

HEATHCLIFF: A SATANIC HERO

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PREFACE

In analyzing a character in fiction, the analyst must consider carefully every possible factor which might enable him to understand the character more fully and thus render his analysis as penetrating and as accurate as possible. The best method of analysis is, of course, the critical interpretation of every means employed by the novelist in presenting the character to the reader. Also important, however, are the outside influences upon the novelist: his reading, his acquaintances, his environment--in short, every facet of his life.

The analyst is greatly hampered when working with Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights; for upon completing his interpretation of her methods of portraying her characters to the reader, he is plunged into working not with facts but with possibilities and, occasionally, probabilities. Very few facts have been established regarding Emily Brontë's life. The facts which are available and indisputable are of little use to the analyst of her work, for generally they concern only those occurrences which have little bearing on the influences important in her development into a capable novelist

and, particularly, in the writing of her novel. Thus Heathcliff, whose character I intend in this thesis to analyze in the light of the characteristics of the anti-hero of the Satanic School of Romanticism, remains to a great degree an enigma.

I wish to thank Dr. Autrey Nell Wiley for the part which she played in the development of this thesis. Without her untiring encouragement I could never have mastered the difficulties involved in expanding an idea into a thesis and in continuing graduate work while establishing a family. I would like to thank Dr. Constance L. Beach for her encouraging comments on my work, particularly during the early days of its composition. I would like to thank Dr. Eleanor James for reading this thesis in connection with her service as a member of my examining committee.

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CHAPTER I

THE SATANIC DEFINED

The term "satanic" as an adjective denoting that which pertains to Satan was first used by John Milton in Paradise Lost, published in 1667, to describe Satan's army. The term "satanic" as an adjective denoting that which is characteristic of or befitting Satan--extremely wicked, diabolical, devilish, or infernal--was first used by Holcroft in his translation of Lavater's Physiography, published in 1793, to emphasize the wickedness of a criminal who had murdered his benefactor. Robert Southey, in the preface to his Vision of Judgement, published in 1821, introduced the term "Satanic School" as an appellation descriptive of the work of Byron, Shelley, and their imitators. Since 1821 the term has often been applied to other writers charged with audacious pride, defiance, impiety, and a joy in portraying illicit passion.¹

The members of the Satanic School, radicals of the Romantic Movement, succumbed to an infatuation with qualities which

¹A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, ed. Sir James A. H. Murray (Oxford, 1914), VIII, Q-Sh, 116.

seemed to deny beauty: the horrible, the base, the repugnant, the diseased, the grotesque, the strange, and the savage.² They also had a predilection for the uninhibited expression of primitive impulses: Narcissistic aggressiveness, emotion over reason, madness, and sadism.³ Imagination and mysticism were extremely important to them;⁴ and their revolt against society, religion, and the conventional was uncompromising.⁵ Indeed, the Satanic School, Romanticism at its zenith, was thoroughly dedicated to Satan himself; he was the foundation, the inspiration, and the personification of the ideals of the Romantic Movement.⁶

The logical product of the writers of the Satanic School is the satanic, or Byronic, hero.⁷ This hero, a recurrent personage in Romantic literature, possesses certain typical

²F. L. Lucas, Literature and Psychology (Ann Arbor, 1957), pp. 96-102. Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony (London, 1951), pp. 27-28. Leicester Bradner, "The Growth of Wuthering Heights," PMLA, XLVIII (1933), 438.

³Lucas, pp. 96-103, 106-108.

⁴Samuel C. Chew, "The Nineteenth Century and After," A Literary History of England, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York, 1948), p. 1123.

⁵Lucas, pp. 103, 111.

⁶Maximillian Rudwin, The Devil in Legend and Literature (Chicago, 1931), pp. 277, 286.

⁷Clyde de L. Ryals, "The 'Fatal Woman' Symbol in Tennyson," PMLA, LXXIV (September, 1959), 442, n. 6.

characteristics which set him apart from all other heroes: his origin, though conjectured to be exalted, is a mystery; he bears traces of burnt-out passions; he gives a suspicion of a ghastly guilt; he is perpetually melancholy, and his habits are those of a melancholy person; his face is pale, and his eyes are unforgettable; he seems to be a kind of fallen angel; he diffuses about him the curse which blights his destiny; and he destroys himself and the unfortunate women with whom he becomes involved.⁸ He is "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection."⁹

Heathcliff, the hero of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, invites analysis in the light of the qualities of the satanic hero. Critics have called him a "brute-demon, . . . a deformed monster, . . . the epitome of brutality, disavowed by man and devil";¹⁰ a "monster of malevolence";¹¹ "a very human monster";¹²

⁸Praz, pp. 59, 66, 74-75.

⁹Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Moore's Life of Lord Byron," Critical, Historical and Miscellaneous Essays and Poems (New York, n. d.), I, 634-635.

¹⁰"Novels of the Season," North American Review, LXVII (October, 1848), 358.

¹¹Laura L. Hinkley, Charlotte and Emily (New York, 1945), p. 340.

¹²Colman Kavanagh, The Symbolism of "Wuthering Heights" (London, n. d.), p. 12.

an "enigma, a being of another race and, it would almost seem, from another sphere";¹³ a "'ham' barbarian," a "rough perfidious lout," a "melodramatic dummy";¹⁴ and a Byronic misanthrope.¹⁵ He has been described as cruel and conniving;¹⁶ diabolical;¹⁷ untamed;¹⁸ "awe-inspiring";¹⁹ "ultra-human, or perhaps sub-human";²⁰ "entirely unreal";²¹ "purposefully, intelligently, malignantly evil";²² and "self-doomed and self-destroyed."²³

¹³Ernest Dimnet, The Brontë Sisters (London, 1927), p. 168.

¹⁴Muriel Spark and Derek Stanford, Emily Brontë: Her Life and Work (London, 1953), pp. 254, 255, 256.

¹⁵Hinkley, p. 334.

¹⁶W. S. Braithwaite, The Bewitched Parsonage: The Story of the Brontës (New York, 1950), p. 170.

¹⁷Dimnet, p. 172.

¹⁸Phyllis Bentley, The Brontë Sisters (London, 1954), p. 34.

¹⁹Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror: A Study of Gothic Romance (New York, 1920), p. 224.

²⁰Edith Ellsworth Kinsley, Pattern for Genius (New York, 1939), p. 166.

²¹Spark and Stanford, p. 255.

²²Hinkley, p. 332.

²³Virginia Moore, Distinguished Women Writers (New York, 1934), p. 118.

By none of the critics whose works I have read²⁴ is Heathcliff designated a satanic hero. It would seem, therefore, that there is justification for an analysis of him as an example of this satanic type of hero. That Heathcliff, the hero of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, is an example of the satanic hero is a thesis or theory that I propose to establish through a critical analysis of Wuthering Heights and Emily's poems supplemented by an analysis of possible sources for Heathcliff as a satanic hero.

²⁴In addition to the critics referred to in my discussion, I have read from the following: Bertrand Evans, Hoxie Neale Fairchild, Clement Shorter, René Wellek and Austin Warren, Wyndham Lewis, Virginia Woolf, Augustus Ralli, Keighley Snowden, C. F. E. Spurgeon, K. A. R. Sugden, Irene Cooper Willis, Herbert Read, David Cecil, Charles Percy Sanger, Florence S. Dry, Margaret Lane, and Angus M. Mackay. Earlier critics, whose works are maintained in rare book collections and were not available to me, include G. F. Bradby, J. M. Dembleby, J. Fotheringham, A. Law, and Edmund Gosse.

CHAPTER II

EMILY BRONTË'S METHODS OF CHARACTERIZATION

In a study of Heathcliff as a satanic hero it is necessary to analyze the methods of character portrayal employed by Emily Brontë in presenting Heathcliff to the reader. These methods include descriptions of the physique, the clothes, and the mannerisms of the character; the way in which the character's personality is expressed in speech, writing, and action; the emotional attitudes of the character toward other people, toward objects, and toward certain forms of activity; the ideas the character entertains concerning man and the universe; the reaction of other people to the character; and the relationship between the character and his environment.¹

Physical Descriptions of Heathcliff

Nelly Dean's introduction of the child Heathcliff into her narrative is accompanied by two descriptions--one a brief observation by Mr. Earnshaw, the other Nelly's own impression

¹Fred B. Millet, Reading Fiction (New York, 1950), pp. 45-46.

of the newcomer. When Mr. Earnshaw deposits the boy before the members of his family, he admonishes his wife to take the intruder as "'a gift of God; though it's dark almost as if it came from the devil.'"² Nelly herself, a girl of fourteen at this time, sees "a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk--indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's."³ Mr. Earnshaw's brief description foretells the evil which is to come through this child, for it seems, as the story unfolds, that he does come from the devil. Certainly his dark aspect calls up in the mind of the reader--if not in the minds of the characters who witness his arrival--an image of mysterious, foreboding evil. Nelly's description, however, is quite objective and free of allusions to and interpretations of the child's physical appearance. The down-to-earth description of her first impression of Heathcliff seems to indicate that her somewhat superstitious descriptions of him later in the novel are due largely to her association of his physical aspect with his diabolic deeds.

After Mr. Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff is forced by the revengeful Hindley to become a hired hand at the Heights. Nelly persuades him to improve his unkempt appearance in order to

²Emily Jane Brontë, Wuthering Heights, eds. T. J. Wise, et al. (Oxford, 1931), p. 40.

³Ibid.

be presentable when the Linton children call. "'Do you mark those two lines between your eyes,'" she says as she shows Heathcliff his reflection in the mirror, "'and those thick brows, that instead of rising arched, sink in the middle, and that couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly, but lurk glinting under them, like devil's spies?'"⁴ Through Nelly's description, spoken as much in fun as in earnest, Emily Brontë links Heathcliff's physical aspect with his strange mental inclinations; for Heathcliff has already exhibited a hard, cold, selfish temperament devoid of any feeling of affection for anyone, except a wild admiration for Cathy and a friendly regard for Nelly.

Upon Heathcliff's return after his three years' absence, Nelly offers her impressions of him as he appears at the age of perhaps twenty:

He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man; beside whom, my master seemed quite slender and youthlike. His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army. His countenance was much older in expression, and decision of feature than Mr. Linton's; it looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. A half-civilized ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows, and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified, quite divested of roughness though too stern for grace.⁵

Though she is impressed by the obvious improvement in his personal appearance, Nelly is still obsessed, as she was years

⁴Ibid., p. 64.

⁵Ibid., p. 109.

before, with the thick brows and black eyes which seem to arouse in her mind a presentiment of the ferocious savagery which she has not yet, at this point in the narrative, had the opportunity to witness--except in his violent, though childish, outbursts against Hindley, Joseph, and Edgar. It is at this point that Heathcliff emerges as a hero possessed of noble proportions and mysterious potentialities for evil. It is this Heathcliff, passionate and tyrannical, who dominates the novel.

At the beginning of Wuthering Heights Lockwood describes Heathcliff as he appears at the age of perhaps forty: "He is a dark skinned gipsy, in aspect, in dress, and manners, a gentleman, . . . rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss, with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure--and rather morose."⁶ His description is devoid of allusions to a fierce expression, fiendish eyes, or any of the adjectives descriptive of the diabolic which are used by other characters when they speak of Heathcliff. Lockwood, having met Heathcliff for the first time, is ignorant of his strange past; therefore, his description of Heathcliff's personal appearance, lacking the coloration of the inevitable association of his appearance with his past, is probably the most accurate objective description of Heathcliff's physical aspect.

⁶Ibid., p. 4.

Personality: Heathcliff the Child

Heathcliff's personality, including his emotional attitudes, is revealed through his speech and actions. When he first appears in Nelly's narrative, he is a morose child, hardened to ill treatment. He "would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding a tear, and my pinches moved him only to draw in a breath, and open his eyes, as if he had hurt himself by accident, and nobody was to blame."⁷ He stoically endures maltreatment and illness with the same uncomplaining reserve, though hardness, not gentleness, made him give little trouble."⁸ Mr. Earnshaw's insistence that everyone bend to Heathcliff's wishes contributes to his pride and selfishness. "'You must exchange horses with me,'" he says to Hindley after the pony he has chosen, the handsomer one, becomes lame. "'I don't like mine, and, if you won't I shall tell your father of the three thrashings you've given me this week, and show him my arm which is black to the shoulder.'"⁹ Heathcliff's extraordinary hardness is in evidence once more when Hindley, roused to violence at being forced to give up his pony, knocks him under its hoofs; he "coolly . . . gathered himself up, and went on with his intention, exchanging

⁷Ibid., p. 42.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 43.

saddles and all; and then sitting down on a bundle of hay to overcome the qualm which the violent blow occasioned, before he entered the house."¹⁰ Already insensible to deceit he allows Nelly to lay the blame for his bruises on the horse: "He minded little what tale was told since he had what he wanted."¹¹

Though he is proud, selfish, deceitful, and wild, the boy Heathcliff, before he is crushed by Hindley's base treatment and Cathy's rejection, exhibits two characteristics which do much to redeem him in the eyes of those who would consider him satanic from birth. The first instance in which Heathcliff reveals a near-angelic facet of his character is on the night of old Mr. Earnshaw's death. Though he has been insensible to his benefactor's indulgence and has never repaid his kindness with any sign of gratitude, when Mr. Earnshaw dies, Heathcliff and Cathy "set up a heart-breaking cry."¹² Later that night Nelly hears them consoling each other with glowing prattle of heaven. The second instance in which Heathcliff reveals a lofty facet of his character is on the night of his jaunt with Cathy to Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff, in relating his tale to Nelly, describes the drawing-room of the Grange in such

¹⁰Ibid., p. 44.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 48.

poetic language that his sensitiveness to beauty is obvious: "We saw--ah! it was beautiful--a splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson-covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glassdrops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers."¹³

As Heathcliff enthusiastically continues his tale of the episode at Thrushcross Grange, he reveals two of his most striking characteristics: his strong will and his courage. When the Lintons' bulldog brings down Cathy, Heathcliff thrusts a stone between his jaws and tries with all his might "to cram it down his throat."¹⁴ And, after Cathy has been taken into the house, Heathcliff resumes his position at the window, determined to shatter it, if necessary, to liberate his companion.¹⁵ Heathcliff also reveals three of his predominant emotional attitudes as he relates his story. His admiration and adoration of Cathy are disclosed when he says of her encounter with the Grange watchdog: "She did not yell out--no! She would have scorned to do it, if she had been spitted on the horns of a mad cow!"¹⁶ and "I saw they [the Linton children] were full of stupid admiration; she is so immeasurably

¹³Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 55.

superior to them--to everybody on earth; is she not, Nelly?"¹⁷ His scornful contempt for the Linton children is exhibited when he calls them idiots and says, "'We laughed outright at the petted things, we did despise them!'"¹⁸ His friendly regard for Nelly is obvious in this particular narration. When he tells her that he continued cursing the Lintons, Heathcliff specifically asks her not to be angry with him because of it.¹⁹ The very fact that he tells her the tale at all, and in such an enthusiastic and confidential manner, indicates that he values Nelly as a trusted friend.

When Cathy returns a fastidious young lady from her five weeks' stay at Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff, realizing his defects, evinces an envy of Edgar Linton's looks and finances: "'I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed, and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!'"²⁰ However, Heathcliff does not covet these qualities for the gratification which they in themselves will offer; he desires them only because he realizes that it will be his poverty and degradation which will lose Cathy for him. Had she remained the wild, dirty, abandoned little imp that she was before her stay at the Grange, envy of Edgar's looks and money would never have entered Heathcliff's mind.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 54.

²⁰Ibid., p. 64.

Personality: Heathcliff the Adolescent

Heathcliff's scorn of Edgar Linton advances to hatred as he begins to realize that Edgar is a formidable rival for Cathy's affection. On Christmas Day, after Cathy's return to the Heights, the Linton children pay a visit. Heathcliff, who has been made presentable by Nelly, ventures to enter upon the scene. Thrust back by Hindley and insulted by Edgar, Heathcliff reacts violently: he dashes a tureen of hot apple-sauce full in the insolent Edgar's face.²¹ This scene marks an important point in Heathcliff's life; it is at this time that he swears revenge upon Hindley: "'I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it, at last. . . . God won't have the satisfaction that I shall. . . . Let me alone, and I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of that, I don't feel pain.'"²²

Heathcliff's sad realization that he is losing out in his badly handicapped struggle for Cathy comes when he is about seventeen years old. Pointing toward the calendar which is hanging on the wall, he says to Cathy, "'The crosses are for the evenings you have spent with the Lintons, the dots for those spent with me--Do you see, I've marked every day?'"²³ It seems to be obvious that the crosses far outnumber the

²¹Ibid., p. 66.

²²Ibid., p. 69.

²³Ibid., p. 79.

dots; Cathy, however, is not moved. She intimates to Heathcliff that she prefers the society of Edgar just as that fortunate young man enters. Heathcliff, crushed by the realization that Cathy prefers Edgar and bewildered by his sudden arrival, leaves the room. It is the last time that Cathy sees him until his return after her marriage.

Personality: Heathcliff at Twenty

When Heathcliff returns from his adventures, his speech and actions indicate that his emotion concerning Cathy has deepened into a mature, passionate love and his feelings for everyone else have degenerated into insensibility or hatred. As Nelly, confounded by wonder and curiosity at his sudden and unexpected appearance, hesitates to take the message of his arrival to Cathy, married and the mistress of Thrushcross Grange, he admonishes her impatiently to carry his message immediately, for "'I'm in hell till you do!'"²⁴ During his subsequent meetings with Cathy, especially on the day of her death, he exhibits a passionate, unrestrained adoration which is indescribable in its intensity.²⁵ After her death his grief renders him inconsolable; he never overcomes his sorrow-stricken passion for her. His hatred of Edgar and Hindley is viciously intense. "'Every day I grow madder

²⁴Ibid., p. 106.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 181-187.

after sending him [Edgar] to heaven!"²⁶ he rages. And when, on the night of Heathcliff's and Hindley's fight, Hindley falls senseless with pain and loss of blood, Heathcliff kicks him mercilessly, dashes his head against the stones repeatedly, and scarcely refrains from murdering him.²⁷

Heathcliff's loathing of Isabella, an emotion so intense that it almost impels him to forget his judicious prudence and murder her, is poignantly displayed in his speech and actions. When Cathy, retaining the embarrassed Isabella in his presence through force, first informs Heathcliff of her infatuation with him, he stares hard at her, "as one might do at a strange repulsive animal."²⁸ Later, Isabella having freed herself and fled in mortification, Heathcliff says of her sharp fingernails, "'I'd wrench them off her fingers, if they ever menaced me.'"²⁹ Isabella's unfortunate marriage to Heathcliff precipitates a revolting show of violence and hatred on Heathcliff's part. She is subjected to mental and physical cruelty disgusting to relate. He says to Nelly, in Isabella's tortured presence, "'This morning she announced, . . .

²⁶Ibid., p. 127.

²⁸Ibid., p. 120.

²⁷Ibid., p. 203.

²⁹Ibid., p. 121.

that I had actually succeeded in making her hate me! A positive labour of Hercules, I assure you! If it be achieved, I have cause to return thanks-- . . . I dare say she would rather I had seemed all tenderness before you; it wounds her vanity to have the truth exposed. But, I don't care who knows that the passion was wholly on one side.'"³⁰ He makes one of his typical statements to her when he says, as she is relating to Hindley the circumstances of his near murder of the night previous, "'Get up, and begone out of my sight.'"³¹ A short time later Heathcliff, in desperate revulsion, hurls a knife at her as she makes her escape from him. It is the last time they see each other.

Heathcliff tells Nelly that Isabella cannot accuse him "'of showing a bit of deceitful softness.'"³² However, he did kiss her in the court at Thrushcross Grange before they were married--Nelly witnessed that act;³³ a kiss cannot be totally devoid of tenderness. Heathcliff's courtship of Isabella is not revealed; however, he must have asked her to marry him, and a proposal of marriage must be accompanied by at least a small degree of softness. He certainly did not fail to take advantage of his rights as Isabella's husband, a fact

³⁰Ibid., p. 172.

³¹Ibid., p. 207.

³²Ibid., p. 172.

³³Ibid., p. 127.

which is evidenced by the existence of Linton. It would seem that his loathing of her could hardly permit him to degrade himself in his own eyes and in hers by permitting her to believe that she could arouse even sexual desire in him. Perhaps his master plan of revenge through Linton was already germinating in his mind.

Personality: Heathcliff at Forty

Heathcliff at the age of about forty displays through his statements and actions the same intense hatred; the profound love remains with him also, but he seems to keep it to himself somewhat more successfully than he did when he was younger. He has a new object of hatred in the person of Cathy's daughter, Catherine. He is exceedingly brutal to her; it seems that he prefers to consider her Edgar's representative and hate her rather than to consider her Cathy's and love her. After tricking her into entering Wuthering Heights and informing her that she is a prisoner, Heathcliff lets her know how deeply he detests her. When in desperation she bites his hand in order to get the key to unlock the door and escape to her dying father, Heathcliff administers "a shower of terrific slaps on both sides of the [her] head."³⁴ Later, when she tries to induce him through pity to allow her to go home to

³⁴Ibid., p. 309.

be with Edgar during his last days, he cries, "'Keep your left's fingers off; and move, or I'll kick you. . . . I'd rather be hugged by a snake. How the devil can you dream of fawning on me? I detest you!'"³⁵ Several months later, after Edgar's and Linton's deaths and Catherine's removal to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff displays his hatred of her in the presence of Lockwood. He speaks to her and looks at her with such savagery and loathing that Lockwood is shocked.

On the other hand, it seems as if Heathcliff cannot help identifying Hareton with Cathy although, for purposes of revenge, he would prefer to identify him with Hindley.³⁶ Heathcliff's feeling toward Hareton borders on affection. His violent acts are never directed toward him; there seems to be almost a pact of friendship between the two, though Heathcliff glories in Hareton's illiteracy and crudeness because, as a portion of his revenge on Hindley and on his own miserable youth, he himself has plunged Hareton into "his bathos of coarseness, and ignorance."³⁷ As Heathcliff approaches his strange death and his violent nature begins to abate somewhat, he chances upon Catherine and Hareton, glowing lovers now, quite suddenly. After they have left the room, he says to Nelly, always his only confidante, "'Hareton seemed

³⁵Ibid., p. 314.

³⁶Ibid., p. 346.

³⁷Ibid., p. 250.

a personification of my youth, not a human being-- . . . His aspect was the ghost of my immortal love, of my wild endeavours to hold my right, my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish.'"³⁸ Again, in speaking to Nelly earlier in the narrative, he reveals that he would have loved Hareton had he been someone else.³⁹

Toward Linton, Heathcliff's speech and actions exhibit an indescribable revulsion accompanied by abject cruelty. His first view of his son prompts him to remark, "'Oh, damn my soul! but that's worse than I expected.'"⁴⁰ Later, when his meticulous plans for revenge are on the verge of being ruined by Linton's premature death, Heathcliff forces his dying son to profess an eagerness for the visits with Catherine which exhaust him completely and bring him even nearer to death. Heathcliff seems to realize that Linton's precarious health will not permit physical torture; "'he's such a cobweb, a pinch would annihilate him.'"⁴¹ Heathcliff's cruelty to Linton, therefore, seems to be largely a mental cruelty, for he says, "'I brought him down one evening, the day before yesterday, and just set him in a chair, and never touched him afterwards. . . . In two hours, I called Joseph to carry him

³⁸Ibid., p. 370.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 237.

³⁹Ibid., p. 249.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 327.

up again; and, since then, my presence is as potent on his nerves, as a ghost; and I fancy he sees me often, though I am not near."⁴² When Linton is very near death, Catherine begs Heathcliff to send for a doctor. "'Walk out of the room!'" cries the soulless man, "'and let me never hear a word more about him! None here care what becomes of him; if you do, act the nurse; if you do not, lock him up and leave him.'"⁴³

Heathcliff's speech and actions concerning Lockwood are important in that they reveal at least a slightly hospitable facet of his character. When Lockwood is attacked by Heathcliff's vexatious mongrels, Heathcliff solicitously asks him if he has been bitten. On receiving a negative reply, he says, "'Here, take a little wine. Guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive them. Your health, sir!'"⁴⁴ And during Lockwood's protracted illness Heathcliff thoughtfully pays him a visit and sends him "a brace of grouse--the last of the season."⁴⁵

Perhaps the deepest insight into Heathcliff's personal concept of his own character comes when he makes this startling

⁴²Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 6

⁴³Ibid., pp. 333-334.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 103.

observation to Nelly: "'I've done no injustice, and I repent of nothing.'"46 If he is taken at his word, Heathcliff can be considered a soulless demon; however, on the very next page he says to the younger Catherine, "'to you, I've made myself worse than the devil.'"47 Considering Heathcliff's character as revealed up to this point, it seems correct to assume that, though he realizes that he has been brutal to her, he does not consider this brutality an act of injustice on his part; he has said to Nelly, "'I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething, and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain.'"48

Heathcliff's ideas concerning man and the universe are largely confined to a superstitious belief in ghosts--"'I know that ghosts have wandered on earth'"49--and an utter disregard for the Christian concept of heaven and hell. When Lockwood quits the "haunted" chamber after his nightmare, he stands outside the door and witnesses, involuntarily, "a piece of superstition on the part of my landlord, which belied, oddly, his apparent sense. He got on to the bed, and wrenched open the lattice, bursting, as he pulled at it, into an uncontrollable passion of tears. 'Come in! come in!' he sobbed.

46 Ibid., p. 380.

48 Ibid., p. 174.

47 Ibid., p. 381.

49 Ibid., p. 191.

'Cathy, do come. Oh do--once more! Oh! my heart's darling, hear me this time--Catherine, at last!'"⁵⁰ His idea of heaven seems to be life-in-death companionship with Cathy in an eternal romp on the moors, and he seems to entertain no doubt as to the accomplishment of this heaven when he dies.

Reactions of Other Characters

to the Child Heathcliff

The reactions of other characters to Heathcliff are extremely important in the portrayal of his character. Upon Heathcliff's introduction into the Earnshaw household Hindley conceives a hatred for him--primarily because of Mr. Earnshaw's obvious partiality to him and the selfish superiority which he assumes over Hindley: "The young master [Hindley] had learnt to regard . . . Heathcliff as a usurper of his parent's affections, and his privileges, and he grew bitter with brooding over these injuries."⁵¹ Mr. Earnshaw "took to Heathcliff strangely, believing, all he said, . . . and petting him up far above Cathy."⁵² Cathy falls in with Heathcliff immediately; they become fast friends and, after Hindley's return from school as master of the house and of the unfortunate Heathcliff, naughty, mischievous allies. His swearing at the Lintons

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 31.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 42.

⁵²Ibid.

during his and Cathy's escapade at Thrushcross Grange prompts Mrs. Linton to remark, "'A wicked boy, at all events, . . . and quite unfit for a decent house!'"⁵³

Reactions of Other Characters to the

Adolescent Heathcliff

When Cathy first catches sight of Heathcliff upon her return from Thrushcross Grange, she is shocked by his unkempt appearance and his grim face. "'Why, how very black and cross you look! and how--how funny and grim! . . . If you wash your face, and brush your hair it will be all right. But you are so dirty!'"⁵⁴ Sympathizing with Heathcliff in his unhappy, dirty, degraded condition, Nelly attempts to help him in his fight for equality with the Linton children; she washes his face and combs his hair, encouraging him with compliments all the while: "'You are younger than Edgar, and yet, I'll be bound, you are taller and twice as broad across the shoulders--you could knock him down in a twinkling.'"⁵⁵ Hindley, still obsessed with jealous hatred, meets Heathcliff, clean and cheerful, going in to take part in the Christmas festivities with Cathy and the Linton children; he sends him away to spend Christmas hungry and alone.

⁵³Ibid., p. 56.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 64-65.

Reactions of Other Characters
to the Man Heathcliff

Cathy is never moved by Heathcliff's violent actions, partly because she is as stubborn and fierce as he and partly because she fully realizes the power which she wields over him. "I never say to him let this or that enemy alone, because it would be ungenerous or cruel to harm them--I say let them alone, because I should hate them to be wronged."⁵⁶ However, in spite of her love for him and her knowledge of his love for her, she does not hesitate to inform the moonstruck Isabella of Heathcliff's true character: "Heathcliff is--an unreclaimed creature, without refinement--without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone. I'd as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter's day as recommend you to bestow your heart on him! . . . He's not a rough diamond--a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic; he's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man. . . . and he'd crush you, like a sparrow's egg, Isabella, if he found you a troublesome charge."⁵⁷ Her basic reaction to Heathcliff, however, the reaction which remains unaltered throughout her life--and after her death, as Heathcliff would have it--is one of passionate spiritual and physical need:

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 117.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 116-117.

" . . . he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, . . . surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of creation if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, . . . 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. . . . my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath--a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff--he's always, always in my mind."⁵⁸

Edgar's reaction to Heathcliff is one of scorn, aversion, and fear. When Cathy, deliriously happy, informs Edgar of Heathcliff's unexpected return, he says, "The whole household need not witness the sight of your welcoming a runaway servant as a brother."⁵⁹ Later, "Your presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous," Edgar says to Heathcliff,⁶⁰ thus precipitating the violent scene in which he displays his helpless fear of his enemy. Cathy, insisting upon "fair means," stops Nelly from calling additional manpower to support Edgar in his ousting of Heathcliff, locks the door, and throws the key into the fire. Overcome with fear, Edgar begins to tremble, and his face grows deadly pale. "For his life he could not avert that excess of emotion--mingled

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 91-93.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 108.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 130.

anguish and humiliation overcame him completely. He leant on the back of a chair, and covered his face."⁶¹ Edgar's hatred of Heathcliff does not abate with the years; he remains obsessed by the fallacy--an unmistakable fact to him--that Heathcliff was the primary cause of Cathy's death and is, therefore, a murderer.⁶²

Hindley's hatred of Heathcliff, having had years in which to eat into his soul, is as intense as is Heathcliff's hatred of him. Only Hindley can compare with Heathcliff in the capacity for such diabolic and unabating hatred. "'Be so good as to turn your lock, and draw your bolt,"' he says to Isabella. "'I cannot resist going up with this [gun] every night, and trying his door. If once I find it open he's done for!'"⁶³

Isabella's reaction to Heathcliff, after her siege of infatuation, is, like Edgar's, one of fear and detestation. He is extremely brutal to her, physically and mentally; she exclaims to Nelly, "'He's a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being! I've been told I might leave him before; and I've made the attempt, but I dare not repeat it!'"⁶⁴ However, her fear is modified by a certain saucy daring; on the morning after Hindley's attempt on Heathcliff's life, she taunts

⁶¹Ibid., p. 131.

⁶³Ibid., p. 160.

⁶²Ibid., p. 255.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 173.

Heathcliff beyond endurance with well-chosen, barbed comments on his relationship with Cathy. It is then that he flings a knife at her, and she rushes from Wuthering Heights. Pausing at the Grange to rest for a moment before pursuing her journey away from Heathcliff, Isabella relates her tragic story to Nelly: "'I gave him my heart, and he took and pinched it to death; and flung it back to me--People feel with their hearts, . . . and since he has destroyed mine, I have not power to feel for him, and I would not, though he groaned from this to his dying day; and wept tears of blood.'"⁶⁵

Linton's reaction to his father is one of helpless, paralyzing fear. At times the mere presence of Heathcliff seems to frighten him to the verge of unconsciousness. Heathcliff's cruelty to his son seems to be a mental one in which Linton is reduced to a state of hypnotic fear through threats of brutality. During one of Catherine's summer visits with Linton, his fear of Heathcliff causes him to start from a nap imagining in terror that his father has called his name. Catherine's last visit with Linton, the visit which terminates in her confinement at the Heights, finds him in an even worse

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 197.

state of nervous fear: "'My father threatened me, . . . and I dread him--I dread him!'"⁶⁶ Indeed, the boy is in such a paroxysm of terror that he cannot move; "there he was, powerless under its [fear's] gripe, and any addition seemed capable of shocking him into idiocy."⁶⁷

Catherine's reaction to Heathcliff is one of stubborn defiance. She, like her intrepid mother, knows no fear. When Heathcliff imprisons her at the Heights during Edgar's last days, she demands to be released: "'I'm not afraid of you! . . . Give me that key--I will have it!'"⁶⁸ Failing in her attempt to loosen his grip by applying her fingernails, she bites his hand. He slaps her repeatedly, and dazed and bewildered, she weeps; however, her weeping seems to denote anger and frustration rather than fear, for after Edgar's death, when Heathcliff comes to the Grange to convey her back to the Heights, she exclaims: "'I defy you to hurt him [Linton] when I am by, and I defy you to frighten me!'"⁶⁹ Later, in answer to one of Heathcliff's tirades which Lockwood overhears, she says, "'I'll put my trash away, because you can make me, if I refuse, . . . But I'll not do anything, though you should swear your tongue out, except what I please.'"⁷⁰

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 305.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 307.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 308.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 328.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 33.

Nelly's reaction to Heathcliff is largely one of dislike; she neither hates him nor fears him. She is repelled by his treatment of Linton and Catherine, but her repulsion never seems to achieve the intensity of hatred. In two instances she evidences a superstitious awe of him. Pausing by the gate to the Heights, she sees the child Hareton, talks to him, and offers him an orange to tell Hindley that she wishes to speak to him. Hareton disappears into the house; but, instead of Hindley, Heathcliff appears at the door. Nelly turns and flees, feeling that she has seen a goblin.⁷¹ And later, during Heathcliff's last days, Nelly carries a candle and his supper into his room. The light illuminates his features; and, again overcome by superstition, Nelly feels that Heathcliff is not a man but a goblin.⁷²

Lockwood's reaction to Heathcliff is a rather casual one. Being a new acquaintance and unaware of Heathcliff's past, he analyzes his dark, morose aspect and concludes that it evidences a reserve which "springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling--to manifestations of mutual kindliness."⁷³ Interested in one whose reserve seems to equal his own, Lockwood returns to Wuthering Heights just as a snowstorm sets in.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 125-126.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 375-376.

⁷³Ibid., p. 4.

During this visit he witnesses Heathcliff's savagery to Catherine and is not so eager to admire him. And when Heathcliff, totally lacking in any regard for Lockwood's safety, inhospitably denies him a guide through the blizzard or a place to sleep at the Heights, Lockwood, in utter disgust, seizes a lantern and strides outdoors to find his way to the Grange unaided. He is brought down by the dogs, much to the merriment of Heathcliff and Hareton. When Heathcliff, visibly shaken by Lockwood's involuntary cry, enters the bedroom to which Lockwood has been conducted by Zillah in secret, Lockwood first attributes his agitation to superstitious cowardice; however, Heathcliff is so violently affected that Lockwood's feelings soon turn from scorn to pity. Lockwood's reactions to Heathcliff are never deep ones; they are the reactions of a casual, objective, curious observer.

Setting in the Portrayal of

Heathcliff's Satanism

The setting of Wuthering Heights contributes a great deal to the portrayal of Heathcliff as a satanic hero. Emily loved the moors. One of her two principal pleasures, the moors were her "great resource": they offered her liberty of mind and body, exaltation of spirit, aesthetic pleasure, and moral inspiration.⁷⁴ It is natural, therefore, that she

⁷⁴Bentley, pp. 12-13.

should inject into the novel her own sensitiveness to their rugged landscapes and their capricious weathers. Above and beyond drawing upon her sensitive response to environment, however, she manipulates her setting in such a manner that topography and elements, the two great divisions of setting, work in harmony with characters, action, and emotion.

Heathcliff's drama is acted before a topographical backdrop which underscores his demonic nature. Isolation is an important prop in the portrayal of strange happenings, and the location of Heathcliff's "den"⁷⁵ is an isolated one. "In all England," Lockwood remarks, "I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society."⁷⁶ Elevation also contributes to the effective presentation of the environment which is in tune with Heathcliff's nature; situated atop a bleak hill,⁷⁷ Wuthering Heights commands a view of an irregular landscape which is as rugged and wild as Heathcliff's character. Desolation, too, is a characteristic which emphasizes Heathcliff's satanism; the land immediately surrounding his dwelling is harsh and barren: "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

⁷⁵Wuthering Heights, p. 381.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 1.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 8.

by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun."⁷⁸

Concordant with its severe surroundings, the exterior of Wuthering Heights is grim and forbidding and is embellished with old and bizarre carvings: "The architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall; and the corners defended with large jutting stones. . . . there is a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door, above which, . . . is written the date '1500,' and the name 'Hareton Earnshaw.'"⁷⁹

The interior of the house is unkempt and dirty. Isabella in a letter to Nelly refers to the kitchen as "'a dingy, untidy hole'";⁸⁰ and Nelly, upon a visit to the Heights while Isabella inhabits it in misery as Heathcliff's wife, notes a "pervading spirit of neglect."⁸¹ Above the chimney in the sitting room are "sundry villainous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols."⁸² Completing the forbidding aspect of "the house' preeminently"⁸³ is the presence of several irritable watchdogs.⁸⁴

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 2.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 156.

⁸²Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 168.

⁸³Ibid.

The elements play an extremely important part in the setting of Wuthering Heights as it emphasizes the character, action, and destiny of Heathcliff. On the night of Heathcliff's momentous departure upon his three-year self-imposed exile thunderstorms begin to gather; the night is black and threatening--"as black as t'chimbley," remarks Joseph.⁸⁵ At midnight the storm breaks upon the Heights with such ferocity that a large branch, struck off a tree by the wind or the lightning, falls across the roof.⁸⁶ Thus Heathcliff's departure in grief and humiliation at Cathy's rejection, an important climax in the novel, is emphasized by the violence of the storm. The storm's damaging blow to the house symbolizes and foreshadows the near annihilation through Heathcliff of both the dwelling and the name of Earnshaw.

Catherine's death, occurring in early springtime, was preceded by several weeks of warm, sunny weather. These pleasant days revived her somewhat; however, the meeting with Heathcliff weakens her physically, and she dies in the night. The fair weather holds until her funeral five days later; immediately after her burial, however--a burial which inters the anguished soul of Heathcliff⁸⁷ with the wasted body of

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 96.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 185.

Cathy--the weather, symbolic of Heathcliff's bitterly shattered love, suddenly changes: "The wind shifted from south to north-east, and brought rain, first, and then sleet, and snow. . . . the primroses and crocuses were hidden under wintry drifts: the larks were silent, the young leaves of the early trees smitten and blackened."⁸⁸

When the second Catherine is in her teens, Heathcliff resolves to secure her as Linton's bride in order to obtain Edgar's property. His methods are subtle at first; as time passes, however, and Linton rapidly approaches death, he becomes alarmed. Riding to the Grange on a cold, threatening day in autumn, he accosts Catherine as she stands beyond the locked gate, unable to climb the wall from the outer side. Accusing her of causing Linton's decline, Heathcliff persuades her to renew her visits in order to revive the boy. Immediately after the sympathetic Catherine hears of her cousin's decline and inwardly decides to renew their friendship--the decision which costs her her happiness and her inheritance--a hard rain begins "to drive through the moaning branches of the trees."⁸⁹ This depressing rain, this cold day, these "moaning branches" seem to symbolize and foreshadow the unhappy year that she will live through under Heathcliff's roof.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 194.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 268.

One of the most moving scenes in the novel and one referred to several times in this thesis is Heathcliff's frantic supplication of the ghost of Cathy after Lockwood's terrifying dream. During this scene Heathcliff gets up on the bed, bursts open the lattice, and pleads to Cathy's spirit: "'Come in! . . . Cathy, do come.' . . . The spectre . . . gave no sign of being; but the snow and wind whirled wildly through, . . . blowing out the light."⁹⁰ In this passage the elements parallel and underscore Heathcliff's emotions and actions; the fury of the storm equals the fury of the passion. And on the morning after these exhibitions of tempestuous elements and vehement emotions, both the elements and the emotions are stilled: the day is "clear, and still, and cold as impalpable ice,"⁹¹ and Heathcliff is silent, moody, and, in tune with the atmosphere, "cold as impalpable ice."

The Use of References to Demons and Beasts in Presenting Heathcliff's Satanism

Perhaps the most effective method employed by Emily in portraying Heathcliff's satanism is her use of references to the characteristics and actions of demons--the devil, hell, ghouls, vampires, fiends, and goblins--and beasts--a dog, a wolf, a tiger, a snake, and "a bird of bad omen"⁹²--in

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 31.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 34.

⁹²Ibid., p. 118.

describing Heathcliff's character and actions. Such references intensify the atmosphere of demonism which surrounds him.

Old Earnshaw is the first to associate Heathcliff with Satan, and he does so with the first words which he utters upon his return from his journey to Liverpool: "'You must e'en take it as a gift of God; though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil.'"⁹³ When Heathcliff lets it be known what he thinks of Isabella, Cathy remarks: "'Well, I won't repeat my offer of a wife--It is as bad as offering Satan a lost soul--Your bliss lies, like his, in inflicting misery.'"⁹⁴ After Isabella has lived with Heathcliff for several months, she asks Nelly in wonder: "'Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?'"⁹⁵ Relating to Nelly the manner of Heathcliff's existence immediately after Cathy's death, Isabella says, "'Whether the angels have fed him, or his kin beneath, I cannot tell; . . . he has continued, praying like a Methodist; only the deity he implored is senseless dust and ashes; and God, when addressed, was curiously confounded with his own black father!'"⁹⁶ The younger Catherine says to Heathcliff, "'You are miserable,

⁹³Ibid., p. 40.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 155-156.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 128.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 198.

are you not? Lonely, like the devil, and envious like him?"⁹⁷
 After Heathcliff's death, Joseph asserts that "'Th' divil's
 harried off his soul, . . . and he muh hev his carcass intuh
 t'bargin.'"⁹⁸

Emily's descriptions of Heathcliff could well be descriptions of the devil himself in human form. Like the devil,⁹⁹ Heathcliff is tall, lean, and of noble bearing; his eyes are piercing and unforgettable; his face is sallow or pale; his clothing is dark; and, though gentlemanly, he gives an impression of black savagery.¹⁰⁰

Heathcliff calls upon the devil and hell frequently; he seems to be on intimate terms with both. Hindley growls, "'Damn the hellish villain!'"¹⁰¹ Later, he cries, "'Am I to lose all, without a chance of retrieval? Is Hareton to be a beggar? Oh, damnation! I will have it back; and I'll have his gold too; and then his blood; and hell shall have his soul! It will be ten times blacker with that guest than ever it was before!'"¹⁰²

Heathcliff is the first to describe his actions in terms of those of a ghoul. During their discussion of Isabella's

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 328.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 383.

⁹⁹Rudwin, pp. 45-57.

¹⁰⁰Wuthering Heights, p. 106.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 201.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 161.

infatuation with Heathcliff, Cathy says, "'I like her too well . . . to let you absolutely seize and devour her up.'" Heathcliff replies, "'And I like her too ill to attempt it, . . . except in a very ghoulish fashion. You'd hear of odd things, if I lived alone with that mawkish, waxen face.'"¹⁰³ Later, as Heathcliff approaches his strange death, Nelly muses: "'Is he a ghoul, or a vampire?' . . . I had read of such hideous, incarnate demons."¹⁰⁴

Heathcliff is also the first to describe his actions in terms of the actions of a fiend: "'The moment her [Cathy's] regard ceased,'" he says to Nelly, "'I would have torn his [Edgar's] heart out, and drunk his blood!'"¹⁰⁵ Isabella is the first to describe him as a fiend; when Hindley attempts to deny Heathcliff entrance to Wuthering Heights, Isabella watches with alarm as he thrusts the casement to the floor and glares through the open window: "'His hair and clothes were whitened with snow, and his sharp cannibal teeth, revealed by cold and wrath, gleamed through the dark.'"¹⁰⁶ Later, she tells Hindley about Heathcliff's maltreatment of him when he was senseless from pain and loss of blood: "'He trampled on, and kicked you, and dashed you on the ground, . . . and

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 376.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 202.

his mouth watered to tear you with his teeth; because he's only half a man--not so much."¹⁰⁷ After Heathcliff's death, Nelly "tried to close his eyes--to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation. . . . They would not shut--they seemed to sneer at my attempts, and his parted lips, and sharp, white teeth sneered too!"¹⁰⁸

Nelly is the first to think of Heathcliff as a goblin; having obeyed a superstitious impulse and walked to Wuthering Heights to see Hindley, Nelly sees Heathcliff emerge from the house: "I turned directly and ran down the road as hard as ever I could race, making no halt till I gained the guide-post, and feeling as scared as if I had raised a goblin."¹⁰⁹ A few days before his death, Heathcliff again seems to Nelly to be a goblin: "The light flashed on his features as I spoke. I cannot express what a terrible start I got, by the momentary view! Those deep black eyes! That smile, and ghastly paleness! It appeared to me, not Mr. Heathcliff, but a goblin."¹¹⁰

References to the characteristics and actions of beasts in describing Heathcliff are few; they are, however, extremely effective. During the last meeting of Heathcliff and

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 125-126.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 382-383.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 375-376.

Cathy, Nelly says that, as she approached to ascertain the physical state of her mistress, Heathcliff "gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species."¹¹¹ Cathy describes Heathcliff as "'a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man,'"¹¹² and Nelly mysteriously refers to him as "'a bird of bad omen.'"¹¹³ Isabella calls him a "'brute beast'"¹¹⁴ and considers him more terrifying than "'a tiger, or a venomous serpent.'"¹¹⁵ And when Nelly approaches him on the morning after Cathy's death, she is shocked at seeing such savage grief: "He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with knives and spears."¹¹⁶

The idea that Heathcliff brings blight and damnation--a power which strongly links him with hell--is hinted at twice. The first time this hint is given is during the last impassioned interview between Heathcliff and Cathy; frantically he cries, "'Yes, you may kiss me, and cry; and wring out my kisses and tears. They'll blight you--they'll damn you.'"¹¹⁷

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 184.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 118.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 166.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 184.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 117.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 196.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 192.

Shortly after this meeting, on the night of the clash between Heathcliff and Hindley, Isabella says that Heathcliff's "'black countenance looked blighting through'" the open window.¹¹⁸

Thus through Emily Brontë's graphic description of his physical appearance, her powerful presentation of his personality as it is reflected in his speech and action, her vital portrayal of the reactions of other characters to him, her vivid delineation of his environment, and her striking use of demon and beast imagery, Heathcliff, whose satanic qualities will be discussed in detail in Chapter III, emerges from the pages of Wuthering Heights a near-perfect satanic hero.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 202.

CHAPTER III

HEATHCLIFF'S SATANISM

A study of Heathcliff as a satanic hero calls for a careful analysis of his character¹ in the light of the characteristics of the satanic hero, listed briefly in Chapter I but here classified for clarity and convenience under broad headings, which set him apart from other types of heroes. There are mysteries surrounding his life: his origin, though supposed to be an exalted one, is unknown; he seems to be a "fallen angel," though he gives the impression of a ghastly guilt; and he bears traces of an unknown "burnt-out" passion. His physical appearance is arresting: he is tall and of noble bearing, his face is unusually pale, and his eyes are unforgettable. His mental characteristics are striking: he is proud; he is moody and melancholy, and his habits are those of a melancholy person; he is savage and defiant, and his will is unconquerable; cruel, violent, and cynical, he hates and scorns mankind. His relations with other characters are marked: he is capable of deep and lasting emotion, usually

¹Several quotations which appear in Chapter II must necessarily be repeated in this chapter and in Chapter IV.

one all-encompassing passion; he is vicious and implacable in revenge; he diffuses the curse which blights his destiny; and he destroys himself and others--particularly the women with whom he becomes involved.

Mysteries Shrouding Heathcliff's Life

Heathcliff is an example of the satanic hero in all his sinister savagery and willful evil. There are mysteries in his life, the most important of which is the mystery of his origin. Returning from a walking trip to Liverpool, Mr. Earnshaw deposits before his wife, children, and servants "a dirty, ragged, black-haired child"² whom he has plucked from the streets of the city; he had seen him "starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb. . . . Not a soul knew to whom he belonged."³ The child is dark, a characteristic which prompts Mr. Linton to refer to him later in the novel as "'a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway.'"⁴ When Heathcliff is in his teens, Nelly suggests the possibility that he is of exalted birth in order to bolster his self-confidence in his fight to rise to Cathy's new social level: "'You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen?'"⁵ Years later, superstitiously speculating upon

²Wuthering Heights, p. 40.

⁴Ibid., p. 56.

³Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 65.

Heathcliff's unknown origin, she wonders, "'But where did he come from, the little dark thing, harbored by a good man to his bane?'"⁶

There are other mysteries in Heathcliff's life. During his three-year self-exile he obtained a great amount of money, and he shook off the batholitic ignorance into which years of mean labor and ill treatment had plunged him. Where he went and what methods he utilized to secure his fortune and education are never revealed. Of those years Heathcliff says only that he "'fought through a bitter life.'"⁷

There are several facets of Heathcliff's character which could almost be said to indicate that he is a "fallen angel." The first of these is revealed on the night of old Earnshaw's death: Heathcliff and Cathy, saddened and dismayed by the event, are overheard by Nelly comforting each other with glowing talk of heaven.⁸ The second is his regard for Nelly; she is his only confidante, and she remains so throughout his life.

The third and most important of these angelic facets of Heathcliff's character is the love for Hareton which assails him against his will; though he had, as he thought, accomplished Hareton's utter degradation, Heathcliff felt

⁶Ibid., p. 376.

⁷Ibid., p. 110.

⁸Ibid., p. 49.

drawn to the boy: "'Do you know,'" he says to Nelly, "'that twenty times a day, I covet Hareton. . . . I'd have loved the lad had he been someone else.'"⁹ Perhaps Heathcliff loves Hareton because he symbolizes Heathcliff's own youth: "'Five minutes ago, Hareton seemed a personification of my youth,'" he says to Nelly. "'Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal love, of my wild endeavours to hold my right, my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish.'"¹⁰ Or perhaps it is because he reminds him of Cathy: "'When I look for his father in his face, I find her every day more.'"¹¹

There are three important indications, however, that Heathcliff is not a "fallen angel." A minor one, his ingratitude to his foster father,¹² needs no discussion. The other two, however, are significant. The first is his lack of remorse for and his insensibility to his demonic actions: a few days before his death he declares to Nelly, "'I've done no injustice, and I repent of nothing.'"¹³ The second is the goodness which thrives in Hareton in spite of his degradation. Nelly says that Hindley's barbaric treatment of Heathcliff

⁹Ibid., p. 249.

¹¹Ibid., p. 346.

¹³Ibid., p. 380.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 370.

¹²Ibid., p. 43.

"was enough to make a fiend of a saint";¹⁴ certainly something caused his diabolism. However, it seems that Heathcliff's character was a bad one from the beginning, for though he does everything in his power to degrade Hareton as Hindley had degraded him, Hareton is gentle and kind: he refuses to hear one word against Heathcliff,¹⁵ who had wronged him above everyone else; and after his death he "sat by the corpse all night, weeping in bitter earnest."¹⁶

The mysteries of the unknown "burnt-out" passion and the suspicion of "ghastly guilt" are characteristics of the satanic hero which Heathcliff does not possess. His passion is never extinguished; it is ever before him: "'And what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree--filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men, and women--my own features mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!'"¹⁷ Concerning the characteristic of the "ghastly guilt," Heathcliff has certainly committed dreadful crimes;

¹⁴Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 383.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 367.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 370.

he is, however, insensible to them,¹⁸ except in the case of the second Catherine, it seems, for to her he says, "'To you, I've made myself worse than the devil.'"¹⁹

Heathcliff's Physical Characteristics

Heathcliff's physical appearance, which is in perfect concord with that of the satanic hero, is imposing. He is a well-built man, tall and athletic.²⁰ His countenance, dark during childhood,²¹ becomes sallow as he grows older.²² Fringed with thick black hair, his face is marked by a "decision of feature"²³ which indicates his inflexible nature. Most striking, however, are the compelling eyes--"'that couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly, but lurk glinting under them, like devil's spies'"²⁴--set beneath "'thick brows, that instead of rising arched, sink in the middle.'"²⁵ These memorable eyes are his most arresting feature. The reader is never allowed to forget them, for they are alluded to often, and always in adjectives which describe their satanic intensity. Heathcliff's

¹⁸Ibid., p. 380.

²⁰Ibid., p. 109.

²²Ibid., p. 106.

²⁴Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 381.

²¹Ibid., pp. 40, 64.

²³Ibid., p. 109.

²⁵Ibid.

unexpected return from his unknown journey catches Nelly unaware; studying his face in the twilight, she wonders, "'Who can it be?'" Then a ray of light illuminates his features and she recognizes him instantly: "The cheeks were sallow, and half-covered with black whiskers; the brows lowering, the eyes deep set and singular. I remembered the eyes."²⁶

Heathcliff's Mental Characteristics

Heathcliff's mental characteristics coincide with those of the satanic hero. The first of these characteristics, pride, is strong in the child Heathcliff. Fostered by the indulgence of old Earnshaw,²⁷ this pride, coupled with his avarice, renders him tyrannical with Hindley, and, after Earnshaw's death and a year or two of Hindley's maltreatment, cross with Cathy when she laughs at his dirtiness: "'I shall not stand to be laughed at, I shall not bear it!'"²⁸ However, many years of hard labor extinguish this pride: "His childhood's sense of superiority . . . was faded away. He struggled long to keep up an equality with Catherine in her studies and yielded with poignant though silent regret: but, he yielded completely; and there was no prevailing on him to

²⁶Ibid., p. 106.

²⁷Ibid., p. 45.

²⁸Ibid., p. 61.

take a step in the way of moving upward, when he found he must, necessarily, sink beneath his former level. . . . he took a grim pleasure, apparently, in exciting the aversion rather than the esteem of his few acquaintances."²⁹

The acquisition of money and manners revives Heathcliff's sense of superiority, which is reflected in his scorn of Edgar, Isabella, and his son, Linton. "'I wish you joy of the milk-blooded coward, Cathy!'" he says of Edgar; "'I compliment you on your taste: and that is the slaverling, shivering thing you preferred to me! I would not strike him with my fist, but I'd kick him with my foot, and experience considerable satisfaction.'"³⁰ Of Isabella he says, "'Now, was it not the depth of absurdity--of genuine idiocy, for that pitiful, slavish, mean-minded brach to dream that I could love her? Tell your master, Nelly, that I never, in all my life, met with such an abject thing as she is--She even disgraces the name of Linton.'"³¹ Of his son Linton, Heathcliff exclaims, "'God! what a beauty! what a lovely, charming thing! . . . Haven't they reared it on snails, and sour milk, Nelly? Oh, damn my soul! but that's worse than I expected--and the devil knows I was not sanguine!'"³² However, Hindley and the younger Catherine seem to arouse a mortal hate which is too deep for scorn.

²⁹Ibid., p. 77.

³¹Ibid., p. 173.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 131-132.

³²Ibid., p. 237.

The second mental characteristic of the satanic hero, habitual melancholy, is certainly evident in the man Heathcliff; his perpetual moroseness is interrupted by a smile or a laugh but few times in the novel: twice he smiles as he ponders evil thoughts and once he laughs as he watches while Lockwood endures a humiliating, but funny, experience. One interruption of Heathcliff's constant moroseness occurs immediately after he has been told by Cathy that Isabella is infatuated with him and that in default of male heirs born to Edgar and Cathy she is the legal heir to her brother's property. Meditating upon the possibilities of satisfying both his revenge and his avarice, Heathcliff grins and lapses "into ominous musing."³³ A second interruption occurs as he relishes aloud Hareton's pathetic boorishness in the presence of the scornful Catherine: "'I know what he suffers now, for instance, exactly--it is merely a beginning of what he shall suffer, though. And he'll never be able to emerge from his bathos of coarseness, and ignorance.'" And Heathcliff chuckles "a fiendish laugh" at the thought.³⁴ A third interruption of his habitual melancholy occurs as he watches Lockwood struggle against two of the Heights watchdogs:

. . . two hairy monsters flew at my throat, bearing me down, and extinguishing the light, while a mingled

³³Ibid., p. 122.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 250-251.

guffaw, from Heathcliff and Hareton, put the copestone on my rage and humiliation.

Fortunately, the beasts seemed more bent on stretching their paws, and yawning, and flourishing their tails, than devouring me alive; but, they would suffer no resurrection, and I was forced to lie till their malignant masters pleased to deliver me: then hatless, and trembling with wrath, I ordered the miscreants to let me out--on their peril to keep me one minute longer. . . . The vehemence of my agitation brought on a copious bleeding at the nose, and still Heathcliff laughed.³⁵

This is the only time that Heathcliff laughs at an occurrence which is actually comical.

Immediately preceding Heathcliff's strange death he becomes wildly glad at intervals.³⁶ This gladness, however, is the result of a change in him--the result of his proximity to death and the attainment of the goal of twenty years of yearning: life-in-death companionship with Cathy in an eternity on the moors. Since it occurs at a time when Heathcliff has risen out of the habitually diabolic and morose character which has been his all his life, this exultant joy is not included in my discussion of Heathcliff's melancholy.

Heathcliff's habits throughout his life are those of a melancholy person. He does not indulge in more intercourse with other persons--excepting Cathy, of course, and, on occasion, Nelly--than is absolutely necessary. He frequently takes solitary walks on the moors,³⁷ especially as the time

³⁵Ibid., p. 18.

³⁶Ibid., p. 373.

³⁷Ibid., p. 63.

of his death draws near.³⁸ He often locks himself in his room where he is heard talking to himself³⁹ or, more likely, to the imminent spirit of Cathy.

Heathcliff's indomitable will, marked by savage defiance, coincides with the indomitable will which particularly characterizes the satanic hero. Challenging heaven and hell, defying and scorning the criticisms and admonitions of those around him, he remains unconquerable throughout his life. The boy Heathcliff shows a strength of will rare in a child. When Cathy, sick and bleeding from the bite of a Grange watchdog, is taken into the Linton house, he keeps watch outside the Grange window: "'If Catherine had wished to return, I intended shattering their great glass panes to a million fragments, unless they let her out.'"⁴⁰ His strength of will is also illustrated by his bitter struggle for money and an education;⁴¹ overcoming tremendous obstacles, he obtains, by means known only to him, these two necessities which he feels will win Cathy from Edgar. His unconquerable will is indicated also by his meticulously planned and relentlessly executed revenge upon Hindley and Edgar. At the end of his life, an indication of his strong will is offered by Nelly when she says, regarding Heathcliff's incapacity to face

³⁸Ibid., pp. 372-373, 378-379.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 379, 382.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 57.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 109-110.

Hareton and the second Catherine at meals, "he would not consent, formally, to exclude Hareton and Cathy. He had an aversion to yielding so completely to his feelings, choosing, rather, to absent himself."⁴²

Heathcliff's savage defiance of heaven and hell is indicated in the following passages; self-evident, they require no elaboration: he declares to Cathy that "'misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or satan could inflict would have parted us'";⁴³ to Nelly he says toward the end of his life, "'I tell you, I have nearly attained my heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued, and uncoveted by me!'"⁴⁴

Concordant with the requirements for the satanic hero, Heathcliff, cruel, violent, and cynical, hates and scorns mankind. Because his cynical scorn of those about him has been previously discussed, analysis will here be confined to his hatred of Hindley, Edgar, Isabella, Linton, and the second Catherine; hand in hand with his hatred goes his violent cruelty to each of them.

Precipitated by Hindley's cruel treatment, Heathcliff early entertains thoughts of violence concerning his detested foster brother. Vowing that he would not change his place

⁴²Ibid., p. 372.

⁴³Ibid., p. 184.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 381.

at Wuthering Heights for Edgar Linton's at Thrushcross Grange "'for a thousand lives,'" he adds, "'not if I might have the privilege of . . . painting the house front with Hindley's blood!'"⁴⁵ On the night of Hindley's attempted murder of Heathcliff, the two finally clash physically, and Heathcliff instantly achieves the upper hand in the battle: "The ruffian [Heathcliff] kicked and trampled on him [Hindley], and dashed his head repeatedly against the flags. . . . He exerted preter-human self-denial in abstaining from finishing him, completely.'"⁴⁶

Edgar excites a hatred in Heathcliff which is matched only by his hatred of Hindley, and he itches to lay violent hands on him: "'I'll crush his ribs in like a rotten hazelnut before I cross the threshold! If I don't floor him now, I shall murder him some time, so, as you value his existence, let me get at him!'"⁴⁷ Two days before Edgar's death, the younger Catherine, in a wild attempt to bribe Linton to free her, reveals a locket containing pictures of her father and mother; Heathcliff is heard approaching: "'She heard papa coming, and she broke the hinges, and divided the case and gave me her mother's portrait; the other she attempted to hide. . . . He took the one I had away; and ordered her to

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 54.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 203.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 132.

resign hers to me; she refused, and he--he struck her down, and wrenched it off the chain, and crushed it with his foot."⁴⁸

Isabella he loathes. His cruel treatment of her is illustrated by the following exclamation, typical of his statements to her: "'Get up, wretched idiot, before I stamp you to death!'"⁴⁹ Moments later, goaded to extremes by her taunting, Heathcliff flings a dinner knife at her, nicking her neck as she flees Wuthering Heights.

Heathcliff's cruelty to Linton is indescribable. The dying boy, though despicable because of his peevish nature, is a pathetic case. To accomplish his relentless revenge, Heathcliff must marry Linton to the younger Catherine before Linton dies; consequently, he forces the wretchedly ill boy to pretend a heartiness which he does not possess. The mental torture which Linton endures renders him so terrified of his father that at times he verges on idiocy and unconsciousness:⁵⁰ "I could not picture a father," says Nelly, "treating a dying child as tyrannically and wickedly as I afterwards learned Heathcliff had treated him."⁵¹ When the younger Catherine is finally secured within Wuthering

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 320.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 307.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 207.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 296.

Heights to await her forced marriage with Linton, Heathcliff looks at the two and remarks: "'It's odd what a savage feeling I have to anything that seems afraid of me! Had I been born where laws are less strict, and tastes less dainty, I should treat myself to a slow vivisection of those two, as an evening's amusement. . . . By hell! I hate them.'"⁵²

The phrases which Heathcliff uses in addressing the younger Catherine indicate his hatred of her: "'insolent slut,'" "'damnable witch,'" "'accursed witch,'"⁵³ "'damnable jade.'"⁵⁴ He lays violent hands on her often,⁵⁵ fulfilling a threat made to her on the first day of her imprisonment at the Heights: "'You can bear plenty--you're no weakling--you shall have a daily taste, if I catch such a devil of a temper in your eyes again!'"⁵⁶ Catherine is the true daughter of her mother, and in spite of Heathcliff's threats and blows often exhibits her "devil of a temper."⁵⁷ Heathcliff's detestation of her is mortal: "'Off with her! Do you hear?'" he shouts at Hareton, whom Catherine wishes to pit against him. "'Fling her into the kitchen! I'll kill her, Ellen Dean, if you let her come into my sight again!'"⁵⁸

⁵²Ibid., p. 308.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 365-366.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 309.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 365.

Heathcliff's One All-encompassing Passion

Heathcliff will be for all time a symbol unequalled in fiction of immortal, death-defying love. The depth and constancy of his passion is almost unbearable in its intensity. This passion takes root almost immediately after Heathcliff's introduction into the Earnshaw household. He and Cathy have much in common: they are willful, energetic, strong, hardy, and adventurous; and after Mr. Earnshaw's death they stoically endure hardships and punishment under Hindley's tyrannical rule. They escape to the moors as often as possible in order to be together and free from Hindley, and the punishment for their wanderings becomes "a mere thing to laugh at."⁵⁹

Heathcliff's childish enchantment with Cathy is shown in a remark which he makes to Nelly after he relates to her the happenings of their escapade at Thrushcross Grange: "I left her, as merry as she could be, dividing her food, between the little dog and Skulker . . . and kindling a spark of spirit in the vacant blue eyes of the Lintons--a dim reflection from her own enchanting face."⁶⁰ This mischievous ramble to the Grange, however, furnishes the seed which will bear the bitter fruit of rejection for Heathcliff, for at the Grange Cathy comes into pleasant contact with the fine things of the world, and her ambition is roused to action.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 52.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 57.

When she returns to the Heights, Heathcliff finds that she has become a fastidious young lady.

During the years of his miserable degradation under Hindley's vengeful tyranny, Heathcliff and Cathy remain companions still; however, Edgar has begun to squeeze Heathcliff out--not out of Cathy's affection, but out of her consideration of him as a husband. "'It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff, now,'" she cries,⁶¹ not knowing that he is listening. Waiting to hear no more, Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights, missing perhaps the most passionate declaration of elemental love and need ever expressed.⁶²

Returning wealthy and educated from his three years' absence, Heathcliff visits Cathy, now Edgar's wife, at Thrushcross Grange: "He took a seat opposite Catherine, who kept her gaze fixed on him as if she feared he would vanish were she to remove it. He did not raise his to her, often; a quick glance now and then sufficed; but it flashed back, each time, more confidently, the undisguised delight he drank from hers."⁶³ He loves her still.

In spite of their joy in each other at his return, Heathcliff expresses somewhat later his feeling that her rejection of him was infernal; and when she becomes angry at his plan

⁶¹Ibid., p. 91.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 91-93.

⁶³Ibid., p. 109.

of revenge upon Edgar through Isabella, he replies: "I seek no revenge on you, . . . That's not the plan--The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him, they crush those beneath them. You are welcome to torture me to death for your own amusement, only, allow me to amuse myself a little in the same style-- . . . Having levelled my palace, don't erect a hovel and complacently admire your own charity in giving me that for a home."⁶⁴ A few moments later occurs the scene between Heathcliff and Edgar which results in Heathcliff's banishment from the house and Cathy's attack of brain fever.

In an interview with Nelly, in which he demands that she arrange for him a secret meeting with Cathy, Heathcliff contrasts his love for Cathy with Edgar's:

"I wish you had sincerity enough to tell me whether Catherine would suffer greatly from his [Edgar's] loss. The fear that she would restrains me: and there you see the distinctions between our feelings-- Had he been in my place, and I in his, though I hated him with a hatred that turned my life to gall, I never would have raised a hand against him. . . . I never would have banished him from her society, as long as she desired his. The moment her regard ceased, I would have torn his heart out, and drunk his blood! But, till then, . . . I would have died by inches before I touched a single hair of his head!"⁶⁵

He expresses his belief in her love for him in the same interview:

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 128.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 170.

"You know as well as I do, that for every thought she spends on Linton, she spends a thousand on me! At a most miserable period of my life, I had a notion of the kind. . . . Yet I was a fool to fancy for a moment that she valued Edgar Linton's attachment more than mine. . . . The sea could be as readily contained in that horse-trough, as her whole affection be monopolized by him. . . . It is not in him to be loved like me."⁶⁶

The meeting between Heathcliff and Cathy on the day of her death is inexpressibly intense. Heathcliff's anguish is unbearable:

"You teach me how cruel you've been--cruel and false. Why did you despise me? Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort--you deserve this. You have killed yourself. . . . You loved me--then what right had you to leave me? What right--answer me--for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or satan could inflict would have parted us, you, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart--you have broken it--and in breaking it, you have broken mine. So much the worse for me, that I am strong. Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be when you--oh, God! would you like to live with your soul in the grave?"⁶⁷

The next morning, grieved to the point of madness, he curses her and pleads in anguish for her to remain with him in spirit:

"May she wake in torment! . . . Why, she's a liar to the end! Where is she? Not there--not in heaven--not perished--where? Oh! you said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray one prayer--I repeat

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 170-171.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 184-185.

it till my tongue stiffens--Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest, as long as I am living! You said I killed you--haunt me then! . . . Be with me always--take any form--drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you!"⁶⁸

Cathy has already declared in the presence of Nelly, during her delirium of the previous winter, "'But Heathcliff, . . . I'll not lie there by myself: they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me; but I won't rest till you are with me...I never will!'"⁶⁹

The intensity of Heathcliff's passion never abates. Shortly before his death he relates to Nelly his anguish on the night after Cathy's burial and the course his love has taken through the years following her death:

"You know, I was wild after she died, and eternally, from dawn to dawn, praying her to return to me--her spirit. . . . The day she was buried there came a fall of snow. In the evening I went to the churchyard. It blew bleak as winter--all round was solitary: I didn't fear that her fool of a husband would wander up the den so late--and no one else had business to bring them there.

"Being alone, and conscious two yards of loose earth was the sole barrier between us, I said to myself--

"'I'll have her in my arms again! If she be cold, I'll think it is this north wind that chills me; and if she be motionless, it is sleep.'

"I got a spade from the toolhouse, and began to delve with all my might--it scraped the coffin; I fell to work with my hands; the wood commenced crackling about the screws, I was on the point of attaining my object, when it seemed that I heard a sigh from someone above, close at the edge of the grave, and

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 191-192.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 144.

bending down.--'If I can only get this off,' I muttered 'I wish they may shovel in the earth over us both!' And I wrenched at it more desperately still. There was another sigh, close at my ear. I appeared to feel the warm breath of it displacing the sleet-laden wind. I knew no living thing was by--but as certainly as you perceive the approach to some substantial body in the dark, though it cannot be discerned, so certainly I felt that Cathy was there, not under me, but on the earth.

"A sudden sense of relief flowed, from my heart, through every limb. I relinquished my labour of agony, and turned consoled at once, unspeakably consoled. Her presence was with me; it remained while I re-filled the grave, and led me home. . . . I was sure I should see her there. I was sure she was with me, and I could not help talking to her.

"Having reached the Heights, I rushed eagerly to the door. It was fastened; and, I remember, that accursed Earnshaw and my wife opposed my entrance. I remember stopping to kick the breath out of him, and then hurrying upstairs, to my room, and hers--I looked round impatiently--I felt her by me--I could almost see her, and yet I could not! I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my yearning, from the fervour of my supplications to have but one glimpse! I had not one. She showed herself, as she often was in life, a devil to me! And, since then, sometimes more, and sometimes less, I've been the sport of that intolerable torture! Infernal--keeping my nerves at such a stretch, that, if they had not resembled cat-gut, they would, long ago, have relaxed to the feebleness of Linton's.

.. .. .
 "It was a strange way of killing, not by inches, but by fractions of hair-breadths, to beguile me with the spectre of a hope, through eighteen years!"⁷⁰

Heathcliff's Desire for Revenge

Heathcliff's fierce desire for revenge upon Hindley and Edgar is particularly indicative of his satanism. His diabolic insensibility to evil renders him capable of the blackest

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 329-331.

of crimes in attaining his revenge: base deceit in enticing Isabella into becoming his wife and in coaxing the younger Catherine into becoming Linton's constant companion; vicious cruelty, both mental and physical, to Hindley, Linton, and the younger Catherine; and virtual murder of Linton.

Heathcliff's desire for revenge upon Hindley is well founded; Hindley's treatment of him after Frances's death "was enough to make a fiend of a saint. And, truly, it appeared as if the lad were possessed of something diabolical at that period. He delighted to witness Hindley degrading himself past redemption."⁷¹ Extremely proud, Heathcliff at about the age of thirteen was thrust ignominiously from the Christmas festivities by Hindley although the boy had made an extraordinary effort to become socially acceptable. Later that night he told Nelly that he was determined to settle his score with Hindley, no matter how long he had to wait: "'I hope he will not die before I do!'"⁷²

A chance at revenge comes for Heathcliff when Hindley, in a drunken rage, drops Hareton over the railing from the second floor. Heathcliff, by coincidence, passes directly under the falling child and instinctively catches him. "A miser who has parted with a lucky lottery ticket for five

⁷¹Ibid., p. 74.

⁷²Ibid., p. 69.

shillings and finds next day he has lost in the bargain five thousand pounds, could not show a blanker countenance than he did on beholding the figure of Mr. Earnshaw above--It expressed, plainer than words could do, the intensest anguish at having made himself the instrument of thwarting his own revenge. Had it been dark, . . . he would have tried to remedy the mistake by smashing Hareton's skull on the steps."⁷³

The depth of Heathcliff's desire for revenge upon Hindley is revealed when he tells Cathy upon his return from his unknown travels that he had meditated upon a plan which involved murdering Hindley and then committing suicide.⁷⁴ Cathy's ecstatic welcome causes him to change these plans, however, and Hindley, prompted by greed at the sight of Heathcliff's mysteriously acquired wealth, invites him to lodge at Wuthering Heights.

While living at Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff initiates four plans for revenge against Hindley: he goads him to ever greater excesses of drink and gambling, he acquires his money and land, he turns Hareton against him, and he begins transforming Hareton into an uneducated boor as he himself had been transformed in his youth by Hindley. Slightly more

⁷³Ibid., pp. 84-85.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 110.

than a year after his return to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff, with "something like exultation in his aspect,"⁷⁵ sees Hindley to his grave.

Heathcliff's desire for revenge upon Edgar is precipitated by Cathy's marriage to him. Edgar is the hated rival who wins the woman of Heathcliff's heart and soul; consequently, Heathcliff meticulously plans his destruction. When Cathy warns Heathcliff that Edgar might deny him admittance to Thrushcross Grange if he persists in soliciting Isabella's affection, he answers, "'God forbid that he should try! . . . God keep him meek and patient! Every day I grow madder after sending him to heaven!'"⁷⁶ He tells Isabella after their marriage that he has married her in order to gain power over Edgar;⁷⁷ later he tells her that she will be Edgar's proxy in suffering.⁷⁸ Heathcliff divulges to Nelly his dreams of revenge upon Edgar: "'My son is prospective owner of your place [Thrushcross Grange], and I should not wish him to die till I was certain of being his successor. Besides, he's mine, and I want the triumph of seeing my descendant fairly lord of their estates; my child hiring their children, to till their fathers' lands for wages.'"⁷⁹

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 213.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 174.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 238.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 127.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 166.

Heathcliff uses the younger Catherine in his revenge against Edgar. Having forced her to remain in Wuthering Heights to be married to Linton, he answers her pleas to return to her dying father: "'Miss Linton, I shall enjoy myself remarkably in thinking your father will be miserable; I shall not sleep for satisfaction.'"⁸⁰ And after Edgar's death and Catherine's removal to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff treats her brutally; she seems to have supplanted Isabella in being Edgar's proxy for suffering.

Heathcliff, though he declares that it is not his plan,⁸¹ revenges himself upon Cathy, too. She says to him: "'Quarrel with Edgar if you please, Heathcliff, and deceive his sister; you'll hit on exactly the most efficient method of revenging yourself on me.'"⁸² He proceeds with his plans as though she had not spoken; thus he does not spare from his ruthless revenge even his adored Cathy.

But when all is prepared for the final death-blow to his hated enemies, Hindley and Edgar, though their proxies, Hareton and Catherine, Heathcliff becomes immobile; he explains his feeling to Nelly:

"It is a poor conclusion, is it not, . . . an absurd termination to my violent exertions? I get levers, and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 312.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 128.

⁸²Ibid.

to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready, and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me--now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives--I could do it; and none could hinder me-- But where is the use? I don't care for striking, I can't take the trouble to raise my hand! That sounds as if I had been labouring the whole time only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity. It is far from being the case--I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing."⁸³

Heathcliff's Diffusion of His Curse

Fulfilling the requirement for the satanic hero, Heathcliff diffuses the curse which blights his destiny. "So, from the very beginning," says Nelly, "he bred bad feeling in the house."⁸⁴ He alienates Mr. Earnshaw from his children: Hindley begins to consider his father an oppressor,⁸⁵ and Cathy becomes hardened from habitual rejection.⁸⁶ Cathy's wayward nature clings to and is influenced by Heathcliff's savage one; later, of course, he encroaches upon her apparently happy marriage, and his power causes her to alienate herself from her husband. Though Hindley hastens to his own destruction, Heathcliff paves the way for him; his ignominious end comes swiftly because of Heathcliff's poisonous influence.

⁸³Ibid., p. 369.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 47.

Isabella wonders how Nelly continued "'to preserve the common sympathies of human nature'" when she resided at Wuthering Heights.⁸⁷ Concerning Edgar, Heathcliff's influence draws from him his wife, his daughter, his house, and his land.

Catherine and Hareton are also affected by the curse upon Heathcliff's destiny. Catherine, forced after the deaths of Edgar and Linton to live miserably at Wuthering Heights, reverses her naturally sunny nature and becomes rude and petulant:

"Were you asked to tea?" she demanded, tying an apron over her neat black frock, and standing with a spoonful of the leaf poised over the pot.

"I shall be glad to have a cup," I answered.

"Were you asked?" she repeated.

"No," I said, half smiling. "You are the proper person to ask me."

She flung the tea back, spoon and all; and resumed her chair in a pet, her forehead corrugated, and her red underlip pushed out, like a child's, ready to cry.⁸⁸

Hareton, naturally intelligent and good-natured, becomes brutish and morose under Heathcliff's venomous influence.

Heathcliff's Part in the Destruction of Others

Heathcliff does not fulfill the last requirement for the satanic hero: he does not destroy himself and the women with whom he becomes involved, Cathy and Isabella. His strange

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 155.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 10-11.

magnetism contributes to their destruction, but in Cathy's case her love for and need of him equal his love for and need of her: she runs to meet the strange eternity with Heathcliff that awaits her; she is the Fatal Woman, and Heathcliff is her Demon Lover. Isabella is destroyed by her own weakness; she solicits Heathcliff's attention despite warnings offered her by Cathy, Edgar, and Nelly; thus, in a sense, she gets what she deserves when she marries Heathcliff.

Heathcliff does not destroy himself. It is true that he neither eats nor sleeps for several days before his death; his fasting and sleeplessness are, however, a result of his spiritual illness rather than the cause of it: "I cannot continue in this condition!--I have to remind myself to breathe--almost to remind my heart to beat!"⁸⁹ He cannot take his mind from his yearning long enough to eat a meal:

That noon, he sat down to dinner with us, and received a heaped up plate from my hands, as if he intended to make amends for previous fasting.

"I've neither cold, nor fever, Nelly," he remarked; . . . "and I'm ready to do justice to the food you give me."

He took his knife and fork, and was going to commence eating, when the inclination appeared to become suddenly extinct. He laid them on the table, looked eagerly toward the window, then rose and went out.⁹⁰

He is drawn to his death by the imminent spirit of Cathy,

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 371.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 373-374.

constantly enticing him, never allowing him a moment's freedom from yearning for her.⁹¹

With the exception of the "ghastly guilt," the "burnt-out" passion, and the destruction of himself and others, Heathcliff possesses in abundance the qualities of the satanic hero: a mysterious life, a striking appearance, memorable eyes, an intractable pride, melancholy moods and habits, a defiant savagery, an indomitable will, an inhuman hatred of and cruelty to others, a deep and lasting passion, a ruthless desire for revenge, and a radiating curse. His satanism is, in fact, much deeper and much more intense than that of other satanic heroes, some of which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 371.

CHAPTER IV

SOURCES FOR THE PORTRAIT

Several sources may have influenced Emily Brontë in her presentation of Heathcliff as a satanic hero. Critics mention as possible influences certain literary sources which she may have read, oral reports which she may have heard, personal acquaintances whose personalities and lives were marked by traits and incidents which were similar to or had something in common with Heathcliff's personality and life, characters from Charlotte's childhood inventions, and Emily's poetry written as a part of her own childhood creations.

Literary Sources

The alleged literary sources for Heathcliff are many. Whether or not Emily's insatiable reading furnished her imaginative mind with ideas which were later incorporated into the character Heathcliff, one cannot say. What books were influential, one cannot name from direct evidence. Charlotte's letter to Ellen Nussey about books supplies titles of works that may well have been known to Emily:

If you like poetry, let it be first-rate; Milton, Shakspeare, Thomson, Goldsmith, Pope, . . . Scott, Byron, Campbell, Wordsworth, and Southey. . . . Omit the comedies of Shakspeare and the Don Juan, perhaps the Cain, of Byron, though the latter is a magnificent poem, and read the rest fearlessly; that must indeed be a depraved mind which can gather evil from Henry VIII., from Richard III., from Macbeth, and Hamlet, and Julius Caesar. Scott's sweet, wild, romantic poetry can do you no harm. Nor can Wordsworth's, nor Campbell's nor Southey's. . . . For history, read Hume, Rollin, and the Universal History. . . . For fiction, read Scott alone; all novels after his are worthless. For biography, read Johnson's Lives of the Poets, Boswell's Life of Johnson, Southey's Life of Nelson, Lockhart's Life of Burns, Moore's Life of Sheridan, Moore's Life of Byron, Wolfe's Remains. For natural history, read Bewick and Audubon, and Goldsmith, and White's History of Selborne.¹

One can hardly imagine that Emily, an omnivorous reader, would pass over works to which Charlotte, and therefore Emily also, had access.

Fannie E. Ratchford mentions as having been available for Emily's perusal Aesop's Fables, The Arabian Nights, Macpherson's Ossian, Byron's Manfred, Cain, and Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Paradise Lost, Rev. J. Goldsmith's A Grammar of General Geography, the works of Chateaubriand, Herodotus, Wordsworth, Keats, Burns, Scott, eighteenth-century and Romantic poetry, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century drama,

¹E. C. Gaskell, The Life of Charlotte Brontë (London, 1857), p. 140.

Gothic romances, histories, and fairy tales.² Edith Ellsworth Kinsley mentions Cowper's "The Castaway";³ Charles Simpson and Bertram White mention the works of such mystic writers as St. Augustine, John Ruysbroeck, St. John of the Cross, and St. Thérèse;⁴ and Romer Wilson and Laura Hinkley mention the tales of Hoffmann.⁵ The periodicals which Emily had access to include Blackwood's, Fraser's, the British Essayists, The Rambler, The Mirror, and The Lounger.⁶ There were many books at the parsonage,⁷ and the Brontë girls obtained books from the Mechanics' Institute library in Keighley, eight miles away.⁸ The only books which Emily is known to have possessed, however, are a Bible, a prayer book, Dr.

²Fannie E. Ratchford, The Brontës' Web of Childhood (New York, 1941).

³Pattern for Genius, p. 170.

⁴Emily Brontë (London, 1929), p. 145, and The Miracle of Haworth (London, 1937), p. 131.

⁵The Life and Private History of Emily Jane Brontë (New York, 1928), p. 201, and Charlotte and Emily, p. 319.

⁶Lawrence and E. M. Hanson, The Four Brontës (London, 1950), p. 40.

⁷Gaskell, p. 131.

⁸Hanson, p. 40.

Watts's Hymns, a French book which was given to her by Madame H  ger, and a copy of Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell.⁹

Critics mention four important literary predecessors of Heathcliff with which Emily was probably familiar. Three of them are indirectly included in Charlotte's list of preferred works, and a fourth is indirectly included in Miss Ratchford's list of possible readings of the Bront  s. They could have influenced in a general way Emily's conception of the character of Heathcliff. They are Milton's Satan, Anne Radcliffe's Schedoni, and Byron's Lara and the Corsair.

Like Milton's Satan, defying heaven and ruling hell, possessing "all the charm of an untamed rebel,"¹⁰ Heathcliff is of imposing looks and stature: "He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man; beside whom, my master seemed quite slender and youthlike";¹¹ his eyes are sinister: "'The clouded windows of hell flashed, a moment towards me; the fiend which usually looked out, however, was . . . dimmed and drowned';"¹² his will is undaunted by his fate; his hate is intense and his pride intractable. In spite of his plans for revenge upon

⁹Helen Brown, "The Influence of Byron on Emily Bront  ," MLR, XXXIV (July, 1939), 374.

¹⁰Praz, p. 55.

¹¹Wuthering Heights, p. 109.

¹²Ibid., p. 207.

those he hates, Heathcliff, like Satan, despairs; the thought of his lost happiness haunts him: "'I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!'"¹³ Again he cries of Cathy: "'The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!'"¹⁴

Like Schedoni, dark hero of Anne Radcliffe's Gothic novel, The Italian, Heathcliff is "stained with the darkest crimes, yet dignified and impressive withal."¹⁵ His physical aspect and atmosphere are much like Schedoni's: "I distinguished a tall man dressed in dark clothes, with dark face and hair," says Nelly; "the cheeks were sallow, and half covered with black whiskers; the brows lowering, the eyes deep set and singular. . . . A half-civilized ferocity lurked . . . in the depressed brows, and eyes full of black fire."¹⁶

Like Byron's Lara, Heathcliff is a man of mysterious origin¹⁷ and deep passions: "'If he [Edgar] loved with all the powers of his puny being, he couldn't love as much in eighty years, as I could in a day.'"¹⁸ He hates mankind: "'The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out

¹³Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 370.

¹⁵Birkhead, p. 53.

¹⁶Wuthering Heights, pp. 105-106, 109.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 376.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 171.

their entrails!"¹⁹ Like Lara, he returns from a self-imposed absence. Fierce and defiant, he gives a haunting impression of demonism: "Heathcliff appeared on the door stones, and I turned directly and ran down the road as hard as ever I could race, making no halt till I gained the guide-post, and feeling as scared as if I had raised a goblin."²⁰ Cathy's love for Heathcliff, like Kaled's love for Lara, is one not of pleasure but of necessity: "'My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath--a source of little visible delight, but necessary. . . . He's always, always in my mind--not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself--but as my own being.'"²¹

Like Byron's Corsair in looks and in personality, Heathcliff has fiery eyes, black hair, and pale skin. He is proud, and he hates and rejects mankind. He rouses anger and dread in those who meet him: "'You, and I,'" Hindley says to Isabella, "'have each a great debt to settle with the man out yonder! If we were neither of us cowards, we might combine to discharge it.'"²² He is ruthless and merciless: "His [Heathcliff's] adversary [Hindley] had fallen senseless with excessive pain, and flow of blood that gushed from an artery, or a large vein. The ruffian kicked and

¹⁹Ibid., p. 174.

²¹Ibid., p. 93.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 125-126.

²²Ibid., p. 200.

trampled on him, and dashed his head repeatedly against the flags; holding me with one hand, meantime, to prevent me summoning Joseph. He exerted preter-human self-denial in abstaining from finishing him, completely.'"²³ Like the Corsair, Heathcliff has one all-encompassing love: "'And what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree--filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day I am surrounded with her image!'"²⁴ Like the Corsair, Heathcliff is made an integral part of the tumultuous elements: "'As I sat nursing these reflections,'" says Isabella, "'the casement behind me, was banged on to the floor by a blow from the latter individual [Heathcliff]; and his black countenance looked blighting through. The stanchions stood too close to suffer his shoulders to follow; and I smiled, exulting in my fancied security. His hair and clothes were whitened with snow, and his sharp cannibal teeth, revealed by cold and wrath, gleamed through the dark.'"²⁵

"The Bridegroom of Barna," a story which appeared in Blackwood's Magazine (November, 1840),²⁶ a periodical which

²³Ibid., p. 203.

²⁴Ibid., p. 370.

²⁵Ibid., p. 202.

²⁶"The Bridegroom of Barna," Blackwood's Magazine, XLVIII (November, 1840), 680-704.

was regularly read at the parsonage, may have furnished a source for Heathcliff's character;²⁷ at any rate, there are several exceptional parallels between Hugh Lawlor, the hero of the story, and Heathcliff. Lawlor returns from a mysterious absence; so does Heathcliff. Lawlor is tall and dark, and his manners are those of a gentleman, but there is something strange about him; Heathcliff also is tall, dark, gentlemanly, and strange.²⁸ Lawlor is an orphan left to his own devices during his formative years; so is Heathcliff: "They both [Heathcliff and Cathy] promised fair to grow up as rude as savages, the young master being entirely negligent how they behaved, and what they did, so they kept clear of him."²⁹ Lawlor is brutal to everyone except Ellen Nugent, with whom he has been desperately in love since childhood; similarly, Heathcliff spares only Cathy from his brutality: "'You never harmed me in your life,'" she says to him during their last meeting.³⁰ Ellen's family cruelly opposes the union, which opposition perhaps causes Lawlor's moroseness and inflexible will; Heathcliff is deprived of Cathy in essentially the same manner with essentially the same results.

²⁷Bradner, pp. 141, 145.

²⁸Wuthering Heights, p. 109.

²⁹Ibid., p. 51.

³⁰Ibid., p. 183.

Lawlor's passion for Ellen Nugent is marked by several scenes which parallel scenes involving Heathcliff and Cathy. During their last furtive, impassioned meeting, before which Cathy has long been ill in a decline similar to Ellen's before her last meeting with Lawlor, Cathy accuses Heathcliff, as Ellen accuses Lawlor, of causing her agony. After her death, Heathcliff unburies her body: "'I'll have her in my arms again! If she be cold, I'll think it is this north wind that chills me; and if she be motionless, it is sleep.'"³¹ Lawlor is buried next to Ellen; similarly, Heathcliff is buried, "to the scandal of the whole neighborhood,"³² next to Cathy.

The story also offers interesting parallels with other aspects of Wuthering Heights. The setting of the wedding festivities is, like Wuthering Heights, a forbidding building set among harsh elder and black thorn trees. Nature has an important part in the story; it is interesting to note that the mortal blows to both Heathcliff's and Lawlor's hoped-for happiness occur in conjunction with fierce thunderstorms. Leicester Bradner states that the similarities are "too numerous and too close to the corresponding parts of Emily's plot to have been mere coincidence"; he declares it to be a much more important source than Hoffmann's "The Entail."³³ Indeed,

³¹Ibid., p. 330.

³²Ibid., p. 383.

³³Bradner, p. 141.

he feels that Heathcliff's literary ancestry is quite clearly a combination of Lawlor and King Julius.³⁴

Another possible, though less important, source of Heathcliff's character is Hoffmann's "The Entail,"³⁵ which Emily presumably read in Brussels in 1842.³⁶ Both Wolfgang and his son Roderick resemble Heathcliff in their strangeness, their fierceness, and their deep love for their women; unlike Heathcliff, however, who never attains physical union with Cathy, both Wolfgang and Roderick marry the women whom they love. There is a marked similarity between the relationships of Wolfgang and Hubert and Heathcliff and Hindley. Wolfgang, like Heathcliff, is the preferred of his "father"; and Hubert, like Hindley, is a spendthrift and a drinker. Rejected by his father in favor of Wolfgang, Hubert is not above plotting, as does Hindley in regard to Heathcliff, Wolfgang's murder.

Similarities between certain characters and certain scenes of "The Entail" and Wuthering Heights are much more striking, however, than the similarities between Wolfgang and Roderick and Heathcliff. The setting of the story is

³⁴Ibid., p. 145.

³⁵E. T. W. Hoffmann, "The Entail," Weird Tales (New York, 1923), pp. 216-321.

³⁶Bradner, p. 138.

much like the setting of Wuthering Heights--it is wild and desolate, and it is the background for tumultuous, often supernatural, events. Always the weather is bitter cold with driving snow and the ocean thundering against the rocks of the shore. As in Wuthering Heights, the wind plays an important part in the portrayal of the violent passions of the story. The narrator, the aged lawyer's nephew Theodore, is much like Lockwood: he is interested in the strangeness of the dwelling, and he becomes entranced by the beauty of Seraphina. He is involved in an incident which is quite similar to Lockwood's encounter with Heathcliff's dogs: having been attacked by a wolf on Baron Roderick's estate, he is asked by the baron if he is all right. Another parallel scene is the arrival of the lawyer and his young nephew at R--sitten late at night: when the old servant, Francis, opens the door, the light of the candle which he is holding reveals his "withered face, which was drawn up into a curious grimace."³⁷ When Isabella arrives at the Heights as Heathcliff's wife, it is dark; Joseph emerges holding a candle. "'His first act was to elevate his torch to a level with my face, squint malignantly, project his upper lip, and turn away.'"³⁸ There

³⁷Hoffmann, p. 222.

³⁸Wuthering Heights, p. 156.

is also in the story a dream involving a ghost, and as in Wuthering Heights the dream is connected with the room in which the sleeper is lying.

Oral Reports

Stories must have come to Emily from oral as well as written sources. It is possible that she found a prototype of Heathcliff in these stories and legends. Tabitha Aykroyd, the old servant known as "Tabby" who lived in the parsonage for many years, a native of Haworth, "had many a tale to tell of bygone days of the country-side; old ways of living, former inhabitants, decayed gentry, who had melted away, and whose places knew them no more; family tragedies and dark superstitious dooms."³⁹ Patrick Brontë told his children stories about old families in and around Haworth parish. Ellen Nussey says that "Mr. Brontë at times would relate strange stories, which had been told to him by some of the oldest inhabitants of the parish, of the extraordinary lives and doings of people who had resided in far-off, out-of-the-way places, but in contiguity with Haworth,--stories which made one shiver and shrink from hearing."⁴⁰ Charlotte says that

³⁹Gaskell, p. 82.

⁴⁰The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendships, and Correspondence in Four Volumes, eds. T. J. Wise, et al. (Oxford, 1932), I, 114.

Emily knew the Haworth peasantry, "I knew their ways, their language, and their family histories; she could hear of them with interest, and talk of them with detail minute, graphic, and accurate; but with them she rarely exchanged a word."⁴¹

During her stay in Halifax as a teacher at Law Hill, Emily may have heard the story of Jack Sharp,⁴² a man whose vicious and unscrupulous character and actions may have influenced her in creating the character and actions of Heathcliff. Sharp was the adopted son of his uncle, John Walker, squire of Walterclough Hall in Southowram and a merchant of considerable wealth. Through devious means, including marrying successively a mother and a daughter,⁴³ Sharp secured his uncle's possessions and set up his own residence at Walterclough Hall. Upon the marriage of Walker's son, however, Sharp was forced from Walterclough Hall. In 1771 he built Law Hill with monies from his uncle's business. Walker's son and his wife and children lived in poverty at Walterclough Hall. "They were proud people, the Walkers. Jack Sharp was not proud; like the devil, he was merely clever, grasping, and conscienceless."⁴⁴ Charles Simpson calls

⁴¹Gaskell, p. 48.

⁴²Simpson, pp. 54-56.

⁴³Hinkley, p. 319.

⁴⁴Virginia Moore, The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë (London, 1936), p. 142.

Jack Sharp "the most historically probable" prototype of Heathcliff.⁴⁵ Leicester Bradner does not go that far in his analysis; however, he does feel that the relations of Sharp and the Walkers bear such a strong resemblance to the relations of Heathcliff and the Earnshaws that the story of Sharp must have at least in part been the source of that particular element in the plot of Wuthering Heights.⁴⁶

Personal Acquaintances

Four men who were living during Emily's lifetime may have provided the seed for the development of Heathcliff's character. Three of these Emily knew well; the fourth was known to her indirectly as the father of Charlotte's friends, Mary and Martha Taylor. They are Joshua Taylor, Branwell Brontë, Patrick Brontë, and Constantin Héger, Emily's teacher in Brussels.

Joshua Taylor's life parallels Heathcliff's in several ways, according to some critics and biographers.⁴⁷ Disappointed in love at an early age he became a man severe and inflexible in manner. He was rich, independent, and

⁴⁵Simpson, p. 156.

⁴⁶Bradner, p. 138.

⁴⁷Braithwaite, p. 170. See also Hinkley, pp. 321, 340-341.

unconventional--a rebel against church and state. His case seems somewhat questionable, however, for Lawrence and E. M. Hanson refer to him as "a cultured and kindly Yorkshireman" who helped Charlotte in her study of French⁴⁸ and even lent her some French novels.⁴⁹

Branwell's influence upon Heathcliff in particular and Wuthering Heights in general is vigorously disputed. By some critics he is considered "the vital influence which resulted in the conception and creation of Wuthering Heights";⁵⁰ by others he is not considered a significant enough source to mention. At bottom it seems that his influence is primarily upon Hindley and that to Heathcliff he offers only "touches of the jealous and baffled lover."⁵¹

The cases for Patrick Brontë⁵² and Monsieur Héger⁵³ as possible influences upon Emily's conception of Heathcliff's character are too weak for consideration.

⁴⁸Hanson, p. 45.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 77.

⁵⁰The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendships, and Correspondence in Four Volumes, II, 56.

⁵¹Hinkley, p. 327.

⁵²Simpson, p. 156.

⁵³Ibid.

Charlotte's Childhood Inventions

Charlotte's Angrian juvenilia may have furnished a source for Heathcliff's character; Zamorna and Percy, Charlotte's heroes, are important as exaggerated parallels of the dark hero. Zamorna is a Byronic hero in every sense of the word. Percy--proud, melancholy, independent, untamed, savage, and dark, with one consuming passion which governs his life--is also a Byronic hero.⁵⁴ Quashia, however, a relatively minor character in the Angrian legends, most resembles Heathcliff. A dark, evil-tempered, rebellious orphan, Quashia causes troubles and sorrow for his foster father and foster brother.⁵⁵

Emily's Poetry

There is much disagreement among critics concerning Emily's poetry. One group, led by Fannie E. Ratchford, maintains that all of Emily's poems are fragments of a strictly imaginary epic or are interrelated songs which were originally incorporated into prose tales.⁵⁶ To substantiate her theory she has skillfully reconstructed these tales.⁵⁷ Some critics who follow Miss Ratchford's theory nevertheless disagree with

⁵⁴Charlotte Brontë, The Legends of Angria, ed. Fannie E. Ratchford (New Haven, 1933).

⁵⁵The Brontës' Web of Childhood, pp. 62-63.

⁵⁶Ratchford, "The Brontës' Web of Dreams," Yale Review, XXI (1931), 156.

⁵⁷Gondal's Queen (Austin, 1955).

the arrangement of the poems in her reconstruction of the "epic."⁵⁸ At the other extreme is a group of critics who maintain that Gondal is a weak disguise behind which Emily blended "imagined Gondal events with Haworth facts--thus securing the leeway of myth without relinquishing the poignancy of truth . . . so fine an outlet for pent feelings"⁵⁹ To avoid both the confusion of the critics and the intricacy of the Gondal cycle itself, I shall discuss Emily's poetry simply as poetry and make no attempt to fit the poems into their places in the Gondal narrative.

Emily's poetry, contrary to Ernest Dimnet's evaluation,⁶⁰ is "the mighty and indispensable precursor" of Wuthering Heights and Heathcliff.⁶¹ The themes of her poetry--passion, betrayal, exile, and revenge--parallel the themes of Wuthering Heights; the characters of her poetry--the fatal women and the iron men--parallel the characters of Wuthering Heights; scenes and actions in her poetry foreshadow scenes and actions in Wuthering Heights. In short, Emily's poetry was the proving ground for Wuthering Heights and Heathcliff.

⁵⁸M. Hope Dodds, "Heathcliff's Country," Modern Language Review, XXXIX (April, 1944), 117.

⁵⁹The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë, pp. 120, 155.

⁶⁰The Brontë Sisters (London, 1927), p. 175.

⁶¹The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë, p. 318.

First melted off the hope of youth
 Then fancy's rainbow fast withdrew;
 And then experience told me truth
 In mortal bosoms never grew.

'Twas grief enough to think mankind
 All hollow, servile, insincere;
 But worse to trust to my own mind
 And find the same corruption there,⁶³

and:

Heavy hangs the raindrop
 From the burdened spray;
 Heavy broods the damp mist
 On uplands far away;

Heavy looms the dull sky,
 Heavy rolls the sea--
 And heavy beats the young heart
 Beneath that lonely tree.

Never has a blue streak
 Cleft the clouds since morn--
 Never has his grim Fate
 Smiled since he was born.

Frowning on the infant,
 Shadowing childhood's joy,
 Guardian angel knows not
 That melancholy boy.

Day is passing swiftly
 Its sad and sombre prime;
 Youth is fast invading
 Sterner manhood's time.

All the flowers are praying
 For sun before they close,
 And he prays too, unknowing,
 That sunless human rose!

Blossoms, that the west wind
 Has never wooed to blow,

⁶³Ibid., p. 73.

Scentless are your petals,
Your dew as cold as snow.

Soul, where kindred kindness
No early promise woke,
Barren is your beauty
As weed upon the rock.

Wither, Brothers, wither,
You were vainly given--
Earth reserves no blessing
For the unblessed of Heaven! ⁶⁴

and:

"Listen; I've known a burning heart
To which my own was given;
Nay, not in passion; do not start--
Our love was love from heaven;
At least, if heavenly love be born
In the pure light of childhood's morn--

.
"That heart was like a tropic sun
That kindles all it shines upon;
And never Magian devotee
Gave worship half so warm as I;
And never radiant bow could be
So welcome in a stormy sky.
My soul dwelt with her day and night:
She was my all-sufficing light,
My childhood's mate, . . .
My only blessing, only pride.

"But cursed be the very earth
That gave that fiend her fatal birth!
With her own hand she bent the bow
That laid my best affections low,
Then mocked my grief and scorned my prayers
And drowned my bloom of youth in tears." ⁶⁵

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁵The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, ed. C. W. Hatfield (New York, 1941), pp. 152-153.

Heathcliff the man, of iron defiance, is foreshadowed
in the following lines:

King Julius lifts his impious eye
From the dark marble to the sky;
Blasts with that oath his perjured soul,
And changeless is his cheek the while,
Though burning thoughts, that spurn control,
Kindle a short and bitter smile,
As face to face the kinsmen stand,
His false hand clasped in Gerald's hand.⁶⁶

Heathcliff the stranger, mysterious and satanic, is
foreshadowed here:

The shepherd placed a seat and pressed
To their poor fare his unknown guest.
.....
A silence settled on the room;
The cheerful welcome sank to gloom;
.....
..... there was something in his face,
Some nameless thing they could not trace,
And something in his voice's tone
Which turned their blood as chill as stone.
The ringlets of his long black hair
Fell o'er a cheek most ghostly fair.
.....
..... when upraised his eye would dart
An icy shudder through the heart.
Compassion changed to horror then
And fear to meet that gaze again.
It was not hatred's tiger-glare,
Nor the wild anguish of despair;
.....
No--lightning all unearthly shone
Deep in that dark eye's circling zone,
Such withering lightning as we deem
None but a spectre's look may beam;

⁶⁶Gondal's Queen, p. 99.

And glad they were when he turned away
 And wrapt him in his mantle grey,
 Leant down his head upon his arm
 And veiled from view their basilisk charm.⁶⁷

Heathcliff the lover, impassioned to the point of frenzy,
 is foreshadowed in the following excerpts from Emily's poetry:

But that pure light, changeless and strong,
 Cherished and watched and nursed so long;
 That love that first its glory gave
 Shall be my pole star to the grave,⁶⁸

and:

There let the bleeding branch atone
 For every torturing tear:
 Shall my young sins, my sins alone,
 Be everlasting here?

Who bade thee keep that cursed name
 A pledge for memory?
 As if Oblivion ever came
 To breathe its bliss on me;

As if, through all the 'wilderling maze
 Of mad hours left behind,
 I once forgot the early days
 That thou wouldst call to mind,⁶⁹

and:

Well thou hast paid me back my love!
 But if there be a God above

⁶⁷The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, pp. 113-114.

⁶⁸Gondal's Queen, p. 134.

⁶⁹The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, p. 150.

Whose arm is strong, whose word is true,
This hell shall wring thy spirit too!⁷⁰

and:

No other sun has lightened up my heaven;
No other star has ever shone for me:
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given--
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But when the days of golden dreams had perished
And even despair was powerless to destroy,
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy;

Then did I check the tears of useless passion,
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine!⁷¹

Heathcliff the unbeliever, viciously impious, is fore-
shadowed here:

No promised Heaven these wild Desires
Could all or half fulfil--
No threatened Hell with quenchless fires
Subdue this quenchless will!⁷²

Had Heathcliff carried out his plan of suicide, the following poem, an important enough source to quote in its entirety,

⁷⁰Gondal's Queen, p. 140.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 126.

⁷²The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, p. 220.

could well have been his impassioned outburst to the absent
Cathy immediately before his death:

Light up thy halls! 'Tis closing day;
I'm drear and lone and far away--
Cold blows on my breast the north wind's bitter sigh,
And oh, my couch is bleak beneath the rainy sky!

Light up thy halls--and think not of me;
That face is absent now, thou hast hated so to see--
Bright be thine eyes, undimmed their dazzling shine,
For never, never more shall they encounter mine!

The desert moor is dark; there is tempest in the air;
I have breathed my only wish in one last, one burning
prayer--
A prayer that would come forth, although it lingered
long;
That set on fire my heart, but froze upon my tongue.

And now it shall be done before the morning rise:
I will not watch the sun ascend in yonder skies.
One task alone remains--thy pictured face to view;
And then I go to prove if God, at least, be true!

Do I not see thee now? Thy black resplendent hair;
Thy glory-beaming brow, and smile, how heavenly fair!
Thine eyes are turned away--those eyes I would not see;
Their dark, their deadly ray, would more than madden me.

There, go, Deceiver, go! My hand is streaming wet;
My heart's blood flows to buy the blessing--to forget!
Oh could that lost heart give back, back again to thine,
One tenth part of the pain that clouds my dark decline!

Oh, could I see thy lids weighed down in cheerless woe;
Too full to hide their tears, too stern to overflow;
Oh could I know thy soul with equal grief was torn,
This fate might be endured--this anguish might be borne!

How gloomy grows the night! 'Tis Gondal's wind that blows;
I shall not tread again the deep glens where it rose--
I feel it on my face--"Where, wild blast, dost thou roam?
What do we, wanderer, here so far away from home?

"I do not need thy breath to cool my death-cold brow;
But go to that far land, where she is shining now;

Tell Her my latest wish, tell Her my dreary doom;
Say that my pangs are past, but Hers are yet to come."

Vain words--vain, frenzied thoughts! No ear can hear
me call--

Lost in the vacant air my frantic curses fall--
And could she see me now, perchance her lip would smile,
Would smile in careless pride and utter scorn the while!

And yet for all her hate, each parting glance would tell
A stronger passion breathed, burned, in this last farewell.
Unconquered in my soul the Tyrant rules me still;
Life bows to my control, but Love I cannot kill!⁷³

The similarity between the situation of the speaker in the poem and the situation of Heathcliff immediately before his return is striking. Heathcliff, knowing that Cathy is now married to Edgar, who is wealthy, could very truthfully have cried, "Light up thy halls!" As does the speaker in the poem, Heathcliff contemplates one last look at the woman whom he worships, whose hair is dark as is the woman's in the poem: "'Just to have one glimpse of your face,'" says Heathcliff;⁷⁴ and, "Thy pictured face to view," says the speaker in the poem--and then suicide.⁷⁵ It would be natural for Heathcliff to cry "Deceiver" to Cathy, for she chose Edgar in preference to him. At that time, too, Heathcliff thought in his heart that Cathy despised him;⁷⁶ otherwise he would never

⁷³Ibid., pp. 85-87.

⁷⁴Wuthering Heights, p. 110.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 184.

have pondered suicide. Certainly the intensity of passion in the speaker of the poem equals the intensity of passion in Heathcliff.⁷⁷

There are in Emily's poetry several scenes which parallel scenes in Wuthering Heights. The first of these is quoted below:

That iron man was born like me,
And he was once an ardent boy:
He must have felt, in infancy,
The glory of a summer sky.

.

I saw the light breeze kiss his cheek,
His fingers 'mid the roses twined;
I watched to mark one transient streak
Of pensive softness shade his mind.

The open window showed around
A glowing park and glorious sky,
And thick woods swelling with the sound
Of Nature's mingled harmony.

Silent he sat. That stormy breast
At length, I said, has deigned to rest;
At length above that spirit flows
The waveless ocean of repose.

Let me draw near: 'twill soothe to view
His dark eyes dimmed with holy dew;
Remorse even now may wake within
And half unchain his soul from sin.

Perhaps this is the destined hour
When hell shall lose its fatal power
And heaven itself shall bend above
To hail the soul redeemed by love.

Unmarked I gazed; my idle thought
Passed with the ray whose shine it caught;

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 184-185.

One glance revealed how little care
He felt for all the beauty there.

Oh, crime can make the heart grow old
Sooner than years of wearing woe;
Can turn the warmest bosom cold
As winter wind or polar snow.⁷⁸

Its similarity to the scene in which Nelly emerges from Thrushcross Grange to inform Heathcliff of Cathy's death is arresting:

He was there--at least a few yards farther in the park; leant against an old ash tree, his hat off, and his hair soaked with the dew that had gathered on the budded branches, and fell pattering round him.

.....

"She's dead!" he said; "I've not waited for you to learn that. Put your handkerchief away--don't snivel before me. Damn you all! she wants none of your tears!"

I was weeping as much for him as her: we do sometimes pity creatures that have none of the feeling either for themselves or others; and when I first looked into his face I perceived that he had got intelligence of the catastrophe; and a foolish notion struck me that his heart was quelled, and he prayed, because his lips moved, and his gaze was bent on the ground.

"Yes, she's dead!" I answered, checking my sobs, and drying my cheeks. "Gone to heaven, I hope, where we may, every one, join her, if we take due warning, and leave our evil ways to follow good!"

.....

"May she wake in torment!" he cried, with frightful

⁷⁸The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, pp. 105-106.

vehemence, stamping his foot, and groaning in a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion.⁷⁹

But Nelly is mistaken, as is the speaker in the poem. Heathcliff's heart was not quelled; and if he prayed at all, he prayed to Cathy. The atmosphere in both of these passages is one of spring freshness, perhaps because of the effective use, in both of them, of the word "dew." In each instance the speaker expects a moving incident to reform the "iron man" on whom she gazes, and in each instance he remains unchanged.

A second scene in Emily's poetry which is strikingly similar to a scene in Wuthering Heights is the following:

"Yet, tell them, Julian, all, I am not doomed to wear
Year after year in gloom and desolate despair;
A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
And offers, for short life, eternal liberty.

"He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering
airs,
With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest
stars;
Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
And visions rise and change which kill me with desire."⁸⁰

The above passage, in which the speaker is a woman, compares with Cathy's mystical declaration to Heathcliff and Nelly shortly before her death:

⁷⁹ Wuthering Heights, pp. 190-191.

⁸⁰ Gondal's Queen, p. 170.

" . . . 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. Nelly, you think you are better and more fortunate than I; in full health and strength--you are sorry for me--very soon that will be altered. I shall be sorry for you. I shall be incomparably beyond and above you all."⁸¹

Two scenes in Emily's poetry which parallel a scene in Wuthering Heights follow:

If grief for grief can touch thee,
If answering woe for woe,
If any ruth can melt thee,
Come to me now!

I cannot be more lonely,
More drear I cannot be!
My worn heart throbs so wildly
'Twill break for thee.

And when the world despises,
When heaven repels my prayer
Will not mine angel comfort?
Mine idol hear?

Yes, by the tears I've poured thee,
By all my hours of pain,
O I shall surely win thee,
Beloved, again!⁸²

and:

O come again; what chains withhold
The steps that used so fleet to be?

⁸¹Wuthering Heights, p. 183.

⁸²The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, pp. 144-145.

Come, leave thy dwelling dank and cold
Once more to visit me.⁸³

Heathcliff, on the morning after Cathy's death, cries out to her: "'Oh! you said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray one prayer--I repeat it till my tongue stiffens-- Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest, as long as I am living! You said I killed you--haunt me, then! . . . Be with me always--take any form--drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you!'"⁸⁴

Emily's Life

Certain phases of Emily Brontë's life have been so confused by critics seeing in them what they wish to see and revealing of them what they wish to reveal that the difficulty of determining the real Emily is frustrating, and deciding how much of the real Emily went into the character of Heathcliff is almost impossible. One critic maintains that Heathcliff's unrequited passion for Cathy is based upon a clandestine intrigue of Emily and an unknown woman or an unknown man.⁸⁵ Another critic claims that it is based upon an incestuous love for Branwell.⁸⁶ Another feels that William

⁸³ Gondal's Queen, p. 66.

⁸⁴ Wuthering Heights, pp. 191-192.

⁸⁵ The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë, p. 327.

⁸⁶ Kinsley, pp. 146, 193.

Weightman was her desired one.⁸⁷ Yet another mysteriously believes in an unknown "angel" or "demon" lover.⁸⁸ Critics and biographers, excepting Miss Ratchford and a few others, seem to find it hard to believe that such vigorous, elemental passion could be the product solely of imagination. One need only consider Charlotte's case, however--and Charlotte is universally considered inferior to Emily in imaginative genius--to realize that such passion could be the product of imagination only. The secret diary which she kept spasmodically during her teaching days at Roe Head indicates the intensity with which imagination assailed her:

"Once more on a dull Saturday afternoon I sit down to try to summon around me the dim shadows . . . of incidents long departed, of feelings, of pleasures whose exquisite relish I sometimes fear it will never be my lot again to taste. How few would believe that from sources purely imaginary such happiness could be derived! Pen cannot portray the deep interest of the scenes, of the continued train of events, I have witnessed in that little room with the low, narrow bed and bare, white-washed walls twenty miles away. . . . As I saw them [young lords and ladies] stately and handsome, gliding through these salons, where many well-known forms crossed my sight, where there were faces looking up, eyes smiling and lips moving in audible speech, that I knew better almost than my brother and sisters, yet whose voices had never woke an echo in this world, . . . what glorious associations crowded upon me! Far from home I cannot write

⁸⁷White, p. 128.

⁸⁸Braithwaite, pp. 94-97.

of them; . . . except in total solitude I scarce dare think of them."⁸⁹

Ellen Nussey's evaluation of Emily--and Ellen knew her personally--is as thorough and self-evident an evaluation as is needed here, and it is important enough to quote:

"Her extreme reserve seemed impenetrable, yet she was intensely lovable. She invited confidence in her moral power. Few people have the gift of looking and smiling, as she could look and smile--one of her rare expressive looks was something to remember through life, there was such a depth of soul and feeling, and yet shyness of revealing herself, a sense of self-containment seen in no other--She was in the strictest sense a law unto herself, and a heroine in keeping to her law. . . . On the top of a moor or in a deep glen Emily was a child in spirit for glee and enjoyment. . . . She could be vivacious in conversation and enjoy giving pleasure--A spell of mischief also lurked in her on occasions, when out on the moors."⁹⁰

The other side of her life, the mystic one, was within her; biographers can contribute very little to the understanding of such a life.⁹¹ It seems, therefore, that Emily contributed to the character of Heathcliff his basic traits only: his indomitable will, his courage and resolution, his unflagging energy, and his stoic endurance.⁹²

⁸⁹The Legends of Angria, pp. xxvii, xxviii.

⁹⁰The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendships, and Correspondence in Four Volumes, II, 273.

⁹¹Edward Wagenknecht, Cavalcade of the English Novel (New York, 1954), p. 312.

⁹²Hinkley, p. 34.

Evaluation of Sources

Heathcliff, hero of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, may derive at least a portion of his characteristics from his predecessors in literature, from Hugh Lawlor of "The Bridegroom of Barna," from Wolfgang and Roderick of "The Entail," from various folk tales and legends of the surrounding countryside, from Branwell Brontë and Joshua Taylor, and from Charlotte's Quashia. It is certain, however, that Heathcliff was first and foremost the product of Emily's incomparable imagination. Her poems reveal the fact that a hero of Heathcliff's type was germinating in her mind years before the composition of Wuthering Heights; into this memorable hero went her own nobility mixed with the strange, dark savagery which had thrilled her imagination since girlhood.

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