrick Brontë’s preaching from an Anglican pulpit, vestiges of the early Methodism in which he was trained remained and were transmitted to his children.⁵ Methodism with its emphasis on Nature rather than on doctrine appears to have left an imprint on Emily’s spiritual life. In keeping with the enthusiastic tradition, Methodism also offered a language allowing for passionate expression of ideas for each gender, not just the male. Although Emily eventually rejected much in the religious traditions offered by both the Anglicans and the Methodists, she retained the perspectives on Nature featured by the Methodists, in particular those regarding the relationships of humans and animals to the deity. She constructed that world based on her early memories at the parsonage and her experiences on the moors. In her letter, she appears to connect these experiences with lingering memories that she had buried since her mother’s death.

Emily’s words in this *devoir* convey a personal loneliness not previously expressed in her writing. While her response may have been perfunctory, there is another possibility suggesting some degree of emotion. Using her imagination, she creates a scenario in which her mother is at home in Haworth waiting to offer consolation should Emily need emotional support, surely a heartwrenching positionality to take regarding her dead mother. Whatever the case, it is evident that she transports herself to a world in which her mother is alive, an incredible imaginative feat, and possibly available to offer comfort while Emily experiences her

loneliness in Brussels. Although she may have been too young at the age of three to understand the full extent of her mother's premature death, she would have heard her mother's last words: "Oh my poor children, my poor children" as she was in the room when her mother died (Lock and Dixon 229). Addressing her "dear Mama" in the *devoir*, she writes:

It seems to me a very long time since I have seen you, and a long time, even, that I have not heard from you. If you were ill, they would have written me; I am not afraid of that, but I am afraid that you think less often of your daughter in her absence. ("Lettre-- Ma Chère Maman" 150)

These words offer a chastisement of the mother figure in a confrontational tone. But, also, given that her mother has been dead for decades, it perhaps signals the daughter's fear that death cancels the emotional bonds between mother and child. In the second part of the letter, there is a shift when the narrative expresses the need of a little girl to talk to her mother. "Saddened by the very little things," Emily "cannot help crying" (150). Then, referring to her decline in health while in Brussels, she mentions her frail health as well as her confinement "the whole day in a solitary chamber" (150) where she hears the "joyous cries of the other children, who play and laugh without thinking of me" (150). She expresses her longing "to be at home once again, and to see the house and the people that I love so much. At least if you could come here, I believe that your presence alone would cure me" (150). While Emily has frequently conveyed her loneliness throughout her poetic offerings, this is the first instance where there is any expression of the deep melancholia she may have been

experiencing as a result of her mother's absent presence—an emotional state that she never directly addressed.

Despite the very proper language that she employs in this “lettre,” Emily’s sense of urgency is evident in her reference to crying as a result of her loneliness and perhaps fear of the unknown, specifically the possibility of death. This emotion, usually conveying vulnerability, is uncharacteristic of Brontë insofar as we know her. However, we do know that she may have been in quarantine during this time period, an experience that exacerbated her terrible longing to be home. As Margaret Homans notes, both the “nineteenth-century experience and literary convention” suggest that a young woman in quarantine often may have been dying (150 WWP). The serious nature of Emily’s illness may thus have contributed to the ambivalence that she shows toward the absent mother—a mixture of repressed anger and yearning. Rarely has Brontë expressed such tenderness in her writing. This assignment, composed shortly after her frightening flirtation with death, may have evoked depths of tenderness that she had long buried.

Biographical sources also indicate that the mother replacements Emily found after her mother died either also soon died or were not to her liking. Her older sisters Maria and Elizabeth died early. Branwell. Maria’s sister, known as Aunt Branwell, came to Haworth to help with the children until her death, but Emily had a love/hate relationship with her. Nancy Garrs, an former servant at the parsonage, later commented, “Miss Branwell were another soart, she were so cross-like an’ fault-finding an’ so close[...]” (qtd, in Gérin 6). It was probably the kindly Tabitha Aykroyd who influenced Emily the most. When Tabby, a “joined Methodist,” came to the

parsonage, she offered Emily special care and affection as well as strict discipline. The loss of her older sisters and the lukewarm relationship with the help and with her aunt magnify the loss of her mother. Already well capable of inventing her own narrative, she creates a virtual mother in this *devoir*, imagining her as her own living mother, or at least a conscious interlocutor, thereby acting as if the mother could respond. She adds, “Come then, dear Mama, and forgive this letter; it speaks only of me, but I myself would speak to you of many other things” (Brontë 150). This almost sarcastic acknowledgement of enforced silence of the dead also speaks volumes about the vulnerability the daughter may have felt in her deep and abiding desire to break the barrier or membrane between life and death.

Brontë more specifically articulates her philosophical views on death in the *devoir* entitled “Le Palais de la Mort.” In October of 1842, Professor Héger assigned a project inspired by “La Mort” in Jean-Pierre Florian’s *Fables* of 1792, which poeticizes a gathering in hell for the purpose of choosing Death’s prime minister (Phelps 119-120).⁶ Emily responds to the prompt with a stunning essay entitled “Le Palais de la Mort,” in which the figures in this *devoir* reside in “The Palace of Death,” an allegorical space representing Hell. Describing Death, she writes: “Death, looking down from the height of her throne, smiled hideously to see what multitudes hastened to serve her” (E. Brontë, “Le Palais de la Mort” 225). Brontë’s figures of evil appear in pairs as in the recital of a litany reminiscent of the seven deadly sins. Importantly, while the title of Florian’s allegory shows death in the feminine, he presents the actual figure of death in the masculine. In contrast, Emily Brontë invokes the trope of *prosopopoeia*, presenting Death in the feminine as in the French “la mort” in her

construction of an elaborate allegory extending a metaphor throughout the entire project to show feminine power.

The candidates for prime minister appear in the masculine with the exception of Fanaticism:

Among the first arrivals were Wrath and Vengeance, who hurried to station themselves before her Majesty, loudly arguing about the justice of their particular rights. Envy and Treason took their positions behind in the shadow. Famine and Plague, attended by their companions Sloth and Avarice, secured very convenient places in the crowd and cast a scornful eye over the other guests. Nonetheless they were forced to give way when Ambition and Fanaticism appeared; the retinues of those two personages filled the council chamber, and they imperiously demanded an immediate audience. (225-226)

In this *devoir*, Death moves past all of these evil personages with the exception of Ambition and Fanaticism. None has more power than Death herself. Ambition, in the feminine, promises to “Lead the elite of the race to your [Death’s] portals” as she harvests them in their flower. She promises that Fanaticism, depicted in the masculine, will be her instrument as she works. Fanaticism, shaking his “savage head, and raising toward Death an eye burning with the fire of obsession,” questions Ambition’s bold comparison of herself with him.

As her majesty wavers in her decision, the door of the hall opened, allowing entrance of an unexpected personage who “had a figure that seemed to glow with joy and health, her step was as light as a zephyr, and Death herself appeared uneasy at her

first approach” (228). Warning that Civilization “will come to dwell on this earth with us, and each century will amplify her power,” female Death halts the advancement of the vices who arrived earlier at the gathering. Death eventually chose the mystery figure, later identified as Intemperance, as her viceroy. We must be reminded that Brontë developed her theories on death in a manner strikingly different from many dogmas dominating the age in which she lived; she actually experienced the trauma of death many times. As mentioned earlier in this analysis, Patrick Brontë recalled that his wife “died, if not triumphantly, at least calmly and with a holy yet humble confidence that Christ was her Saviour and heaven her eternal home” (Dinsdale 20). Although Brontë did not yet fully reject heaven as an eternal home, her explorations were progressing toward that conclusion. Eventually, her relationship with Nature as a force unto itself prompted her to move toward a consideration of the moors as the heaven where she intended to spend life following her death. Emily’s version speaks to her need for freedom—in her world, without freedom, one is dead. It is the civilization of polite society that caused consternation for her.

Before, during, and after the completion of these *devoir* assignments, the Brontë sisters were met with reports of the deaths of William Weightman, Patrick Brontë’s young curate, Martha Taylor, a close family friend, and finally Aunt Branwell. These deaths were preceded, of course, by the untimely deaths of her mother and two older sisters in her childhood years. Certainly this morbid series of events speaks to the how imminent death seemed in an age prior to the medical wonders of the twentieth century. But “*Le Palais de la Mort*” allowed Emily to explore the nature of Death more fully and profoundly in personal, but also spiritual,

philosophical, and literary engagements with this fateful reality about life. This essay about death, as I have shown, illustrates her vivid, hard look at death as an entity she could interrogate and make herself equal to. In writing it, she showed that she could not be conquered by life's darker meanings, but that she would remain immanently *in* this material world despite her own eventual demise.

It is particularly impressive, or more aptly, astonishing that Brontë managed to create a cohesive argument in the myriad of topics she was required to broach in her writing of the *devoirs*. M. Constantin Héger, though rigid in his approach, encouraged his students to think thereby allowing Emily's unique approaches to the assignments. While "Le Chat" and "Le Papillon" may appear whimsical to some readers because they provide analyses of feline behavior and butterfly beauty, the messages that Brontë conveys are incisive in their critique of the human condition. She brilliantly connects her essay on "La Mort" to the human condition in her naming of Civilization and its collaborator, Intemperance, as Death's viceroys in Hell. A further connection is established as she directly challenges death in her virtual creation of the mother that she lost so many years ago. Héger's fascination with her "powerful reason," her "strong imperious will," and her "faculty" of imagination have been well warranted.

Her time in Brussels, although challenging to her individuality, offered an experience of thinking beyond Haworth thereby contributing to the haunting ideas expressed in *Wuthering Heights*. In order to construct an ontology of death, one must have not only the personal experience, but also the technique of how to express it in writing. The Brussels assignments provided the techniques that she needed. As

customary with Brontë, she had her own ideas—ideas that find their full fictional expansion in her only novel.

To conclude, then, in the *devoirs* I have examined here, I have shown that Emily Brontë depicts the birds and animals in her depiction of them as more humane than humans. Thus, for her, the transcendent God of the Victorians gave way to an immanent world that effaces hierarchy—a world where there is an equality of being. While transcendence causes submission to a single perspective, immanence erases hierarchy. Emily's intense philosophical investigations in Brussels provided the culminating foundations for her fictional representations in *Wuthering Heights*, all of which deal with her complex ideas on the dimensions of space and time as they relate to the death-to-life cycle. I have also examined her ability to posit a philosophical third space between a life and death, a space where Nature's violence and destruction are considered as part of existence. In addition, this third space offers a point of critique from which to examine human identity and the flaws in Christian theology. In the following chapter, I more fully develop the philosophical ideas intimated in the *devoirs*—ideas that lead up to the full-blown organic philosophy found in *Wuthering Heights*.

¹ The titles of her *devoirs* are “Lettre d'un Frere à un Frere,” “L'Amour Filial,” “Lettre—Ma Chère Maman,” “Le Palais de la Mort,” “Le Siège d'Oudearde,” “Le Roi Harold avant la Bataille de Hastings” “Le Chat,” “Lettre,” and “Le Papillon.”

² In his famous “Sermon 60,” John Wesley explores the spirituality of animals vis-à-vis humans. The sermon begins with an assertion that God cares for all of creation and then asks, “How is it that misery of all kinds overspreads the face of the earth?” Wesley then discusses the difference between humans and animals? He found no ground to believe that animals had any capability for knowing, loving, or obeying God. Just as loving obedience to God was the perfection of man, so a loving obedience to man was the perfection of brutes” (4-5).

³ It seems appropriate here to mention that years later, Gilles Deleuze offered a similar approach when he proclaimed that “the world is an egg,” not as a biological being in germ, but rather as different than the individual that emerges from it (251 DR). Importantly, Deleuze’s proclamation indicates that actualization does not restrict being, but contributes to an overflow in which the present holds more than it seems; it is comprised of the past which is also its future (See Todd May 70).

⁴ Alexandre Soumet’s poem is shown here in the original French—with translation shown below.

J’ai fui ce pénible sommeil
Qu’aucun songe heureux n’accompagne ;
J’ai devancé sur la montagne
Les premiers rayons du soleil.

S’éveillant avec la nature,
Le jeune oiseau chantait sur l’aubépine en fleurs ;
Sa mère lui portait sa douce nourriture ;
Mes yeux se sont mouillés de pleurs !

Oh ! pourquoi n’ai-je pas de mère ?
Pourquoi ne suis-je pas semblable au jeune oiseau
Dont le nid se balance aux branches de l’ormeau ?
Rien ne m’appartient sur la terre ;
Je n’ai pas même de berceau ;
Et je suis un enfant trouvé sur une pierre
Devant l’église du hameau.

Loin de mes parents exilée,
De leurs embrassements j’ignore la douceur,
Et les enfants de la vallée
Ne m’appellent jamais leur sœur !
Je ne partage point les jeux de la veillée ;
Jamais sous un toit de feuillée
Le joyeux laboureur ne m’invite à m’asseoir,
Et de loin je vois sa famille,
Autour du sarment qui pétille,
Chercher sur ses genoux les caresses du soir.
Vers la chapelle hospitalière
En pleurant j’adresse mes pas :
La seule demeure ici-bas
Où je ne sois point étrangère,
La seule devant moi qui ne se ferme pas !

Souvent je contemple la pierre
Où commencèrent mes douleurs :
J'y cherche la trace des pleurs
Qu'en m'y laissant peut-être y répandit ma mère !

Souvent aussi mes pas errants
Parcourent des tombeaux l'asile solitaire ;
Mais pour moi les tombeaux sont tous indifférents ;
La pauvre fille est sans parents
Au milieu des cercueils ainsi que sur la terre.

J'ai pleuré quatorze printemps
Loin des bras qui m'ont repoussée ;
Reviens, ma mère : je t'attends
Sur la pierre où tu m'as laissée.

Alexandre Soumet

I have fled that painful sleep
Which no happy dream accompanies;
I got ahead of the mountain
The first rays of the sun.

Awakening with nature,
The young bird sang on hawthorn in bloom;
His mother brought him his sweet food;
My eyes are wet with tears!

Oh ! why do not I have a mother?
Why am I not like the young bird
whose nest sways to the branches of the abalone?
Nothing belongs to me on earth;
I do not even have a cradle;
And I am a child found on a stone
In front of the church of the hamlet.

Far from my parents exile,
Of their embraces I do not know the sweetness,
And the children of the valley
Never call me their sister!
I do not share the games of the vigil;
Never under a roof of foliage
The merry plowman invites me to sit down,
And from afar I see his family,
Around the branch that sparkles,
Looking on his knees the caresses of the evening.

Towards the hospital chapel
Crying I address my steps:
The only dwelling here below
Where I am not strangers,
The only one in front of me that does not close!

I often contemplate the stone
Where my pains began:
I search for the traces of tears
That, perhaps leaving me there, spread my mother!

Often also my wanderings
Browse the tombs the lonely asylum;
But for me the tombs are all indifferent;
The poor girl is without parents
In the middle of coffins as well as on the ground.

I cried fourteen times
Far from the arms that pushed me away;
Come back, my mother: I'm waiting for you
On the stone where you left me.

⁵ Emily Brontë's awareness of Methodism, the religion dominating both her home and society, was profound. Methodism had its most dramatic outbursts in the West Riding area of Yorkshire, in which Haworth is situated and where Brontë lived, accommodating over 17,000 Methodist members from the half-million Methodist population of Britain in the nineteenth century. This number was supported by Methodist schools such as the Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge, attended by Brontë from the age of six, and the Wesleyan Woodhouse Grove, where Brontë's clergyman father was an examiner (Baxter 66). Haworth itself is considered by some church historians to have been the original site of Evangelical radicalism, the favourite preaching ground of John Wesley, leader of the Methodist movement, and where William Grimshaw, the preacher who Wesley chose to succeed him, in 1842.

⁶ Following are the applicable lines from Florian's fable, "Death's Choice of a Prime Minister:

Once on a time there was a king
Who wish'd his state more flourishing.
In hell he rear'd his awful throne,
(As King of Terrors he is known)
And, as the case did much import,
He call'd together his whole court
The question was what plague should be
The chief aid to his majesty.
First, from the lowest hell there came

Three spirits of most dreadful fame,
 FEVER, GOUT, and WAR.
Death gave them welcome ; for, of all
The ills that plague our earthly ball.

These most dreaded are.
Then PEST steps forward — all agree
That he too, has great potency.
Then comes a Doctor, at whose name
'Twas evident he had a claim.
Which caused e'en Death himself to doubt
How his selection must turn out.
But when the Vices all advance.
Death could no longer hesitate
Which most his service would enhance,
Or which was his true candidate:
Vice of all vice — INTEMPERANCE —
He chose prime minister of state (Phelps 119-120)

Chapter Five – “I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth”:

Dimensions of Love and Death in *Wuthering Heights*

[...] “Wuthering” being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there, at all time, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house, and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving the alms of the sun.

Emily Brontë WH 4

I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here.

Emily Brontë WH 64

Few hearts to mortals given
On earth so wildly pine
Yet none would ask a Heaven
More like the Earth than thine
Then let my winds caress thee—
Thy comrade let me be—
Since nought beside can bless thee—
Return and dwell with me—(21-28)

“Shall Earth no more inspire
thee” Emily Brontë, 1841 (No.
84)

“A perfect misanthropist’s heaven—and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us” (WH 3). Thus, Mr. Lockwood’s ejaculations lead the reader into the world that Emily Brontë creates in *Wuthering Heights*.

Lockwood is one of the three unfortunate men who dominate the narrative in the

beginning. The other two are Heathcliff and Joseph. Lockwood, the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange, finds Heathcliff to be a “capital fellow” (3). Heathcliff, the surly landlord, utters, “Go to the Deuce!” under his breath as he allows Lockwood to enter his dwelling (3). Finally, Joseph, the religious fanatic, soliloquizes, “The Lord help us!” as he takes care of Lockwood’s horse. We also meet Wuthering Heights, now a domicile of misery and unhappiness, abutted by a “few stunted firs” and “a range of gaunt thorns stretching their limbs one way, as if craving the alms of the sun” (4). Brontë’s choice of “wuthering,” an archaic term describing the “atmospheric tumult” to which the dwelling “is exposed in stormy weather” sets the stage for Catherine’s entrance, the extraordinary event that occurs when Lockwood calls on Heathcliff a second time. Isolation and the wind, motifs throughout Brontë’s *oeuvre*, reemerge and are often synonymous with the moors, a solitary space removed from “the stir of society” (4). The misanthropic solitude in which Heathcliff lives is wildly different than that sought by Catherine on the moors in both her corporeal and incorporeal states. She would have had no fondness for the performance of misanthropy at Wuthering Heights.

It is into this setting that Emily Brontë propels her heroine, Catherine Earnshaw, whose untimely death had occurred twenty years earlier. Catherine is already in her preferred eschatological space—yet she feels the need to return to the nostalgic memories of happier times when Wuthering Heights was a home bustling with activity. Graeme Tytler suggests that Brontë, whose homesickness is well documented, may have been indirectly conveying her own thoughts on house and home. Catherine is not nostalgic for her life of luxury at Thrushcross Grange where

life was very regulated, but instead misses the day-to-day activities at Wuthering Heights where she experienced more freedom of expression and movement. Ironically, Lockwood may have been drawn to Catherine's ancestral home for the same reason (233 HH). In happier times, Wuthering Heights brought pleasure to its inhabitants; now all that remained was vengeance and hatred. Catherine is not about to allow Lockwood or Heathcliff to "divide the desolation" (3) or dominate her story for she has other ideas to be revealed as this discussion proceeds. Years earlier, Brontë's heroine had refused to be indoctrinated by Joseph, who often held services in the drafty garret for her and Heathcliff during inclement weather. On one occasion, after shivering and groaning through Joseph's customary three-hour pontifications, Catherine tears the back of "Th' Helmet uh Salvation" and Heathcliff "pawsed his fit intuh t' first part uh "T Broad Way to Destruction" (16-17). As Joseph's account conveys, the young pair had only disdain for matters of salvation. Brontë's invention of these titles is reflective of her earlier criticism of the severity of religious indoctrination and also conveys her command of satire.¹

A woman of Catherine's station was expected to read the Bible—clearly, she was not interested. So Lockwood learns as chance leads him into the inner sanctum of Catherine's being long before Ellen Dean enters the narrative. Lulled into a state of semiconsciousness by a "glare of white letters" (16), his eyes seized upon a "red-ornamented title" (18) featuring Jabes Branderham's postulations based on "Seventy Times Seven, and the First of the Seventy First" (18), a passage from "Matthew 18" dealing with the necessity of forgiveness.² At this point in her life, Catherine feels no

need to offer the forgiveness suggested in these words. However, as I show presently in this analysis, forgiveness is actually Catherine's portal to the afterlife.

Off limits for years, her room had become a sacred space for Heathcliff who wanted her to haunt him after her death. A series of occurrences lead to the moment at the window, the extraordinary demonstration of Emily Brontë's organic philosophy, as I have shown in the introduction. First, when Lockwood decides to make his way across the moors for his second visit with Heathcliff, weather conditions could not have been predicted. However, the wind and weather combine to create a blizzard making Lockwood's return to Thrushcross Grange impossible. Thereupon, he had no choice but to spend the night at Wuthering Heights despite Heathcliff's unfriendly disposition. Secondly, it is in another random moment that Catherine's daughter and namesake leads Lockwood to her mother's childhood room anticipating no surprises. This was not to be the case! Were it not for the challenging weather, the story may not have happened.

As Graeme Tytler suggests, Brontë's symbolic incorporation of weather, particularly embedded in the commentary of Nelly Dean and Mr. Lockwood, offers insights into the development of her protagonists (WWH 39-40). While Lockwood generally notes the climatic features that affect his well being, he also provides the reader with important aspects of weather conditions in the rustic space to which he has relocated. For instance, after his experience at the window, he recalls that "at the first gleam of dawn, [he] took an opportunity of escaping into the free air, now clear, and still, and cold as impalpable ice" (E. Brontë 26 WH). Two years later upon his return, he appears to luxuriate in the "sweet, warm weather" in which he would have

been tempted “to waste a month among its solitudes” (271). Nelly’s comments, on the other hand, are sometimes impersonal as she describes the weather as a matter of course when she begins her day and, at other times, capturing the essence of Nature that Brontë embeds in her characters. Particularly remarkable are Nelly’s health advisements to a delirious Catherine regarding the strong wind “from the north-east” (108) when Catherine wanted to experience the open window on her deathbed; to Heathcliff a few days before his death Nelly cautioned him to avoid his nocturnal walks because of the moist weather in April (291). Nelly and Lockwood are observers while Catherine and Heathcliff are as tempestuous as the storms themselves. J. Hillis Miller points to the wind as an ancient and primitive symbol that Brontë utilizes to convey the violent patterns of life and death at *Wuthering Heights* and to accentuate the turbulent natures of her characters (170). It is the wind that creates movement thereby contributing to the unpredictable events that move her narrative forward. Just as important is the correlation of weather events on the moors chronicled by Rebecca Chesney in her previously referenced study and also by the commentary of Brontë herself, particularly in her “Diary Papers,” in which meteorological conditions are consistently featured.

Thus, in her first attempt at fictional prose writing, Emily Brontë features a storm on the moors, the optimal setting for the wind-blown entrance of Catherine. It is under similar conditions that Catherine’s prototype, A.G.A., the Queen of Gondal, arrived years earlier in Brontë’s epic poetic series. Although both Catherine and A.G.A. are catapulted into Brontë’s creative works by means of a storm at night, there is a difference: A.G.A. enters as a regal unattainable being who is larger than life.

Catherine, on the other hand, initially presents as small and helpless, a character who evokes sympathy, at least in the moment of her arrival at the window. However, the reader soon learns that her persistence more than compensates for what she lacks in stature and strength. Catherine appears to have risen from the storm itself. In her ghostly presence, essentially a rearrangement of the particles of her being in a less condensed configuration than in her physical state, she moves freely with the wind across the moors.

Yet, Lockwood is able to pull “its wrist on to the broken pane [...]”; still it wailed” and “maintained its tenacious gripe” (sic) (21). Finally, when “the fingers relaxed” (21), he is able to snatch his hand away. Catherine is distinctly in control of the situation and of Lockwood himself—she decides when to release his hand. Meanwhile, the sounds of the storm mix with Catherine’s “doleful cry moaning on!” (21). Catherine understands the language of the storm and communicates accordingly. Lockwood, on the other hand, taking note of the “feeble scratching outside,” suddenly notices that the pile of books that had entertained him earlier “moved as if thrust forward” (21). Perhaps Catherine wants Lockwood to tell her story—with certain stipulations as she speaks from beyond the grave through the ghostly winter wind.

That story features the death and rebirth of a well ensconced family of the Yorkshire moors beginning at the end of the eighteenth century. In her presentation of the different aspects of Catherine Earnshaw, Brontë creates a tapestry of events in Catherine’s life and afterlife based on the recollections of Ellen Dean (Nelly), the long-time housekeeper, filtered through Lockwood, the voyeuristic stranger from London. Catherine is always just outside of her own narrative randomly entering to

interrupt her constructions by others. Each time she appears, a cataclysmic event in Nature contributes to her entry. I suggest that perhaps Emily Brontë's recollections of the "earthquake" of 1824, actually the Crow Hill bog explosion, continue to persist in the perspectives that she presents on the power of Nature in *Wuthering Heights*. Regarded as a providential event by her father and his followers, this violent occurrence produced torrents of seven feet accompanied by airborne rocks, peat, and mud, "the air being charged with electrical matter" (Turner 151-152). This event was Emily's first recorded personal experience of the sublime supremacy of Nature—a pervasive theme in her work.

Beginning her novel *in medias res*, Brontë is able to manipulate space and time as she moves Catherine through the multidimensional world in her novel. This result is an atmosphere of randomness that continually piques the reader's interest. In order to manage the complexity of the novel and Brontë's interrogations, I present commentary and analysis on Catherine and Heathcliff's story under three headings in this chapter: Catherine and Heathcliff—A Convergence of Elemental Energies; Catherine's Death—Separation from Heathcliff; Heathcliff's Death—Reunion of Souls. Continuing the focus on the first-generation narrative in *Wuthering Heights*, this analysis also includes selected drawings that act as visual analogues complementing Brontë's writing. I argue, then, that through the first Catherine, Emily Brontë conveys her very deliberate thoughts on the nature of space and time resulting in a philosophy characterized by the fluidity of movement through various states of existence with a fixation on the afterlife. In effect, she is interrogating death, a prominent theme in both her and Catherine's life. This earthly expanse and its life-

giving wind offer a desirable afterlife for both Catherine and her creator in direct opposition to the heaven of Christianity.

In the introduction to this study, I argued that Brontë offers an “extraordinary event” in her initial presentation of Catherine, who is blown by the storm from the afterlife. Although Heathcliff has preserved her room as it was, her personal space has now been compromised by Lockwood’s vicarious invasions. As I have shown, his framework and set of rules as a male, who is also from a different part of the country, more politically and socially powerful, are different not only from hers while she lived, but most assuredly in the afterlife in “the space of death” that she creates on the moors, a self-designed marginal space, as Albert Myburgh argues (25). And, each time Catherine penetrates the story, the framework and set of rules are altered.

Several important entrances and exits are featured in this discussion: first, Heathcliff’s initial entry and the deaths of loved ones; secondly, her death; and lastly, her return and Heathcliff’s death. It is important to emphasize the importance of the moors as both a physical space and a metaphorical space in which events may or may be actualized. Their realization depends upon the game of chance in which Brontë indulges. She teases out a theorization of time in which Catherine appears in the past, present, and future. In effect, Catherine is able to move from the future and past to the present by means of the event. She achieved this state of freedom only after her physical death.

Death also may be construed as an event in Brontë’s narrat. According to Deleuze, there is the physical death of the body leading to a disintegration of that body. There is also the event of death that is realized in the actualization of a pure

incorporeal event (145-146 LS). As Piotrek Swiatkowi explains, while death has a predictable impact on the body and its environment, each of us dies in different ways (185). All of the features that contribute to an entrance from the virtual to the actual apply similarly to the death event: the exact moment is unpredictable as are the precise conditions. While Catherine lies dying, the moment of her death cannot be determined before its occurrence; the same holds true for Heathcliff as I explain later in this chapter.

There are other features in the time/space relationship that contribute to an understanding of Brontë's sophisticated thought processes. As opposed to the lack of punctuation in her "Diary Papers," in *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë uses punctuation effectively, but relies on her heteroglossic narrative technique thus allowing for multiple Catherines depending on who is speaking about her. Lockwood is the outsider who lives vicariously through Catherine's story while reporting it to the reader. Ellen Dean, the faithful family servant, is the insider who perhaps understands Catherine the best. She relates the story to Lockwood. Joseph, the proselytizer, tries to civilize Catherine by subjecting her to religious fanaticism. Then, there are Heathcliff and Edgar Linton, who both lay claim to Catherine. Their possessive natures cause her to be conflicted thus making her corporeal body a site of paradox where the natural world meets civilization.

Although many people in her life attempt to convey her emotions, it is actually Catherine who disrupts the flow every time she enters the story in either direct or indirect discourse. Her entrances and exits feature different aspects of her being and also her original thought patterns regarding love, death, and afterlife.

Brontë cleverly filters her own philosophical discoveries through Catherine. Thus, the story of Catherine and Heathcliff proceeds. Embedded in the discussion are snippets of Ellen Dean's secular catechism, her questions and answers intended for instruction. Nelly, with her insider wisdom, appears to capture the essence of each phase of the Catherine/Heathcliff relationship.

Catherine and Heathcliff— A Convergence of Elemental Energies

She was much too fond of Heathcliff—the greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him (Ellen Dean—E. Brontë WH 33).

Considerations of death do not appear to be of concern for young Catherine Earnshaw. The family's pet name for her is Cathy, a diminutive of her given name. "Mischievous and wayward" (30), she is wild as the wind on the moors and prefers to be there rather than inside Wuthering Heights, a strong edifice with "narrow windows deeply set in the wall" and "corners defended with large jutting stones" (4). These strong barriers protect the family from stormy conditions on the moors. For Catherine, however, they function as barricades separating her from Nature. In her youth, the family unit is strong with both parents still alive, and Hindley, her brother, not yet at his worst. This situation is not to last. Death will soon intervene. Meanwhile, a major event is to change her life forever.

Framed in Mr. Lockwood's narrative of Ellen Dean's words, the story really begins on a fine summer morning when Catherine Earnshaw's father announces his plan to walk to Liverpool, a distance of about sixty miles. He provides no reason for his journey, but eventually returns with a very unusual gift—not the riding whip that Cathy had requested, nor the fiddle that Hindley wanted. It is important to note that in

the sphere of gender consideration of the time, the fiddle would have been regarded as a feminine accoutrement and the riding whip masculine. From the beginning, Brontë places the instrument of greater power in the possession of her female heroine. Similarly, it is Catherine who reigns as the center of the narrative in what Deleuze theorizes as the aleatory point—the point from which problems arise. I suggest that Brontë places Catherine in this position to create continual tension. Each time Catherine seems to have faded from the story, she randomly interjects herself amidst the heteroglossia of multiple voices with different vocal patterns, dissimilar religious beliefs, and different economic classes, all existing in the same framework of Brontë's narrative.

The result is a heteroglossic presentation where there is no hierarchy for all of the voices that contribute to the representation of Brontë's fascinating heroine. In this non-hierarchical world, there are also no judgments of good and evil or right and wrong as in the transcendent model. This idea is in keeping with Brontë's adamant rejection of the mores and manners in which she was schooled. Also, in her organic fashion, she would have understood immanence in terms of her immersion in Nature, represented by the moors. While numerous critics suggest Brontë had pantheistic tendencies and took refuge in a pantheistic communion (Alexander and Sellars 128 AB),³ I suggest that Emily would have found labeling her spirituality ineffectual. Meanwhile, Catherine waits for her father to return.

Mr. Earnshaw finally arrives in a disheveled state following his being attacked on his journey. Bundled in his great coat is a "dirty, ragged, black-haired child" (E. Brontë WH 29) that he found on the streets of Liverpool. Mr. Earnshaw asks his wife

“to e’en take it as a gift of God, though it’s as dark almost as if it came from the devil” (29). Earnshaw gives him the name Heathcliff—after his own dead son. Notice that the child has no gender assignation in Earnshaw’s eyes. As the patriarch of the Earnshaw family, he determines how gender is performed with the walls of his home. At this point, he may not know where to place Heathcliff without reference to his own son. The aleatory nature of this event must not be ignored. First, Brontë refuses to separate him from the dead son; and secondly, the complexity of naming in two generations suggests that subjectivity is not bounded. While we are all affected by genes, traditions, family stories, and family personalities through the generations, we are not just one being thus suggesting flux. Heathcliff himself exists in both the past and present, at least in Mr. Earnshaw’s eyes. Eventually, Catherine and Heathcliff are closest to him perhaps signifying Mr. Earnshaw’s affection for their wild and unaffected natures.

Catherine’s ability to accept Heathcliff, even though he is not a blood relative, suggests her ability to live in fluidity and chance. Her behavior as a woman differs substantially from Hindley’s reaction to his new brother. As a male, Hindley demonstrates rigid structure and boundaries—later to disintegrate when he drinks heavily perhaps to avoid the reality of his own existence. From the beginning, he is a spoiled and angry young man who oozes entitlement as the first-born male. In the end, the expectations placed upon him may contribute to his demise.

Following the introduction of their new brother, the Earnshaw children learn that their father had lost the whip and actually had returned with a fiddle, albeit a crushed fiddle. Cathy’s response is to grin and spit at the “stupid little thing” (30). In

the succeeding weeks, Hindley is no better as he commands his new brother to exchange horses. “Off, dog!” he says as he throws an iron weight at the “gipsy” child (30). This violent exchange is just one example of the cruelty wielded by Hindley whose proclivity for bullying and abuse grows exponentially over the years. Catherine herself is not exempt from inhumane actions although she does cry after displaying her bad side. Heathcliff does not initially demonstrate meanness, brutality, or malice when he first arrives at Wuthering Heights; later, he succumbs following his treatment by civilized society. This mistreatment eventually results in vindictive behavior directed not only at the first Catherine, but also the second Catherine and every person who enters his life.

A review from *The Athenaeum*, dated December 25, 1847, attests to Ellis Bell’s ability to affect painful and exceptional subjects: --the misdeeds and oppressions of tyranny [...] in spite of much power and cleverness; in spite of its truth to life in the remote nooks and corners of England, 'Wuthering Heights' is a disagreeable story [...] dwelling upon those physical acts of cruelty which we know to have their warrant in the real annals of crime and suffering, – but the contemplation of which true taste rejects. (H.F. Chorley)

Although H.F. Chorley presents a realistic view of the novel, I suggest that he misses a major point that Brontë may have been attempting to fictionalize. It has to do with the intrusion of civilization into the natural world. While rigidity reigns in the world of polite society, fluidity best describes the natural world. In effect, Hindley exhibits

worse tendencies than Heathcliff, at least at this point. This is but one example of the dangers of civilization with its rigid standards that allow no fluidity in either class or compassion.

One can certainly understand Catherine's need to escape to the moors where the freedom offered there counters inflexible burdens of mid-Victorian civilization. J. Hillis Miller maintains that the violence of Brontë's characters may be a reaction to the loss of their earlier happiness attributable, in some sense, to their separation from Nature, animals, and the true realm of the supernatural (170). *Wuthering Heights* features their devolution, at least while they are in the physical realm.

An early sketch (cropped here) by Emily may act as an analogue for the cruelty featured in *Wuthering Heights*:



Figure 5.1. "Images of Cruelty" with excerpt from an early dramatic piece. Pen and ink on paper. E.J. Brontë, March 13, 1838. Walpole Collection, The King's School, Canterbury.

Emily's drawing, "Images of Cruelty," depicts several brutal scenes in immediate proximity as in film frames in continuous motion. The composite drawing provocatively evokes many ideas that compete with each other. There is no

punctuation, so to speak, or any visible lines of demarcation between her drawings thus again demonstrating her predilection for simultaneity. Christine Alexander offers a description of the multiple scenes in the drawing: in one scene, there is a man with a whip holding a child by the hair while another man watches; the second shows a man being flogged beside a pile of bodies. Another figure carrying a whip or stick rushes in (AB 381). Between the scenes of violence is a row of stacked books with some on their sides.

These depictions of violence mesh fluidly with the books that might possibly describe them. Such eliminations of barriers are characteristic of Brontë who works flawlessly in different genres, in this case, the written words with the visual images that she constructs. This is but one interpretation among many. In this sketch, she may also be suggesting that the contents of the books are literally coming alive in her sketches in a series of becomings. The stack of books next to the pile of bodies is a display of irony to say the least. Obviously, the bodies can no longer speak of their traumatic experiences, but perhaps the books unravel the mystery of their deaths. She may also be intimating that she authored the books based on her experiences and her desire to write. Among the myriad of interpretations, I offer a final thought: Brontë begins with one idea, an aleatory point, if you will; this idea then develops rhizomatically with seemingly no beginning or ending in her composite drawing where the offshoots are multiple images of cruelty.

Given Brontë's continual demonstrations of her preference for fluidity of time, space, and movement, she may be questioning representation itself, whether in writing or drawing, in a consideration of violence. Although the visual and the verbal

offer the means to convey ideas, Brontë may be questioning both methods especially since she is trained in another means of communication: music. Clearly, the drawing shows her familiarity with abusive acts of the people with whom she was familiar. She had the courage to penetrate the façade or code of propriety that the Victorians tried to preserve. Seeing natural and societal violence all around her (It is well documented that Emily's brother was a violent alcoholic whose behaviors caused the family great anguish), Brontë fluidly represents them across genres and almost sees no difference between, Nature, life, and art in this small drawing.

Initially spurned by both Catherine and Hindley, Heathcliff soon finds a place in Catherine's heart as they romp on the moors together. Margaret Homans argues that Catherine remakes Nature in the form of a chosen beloved (156 WPI). Nature literally came to Cathy's door in the form of Heathcliff. As Charlotte Brontë later writes,

Heathcliff (heath/cliff) is literally a crag taking human shape. [...] there it stands, colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock: in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like; in the latter almost beautiful [...] and heath, with its blooming bells and balmy fragrance, grows faithfully to the giant's foot" (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 306).

Heathcliff may indeed represent all of these mythical qualities. However, the fact remains that he is suddenly transported from a world in which he barely existed to another unrecognizable world in which he feels alienated at best. Found in Liverpool, the fulcrum of the slave trade, Heathcliff may well have been the offspring of the Romani, an "American or Spanish Castaway" or the term for an Indian sailor, a "little

lascar” (E. Brontë WH 40), all of which are the ethnic slurs Edgar’s mother uses for him. The Lintons have little use for anybody who does not resemble them physically or in economic class. Heathcliff’s response is to resist then assimilate. When his attempts at immersion are not successful, he aims for acceptance especially from Catherine. She alone appreciates his unaffected raw nature. Mostly likely seeing her primal self in him, she is irrevocably drawn to what he represents. He begins to feel the same about her. On the moors, their class, and perhaps racial, differences are of no consequence because there is no societal judgment there. This is a feature of a cosmos characterized by immanence.

Thus, for Catherine, Heathcliff and Nature do become interchangeable, at least for a period of time. Catherine, in the meantime, continues to be in mischief—with her “spirits always at the high-water mark, her tongue always going—singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same” (33). As Nelly Dean remarks, “she had the bonniest eye, and sweetest smile, and lightest foot in the parish. She was much too fond of Heathcliff—the greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him” (33). So begins the metaphysical relationship that has baffled scholars for many years.

To all except Brontë herself and Catherine, the attraction initially seems unlikely. Catherine overflows with joy, while Heathcliff is morose and troubled. After all, he is the ultimate intruder at this point. Yet, he is a child who quickly feels close to the lively Catherine whom, I suggest, Brontë invented, in part, to express her own *jouissance*. Important to the Catherine/Heathcliff story is that bodies seek to connect with similar bodies to enhance their power. Power, enhanced by desire, is the result—

power here refers to the power of production thereby resulting in continuous becoming. Deleuze emphasizes the importance of chance encounters with bodies that agree with one's nature. Desire for him is both positive and productive. It begins with connection and thrives on connecting with other desires (AO 326-327).

In this case, the attraction between Catherine and Heathcliff initially becomes life-giving. Deleuze describes this phenomenon in his recognition of the joy of the encounter as the composition of two bodies in a new, more powerful body (Hardt 118). The common bond uniting them is Nature. Catherine and Heathcliff find themselves in the embrace of the heather-covered moors as they yearn to find something as strong as Nature in their own relationship. Benjamin Bagley suggests



Figure 5.2. Emily Brontë. 'Study of a Fir Tree.' Pencil on Paper. c. 1842. Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, UK.

that the two love each other for their common wildness. This characteristic is what draws Heathcliff to her and she to him as they experience the “rawness, beauty, and isolation” that life at Wuthering Heights offers. In that venue, they work out together what that wildness means to them—an improvisational exercise (502).

Throughout her artistic and literary life, Brontë has demonstrated an uncanny ability

to draw what she theorizes. Her “Study of a Fir Tree,” a pencil drawing offers a visual study of a tree that she appears to be describing later in *Wuthering Heights*. Her narrative features wind “a few stunted firs” (4) whose “excessive slant” (4) is the result of the north wind. The fir-bough returns again as it becomes an arm when the long dead Catherine makes her first entrance into the narrative (20). Her drawing foregrounds a decayed tree with branches and foliage that seem to have a life of their own. Produced in Brussels in 1842 during her enrollment at the Pensionnat Héger, this drawing, I suggest, demonstrates Emily’s desire for “wild spaces.” The edges are rough, and the scene appears bleak and turbulent. The trunk flows into the surrounding rocks and vegetation suggesting fluidity and movement in the whole scene (C. Alexander AB 118-119). In all of her drawings, even those copied, she endeavors to create movement as opposed to stasis. What is especially important about this drawing is that the trunk of the tree is in a state of decay as it blends with the surrounding scene in its state of “becoming.” The tree no longer appears to depend on a single source for its being, but rather exhibits life through its multiple appendages. Furthermore, the branches are moving in different directions like rhizomes. Similarly, Brontë’s novel is filled with multiple entrances and exits with Catherine always at the center. In most cases, death is the contributing factor.

Here, I re-emphasize a major feature affecting my analysis of *Wuthering Heights*: Heathcliff and Cathy, two beings from very different worlds, are literally thrown together. Brontë presents them as like beings, both with wild and unpredictable natures, who embrace Nature. They connect with each other in the natural surroundings of the moors, but find their lives unmanageable when having to

exist in polite society. Both reject the hierarchy reflected in the manners and mores at Wuthering Heights and the surrounding community. They prefer their own ebbs and flows because they are, at the best of times, in keeping with those of the moors. When Joseph, Hindley, or even Ellen Dean intervene in their relationship, the flow is interrupted; nevertheless, they carry on thus demonstrating their powerful inseparability. However, when Edgar Linton, the master of Thrushcross Grange, comes to court Catherine, I suggest that she interrupts the flow when she succumbs to the material advantages attached to such a union.

Even Nature, the place of respite for Catherine and Heathcliff, cannot not alter the death events that were to irrevocably alter the Earnshaw family. Life changed abruptly when Catherine's mother died suddenly. Then, on an October evening when "a high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney" (34 WH), Mr. Earnshaw passed away. The wind "sounded wild and stormy, yet it was not cold" (34) as Catherine went to bid her father good night. When she discovered her loss, both she and Heathcliff "set up a heart-breaking cry" (35). Ellen Dean remembers that "the little souls were comforting each other with better thoughts that I could have it on; no parson in the world ever pictured heaven so beautifully as they did, in their innocent talk" (35). Life for both of them was to change abruptly. Brontë later reveals their conceptions of heaven—ideas possibly expressing her own beliefs about heaven as a space on the moors.

What had been a reasonably happy home degenerates into unbearable circumstances for Catherine and Heathcliff when Hindley, now the master, returns to Wuthering Heights with his new wife. The two children of Nature continue their

relationship as they slip away to the moors in the morning and often remain there all day. A rambling search for freedom one evening alters their relationship when Catherine literally falls into a new existence that thrusts her into the restrictions of polite society. In keeping with her free-spirited existence, Catherine had lost her shoes on the moors thus making her vulnerable to the guard dogs at Thrushcross Grange when she lands in the Linton garden. When Heathcliff tries to help, he is forcibly removed because he does not meet the expectations of society.

Civilization is about to intrude on Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship in the form of Edgar Linton, the heir to Thrushcross Grange. Recuperating from her injuries at the Grange, Catherine is pampered excessively. It is soon apparent that her wild nature has given way to the polite behavior expected of a young lady in society of the time. This change marks the decline of her spirit. It also recalls Brontë's predilection for civilization as a destroyer. In her *devoir*, "Le Palais de la Mort," she couples her condemnation of civilization with intemperance. Although Edgar Linton does not display intemperance, it is partially the intemperance demonstrated by Hindley, the drunken new master of Wuthering Heights that drives Catherine to marry Edgar. This idea brings us to the next stage in the devolution of the Earnshaw family.

Ellen Dean explains that Wuthering Heights had become an "infernal house" under Hindley's rule with not even the curate calling (52). Brontë's "Images of Cruelty," originally a visual production, has now moved to a new dimension in her fictional representation of cruelty. Also, adding to the tension is Catherine's behavior following her return home: she had become increasingly arrogant and headstrong.

Meanwhile, Heathcliff degenerates to a state of near savagery and appears very uncivilized having been forced to live in the stable. Edgar Linton is literally one of few callers to the desolate location as he begins to court her at the dismay of Heathcliff who cannot compete materially or socially with the Lintons. The .important feature here is that Catherine decides how she will live her life. She prefers *jouissance* to the restrictions of sorrow. However, at various periods, she does accede unwillingly to the miserable circumstances surrounding her. As Ellen Dean notes, when with Edgar Linton and his sister, she “had no temptation to show her rough side.”

However, when back at the Heights with Heathcliff, she “had no inclination to practice politeness” (Brontë WH 52). This is the beginning of the conflict dominating young Catherine’s life—a conflict causing her to eventually reject Heathcliff. It is not a simple rejection because of her inner turmoil. Meanwhile, she divides her time between civilized society, represented by Edgar Linton, and wild Nature on the moors with Heathcliff. Initially, she is able to navigate the fluidity required to be in these two radically distinct worlds. Eventually, however, the connective flow between Catherine and Heathcliff and Nature will be disrupted.

Catherine’s Death—Separation from Heathcliff

How can I know? [...] Why do you love him (Edgar), Miss Cathy? [...] He (Edgar) won’t always be handsome and young, and may not always be rich (Ellen Dean’s Catechism—E. Brontë WH 61-62).

This section focuses on Catherine’s death journey, which, I suggest, is also a path to philosophical enlightenment for her. The conflicts in her life present her with

difficult choices that determine how she will spend her earthly life. Her reflections on these choices provide insights into Emily Brontë's developing philosophy contributing profoundly to her interrogations of death. Again, it is Nelly's catechetical stance that captures the essence of the situation. In my estimation, Nelly is the only character other than Heathcliff who understands Catherine's need to be free and wild. Again, Brontë's characters become larger than the text; they take on a life of their own as they mirror Brontë's own views on philosophical matters.

The unhindered procession of Nature on the moors provides the perfect place for Brontë's observations of life and death. She understands the finality of death to be sure. However, one question remained throughout her interrogations: by what technique or means does a being traverse the gap between life and the afterlife? The seemingly paradoxical worlds of the corporeal and incorporeal still did not connect despite her dogged investigations, especially in her work with the *devoirs*. Although she did not openly express a fear of death in her *oeuvre*, she certainly challenged the idea of physical death, as suggested in the previous chapters of this study, most likely a result of her witnessing a multitude of death events afflicting her family. She seems to have taken up the mantra of resistance thus accounting for her consideration of death as a continuation of life. Perhaps the performance of her own death might be a meticulous rendition of her philosophical beliefs literally put into action. Thus, I trace events leading to Catherine Earnshaw's untimely death.

The first incident leading to her earthly demise occurred on a night marked by Hindley's violent drunkenness. Catherine announces Edgar Linton's proposal and her acceptance, and the secular catechism that Nelly offers helps us to understand the

philosophy that Brontë is developing. Nelly, knowing full well that such a union might be disastrous, interrogates Catherine regarding her decision asking, “How can I know?” (60). Unbeknownst to Nelly and Catherine, Heathcliff is in another part of the kitchen. He hears everything! Catherine’s justification appears flippant: “He (Edgar) is handsome, and pleasant to be with [...], young and cheerful, he loves me. And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband” (61). Nelly, fully understanding Catherine’s impulsiveness chastises her, “And now you love him” (61). Still petulant, Catherine tries to please Nelly, “I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says—I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely, and altogether. There now!” (61).

The next part of the conversation reveals Catherine’s thoughts regarding her choice. All of these considerations are cloaked in a continuation of Nelly’s catechism. When she reminds Catherine that Edgar “won’t always be handsome, and young, and may not always be rich” (62), Catherine replies, “He is now; and I have only to do with the present” (62) offering no reference to the past or future. This acknowledgment places her in the role of the actual rather than the virtual and works well if one lives in the present only.

Catherine’s flippancy soon disappears as she reveals her most intimate thoughts about Heathcliff and the afterlife. I draw upon a number of longer passages in this section to demonstrate the intensity of Catherine’s thoughts on the important issues of the afterlife. When Nelly questions Catherine regarding the obstacle to her marriage to Edgar, Catherine becomes very serious as she places one hand on her

forehead and the other on her breast. She says, “In whichever place the soul lives, in my soul, and in my heart, I’m convinced I’m wrong” (62). Catherine then relates her dream to Nelly:

If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable.” [...] I dreamt once that I was there [...] heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out, into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy” (63).

Catherine has thus set the stage for the afterlife that she envisions. From the beginning, she displays her distaste for organized religion and its concept of heaven as a mythic place in the beyond. She now relates her dream to the matter at hand:

I’ve no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; [...]. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him; and that, not because he’s handsome, Nelly, but because he’s more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, Linton’s is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire. (63)

Notice that Catherine invokes the language of Nature to differentiate between the souls of Edgar and Heathcliff. While she describes Edgar using cooler more static features, frost and moonbeam, she assigns lightning and fire to Heathcliff. Lightning is direct and immediately forceful and can often bring fire. Fire also symbolizes Promethean beginnings. Worrying that if she married Heathcliff, they would be

beggars. Heathcliff had been listening to this point and then departed suddenly following Catherine's painful revelations.

Catherine soon realizes that a marriage to Linton in the physical realm might help her to aid Heathcliff and get him away from her brother, here again, illustrating her unconventional fluid thinking. She looks to another realm, the incorporeal, for what might be regarded as a parallel existence or an existence in the afterlife. Although she "cannot express it," she believes that "surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here" (64). She is looking for a way to define love not in the domain of the actual or the corporeal, but wants to move it to the virtual—an incorporeal realm where it might be rearticulated for a possible return to the actual at some point. Any return would be under certain unpredictable conditions, specifically those determined by the random workings of Nature.

Desire, as defined by Deleuze, offers some guidance in interpretation here. In keeping with his metaphysics of becoming, he looks at desire as the process of life itself and death as that by which one desires. When one breaks down old patterns, new modes of existence are the result. Thus, mortality is the opportunity for creation (Protevi 10). Emily Brontë's profound investigations of life and death intuitively align with Deleuze's ideas *avant la lettre* for Catherine who roams the moors after her physical death. She may have been lost there because she needed to complete her being with Heathcliff. In many ways, her incorporeal existence is more lifelike for Heathcliff than her physical body especially considering her rejection of him for a life of luxury and status. With all of this in mind, the prevailing question might concern the need

for Catherine, as interceptor, to create the chaos necessary for a better life after death. The restrictions placed upon her, as a person of some status, as a woman living in the late eighteenth century would not have been of benefit for either her or Heathcliff were they to marry. She consciously makes her decision based on this wisdom and then has regrets for the remainder of her corporeal existence.

As Catherine continues her monologue, she soon realizes that Edgar Linton does not offer the deep metaphysical qualities inherent in Heathcliff. The following passage demonstrate her absolute need to meld with Heathcliff who shares her metaphysical state:

My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and, if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem part of it (E. Brontë WH 64).

This passage is suggestive of a world in which Catherine and Heathcliff are integral parts. As I have maintained throughout this analysis, the moors are both the literal and metaphorical space that defines this non-hierarchical space—this world of immanence that I suggest as a framework for Brontë's system. Throughout her novel, she features Catherine and Heathcliff amidst the natural surroundings of the moors. Their attraction to each other as like bodies is enhanced by their relationship with Nature. Although in the corporeal world, Catherine may consider a marriage to Edgar Linton, in the afterlife, only Heathcliff will do.

While Catherine's "love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods" that "time will change it [...] as winter changes the trees" (64), she professes that her "love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath—a source of little visible delight but necessary" (64). Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff—he's always in my mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself—but, as my own being—so, don't talk of our separation again—it is impracticable; and— " (64). Benjamin Bagley notes that people loved for their cheerfulness and beauty, as Catherine loves Edgar are not irreplaceable; however, people loved for what their souls offer are (477). Thus, Heathcliff has imprinted on Catherine's soul and she on his with the possibility of future improvisations that help them to grow. This is not to happen while they are in their physical bodies. Societal expectations of late eighteenth-century England would never have allowed such a union. They must wait!

Throughout this analysis, I have featured the importance of Brontë's omission of punctuation and her use of the various rhetorical features implied by certain punctuational elements. I suggest that her choice of multiple double dashes in the above passage indicate the absence of finality in her relationship with Heathcliff. This choice strongly indicates that, in her thoughts, she and Heathcliff are irrevocably bound to each other in some way yet not to be fully defined and possibly reaching some definition as they roam the moors without their physical bodies. Meanwhile, their separation ensues.

After departing in the midst of Catherine's philosophical discussion with Ellen Dean, Heathcliff disappears into the night. His mental state is reflected in the storm that follows him. It was a "very dark evening for summer" with the clouds appearing

“inclined to thunder” (66). Soon Catherine runs into the “growling thunder” as the “great drops [...] began to splash around her” (E. Brontë WH 66). Again, Brontë features the deep connection that she feels with meteorological events on the moors as she describes the “storm [...] rattling over the Heights in full fury” (66). This description might well be applied to Heathcliff. Both he and Catherine are on the moors searching for each other amidst a violent wind and thunder. Heathcliff is nowhere to be found.

Catherine, on the other hand, becomes very ill with fever, as is customary when she suffers emotional setbacks, and convalesces at the Linton home. The Linton parents both contract the fever and die. Their deaths do not seem to affect Catherine for she returns to Wuthering Heights “saucier and more passionate, and haughtier than ever” (70). Three years hence, Edgar Linton, “infatuated” and “the happiest man alive,” leads Catherine “to Gimmerton chapel” (70). Catherine appears to adjust to her life as mistress of Thrushcross Grange except during her dark stormy moments when she demonstrates a “depression of spirits” (72). An unforeseen event lifts her spirits to a level of frenzy when Heathcliff reappears several years later. As Nelly relates, she “flew upstairs, breathless and wild, too excited to show gladness; indeed, by her face, you would rather have surmised an awful calamity” (74). In his time away, Heathcliff had undergone a great transformation: “he had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man” with a carriage suggesting “the idea of his having been in the army” (75). Yet, “a half-civilized ferocity lurked in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire” (75). His manner, “divested of roughness,” was “even dignified” (75).

The renewed relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff serves to destroy what they had previously.

Again, civilization is the culprit. Heathcliff is no longer the poor wretch fetched from the streets of Liverpool. Now a man of means, he becomes greedy in his desire for material possessions. Heathcliff blames Catherine for their loss of each other and Catherine finds fault in him for not measuring up. Their initial attraction now appears to have descended into the realms of monolithic destructive behavior. For Catherine it is jealousy, while vengeance seems to be flowing through Heathcliff's veins. Following numerous episodes of cruelty between Edgar and Heathcliff, Catherine becomes ill as is customary when faced with situations of conflict. Now afflicted with brain fever, she will soon leave the realm of the actual. Claiming that both Heathcliff and Edgar have broken her heart, she exclaims, "You have killed me –and have thriven on it, I think. [...] How many years do you mean to live after I am gone" (124)? Her emotions suddenly soften as she tells Heathcliff, "I wish I could hold you [...] till we are both dead! I shouldn't care what you suffered. I care nothing for your sufferings. Why shouldn't you suffer? I do!" (124).

Both Catherine and Heathcliff's beliefs on the death experience a crescendo as her own time approaches. She is most concerned about how Heathcliff will remember her. Her configurations of time are reminiscent of A.G.A.'s returning to the grave of her beloved years after his death in *The Gondal Poems*. Catherine pleads with Heathcliff: "Will you forget me—will you be happy when I am in the earth? Will you say twenty years hence, "That's the grave of Catherine Earnshaw. I loved her long ago, and was wretched to lose her; but it is past" 124). While Catherine considers the

burial of her body, Heathcliff responds with what appears to be a broader view of the afterlife, “Don’t torture me till I’m mad as yourself” [...] Are you possessed with a devil [...] to talk in that manner to me. Do you reflect that all those words will be branded in my memory, and eating deeper, eternally, after you have left me?” (124). While Heathcliff proclaims, “Catherine, you know that I could as soon forget you as my existence! Is it not sufficient for your infernal selfishness, that while you are at peace I shall writhe in the torments of hell?” Moaning, Catherine acknowledges that she will feel the “same distress underground” and will “not be at peace” (125). The two entwined souls alternate between blaming each other and expressing their undying devotion. There is little acceptance on either side.

Soon Brontë’s powerful dialogue presents death as a process in which each thread of commentary between Catherine and Heathcliff is productive as each moment is a new beginning. With each new moment, the two appear to move beyond the incapacitating effects of their dilemma toward more creative possibilities with no finitude. Deleuze argues that even our loves are an interception of flows. “The persons to whom our loves are dedicated [...] intervene only as points of connection, of disjunction, of conjunction of flows” (AO 292-293). Initially, the randomness of the event as postulated by Deleuze accounted for the connection between Catherine and Heathcliff. Their attraction was based on the similar construction of their spirits. Then, as I have noted, civilization intervened, in Catherine’s case through Edgar Linton. In Heathcliff’s situation, it was through his autodidactic pursuits resulting in his returning a gentleman, at least in appearance. At the time of her death, disjunction has not yet yielded to conjunction.

With her death imminent, Catherine appears to be claiming victory as she again tries to define the possibility of her existence in the greater beyond:

[...] the thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired, tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there; not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart, but really with it, and in it. [...] I shall be incomparably beyond and above you all (E. Brontë WH 127).

In her last earthly utterance to Heathcliff, Catherine both offers forgiveness and begs forgiveness: "If I have done wrong, I'm dying for it. [...] I forgive you. Forgive me!" (126). At midnight, the threshold between night and day, she gives birth to a daughter, who will be called Catherine. Dying two hours after the birth, she never recovers consciousness—nor does she miss Heathcliff or know her husband (128). Later, she returns to Wuthering Heights and the narrative during a storm at night.

Ironically, there is no storm at the time of Catherine's death, but rather placid conditions. Noteworthy is that the weather suddenly changed at the time of her internment possibly heralding the "unquiet slumbers" (258) that Lockwood denies at his visit to the gravesite. Brontë's staging of her characters in accordance with meteorological conditions on the moors generally matches their moods or emotional states. It is on this basis that I suggest Catherine departed in tranquility. Her utterance of forgiveness prior to her death may be indicative of this conclusion. While she is continually given to temper when she is alive, there is no indication in Brontë's text that her anger follows her to the afterlife. The text shows her as lost, but adamantly

resolute in her convictions. Heathcliff will live in “a perfect misanthropist’s heaven” (4) for the next twenty years while Catherine roams the moors.

Heathcliff’s Death—Reunion of Souls

Alarmed at his manner, though he was neither in danger of losing his senses, nor dying; according to my judgment he was quite strong and healthy; and, as to his reason, from childhood he had a delight in dwelling on dark things, and entertaining odd fancies. He might have had a monomania on the subject of departed idol; but on every other point his wits were as sound as mine. [...] “You have no feeling of illness, have you? [...] Then, you are not afraid of death?” (Ellen Dean’s Catechism WH 248)

Just as Catherine’s death journey began years earlier when Heathcliff departed and suddenly returned, Heathcliff’s own long years of torment now reach their nadir in his gradual descent into hatred and depression. His death experience helps us to better understand the Catherine/Heathcliff relationship. Again, Ellen Dean leads the discussion in her catechetical approach.

As Catherine is dying, Heathcliff keeps a vigil in the garden while Edgar Linton stays with his wife. Ellen Dean remembers that, in death, Catherine’s countenance radiated “perfect peace” with “her lips wearing the expression of a smile” (128). Ellen, whose “mind was never in a holier frame” as she gazed upon the “untroubled image of Divine rest,” comments that “no angel in heaven could be more beautiful than she [Catherine] appeared” (128). Nelly’s farewell places Catherine in a framework of Victorian religious belief while at the same time allowing for another space more appropriate for her “wild Cathy.” She muses, “Whether still on earth or

now in heaven, her spirit is at home with God” (128)! Obviously Ellen is attempting to imprint her spiritual belief in a hierarchical being, but she does concede the possibility that Catherine may still be on earth.

Panicked when he cannot even imagine where Catherine might be, Heathcliff wishes her no serenity. His wish is that “she wake in torment! Where is she? And I pray one prayer—I repeat it till my tongue stiffens—Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest, as long as I am living!” (128). Begging Catherine to haunt him, he pleads, “Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! Only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you!” (128). Brontë does not accede to his wishes, but decides to make him wait until Catherine is ready to move through time and space. However, his own gigantic will seems, in part, to keep her on earth. By this time, Catherine and Heathcliff have taken command of their own narrative. If and when conditions permit, Catherine will find Heathcliff—these conditions may include his extrication from the greedy materialism defining his life and his surrender to the randomness of Brontë’s cosmos. In the meantime, he remains in the abyss of his misery, a seemingly indeterminable chasm, filling his existence with hatred, vengeance, greed and cruelty over the next twenty years. Yet, at this point, he cries, “Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!” (128).

In what Brontë calls monomania, Heathcliff sees Catherine “in every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day” (247). Heathcliff cries, “I am surrounded with her image! The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!” (247). One memorandum available to him is a portrait of Catherine painted when she was at her most beautiful and vibrant. I suggest that an analogue may be found in a painting produced by Brontë during her time in Brussels, years before she thought of



Figure 5.3. Emily Brontë. “The North Wind.” Watercolor on Paper. Copied from William Finden’s engraving of Richard Westall’s “Ianthé” first published as the frontispiece to Volume 2 of Thomas Moore’s *Life of Byron*, 1839. Present location unknown.

Catherine Earnshaw. The painting features a young woman appearing to be caught in flight with her dark curly hair blown toward the left. She is attired in a Roman-style dress with her throat and chest bare.

Christine Alexander believes that Brontë’s rendition of Richard Westall’s painting offers a more mature expression compared to the

original. In Brontë's painting, the subject's piercing eyes, translucent skin, and dark windblown hair anticipate the features of the Catherine Earnshaw (116 AB). The important element in this painting is the wind as an active force in the production of energy. The woman in the painting is captured in movement as if she were in tandem with the wind. She is not static—nor is Brontë. The fluidity that Brontë seeks may be seen in her choice of the watercolor medium. Whereas painting in oils and drawing in ink or even pencil does not offer the possibility of change, in watercolor, the canvas can easily be altered during the creative process, and blurring of lines is acceptable. In this water-based medium, creative movement is easily achieved. This type of changeability is important to Brontë and her fascination with impermanence.

In her presentation of a woman in process, she embeds features of movement and process in the wind-blown hair of her subject. In fact, her hair is about to be blown away. Hence, she is trying to capture movement in a static painting. Given Brontë's love for dramatic weather, she is also referencing the woman's internal storminess, passion, process of becoming; in some ways, is the woman literally a natural feature of Nature in this painting—not separate from Nature, but merged with it. Brontë is getting closer to the expression of her intense desire to be an integral part of the processes in Nature. With each exploration, she approaches her goal more closely. What is at hand here is her movement toward theories of a world of immanence where there is no hierarchical structure, no moral judgment, and no oppositional afterlife. She is evolving as a complex thinker.

Lockwood is captivated by a similar representation of the first Catherine when he visits Heathcliff at Wuthering Heights. Her image imprints strongly in his psyche

and feeds his voyeuristic need to learn more about her. He will not be disappointed. As he is locked in time, Catherine's story offers violence, hate, love, and an existence not relying on the customary theorizations on the dimensions of time and space. He notices "the pensive and amiable expression" along with "the long light hair curled slightly on the temples" (E. Brontë WH 52). In his continual gazing at Catherine, he notes that her "eyes were large and serious" and "her figure almost too graceful" (52). In typical fashion, he places himself in the position of constructing Catherine.

While his patriarchal gaze makes Catherine static, Emily's drawing suggests the fluidity of her being. The title of her drawing is "The North Wind" rather than portrait of a woman. In effect, the woman in the painting becomes the embodiment of wind just as she presents Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*. Brontë's interjection of a painting of Catherine into the text is a clever way of bringing Catherine back as interceptor. There is a radical difference between Lockwood's voyeuristic gaze and Heathcliff's recollection of her in the fluidity of Nature where there are no boundaries. Brontë seems to be signaling a change in Heathcliff perhaps heralding his return to Nature and Catherine. His death appears to be imminent.

Despite his wishes and yearnings, Catherine does not haunt him. Nor does she appear even after his invasion of her gravesite on a snowy night. He claims to have heard a sigh—and then another sigh. Feeling Catherine's presence, he feels assured that she "was not under him, but on the earth" and with him (220-221). Looking upon her virtually unchanged body, he rearranges the site so that he will be buried between Catherine and Edgar (220). Her decision to place Catherine's body between the remains of Heathcliff and Edgar positions Catherine as the interceptor.

Heathcliff dies as he lived—under stormy conditions and on his own terms. Removing himself from society, he isolates himself behind the locked doors of Catherine’s childhood room and waits. The same portal through which Catherine enters the narrative now serves as his means of departure. Since Catherine has not come to him, he must look for her on the moors. Just as Catherine has acted as interceptor throughout the telling of her earthly story, she now takes charge of her afterlife. Apparently, Heathcliff does eventually find Catherine according to the account of a young frightened shepherd boy who believes he saw Heathcliff and a woman walking on the moors. Edgar Linton is not with them. Brontë questions the dyad while Catherine, Edgar, and Heathcliff exist in the domain of the actual. The ménage-at-trois offers yet another daring means through which Catherine Earnshaw explores her being. Neither she nor Brontë is conventional. While, shockingly, the corporeal remains of the three will mix underground, only Catherine and Heathcliff walk ethereally on the moors. From the beginning, they have identified with Nature. Now they are an integral part both above and below in Brontë’s defining demonstration of simultaneity.

When Lockwood returns to the area months later, he stops at the burial site to discover three head-stones on the slope next to the moor: Catherine’s is “grey, and half buried in heath,” as would be expected because of her love of the heath/the moors; Edgar’s is “only harmonized by the turf; Heathcliff’s is still bare, probably because he was recently buried (258). Catherine is the first to be buried “in a corner of the kirkyard” (131) away from the ancestral tombs of both the Lintons and the Earnshaws. This indicates her final victory over the patriarchal conditions under

which she lived. Whereas in life she sought refuge on the moors, in death, the moors came to her when “the heath and bilberry plants climbed over the low wall” (131) next to her grave.

While Lockwood, the outsider, lingers “under the benign sky,” he watches the “moths fluttering among the heath, and hare-bells” (258). Observing the “soft wind breathing through the grass,” he wonders “how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth” (258). Catherine will surely not rest as long as the finale of her story is spoken by Lockwood. Brontë is not about to allow such an ending. In her role as the character around whom Brontë’s novel evolves, Catherine continues to be an interceptor of flows as she powerfully commands the telling of her own story—a story with no end and no beginning. Mediated by Catherine, the wild savagery of Heathcliff will combine with civilized sophistication of Edgar to create a new world in the next generation. Brontë has demonstrated the need for old patterns to be broken to make way for the creation of new flows.

My discussion of *Wuthering Heights* has featured Catherine Earnshaw as the point of departure, the aleatory point for new flows—new becomings. I have argued that an extraordinary event catapults her into the narrative and the domain of the actual during a storm at night on the moors. Although she is in spectral form, she directs her own story from her enlightened vantage point. Her entry through the shattered window demonstrates Emily Brontë’s fixation on the elimination of the gap between the virtual and the actual. Brontë’s choice of the broken window recalls her first extant drawing, “The Mullioned Window,” discussed in Chapter One of this study. In Chapter Two, Brontë’s glorious heroine, A.G.A. enters the Gondal story

during a storm at midnight, the threshold or gap between day and night. Similarly, Catherine Earnshaw dies at midnight; she is followed years later by Heathcliff who also dies amidst a storm at night when he passes through the open window where Catherine first entered. Brontë's choice of the window as portal presents a powerful metaphor that may provide the answer to questions of the afterlife.

One final consideration is Brontë's presentation of the final moments of Catherine and Heathcliff. Noteworthy is that both seek forgiveness before dying. The idea of the good death, a prime consideration for Brontë's presentation of death in her *devoirs*, resurfaces here. In a return to the ideas of the Stoics, Brontë delays the fulfillment of the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff to a point following their physical demises. Although the bodies of Catherine, Heathcliff, and Edgar may be writhing under the ground, it may well be that Catherine and Heathcliff's approach to death ensures their afterlife roaming the moors. They continue to roam through their portrayals in numerous genres including multiple films, dramatic presentations, ballet productions, and in musical productions both on and off Broadway. The characters who found their initial existence in Brontë's creative imagination have long outgrown her initial depictions. In death, they "[...] sleep / Without identity-- / And never care how rain may steep / Or snow may cover [...]" (E. Brontë, "The Philosopher," No. 115, 6-10).

Conclusion – “Its over now Ive known it all / Ill hid it in my heart no more”

Emily Brontë (Undated Fragment, No. 141, 1-2)

Emily Jane Brontë’s untimely death on December 19, 1848 cut short the life of a genius who delved with great courage into multiple genres of expression to emphatically state the case for her beliefs. Unconventional in her thinking, she adamantly demonstrated that she was “no coward soul” and “no trembler in the world’s storm troubled sphere” (No. 125, 1-2). With these lines, I present concluding thoughts on Brontë’s life as an organic philosopher. Bursting onto the literary scene in 1847 with the publication of *Wuthering Heights* under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell, she soon found herself at the center of both curiosity and commentary. The discovery of her large body of poetry and her artwork allowed the public to have a glimpse into her enigmatic nature. Despite all of the attention, she remained mysteriously private.

As I have argued throughout this study, the themes that consistently appear in her *oeuvre* provide clues to both her literary goals and her philosophical aspirations. A protofeminist, she also offered protomodern interrogations of metaphysics, epistemology, and eschatology, particularly in her engagements with the meanings the boundaries of death and life, time and space, the powers of Nature, interrelations of process, being, becoming, and actualization, and lastly the definition and function of God or god, all resulting in her complex perspectives on death.

My discussions have included events in Brontë’s early life that contributed to her rigorous interrogations of death prompted by the pervasive presence of death in her world. Bursting into the world of authorship in her fantastic paracosm, *The Gondal Poems*, she created a strong, swashbuckling female protagonist, A.G.A., who

defied conventional gender stereotypes in her role as Queen of the Gondals. Sleeping in the heather and existing on the moors, A.G.A. embodied Emily's love of wild Nature, a space in which Emily existed both in her imagination and in the physical world. In the end, A.G.A. is murdered and dies alone on the moors. With no solution as yet to the problem of existence in the afterlife, Brontë embarked on a daring presentation of parallel worlds in her Diary Papers resulting in a simultaneity of time and space. I have argued that this bold experiment caused her to challenge existing dichotomies such as those dividing Nature and culture, man and animal, and life and death. She brazenly sought to elude boundaries created in the rigid definitions of mid-Victorian England. Emily's ontology of death finds expression her *devoir*, "Le Palais de la Mort," in which she personified Death as a powerful and evil presence who lives in hell and works to infect humanity with intemperance. Finally, in *Wuthering Heights*, dismissing death as an end of life, Brontë began to look at death as the beginning of the afterlife, a perspective more Stoic than Christian. In a protomodern move, she envisioned two realms of reality, the corporeal and the incorporeal, as she found a means to move her protagonist from one to the other. The extraordinary event featured in the fenestral scene creates a dynamic site of fluidity and flux where time and space are magnified and deconstructed simultaneously as Catherine returns to the present tense in spectral form. In a delay of fulfillment and merging past, present, and future, Catherine and Heathcliff will finally be together immanently as they spend their afterlives on the moors while their physical remains intermingle with the earth.

In her destabilization of gender expectations and religious conventions in her world, Brontë offered a loosely constructed organic philosophy in which she

embraced flux and fluidity in an intermingling of spaces. My analysis offers a new perspective on the life and work of the “Sphynx of Literature.” The one hundred seventy years since her death have seen a proliferation of her ideas in a rhizomatic tapestry of representations including films, stage presentations, music, and even cartoons. Catherine and Heathcliff remain a lingering presence in our world!

¹ Richard Dunn explains that these apparently fictionally titled tracts are of the sort fit for Sunday services (E. Brontë 17 WH).

² Matthew 18:22-23: “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (*King James Bible*)

Emily Brontë’s choice of this passage urging forgiveness offers a strong critique of the façade of the brand of spirituality that reviled. In particular, her creation of Jabez Branderham offers biting anti-Methodist satire; her character was probably based on the founder of independent Methodism, Jabez Bunting. Bunting was known to be violently authoritarian as he expelled dissidents from the Methodist “brotherhood,” an organization antithetical to the Methodist “doctrine” of the people. He was not favored by the Brontës (Davies 154).

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