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Charlotte Bronte'S Novels: The Artistry Of Their Construction

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CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S NOVELS:
THE ARTISTRY OF THEIR CONSTRUCTION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Anne Wonders Passel

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This dissertation, written and submitted by

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CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S NOVELS: THE ARTISTRY OF THEIR COMPOSITION

Anne Wonders Passel

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Charlotte Brontë is a conscious artist, aware of the demand of the novel form. In her four novels she demonstrates her understanding of the principles of organic unity. Each novel is based on a different pattern, but each achieves unity and coherence through the author's conscious use of structure, language, and theme.

The Professor (written in 1846-1847, published posthumously in 1857), though highly structured, seems the least expertly handled of her novels. Overly romantic, it holds rigidly to a predetermined three-part division, a triple emphasis which the author carries to the extreme. Her conscious attention to structure, however, indicates that she senses the need for such organized unity. Her handling of the extended metaphor shows her latent skill.

Jane Eyre (1847), conforming to linear structure, is based on a pattern of reversal which contrasts the ultra-rational world of St. John Rivers with the ultra-emotional world of Rochester. Charlotte Brontë's creation of the thematic symbol of the mirror forms the basis for the structure of the novel. The idea of reversal serves the author as the organizing element of organic unity.

In Shirley (1849) Charlotte Brontë attempts her most complex form of structure. She uses counterpoint to interweave three voices speaking for three wholly separate areas of life. The author proposes a series of fundamental questions concerning man and his relationship to the world, and she offers answers by each of these three voices. The voice which speaks for man's need to adjust to other men becomes the voice most clearly heard and most easily believed.

In Villette (1853) the author returns to the novel with a single voice, a single point of view, and a single theme. Its artful construction is not immediately apparent. The thematic symbol of the circle forms the basic structure of the novel in which the protagonist travels in four complete cycles, passing and repassing the same points, moving through moods of isolation, depression, reconciliation, and elation and back to isolation in a preconceived pattern.

In all of these novels Charlotte Brontë deals with three themes which emerge as her major concern: man's need to overcome isolation, his need for self-esteem and self-reliance, and his search for the resolution of life's problems in a compatible marriage. As the author's skill and insight develop from novel to novel her vision shifts from the romantic daydreams of her juvenilia to the acceptance of reality in her final work. Throughout her short career, however, she writes in truth and she writes with skill, and this combination has assured her novels the respect, through the years, which they deserve.

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I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the English staff of the University of the Pacific Graduate School who introduced me to the excitement of scholarly investigation and opened my mind to areas of thought which I had not known existed.

Most particularly I wish to thank Dr. Ruth Marie Faurot for her energetic intellect, her insistence on perseverance, and her continuing stimulation and encouragement. And my gratitude goes with affection to my family--my husband Howard, my sons Paul and Jonathan--for their tolerance, indulgence, and forbearance.

PREFACE

Jane Eyre is a book meant to be enjoyed. So are the other novels of Charlotte Brontë. There exist, however, various levels of enjoyment, levels of comprehension and amusement, discernment and pleasure. If the reader's interest is aroused by the characters, the action, the dialogue, the atmosphere, he has reacted in a way which would have pleased the author. If, beyond that, he understands the basic thesis, the inner compulsion which urged Charlotte Brontë to communicate through her fiction, he will enjoy the novel on the most satisfying level.

One approach to such a comprehension, through the aesthetics of the work, begins with the premise: This is a good novel (which the critic may prove or disprove) and then investigates the query: What makes it so (or, conversely: What makes it not so?) The natural consequence of this inquiry leads to an investigation of the basic elements of the novel: its structure, its language, its theme. What appears in the novel should be judged; what it means may be conjectured; but how the effect is achieved should be the primary concern. It adds to the reader's understanding if he can view the work in relation to the times, as well as in relation to the author's other work, cultural heritage, and environment. But the personal life of the author should not overshadow the investigation.

Considering the amount of material which can be gathered on the writing of Charlotte Brontë one might wonder that anything further need be said. The critical material, on the whole, has the merit of quality. Many proven writers have given their attention to evaluation and analysis; many new writers have offered interesting and unusual ideas. The problem concerning the analytic criticism of her novels lies in its scattered nature. There exist to date: only one book on the novels of Charlotte Brontë; one book on the novels of all the Brontës; two booklets of abbreviated factual material; an offering of dissertations primarily emphasizing theme or point of view (two recently popular approaches to criticism), or studying influences and early criticism, and (from Germany) discussing the place of women; many articles and chapters in longer books which often suggest exciting but not fully developed theories; and a myriad of excellent statements, declared but barely supported, in literary histories and genre studies. The most nearly definitive text is The Shakespeare Head Brontë (1931-1938) which includes not only the Brontë fiction but also volumes on life and letters,

hitherto unpublished writings, and poetry.¹

Charlotte Brontë's novels were never like the little girl named Jane Eyre, unloved, unwanted, and unappreciated (with the exception of The Professor--and unfortunately almost anything which is said about the novels in general does not include this first novel of hers). From the day in 1847 when the first edition of Jane Eyre reached the reading public to today when reprints of the novels are still being bought eagerly, there have been those who spoke out in immediate appreciation. Two nineteenth-century reviewers, Eugene Forçade of the Revue des deux mondes and Albany Fonblanque of the Examiner, treated her work with respect and were appreciated by the author. Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot were enthusiastic readers, as was Thackeray. Of later readers, Swinburne has praised her work, as have Saintsbury and Chesterton. Discerning readers are still drawn to these novels: Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Phyllis Bentley, and Muriel Spark are among the

¹All quotations from Charlotte Brontë's novels used in this study are taken from The Shakespeare Head Brontë, edited by T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1931). In this series, the volumes of Charlotte Brontë's works are numbered I through VII. The Professor is a single volume, but each of the other novels is printed in two volumes in this edition and are numbered I and II by the editors. It is these volume numbers which appear in the footnotes to follow, indicating the volume of each novel, the chapter, and the page. The Shakespeare Head Brontë retains the syntax and spelling of the original edition.

twentieth-century writers who are ardent admirers of Charlotte Brontë.

Beyond a statement of pleasure in the reading--or, contrarily, a vigorous condemnation of structure, subject matter, theme, or emotional content (as that expressed by Matthew Arnold or Harriet Martineau)--the early criticism centered on the identification of Currer Bell. Were these novels written by a man or a woman? With this initial interest in the author began a biographical approach to the Brontë family which reached its full pitch with Mrs. Gaskell's publication of The Life of Charlotte Brontë (1857). The biographical interest has not yet abated. (See, for example Daphne du Maurier's 1961 publication of The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë and the strong biographical overtones of Inga-Stina Ewbank's Their Proper Sphere: A Study of the Brontë Sisters as Early Victorian Female Novelists, published in 1966.) The biographical preoccupation of readers seems almost limitless, reaching into the future as long as men can react sympathetically to a life-story fraught with pathos. But the distraction of autobiographical reading of the novels hampered critical judgment for many years.

A change came when Fannie E. Ratchford had the opportunity of examining many of the tiny hand-lettered volumes of the Brontë juvenilia, and published first, with

Clyde De Vane, The Legends of Angria (1933), and later, on her own, the excellently analytic The Brontës' Web of Childhood (1941). Another critic who has followed Fannie Ratchford's lead and given serious consideration to the juvenilia is Phyllis Bentley whose The Brontës (1947) shows the influences of the juvenile Angrian material on the rest of Charlotte Brontë's work. Critics now began to see the novels as an outgrowth of childhood and girlhood writing and not necessarily as statements of autobiography.

Charlotte Brontë's letters have given a clearer understanding of the author and have helped critics to evaluate the mind which produced the novels. Mrs. Gaskell's biography includes many of the letters. Clement Shorter collected a substantial number of the letters of the whole family and published them in 1908 in The Brontës: Life and Letters. Then, too, letters are included in The Shakespeare Head Brontë. More recently Muriel Spark has published a representative selection in The Letters of the Brontës: A Selection (1954), which are intended to illustrate style in correspondence.

Charlotte Brontë's novels are included in critical discussions which consider the works of several writers. Some of this critical material attempts to discuss all the novels of the Brontë sisters. Inga-Stina Ewbank's recent book Their Proper Spheres (1966), does just this. The result

is an analytic but cursory treatment of Charlotte Brontë's novels. In The Brontë Sisters (1950), Phyllis Bentley has this same problem of condensation, especially as this is only a 44-page booklet.

Literary histories are automatically limited in their treatment of any one writer, though Walter Allen in The English Novel (1955) is perceptive in what he does say about Charlotte Brontë's novels, and Lord David Cecil in Early Victorian Novelist (1935) is one of the most vigorous detractors of Charlotte Brontë as a novelist. Both Sir Herbert Read ("Charlotte and Emily Brontë" in The Yale Review, 1925) and Virginia Woolf ("Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights" in The Common Reader, first series, 1925) attempt to fathom both sisters in one sitting, and thus begins a phase of criticism which merges the two Brontës as one. One article following this pattern is Richard Chase's "The Brontës, A Centennial Observance" (1947), which uses a Freudian approach to the symbolism in the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë. Another is Melvin Watson's "Form and Substance in the Brontë Novels" (1957) which acknowledges the Brontë talent but limits his praise to Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights.

Charlotte Brontë's four novels can be more successfully treated within one critical work. Critical energy divided among the four novels which compose the canon of

one author seems both logical and orderly. But in the case of Charlotte Brontë only one book has done this. In 1966 Robert B. Martin published The Accents of Persuasion: Charlotte Brontë's Novels. His stated purpose is to "search out the themes that occupied Miss Brontë in her novels and to demonstrate how they are given artistic life. . . ."² He gives, however, very little consideration to anything which has been written by any other critic (though, at the end of the book, he lists fifteen critics whom he has evidently consulted).

Two dissertations on Charlotte Brontë, useful to this study, investigate theme. Margaret Howard's "Charlotte Brontë's Novels: An Analysis of their Thematic and Structural Patterns" (1962) traces the theme of the search for love, and Arnold Shapiro's "A Study in the Development of Art and Ideas in Charlotte Brontë's Fiction" (1965) works with the themes of isolation, social criticism, and personal relationships. He also treats the use of the first-person narrator. Philip Momberger in his article "Self and the World in the Works of Charlotte Brontë," (1965) also studies theme and point of view. Earl A. Kneis in his dissertation "The Art of Charlotte Brontë: A Study of Point of View in

² Robert B. Martin, Accents of Persuasion (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 20.

Her Fiction" (1964), looks further into the problem of the narrator. Robert B. Heilman has written two penetrating articles which consider particular aspects found in all of Charlotte Brontë's works. He analyzes symbolism in "Charlotte Brontë, Reason, and the Moon" (1960) and studies the author's relation to Gothic tradition in "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic" (1958).

But in none of these studies, with the possible exception of Martin and Shapiro, is each of the four novels given serious broad analytic consideration, and in these last two mentioned insufficient attention is given to new ideas expressed in periodicals or book chapters. Shapiro presents what amounts to a dialogue with a single critic for each novel, as though none of the other articles on that novel were of any value. Martin pays almost no attention to scholarship or criticism.

On the whole, critics seem drawn to offering a single thesis based on one of the novels. The most notable exception is Kathleen Tillotson, who, in Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (1954) gives the impression of discussing Jane Eyre (which she most certainly does), but actually in addition she says more of value about that novel in relation to the one which preceded it and the two which followed it than most of the other critics do.

In the studied of the individual novels, the least has

been done on The Professor--and quite rightly, since this is the least expertly written of all Charlotte Brontë's novels. Margaret M. Brammer in a Master's thesis, "A Critical Study of Charlotte Brontë's The Professor," University of London (1958), suggests that the source of this novel may be George Sand's Consuelo. In addition, some writers who deal with more than one novel have interesting suggestions to make about The Professor: J. A. Falconer in a four-page article on "The Professor and Villette: A Study of Development" (1927) presents a comparison based primarily on the search for autobiography. Earl A. Kneis, in his dissertation (1964), stresses the influence of the juvenilia, and Daphne du Maurier in the fictional biography The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë (1961) suggests that the opening of his sister's first novel bears a striking resemblance to Branwell's story "The Wool is Rising," although most of the emphasis in the book is on Branwell's work.

Jane Eyre, as might be expected, has been written about in more articles and book chapters than any other novel by Charlotte Brontë. Mrs. Tillotson's chapter must always receive first mention as it shows the novel in relation to its time as well as in relation to Charlotte Brontë's developing talents.

A study of the author's point of view is covered in Earl A. Kneis' article "The 'I' of Jane Eyre" (1966). Edgar

F. Shannon, Jr., explores the use of syntax in "The Present Tense in Jane Eyre" (1955). Studies of particular details of subject matter appear in two brief articles: Lawrence E. Moser's interpretation of Jane's art in "From Portrait to Person: A Note on the Surrealistic in Jane Eyre" (1965), and an indication of Jane's reading in Brother David Clement's "Note the Literary Allusions" (1965).

The symbolism in this novel has caught the interpretive imagination of the modern critic. R. E. Hughes in "Jane Eyre: The Unbaptized Dionysos" (1964) treats the themes as based on mythology. A series of critics have seen importance in the fire imagery: Jerome Hamilton Buckley in The Victorian Temper (1951), David Lodge in "Fire and Eyre: Charlotte Brontë's War of Earthly Elements" (1966), William H. Marshall in "The Self, the World, and the Structure of Jane Eyre" (1961), and Eric Solomon in "Jane Eyre, Fire and Water" (1964). This last article also presents a suggestion of erotic imagery in the novel, as do those by: Wayne Burns in "Critical Relevance of Freud" (1956), Richard Chase in "The Brontës: a Centennial Observation" (1947), G. Armour Craig in "The Unpoetic Compromise: On the Relation Between Private Vision and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century Fiction" (1956), Martin S. Day in "Central Concepts of Jane Eyre" (1960), John A. Lester, Jr., in "The Consolations of Ecstasy" (1963), Joseph Prescott in "Jane

Eyre: A Romantic Exemplum with a Difference" (1958), M. H. Scargill in "All Passion Spent: A Revelation of Jane Eyre" (1950), and David Smith in "Incest Patterns in Two Victorian Novels" (1965).

Several critics have found nature imagery in the novel, including Charles Burkhart in "Another Key Word for Jane Eyre" (1961), Robert B. Heilman in "Charlotte Brontë, Reason, and the Moon" (1960), Mark Schorer in his introduction to Jane Eyre (1959), and Virginia Woolf in The Common Reader, first series (1925).

Shirley has been analyzed thoroughly in relation to the characters in an article by Jacob Korg, "The Problem of Unity in Shirley" (1957). This study of the literary aspects of the novel presents an unusual approach which works with the levels of characters in the story, centering the interest of the novel on the romantic principle of egoism, personified by the protagonist's dog. Ivy Holgate makes two brief suggestions concerning the selection of subject matter in the novel in "The Structure of Shirley" (1962) and "Shirley: Charlotte's Own Evidence" (1963). In Lew Girdler's "Charlotte Brontë's Shirley and Scott's 'The Black Dwarf'" (1956) the source of the novel is suggested. Factual studies include Earl A. Kneis' "Art, Death, and the Composition of Shirley" (reprinted from his dissertation, 1964) which proposes the date of composition; Asa Briggs' "Private and

Social Themes in Shirley" (1958) which offers historic background; and Herbert Heaton's "The Economic Background of Shirley" (1936).

Critics who treat all of the novels offer some interesting suggestions about Shirley, particularly Amy Cruse in The Victorians and Their Reading (1935), who indicates audience reaction to the novel; Walter Allen in The English Novel (1955), who has an interesting analysis of the characters; and Robert B. Heilman in "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic" (1958).

The studies of Villette offer a wide variety of subjects under consideration. The most interesting by far is Robert A. Colby's "Villette and the Life of the Mind" (1960) which indicates Charlotte Brontë's emancipation from the dream world of her juvenilia. E. D. H. Johnson treats the nun's tale as of great significance in "'Daring the Dread Glance': Charlotte Brontë's Treatment of the Supernatural in Villette" (1966). Clara Lederer in "'Little God-Sister'" (1947) deals briefly with the biographical elements in the characters. Charles Burkhardt's "Brontë's Villette" (1962) explicates a passage on moon imagery. Robert P. Utter and Gwendolyn B. Needham show how Lucy Snowe fits the pattern of Victorian heroine in Pamela's Daughters (1937). A study of name symbolism is presented by Georgia S. Dunbar in "Proper Names in Villette" (1960).

Few fragments survived Charlotte Brontë's destruction of her earliest attempts at writing a novel for publication. One fragment, "The Moores," was included by W. Robertson Nicolls in his 1901 edition of Jane Eyre. Kathleen Tillotson in Novels of the Eighteen Forties (1956) dates this fragment somewhere around 1847-1848, suggesting that it is an attempt on the part of the author to rework The Professor.

After the publication of Villette, Charlotte Brontë began work on what she intended to be her next novel. Of this material two fragments survive: "Willie Ellin" and "Emma," both written between the publication of her last novel and her death in 1855. "Willie Ellin" has appeared only in the Brontë Society Transactions, pt. 46, IX:I (1936), but "Emma" was published in Cornhill Magazine for April 1860 with an introduction by Thackeray. Both seem to be the first draft of a series of ideas and like all of the fragments show that they had not received the author's approval or her conscientious reworking. They may be considered as indicating the direction which her thinking was going, but cannot be justifiably analyzed as finished products of the author's highest skill.

Besides fiction, Charlotte Brontë expressed herself in two other areas, not within the scope of this study, but none-the-less of interest: her poetry and her essays. Her

so-called Complete Poems were published in 1923. Selections from her poetry is also included with the poetry of the other members of her family in The Shakespeare Head Brontë. Occasionally some of her poetry finds its way into the new anthologies, and recently Margaret Webster has released a record of the Brontës' works, called "No Coward Soul" (VR S9176/7).

An article has appeared by Philip Drew on "Charlotte Brontë as a Critic of Wuthering Heights" (1964), which offers high praise for the preface which Charlotte Brontë wrote for her sister's novel in 1850. Most of Charlotte Brontë's other literary criticism appears in the comments which she made in her correspondence.

Perhaps the most pertinent comment of Charlotte Brontë's relationship to her critics may be found in her third novel. Written in Shirley's French essay are the words which speak for the author: "'Unhumble, I can take what is mine.'"³ The criticism of her novels which has been appearing in recent years attests to the excellence of her skill and subtlety; these are critical words which would not have humbled Charlotte Brontë to read. Not all in praise, but much written with analytic perception which she appreciated, the modern criticism has begun to give the consideration to

³Charlotte Brontë, Shirley, II: XXVII, 186.

these four novels which they merit. Charlotte Brontë liked the contemporary critic Fonblanque because, as she stated,

. . . he has power, he has discernment--I bend to his censorship, I am grateful for his praise; his blame deserves consideration; when he approves, I permit myself a moderate amount of pride.⁴

Later critics with some power and discernment have suggested specific areas of excellence in Charlotte Brontë's novels. Many have indicated the subtlety and skill with which particular elements have been handled. It is the purpose of this dissertation to incorporate these discernments into a larger view of the complete novels of Charlotte Brontë. This study will prove the structural solidity of these novels. Charlotte Brontë's works are not the unpolished day-dreams recorded in a Yorkshire parsonage. A favorable aesthetic evaluation of the novels finds support in the author's achievement of organic unity, and in the evidence of her skill in handling structure, language, and theme. The following chapters bring to light this unity, this structure, and the artistry of The Professor, Jane Eyre, Shirley, and Villette.

⁴Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams on November 5, 1849, in The Brontës: Life and Letters, edited by Clement Shorter (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), letter 388, II, 81.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROFESSOR

If Charlotte Brontë did not achieve her greatest literary work in The Professor, she did at least make a valliant, whole-hearted attempt to organize her feelings and beliefs into a coherent, unified novel. She has created a novel basically sound in structure, though perhaps oversimplified. The work concentrates on the areas of her two major interests: the struggle for a security compatible with a life of independent action and the search for completion in the companionship of marriage. The language is experimentally provocative through metaphor and symbol. Understandably, the twentieth-century reader does not turn to The Professor for either instruction or amusement; it is not a novel of our time. But then, it was not deemed to be a novel of the eighteen-forties either. Editors in at least half a dozen London publishing houses were not willing to chance their profits on a work of such dubious value. Only posthumously did the novel find its way into print, at a time when the all-too-limited canon of the Brontës could not satiate the interested readers. The history of the publication of The Professor, then, could not entice the modern readers. But those interested in Charlotte Brontë's talent are tempted into a reading of her first adult novel, and much can be learned about the young writer by analyzing her earliest serious

work.

The quality of the novel--if quality is admitted to be there at all--shows itself in the presence of unity in the work. A hint of the author's abilities, however unaroused, shows in her selection and ordering of words. The subject of the novel, while it exposes the limitations of the area of her interests, indicates the possibilities as well, and the content--the meaning--of the work can be detected through an analysis of the thematic emphasis within the novel.

An early work of any writer may easily be attacked by seeking out and listing the obvious shortcomings. At the time of the composition of The Professor, in 1846, Charlotte Brontë's reading was limited and sporadic; her literary associations were totally en famille; and, as enthusiastic biographers have assured the world for the last hundred years or so, the atmosphere in which she created was physically exacting and emotionally disturbing. But an aesthetic analysis centers on quite another area of consideration. The reader must accept the situation as it stood and try to determine in what way The Professor is exceptional--and if not that, in what way it indicates the latent talents of its author. Henry James has reminded us that "we must grant the artist his subject, his idea, his donnée: our criticism is applied only to

what he makes of it."¹ Just so The Professor must be viewed objectively as a work of art, and a sincere attempt must be made to filter out the elements of good writing and sift these findings in the hope of detecting some brief flashes of the qualities which later, reappearing in her mature works, reveal Charlotte Brontë as a writer of worth.

Charlotte Brontë had a remarkable sensitivity toward the need for unity in a novel, a conscious or unconscious awareness. She demonstrates the underlying dependence on a patterned structure in all four of her novels, most clearly in The Professor. She balances the pattern of the plot, and this pattern dominates the novel. True, she also shows a pattern of characters, of setting, of mood. But at this early stage of Charlotte Brontë's writing, her preoccupation with plot, easily seen in an examination of her juvenilia, leads her naturally to a development of the required unity and balance through plot structure.

The barest outline of The Professor proclaims its

¹Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," The Future of the Novel (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 17. In an attempt to relate this early work of Charlotte Brontë's to the books she is known to have been reading, Margaret M. Brammer in "A Critical Study of Charlotte Brontë's The Professor," unpublished Master's thesis, Bedford College, University of London, 1958, shows the possible influence of George Sand's Consuelo.

apparent balance of plot.² The action begins in England, sets the tone of discontent, and introduces two of the five major characters (William Crimsworth, the protagonist-narrator, and Yorke Hunsden, the adult enfant terrible). After chapter six the action shifts to Brussels, exposes the protagonist as he struggles for his independence and his emotional resolution, and introduces the three other characters of consequence (his headmaster, M. Pelet; the neighboring directress of a girls' school, Mlle. Reuter; and the object of the narrator's affection, Mlle. Frances Henri, later Mrs. Crimsworth). For its final action the novel shifts its venue back to England, thus neatly--if rather obviously--balancing the settings for activity.

But while the linear progression of the plot indicates an uncomplicated setting of here-there-here, something quite otherwise takes place in the emotional plot pattern of the protagonist. True, William Crimsworth works through a series of three-part changes. The author conceives his basic development romantically: he begins as a tradesman, becomes a

²Kathleen Tillotson in Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954) suggests that it is "a single-track novel . . . masquerading as a more complex unity . . ." (p. 282). Melvin R. Watson in "Form and Substance in the Brontë Novels" in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad edited by Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), goes even further by suggesting that in this novel Miss Brontë "was essentially improvising. . . . On the surface there is a fine balance among the various parts, but they do not grow out of each other" (p. 110).

teacher, and reaches the height of school directorship before he retires. A three-part up-down-up pattern reflecting his response to love and friendship accompanies this three-part development in his profession: he finds a true friend (without acknowledging him as such), discovers a false friend and unworthy love, and finally gains his true love. According to this tripled pattern established in setting, professional progress, and inter-personal relationships, one might suppose that the emotional experiences of the protagonist would follow this established pattern. On the contrary, a fluctuating tension is established; Crimsworth goes back and forth between happiness and misery as events lead him. The author establishes a neutral tone of peace at the opening as the narrator starts his story and again at the end when he reveals that his story-telling has been done from the idyllic seclusion of his English retirement home. Several times during the story by authorial interruptions the same note of peace intrudes on the otherwise erratic pattern of Crimsworth's emotional life.

The narrator becomes involved in another development of what at first appears to be the balanced three-part structure. Crimsworth's relationship with society and family is so strongly delineated as to lead the reader to suppose that here too Charlotte Brontë's apparent concern with balance and order in structure might cause her to create another conscious

expression of three-part development. The contrast between the narrator's attitudes and circumstances in the first section and the equivalent revelations in the Brussels section awakens the expectancy of a balance in the third and final section. But this does not exist.

Crimsworth lives in X---- as an unhappy and moderately haughty young man. He scorns the local society. Later in the novel, looking back on these early days in his brother's employ, Crimsworth says of the young women in the town:

"I seldom spoke to them--they were nothing to me. I considered them only as something to be glanced at from a distance; their dresses and faces were often pleasing enough to the eye: but I could not understand their conversation, nor even read their countenances. Whenever I caught snatches of what they said, I could never make much of it; and the play of their lips and eyes did not help me at all."

(XXII, 214)³

His friend Hunsden even more graphically describes the young Crimsworth of that time:

"I have remarked you sitting near the door in a room full of company, bent on hearing, not on speaking; on observing, not on entertaining; looking frigidly shy at the commencement of a party, confusingly vigilant about the middle, and insultingly weary towards the end. Is that the way, do you think, ever to communicate pleasure

³All quotations from The Professor are taken from The Shakespeare Head Brontë, volume VII of Charlotte Brontë's work, edited by T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1931) and are identified by chapter and page. The work was written prior to 1847 and was published posthumously as The Professor--A Tale, 2 volumes (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1857, first edition). It was reprinted in 1860 with "Emma, a Fragment of a Novel," first published in the Cornhill Magazine, 1860.

or excite interest? No; and if you are generally unpopular, it is because you deserve to be so."

(XXII, 215)

Along with this basic withdrawal from society during his stay in the mill town comes his violent rejection of his family. He has caused himself to be cast off by his uncles (an overt act of exclusion on his part, premeditated and never regretted), and he has arrived at a pitch in his emotional and intellectual life which can only result in the violent scene of denunciation between the Crimsworth brothers. As an essential part of his scorn for society he aggressively rejects his family. This rejection serves as the underlying psychological action of the first section of the novel.

In the Brussels section, a further rejection of society takes place. From the beginning of their association, the young professor and his pupils have no rapport. The employment which he has found in the boys' school run by M. Pelet does not enter into the action of the novel, except in a retrospective recounting of a most fortuitous and improbable act of heroism disclosed when it will serve as a device to save the protagonist. Except for this event, the boys' school is unimportant. The center of the novel focuses on Crimsworth's professorship in the neighboring girls' school, and the pupils of this school are rejected immediately by the young teacher. "I had under my eye French, English, Belgians, Austrians, and Prussians," he reveals (XII, 98). He approves

of none of them. The teachers are perfunctorily dismissed from his consideration. Two he finds commonplace and ordinary, the third "a coquette, perfidious, mercenary, and dry-hearted" (XII, 105). The fourth he has seldom seen, and, little dreaming that she will appear some twenty pages later as the girl with whom he falls in love, he ignores her, remarking that she "had a very girlish air for a maîtresse, otherwise it was not striking; of character I should think she possessed but little" (XII, 106).

Totally out of keeping with his humble position as English tutor, he has allied himself socially with both his headmaster, M. Pelet, and the directress of the girls' school, Mlle. Reuter. The latter attracts him. In her he admires a quality which Charlotte Brontë admired and yet distrusted in womankind. The young professor says to himself:

"To read female character as depicted in Poetry and Fiction, one would think it was made up of sentiment, either for good or bad--here is a specimen, and a most sensible and respectable specimen too, whose staple ingredient is abstract reason. No Tallyrand was ever more passionless than Zoraïde Reuter!"

As narrator he adds the comment:

So I thought then; I found afterwards that blunt susceptibilities are very consistent with strong propensities.

(X, 90)

The narrator has forecast the incident which reveals to him what he considers the betrayal of friendship and love committed by M. Pelet and Mlle. Reuter, when--by forthright

eavesdropping--the young professor discovers that the headmaster and directress are engaged to be married, and have not taken seriously either his confidences or his flirtations. He reacts by withdrawing. He asserts, "Not that I nursed vengeance--no; but the sense of insult and treachery lived in me like a kindling, though as yet smothered coal" (XIII, 115).

The third section of the novel depicts the idyllic and circumscribed coterie in which William and Frances Crimsworth live in retirement with their young son Victor. Their only association with the outside world comes through their beloved neighbor, Yorke Hunsden. In one sense, this withdrawal to romantic seclusion fulfills the three-part pattern. The author implies that Crimsworth has continued to scorn society, as much in his prosperity and what may be called his maturity as he did when he was a down-trodden mill-worker or a dissatisfied English teacher. But his violent casting off of family and his equally dramatic renunciation of school associates finds no balance in this final section of the novel. The conscious three-part pattern, if such a thing exists in this novel, has here been abandoned.

A few rather apparent gaucheries must be mentioned in a discussion of the structure of the plot, and especially in a study which claims consistency and balance in the novel. Time, that sustaining element of any novel, often slips out of control. The author pleats and unpleats it according to whim,

condenses or expands as the story seems to require. Time passes sporadically and disquietingly. The reader is swept ahead and held back. Then he suddenly finds himself cast forward into a still undated and unlocated present by such authorial insertions as the comment which assures him of the truth of something because "I find it [and note the present tense] recorded in my diary" (XVIII, 157). Such authorial plateaus, inserted now and then in the center section of the novel, may serve to reaffirm the tone of peace which permeates the beginning and the end of the novel, may serve to stabilize an inconstant emotional temperature, but they have the effect of disorienting the reader, or perhaps what might more justly be called imbalancing the time sequence which he hopes to work out.

But unfortunately Charlotte Brontë reveals her inexperience and ineptitude in more than the handling of time. From the opening chapter, the whole matter of literary devices gets a little out of hand. The expository letter⁴--written to a name, "Charles," but not to a character in the novel--starts the narrative in an artificial way, unbelievable and

⁴This particular letter has been an annoyance to critics over the years, among them Robert Bernard Martin, who, in The Accents of Persuasion: Charlotte Brontë's Novels (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), comments that "one can hardly avoid irritation at such awkward devices as the letter that opens the book . . ." (p. 37). Watson, too, (loc. cit.) regrets the "succession of false scents" as well as what he calls the "clumsy opening letter."

confusing. Four other letters appear in the novel. Crimsworth's introduction to his patron Mr. Brown is by way of a letter from Hunsden. In Brussels, when William has been frustrated by circumstances, a letter from Frances and one from Hunsden arrive simultaneously. Later, Hunsden includes a note with his gift to William of his mother's portrait. It occurs to the reader, though, that these letters serve only to further the plot and appear to be artificially introduced.

Another literary device comes in the form of the portrait of William's mother, a symbol contrived by Charlotte Brontë to establish the aristocratic background of the protagonist. By repeated insistence, both Crimsworth himself and his friend Hunsden keep the reader aware that Crimsworth remains an aristocrat, no matter what his social position seems to be. The narrator looks very like the picture of his mother: "My mother, I perceived, had bequeathed me much of her features and countenance . . ." (III, 20). Hunsden reports, "'It is you, William, who are the aristocrat of your family'" (III, 23). The metaphor of chivalry, begun in these early chapters and later abandoned by the author, further emphasizes the suggestion of Crimsworth as the aristocrat. As an inexperienced under-clerk cum translator the protagonist must bear the close examination of his immediate overseer, during which time he assures the reader that "I felt as secure against his scrutiny as if I had had on a casque with the

visor down . . ." (II, 17). And against the crude verbal attacks of his overbearing brother Crimsworth carries "a buckler of impenetrable indifference" (III, 19). He is shown as a knight manqué.

But the author offers the portrait of Crimsworth's mother as a symbol of the hereditary superiority of the young man, a little too bluntly to be totally acceptable. An author who tells the reader how to interpret the signs is in danger of arousing immediate suspicion.⁵ Beyond this surface function, the portrait as symbol seems to suggest a deeper significance. Crimsworth confronts the portrait three times during the course of the novel, reminding the reader that Charlotte Brontë has used the three-part pattern to a point beyond coincidence. But these three confrontations are not spaced organically throughout the novel, one to each chronological and geographical division. Here the triple appearance seems to be used to supply the protagonist's inner needs. At moments when Crimsworth finds himself plagued by self-doubts he stands before the portrait. Initially he stands in the home of his stranger-brother, unsure of his reception, disappointed in both Edward and his wife. Later when he has suffered his first social failure in the new community, a

⁵See, for example, Sir Herbert Read's "Charlotte and Emily Brontë," Reason and Romanticism (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), in which the critic sees Charlotte Brontë's "longing for a lost mother" as the psychological basis for the plot.

failure which he persists in repeating, he leaves the ballroom and seeks the diningroom in which the portrait hangs. Still later in Brussels, when he has rejected false friendship and deceiving love, and has found--but not yet claimed--his true love, the final encounter with the portrait takes place. At this moment he has violently severed all connection with his teaching post and has not yet found a new position. Insecurity binds him.

Hunsden labels the portrait more specifically than the author allows the narrator to do. The note sent with the gift of the portrait reveals Hunsden's perceptivity:

There is a sort of stupid pleasure in giving a child sweets, a fool his bell, a dog a bone. You are repaid by seeing the child besmear his face with sugar; by witnessing how the fool's ecstasy makes a greater fool out of him than ever; by watching the dog's nature come out over his bone. In giving William Crimsworth his mother's picture, I give him sweets, bell, and bone all in one. . . .

(XXII, 220-221)

The portrait, then, rather than establishing the heroic proportions of the protagonist, his aristocratic rights by heredity, has instead served to expose his inmost needs.

The difficulty which besets the reader in analyzing the use made of the portrait of Crimsworth's mother lies not so much in determining its symbolic significance as in interpreting the psychological implications. And this difficulty springs from the fact that Charlotte Brontë does not deal with a young man making his way in the world and eventually selecting and claiming the mate of his choice. Instead, she seems

to be exposing a complex human being. He functions, first, in a guise designated as masculine (however femininely activated) under the name of William Crimsworth. Later the same figure seems to appear in the highly believable and emotionally true female form of Frances Henri. Finally the fused man-and-wife image emerges, achieved by what television cameramen call lap-dissolve: overlapping two images and dissolving the confusion into one steady and clearly focused picture. On the practical level of evaluating the author's approach to character delineation, the protagonist seems to be traveling through a Bildungsroman, though his figure is somewhat blurred when he exists as William Crimsworth. But the protagonist becomes decisive, determined, and sincere when the voice of the feminist author can be heard defending the modus vivendi of the heroine. By the time the figures merge this feminine attitude is firmly asserted..

The question of the meaning of the portrait remains unanswered. Whatever its meaning, the author's identification of the symbol is too simple. Her use of it does not appear awkward as the letters are awkward, but the reader has been asked to receive it as a thoroughly explained symbol, which it is not. The reader must determine for himself whether the author has falsely identified the symbol, revealing a subtle

conception, or whether she employs it so naively as to reveal the inexperience and therefore the undependability of the author and consequently of the narrator.

One device of the novel, however,--the introduction of an extraneous event--can hardly win acclaim for anything except its startling use of the element of surprise. Charlotte Brontë unexpectedly discloses Crimsworth's feat of aquatic heroism. The heroic propensities of the young man are nowhere intimated. He proves to be defiant under duress, yes; when his brutal brother Edward threatens him with the whip he faces him squarely, full of argument in self-defense. He responds to the challenge in one of his most virile acts (perhaps his only genuinely virile act):⁶

⁶Crimsworth's lack of virility shows on various levels throughout the novel. His threat to report his brother Edward to the magistrate in the scene here being discussed is one of his less manly acts. His violent physical reaction against marriage, his succumbing to eight days of illness and delusions, follows what has appeared to be a most normal middle-class courtship, proposal, and acceptance. It implies a revulsion which can hardly be interpreted as a normal desire for domestic life.

In addition to the actions of the protagonist there is much in the language of the narrator which is not fully masculine. Some of the details reported in the descriptive passages indicate a woman's point of view. He notices and reports on furniture and room decoration, the color and style of women's clothing, the material of which the clothes are made and the ornaments which trim them.

Reactions of other characters imply something about the sexual attractiveness of the protagonist. With the notable exception of Frances Henri, none of the girl students or lonely teachers makes any attempt to flirt with him. But the headmaster of the boys' school becomes particularly friendly. Crimsworth remarks about "that caressing tone with which

The end of the lash just touched my forehead. A warm excited thrill ran through my veins, my blood seemed to give a bound, and then raced fast and hot along its channels. I got up nimbly, came round to where he stood, and faced him.

His words are equally aggressive. He commands, "'Down with your whip!'" At the climax of the scene Crimsworth is even more dominating, for "when he cracked the whip straight over my head" the protagonist leaps to action:

A minute sufficed to wrest it from him, break it into two pieces, and throw it under the grate. He had a head-long rush at me, which I evaded, and said: "Touch me, and I'll have you up before the nearest magistrate."
(V, 40-41)

This threat, which suggests the cry of an independent but terrified maiden-in-distress, achieves its end, for brother Edward forsakes his attack.

Until at least two-thirds of the way through the novel this is the only time at which Crimsworth approaches heroism. Therefore the reader learns with a reaction of surprise, at a moment when all of the protagonist's resources have failed him, that a grateful father of a student stands ready to befriend him. In undisguised exposition the narrator reveals that there was once an outing of boys from M. Pelet's school

Monsieur had, of late days especially, been accustomed to address me" (XIII, 115).

Charlotte Brontë's use of metaphor substantiates this suggestion concerning Crimsworth's nature. Images of clothing are used by the narrator, images which emphasize his essentially feminine point of view, as when he speaks of "the plain texture of truth under the embroidery of appearance" (XXII, 216).

(a cast of characters who do not appear on stage anywhere else in the novel), that Crimsworth was appointed chaperon of such a potentially dangerous expedition as a boating excursion, and that, when the disaster of a student drowning seemed fated, it was (as the English master declares) "a natural and easy act for me to leap to the rescue" (XXI, 205-206).

Through devotion and gratitude, the boy's father serves the plot in its time of need. Here Charlotte Brontë makes blatant use of an unexpected and improbable incident to solve a plot problem by introducing a new patron.

But Crimsworth's dependence on a patron has become familiar to the reader. In fact, this progress from patron to patron suggests that Crimsworth fails to exhibit the development of independence which has generally been accepted as one of the basic themes in all of Charlotte Brontë's novels.⁷ Until after Crimsworth becomes a professor in the university in Brussels, an appointment only slightly lower

⁷Of the acknowledged themes in Charlotte Brontë's novels Inga-Stina Ewbank has stated in Their Proper Sphere (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), "Independence, then, is a keynote in her thinking about her own life and the life of all unmarried women. It is also a central theme in all her novels" (p. 157). Robert Martin (op. cit.) indicates the other theme which is important to Charlotte Brontë: "The major theme of all the novels is the study of the adjustment between reason and the passions, and the plot embodying that theme is always a love story." He goes on to say that for Charlotte Brontë "love was indeed woman's whole existence" (p. 40).

than his school directorship which climaxes his academic career, every step upward in his ascent to success is the direct result of the action of a patron. His uncles, aristocratic and generous, though unappreciated, offer him a living and a wife, both of which he refuses with vigor and unmistakable disdain. This act drives him to his brother who assumes a sponsorship which must have seemed quite generous to his mercantile and profit-oriented mind. The violent termination of this patronage leads to Crimsworth's complaint to Hunsden, "' . . . you have taken my work from me'" (VI, 48). The young man then summarizes his situation half-jokingly, and yet in a way which exposes his underlying resentment:

"I withdrew from my cold uncles, and preferred throwing myself into my elder brother's arms, from whose affectionate embrace I am now torn by the cruel intermeddling of a stranger--of yourself, in short."

(VI, 48)

As the natural consequence of this accusation Hunsden becomes his sponsor, at least offering a letter of introduction to a gentleman in Brussels named Mr. Brown. This gentleman serves as patron in introducing Crimsworth to M. Pelet and his boys' school. The headmaster in turn sponsors Crimsworth by recommending the tutor to Mlle. Reuter as a possible master of English in her school. She in turn forwards Crimsworth both in his career and, unintentionally, in his love life by recommending him as Frances Henri's tutor.

When, in complete accord with his pattern of behavior toward his patrons, Crimsworth casts himself off from the sponsorship of M. Pelet and Mlle. Reuter, the author interjects the unexpected patronage of the grateful M. Vanderhuten. Even after Frances and Crimsworth have achieved their total success and have retired to the seclusion of their English property they exist under the social patronage of the wealthy Yorke Hunsden.

Perhaps this dependence on patronage can be considered one of the unifying elements of the novel, though it runs absolutely counter to the declared principles of the author. That Charlotte Brontë did not intend to reveal the lack of independence of her protagonist does not, of course, invalidate its force in the novel. It does, however, seem to expose a weakness in her handling of a major theme, a weakness in which action and circumstance within the novel seem to have the upper hand, causing the story to progress through time and situation according to one principle while the declared beliefs and motivations of the characters appear to be functioning according to quite another.

For, in spite of the underlying and steady support of his patrons, the character of Crimsworth develops according to Charlotte Brontë's over-present and seemingly consciously conceived three-part pattern. The first section of the novel which takes place in Bigben Close in X---- finds Crimsworth

confused and unsure of himself. Throughout his experience in Brussels he increases in confidence and self-assertiveness. In his final success and retirement in England he has become nothing short of complacent. Each section manifests a personality unique to that section, and leads naturally--through experiences which are revealed to the reader--to the subsequent stage. His relationship with so-called aristocracy (though its qualities seem more typical of the gentry than of aristocrats) also shifts and develops during the three stages of his life. The citizens of X---- scorn him for his aristocratic traits. His brother Edward resents his Etonian education, his childhood indications of gentility (indicated by the uncles' preference for the younger boy), his resemblance to their aristocratic mother, and probably what must have been his most obvious scorn of everything mercantile about the life Edward had succeeded in. The townspeople are later revealed as having felt that Crimsworth counted himself superior to their society and to their marriageable daughters. Hunsden, himself the result of the joining of two respected old families in the area, has what Crimsworth refers to as "the advantages of birth," and Crimsworth senses that he "fully appreciated the distinction of his ancient, if not high lineage" (III, 24). Yet it is from Hunsden that Crimsworth hears the greatest scorn of his aristocratic traits:

"I told you that you were an aristocrat, and who but an aristocrat would laugh such a laugh as that, and look

such a look? A laugh frigidly jeering; a look lazily mutinous; gentlemanlike irony, patrician resentment. What a nobleman you would have made, William Crimsworth! You are cut out for one; pity Fortune has baulked Nature. Look at the features, figure, even to the hands--distinction all over--ugly distinction!"

(IV, 34)

In the middle section of the novel these same aristocratic qualities, as well as his education as a gentleman, gain Crimsworth his entry into his new profession. When the position of professor of English and Latin is suggested, one in which he will be required to use French in dealing with the Belgian boys, Crimsworth assures his new patron that "having studied French under a Frenchman, I could speak the language intelligibly though not fluently. I could read it well, and write it decently" (VII, 58-59).

In the third and final phase of the story Crimsworth's aristocratic leanings benefit him most fully. He now establishes himself as an English country gentleman, not on the grand scale, but as far above the level of a mill-clerk or a resident English tutor as he and Frances could desire.

Hunsden too has progressed through three stages toward maturity. In the early section he acts rude and arrogant; an imbalancing of Crimsworth's acquiescence and humility is his aim and accomplishment; but a kindness underlies his brash behavior, apparent to the reader and seemingly unnoticed by Crimsworth, even when Hunsden's letter forwards his career. In the heart of the novel Hunsden has completely disappeared.

His sudden return at first reassures the reader of Hunsden's importance, implied earlier, and then disappointment sets in as the man vanishes from the scene without taking any significant part in the unfolding of the story. He does reveal a change in his character, however, as he responds to the more mature qualities which Crimsworth evinces. Hunsden's actions are now brusque and challenging; he enjoys his reputation for inconsiderate speech and outspoken honesty. But again his actions belie his words, even his written words, as through kindness and at an unmentioned expense to himself he sends Crimsworth his mother's portrait.

In the final version of Hunsden in the third phase of his development the reader finds him all kindness, even when Crimsworth suggests that he distrusts Hunsden's influence on the Crimsworths' young son Victor, and that Frances "regards it with a sort of unexpressed anxiety." Crimsworth watches them from the window and says that "Hunsden's hand rests on the boy's collar, and he is instilling God know what principles into his ear." It turns out that the parents wish "that Hunsden had children of his own, for then he would better know the danger of inciting their pride and indulging their foibles" (XXV, 282). Thus the eccentric young mill-owner of the early setting has mellowed into the kindly friend and neighbor, whose worst offenses are that he presents his friends' young son with a pet mastiff and otherwise incites

his pride and indulges his foibles.

Frances too, as the other important character--perhaps as the most important character--goes through a three-part development, but her three stages are not synchronized with the overall three-part division of the novel. She does not enter the action of the novel until the end of chapter thirteen, does not speak until two chapters later. Her first words, a recitation in English, are significant: "'On his way to Perth, the king was met by a Highland woman, calling herself a prophetess . . .'" (XV, 130). The words of Frances Henri, while not always prophetic when she speaks to the hero-figure in the novel, are always so ordered as to lead him toward his greater accomplishment. The first revelation of Frances' character shows her to be timid and reserved, humble beyond need, self-effacing and downtrodden. In her second phase, brought about by Crimsworth's interest and praise, she grows in independence and self-respect. Both Charlotte and Emily Brontë believe vigorously in this manifestation of woman's accomplishment.

The acquisition of this independence, of self-esteem and some small indication of the tolerance of the world, of creativity and fulfillment by contributing to life, form the primary theme in the novels of Charlotte Brontë. Her second concern centers on finding completion through a compatible marriage, a union with mutual responsiveness of intellect and

emotion, though always an acceptance of the relative positions of the obliging and dedicated wife and the dominating and yet considerate husband. This concern governs the second theme in her novels. Because of the sincerity and intensity with which the author treats these two themes the character of Frances Henri emerges successfully from her part in the novel. And because of this intensity the character of Frances, while not in any way great in itself, overpowers William Crimsworth's always elusive, occasionally feminine, and generally asexual character.

In spite of their ambiguous relationship, the Crimsworths are often admired as a couple. The love story has frequently been praised. Charlotte Brontë herself deemed this the strongest part of the novel, claiming,

. . . the middle and latter portion of the work, all that relates to Brussels, the Belgian school, etc., is as good as I can write: it contains more pith, more substance, more reality, in my judgment, than much of Jane Eyre.⁸

She even made an attempt to have this isolated sequence published separately as a complete unit. And yet in it she expresses a vague overtone of onanism; the protagonist, by whatever name, submerges an imperfectly explained and as yet undifferentiated personality in the recently strengthened

⁸ Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams on December 14, 1847, in The Brontës: Life and Letters, edited by Clement Shorter (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), letter 254, I, 374.

manifestation of self--William completed in Frances.

The characters as well as the reader notice the strange duplication of Crimsworth in Frances. Hunsden, who proves to be perceptive as well as outspoken, tells Crimsworth at once, after his first brief sight of Frances, "'She is too good for you evidently; she is like you, but somewhat better than you . . .'" (XXIV, 244). But Crimsworth himself has sensed something more penetrating in Hunsden's quick observation of the couple together. He tells Frances that Hunsden's eyes spoke clearly. "'To you they said, 'How do you do, Wilhelmina Crimsworth?' To me, 'So you have found your counterpart at last; there she sits, the female of your kind!'" (XXIV, 243). Through the astuteness of the eyes of Hunsden or the interpretation of William, the reader sees here the unifying merging of the divided parts of the protagonist.

A preoccupation with the overlapping character of William-Frances does not, however, distract the reader from his attention to the basic intention of the novel. He has made an orderly, linear voyage with the protagonist through the well-defined areas of action and phases of character development. He has seen him awakening in England and has journeyed with him to foreign lands. He has followed him through the second stage and has seen the protagonist's figure first doubled and then merged into one reinforced image. Finally, he has seen this protagonist-couple move from their

long period of struggle and attainment to the final stage of life back home in England. The three-part structure has been maintained on several levels, so many that the reader cannot ignore this consciously proposed order of progress.

But if the three-part division were the only structural basis of the novel then there would be no reason why Charlotte Brontë should not have met with success in her decision to lift out the center section and publish it separately. Or, if the publishing practices of the time were so stringently demanding as to length, why has someone in the last hundred years not attempted the publication of such an excerpt?

The answer may be discovered in a further examination of the structure of The Professor. Yes, Charlotte Brontë has constructed a novel based on a three-part development. But to assume that this is the only cohesive force in the novel would be to ignore the author's sense of organic unity, which she handles so successfully.

Unquestionably, the reader must have a sympathetic understanding of the protagonist, of the restless drive within him and the frustrating forces which divert him from that success which he has openly declared to be his goal. But the reader cannot depend on Crimsworth's self-revelations alone. Long passages of discourse between the young man and some abstraction, such as his conscience, imagination, or reason, show his inner struggle. But they confuse the reader. They

disguise Crimsworth's sense of conflict between pride and humility in his daily life. They are altogether too grandiose.

The authorial comment serves as another device offered to guide the reader, and one which might equally divert him from a fuller understanding of the protagonist. The narrator, speaking from the present (about which the reader knows nothing), inserts diversions of description and opinion which are intended to illuminate but have the effect of appearing untrustworthy through the very editorializing nature of their attitude. A wary reader cannot be led by the hand; he cannot be told.

An author has two alternatives if he will be effective. He may tell as well as show.⁹ Charlotte Brontë undoubtedly knows and practices this successful kind of exposure. An author may--and an eminently successful author must--establish communication with his reader through metaphor.¹⁰ That is, by his selection of vocabulary and words of reference he reveals

⁹As Wayne C. Booth has convincingly explained in The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961).

¹⁰The thematic metaphor, as the expression is used here, refers to a unit of communication which, by being grouped with recurrent variations with the same basic implication, conveys an inner meaning, the Aristotelian dianoia or theme, which remains unstated on the surface or plot-level of the novel. The thematic metaphor is not restricted semantically or syntactically: a word, a phrase, an image, a proper name--when one of these links in meaning to others within the novel they work together to create the thematic metaphor.

to his reader the true theme of the novel and the actual world of the novel as it exists not on the obvious level of action and setting but on the more obscured level of the motivations and preoccupations of the characters, and, incidentally, of the author. Twentieth-century writers, having learned all about metaphor from such excellent critics as I. A. Richards, T. S. Eliot, Cleanth Brooks, Northrop Frye, and the many others, consciously use this subconscious level of communication. In contrast, the nineteenth-century writers, and particularly the isolated natural writers such as the Brontës, used thematic metaphor in its most revealing function, without artifice, without diverting their subconscious into some more deeply submerged level. The metaphor was selected by the author ostensibly for its unusual qualities, for its picturesque effect or its powerful or poetic phraseology. The modern critic is at liberty to investigate and determine whatever instinctive forces he feels have guided the author's choice or even produced the selection from which he chose.

In the works of Charlotte Brontë an investigation of metaphor proves vastly rewarding. Her ability to penetrate beneath the surface characteristics of the protagonist and move with him through his year of growth is that same ability which enabled her to select the metaphors which are most revealing of his motivations and frustrations. The remarkable

thing about The Professor is not only that the metaphors are revealing of this underlining thematic development, but that Charlotte Brontë has used them consistently and structurally to unify what would otherwise be a segmented and even episodic tale.

John Loofbourow declares in his thorough study that Thackeray "was the first English novelist to create a narrative medium in which form and content are derived from the expressive pattern of the language itself."¹¹ This statement suggests the reason why Charlotte Brontë had such enthusiasm for Thackeray. For the pattern of Charlotte Brontë's language, and especially the long threads of metaphor which reinforce that pattern, create a multi-dimensional exposure of the protagonist which his actions might tend to disguise.

On the whole, Charlotte Brontë's areas of metaphor may be considered in groupings of the two opposing forces which struggle for dominance in the life of the protagonist. As in most human existence, a negative and a positive force are at work in his life, but, as in most human lives, the division is not as simple as that statement might seem to imply. Metaphors of isolation, of restriction, and those which reveal a struggle for power indicate the negative force. Metaphors of freedom or escape and those of rewarding

¹¹John Loofbourow, Thackeray and the Form of Fiction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 4.

experiences represent the positive force. Throughout the novel these specific metaphors are maintained; from the mention of animal and fire on page one ("cold-blooded creature," "animal magnetism," and "coldness") to the use of "stag" and "flame" on the final page, a consistency and extended emphasis on selected metaphor gives unity to the novel. The reader may not be consciously aware of the areas of metaphor; perhaps the writer herself was not. But analyzing and knowing bring their own satisfaction.

It will be in order, now, to try to define these areas of metaphor, in the hope that a fuller understanding of their complexity will add to the general esteem in which readers hold Charlotte Brontë's early work, The Professor.

Of the negative-force metaphors the most effective and most subtly conceived area is that of isolation. This metaphor includes such images as the wall, a nook, a convent, a cabinet, the grave, and a box. Of disappointment and grief Crimsworth declares, "I pent them . . . in one straight and secret nook" (XIX, 167). Frances too seeks this same seclusion, for Crimsworth reports that when he speaks a word of praise to her she will "nestle into a nook of happiness" (XIX, 186). The essential force lies in the implication of being enclosed in seclusion and isolated from the rest of the world. Even the bird becomes a part of the metaphor of isolation when it is used so frequently in relation to nestling, fledglings, and other images of rest and security.

Crimsworth reveals that his desires, "folding wings, weary with long flight, had just alighted on the very lap of fruition, and nestled there, warm, content . . ." (XXIII, 242). Although defining isolation, the other images too suggest that to be withdrawn, alone, enclosed, brings peace, a peace gained by avoiding reality, by refusing to come face to face with life.

The protagonist puts the imagery in action as he seeks his favorite garden retreat, enclosed by a high blank wall on one side and overgrown shrubberies on the other. This confined seclusion actually bears the name of the allée défendue. It is here that Crimsworth flirts with Mlle. Reuter, who is engaged to another, and looking from his window down on this area he overhears the conversation which informs him of this engagement. The way is forbidden indeed. Throughout, the protagonist seeks to be alone. In action, at the end, Crimsworth has accepted the isolation which he courted and repulsed and finally took to heart. Ultimately the metaphor of isolation does not imply the negative force which is seeking to stifle him, but the ambivalent symbol of control and liberty.

The author offers the metaphor of restriction quite simply. Crimsworth does not have great vision. On the level of material objects and physical circumstances, the reader learns that he wears glasses and is handicapped by extreme

shortsightedness. His restriction is revealed, too, through symbolic imagery of natural forces which close him in. Mist and smoke, rain and snow, and the darkness of night serve to hamper his total vision. He is beset by dreams and delusions; he is connected, metaphorically, with symbols of the overpowering supernatural. The metaphor of injury and illness indicates his lack of wholeness or of complete action. Two other images of things more tangible or material indicate the restrictions which curb him. A bell rings and Crimsworth jumps willingly back into his restricted circumstances or from one situation to another. After his first personal encounter with Frances, he has dismissed her rudely because of her unpunctuality. When he allows himself to muse on her behavior and on her person he interrupts his thoughts with the comment that "the four o'clock bell rang; with my accustomed alertness in obeying that signal, I grasped my hat and evacuated the premises" (XIII, 121). This unquestioning response to the bell appears throughout the novel. Clock bells, door bells, school bells, factory bells, all shock him into alertness and call him back into line.

The other metaphor of restriction implies self-restriction as Crimsworth equates himself with stone. The image of stone or rock appears repeatedly. Mlle. Reuter's smile falls on his heart "like light on stone" (XIII, 116); her homage to him seems to transform him "into a rigid pillar

of stone" (XV, 134). But a combination of the images of isolation and restriction appear in some passages. In a moment of despair the protagonist admits:

I seemed like one sealed in a subterranean vault, who gazes at utter blackness; at blackness ensured by yard-thick stone walls around, and by piles of building above, expecting light to penetrate through granite, and through cement firm as granite.

(XXI, 205)

Images which refer to a struggle for power are used consistently throughout all of the sections of the novel. One of the strongest is the master-slave relationship, in which the protagonist always figures as the slave. Early in the novel metaphors of chivalry hint at the heroic role which Crimsworth might play, but Charlotte Brontë forsakes this metaphor entirely after the story begins to unfold. Crimsworth states that "a man is master of himself to a certain point, but not beyond it" (XXII, 209). Even Frances controls him; her glance makes him "her subject if not her slave" (XIX, 186).

Some uses of imagery combine the idea of master-slave relationship with that of the animal, one of the strongest images of power and one which the author uses frequently in the novel. Crimsworth remarks that often impulses "attain us with a tiger-leap, and are our masters ere we have seen them" (XXIII, 239). The protagonist, essentially human in these images, faces those who have the qualities of animals. The bull, the lion, the dragon (even the cat in connection with

Frances) are forces which Crimsworth has not the strength or the understanding to overpower. When the protagonist becomes the animal the image shifts to that of the hunt. Hunsden warns him, "'Bad luck crushes the bulls as easily as bullaces; and, I believe, the fury dogs you'" (XXII, 217). Crimsworth escapes a trap and announces the the directress "had fallen into a snare of her own laying--was herself caught in the meshes of the very passion with which she wished to entangle me" (XX, 192).

Opposing these images which reveal sublimation and frustration caused by the powers set against Crimsworth and the urges within himself which he cannot comprehend, the metaphor of escape and freedom takes many forms. First, the door and the gate consistently indicate a way out. A variant use of the symbol of the bird appears--here a flying bird, a bird of freedom. But the image of sea travel seems to charm Charlotte Brontë. Chapter four opens with this image:

. . . every man, worthy of the name, will row long against wind and tide before he allows himself to cry out, "I am baffled!" and submits to be floated passively back to land.

(IV, 26)

The author introduces a similar image later in the book:

At that hour my bark hung on the topmost curl of a wave of fate, and I knew not on what shoal the outward rush of the billow might hurl it; I would not then attach her destiny to mine by the slightest thread; if doomed to split on the rock or run aground on the sand-bank, I was resolved no other vessel should share my disaster. . . .

(XXIII, 226)

Similarly, in a moment of success Crimsworth feels that "the tide of fortune bore me smoothly on its surface" (XXII, 211), and later he admits that his feelings ebb and flow. The sea voyage, then, tells of the risky and treacherous voyage to freedom, a journey during which another force controls the protagonist, but the way through which he will arrive at success. The image becomes a metaphor in action when the young Englishman steps aboard the ship that will take him overseas to happiness and accomplishment.

The metaphor of reward finds expression in images which are traditional and unimaginative, as when Crimsworth says of Frances, "the prize of success will be a treasure after my own heart" (XXII, 217), or of their time together, "I see the evenings passed in that little parlour like a long string of rubies circling the dusk brow of the past. Unvaried were they as each cut gem, and like each gem brilliant and burning" (XXV, 261). But rewarding experiences are also recorded through reference to green-growing and fruitful nature, to marital situations and physical satisfactions, and to the fire which symbolizes the domestic hearthfire. Fire, employed as a symbol of spiritual energy, can easily be linked to fertility.¹² As the alchemists

¹²See a fuller explanation in J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, translated by Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), pp. 100-101.

identified fire as the central element in all things, the unifying and stabilizing factor, so Charlotte Brontë seems to be using the image of fire to emphasize the ultimate goal of the protagonist in his seeking of completion through marriage.

The author reveals the state of the protagonist's hearth and indicates his state of mind and emotional tenor: "To my joyful surprise, I found, on entering my sitting-room, a good fire and a clean hearth" (VI, 44).

Crimsworth sees Frances' love as fire, but one controlled and domesticated:

I knew how the more dangerous flame burned safely under the eye of reason; I had seen when the fire shot up a moment high and vivid, when the accelerated heat troubled life's current in its channels; I had seen reason reduce the rebel, and humble its blaze to embers.
(XIX, 177)

He admires the look in her eyes like "a light where fire dissolved into softness . . ." (XIX, 183). When he goes to her to propose, one of the symbolic sounds which he hears as he listens outside her door is that of a fire being gently stirred (XXIII, 226). The hearthfire becomes the fire of creativity. And whether it is the creativity accomplished through marriage or that kindled by independent living, this fire represents the theme of the novel.

Charlotte Brontë's handling of language has its excellences and its imperfections. At times her syntax misses perfection. Often, and with increasing power to

irritate as the novel progresses, her handling or mishandling of French, her condescending collateral translations, her macaronic sentences, pall rather than charm. The piling up of adjectives or nouns has the tendency to confuse rather than clarify. But to counterbalance these shortcomings there are some traits in her writing which bring admirers into the fold.

The remnant of eighteenth-century balanced syntax comes occasionally in to play. Used so sparingly, and with such decorum, it becomes effective. In moments of action Charlotte Brontë confines her narrator to a brusque style:

It was a fine day, but I would not look at the blue sky or at the stately houses around me; my mind was bent on one thing, finding out "Mr. Brown, Numero --, Rue Royale," for so my letter was addressed. By dint of inquiry I succeeded; I stood at last at the desired door, knocked, asked for Mr. Brown, and was admitted.

(VII, 58)

In contrast, the balanced sentence becomes forceful:

From all this it resulted that the false and selfish called her wise, the vulgar and debased termed her charitable, the insolent and unjust dubbed her amiable, the conscientious and benevolent generally at first accepted as valid her claim to be considered one of themselves: but ere long the plating of pretension wore off, the real material appeared below, and they laid her aside as a deception.

(XV, 134)

At other times the author uses a consciously sustained metaphor in an effort to create a symbolic passage which will enlighten the reader as to her metaphoric--and usually homiletic--intentions. While carefully worked out and managed in an orderly and masterful manner, these contrived images

are less effective than the insistent presence of the series of thematic metaphors which run through the novel. These thematic metaphors give the appearance of being casually called upon and accidentally significant, an appearance which allows the reader at least the illusion of discovery and the author the semblance of subconscious motivation.

Probably the passages which remain most clearly in the memory after the book has been read are those which define Frances as an independent woman and a beloved wife. The reader learns that woman must live an active, productive life involving herself in the work of her choice. If, in addition, fulfillment should come through marriage, the woman becomes complete. But an unsuitable marriage undertaken to escape spinsterhood (however dreadfully its shadow haunts Frances Henri and Charlotte Brontë) only brings about disaster. Crimsworth's explanation of the success of their marriage is almost oracular in its utter simplicity, but completely in accord with the ideal marriage envisioned by Charlotte Brontë. Crimsworth states, "Frances was then a good and dear wife to me, because I was to her a good, just, and faithful husband" (XXV, 269).

The passages which define Frances' existence as an independent woman show her attitudes and emotions, her determination to continue as a teacher and a worker in the world. Of her proposal for a satisfying way of life Frances declares

to Crimsworth:

"I like a contemplative life, but I like an active life better; I must act in some way, and act with you. I have taken notice, Monsieur, that people who are only in each other's company for amusement, never really like each other so well, or esteem each other so highly, as those who work together, and perhaps suffer together."
(XXIII, 238-239)

Crimsworth, speaking in the voice of the narrator, and speaking for the unified image of Frances and him as one, explains this same determination that woman shall be productive and fulfilled:

I knew she was not one who could live quiescent and inactive, or even comparatively inactive. Duties she must have to fulfill, and important duties; work to do--and exciting, absorbing, profitable work; strong faculties stirred in her frame, and they demanded full nourishment, free exercise: mine was not the hand ever to starve or cramp them; no, I delighted in offering them sustenance, and in clearing them wider space for action.
(XXV, 263)

But probably the most effective writing in the novel can be found in some half-dozen isolated passages in which the reader may listen to Charlotte Brontë's lyric voice, which is not often heard. A passage which appears early in the novel will serve well as an example. The author speaks, of course, in the voice of the narrator. The passage has two particularly notable qualities about it. First, many of the images which are included convey the thematic metaphor which has just been discussed. And second, the subject of the passage resembles that of several others of the lyric passages: a description of man in nature, isolated from

society and in harmony with the scene around him:

The short winter day, as I perceived from the far-declining sun, was already approaching its close; a chill frost-mist was rising from the river on which X---- stands, and along whose bank the road I had taken lay; it dimmed the earth, but did not obscure the clear icy blue of the January sky. There was a great stillness near and far; the time of the day favoured tranquillity, as the people were all employed within doors, the hour of evening release from the factories not being yet arrived; a sound of full-flowing water alone pervaded the air, for the river was deep and abundant, swelled by the melting of a late snow. I stood awhile, leaning over a wall; and looking down at the current: I watched the rapid rush of its waves. I desired memory to take a clear and permanent impression of the scene, and treasure it for future years. Grovetown Church clock struck four; looking up I beheld the last of that day's sun, glinting red through the leafless boughs of some very old oak trees surrounding the church--its light coloured and characterised the picture as I wished. I paused yet a moment, till the sweet, slow sound of the bell had quite died out of the air; then ear, eye, and feeling satisfied, I quitted the wall and once more turned my face towards X----.

(V, 43)

With such writing Charlotte Brontë promised much for the novels still to come from her pen.

CHAPTER II

JANE EYRE

In writing to George H. Lewes in January of 1848, Charlotte Brontë spoke of a force governing her writing in a statement which is highly pertinent to an understanding of the structure of Jane Eyre:

When authors write best, or, at least when they write most fluently, an influence seems to waken in them, which becomes their master--which will have its own, way--putting out of view all behests but its own, dictating certain words, and insisting on their being used. . . .¹

The reader sensitive to language easily believes, even without Charlotte Brontë's forthright declaration, the language of Jane Eyre indicates a strong organizing force at work. This force, this influence as she calls it, causes the novel to have an overwhelming sense of unity and contributes to its organically sound construction.

To understand the function of this influence the reader must first begin with an analysis of the novel itself, the kind of analysis which determines the basic outline of the plot, the use of setting, the materialization of the characters, and the pattern of development as it is most clearly delineated through one or more of these areas. In

¹Charlotte Brontë to G. H. Lewes on January 12, 1848, in The Brontës: Life and Letters, edited by Clement Shorter (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), letter 263, I, 386.

short, one must become sensitive to these basic overall patterns and must begin to detect the level on which the structure functions.

Sir Ifor Evans gives a clue as to the best starting point for an investigation when he suggests that Jane Eyre "holds the mind and the senses by the strength of its impact."² This impact is felt most strongly in Charlotte Brontë's effective use of atmosphere, and therefore one may most successfully begin a study of structure in this amorphous area. The atmosphere may be detected in the sequences of actions and responses, in the geographical shift of scene, and in the emotional tensions and motivations of Jane and her master, Mr. Rochester. This atmosphere cannot simply be called Gothic,³ for the definition of the atmosphere becomes real only in the temperance of the Gothic with highly believable human relationships.

The establishment of the Gothic, even of what has been called the New Gothic, begins early in the book. It is

²Ifor Evans, English Literature: Values and Traditions (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1962), p. 80.

³Robert B. Heilman gives an all-too-brief treatment of Jane Eyre in "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic," From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad, edited by Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958). Heilman defines the advancement of the Gothic in Charlotte Brontë's hands as the revelation that passion, so elemental in the Gothic, "is no longer oriented to marvelous circumstances but moves deeply into the lesser known realities of human life" (p. 123).

effected by a use of traditional Gothic elements through emblems which seem real to the reader, which do not seem to be outside the possibilities of experience. One must remember, however, that in the opening chapters the protagonist narrates the story of her childhood as she remembers it. The pervading sense of being unloved is a self-revelation in retrospect. The lonely little girl comes to life through the words spoken by her later self, through memories of unhappiness which she has carried into her maturity. For Jane is truly a child unloved.⁴ Mrs. Reed's selfish indulgence

⁴Even her name seems significant. "Plain Jane" is her own suggestion, as she refers to herself as "plain" time and time again. This epithet harks back to the word jane or jean meaning simple cotton cloth, plainly woven without cording or figured pattern (Oxford English Dictionary). The meaning of Eyre has been variously interpreted: connected with error (to err), heir, air (as Adele suggests, I: XI, 128),* aery (ethereal), aery or eyrie (the eagles' nest), or Eyre as the early spelling of Aire, the river which flows through Keighley. Further word-play is made on the name within the novel. Those who either plague her or love her give Jane nicknames: The young tormenter, John Reed, refers to her as Joan (I: I, 4), though perhaps this is the time-honored device of pretending to be ignorant of the name of one considered too lowly to be acknowledged. Adele quite logically de-Anglicizes the name and refers to her governess as "'ma chère Mdle. Jeannette'" (I: XII, 140). Mr. Rochester calls his love Janet as a term of endearment. Without entering into the search for Yorkshire sources for place names and character names, it remains a pleasurable pastime to imagine the possible significance and symbolism of the names in all of Charlotte Brontë's novels.

*All quotations from Jane Eyre are taken from The Shakespeare Head Brontë, volumes I and II of Charlotte Brontë's work, edited by T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1931) and are identified by Jane Eyre volume I or II, chapter, and page. The work originally appeared as Jane Eyre--An Autobiography, edited

of her own children, the bullying superiority of those children, and even the servants' lack of understanding endow Jane Eyre with the primary qualifications needed to make her the heroine of a Gothic tale. In addition, Jane has a mysterious uncle mentioned mysteriously at nine widely separated times in the novel. The author treats the shadowy existence of this relative in the distance traditionally, yet handles it with a restrained use of repetition so that the freeing force of his legacy to Jane can be accepted by the reader without too much difficulty.

These early scenes introduce the Gothic heroine as a child through an awareness of her mistreatment, her mysteriously elusive uncle, her loneliness, and her outspoken and obstinate independence which is, at the same time, tempered by a firm and unquestioning religious faith. Something of the author's insistence on Jane's small size and plain looks humanizes even the most Gothic of these childhood scenes.

When the story shifts into Jane's maturity, the reader senses a fulfillment of the Gothic potential suggested in the first sections. Thornfield Hall itself appears to be most satisfyingly mysterious. Huge, old, only partially occupied, the hall gives promise of every Gothic quality. The characters,

by Currer Bell, 3 volumes (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1847). It was reprinted in 1848 as "By Currer Bell," with a Preface.

too, fulfill the Gothic qualifications. Jane arrives at night, cold and hungry, and finds that she has mistakenly supposed the housekeeper to be the lady of the house. The master, Mr. Rochester, remains an unknown factor for several months: Jane arrives at Thornfield in October and does not meet Mr. Rochester until one fine, calm, cold day in January. Jane's pupil has a confused and pitiful origin: Mr. Rochester, in disclaiming paternity begins by a half-confession that Adèle is his daughter--"'perhaps she may be'" (I: XV, 185)--though ever after he denies it vigorously. Except for Jane's affectionate care, little Adèle grows up as unwanted as little Jane was in her time.

Other events, listed in sequence, make the novel seem truly Gothic. The eery laugh which frightens Jane, the bed set afire in the night, the arrival of a mysterious stranger from distant lands, Mr. Rochester's troubling secret, the presence of the gypsy fortuneteller, the bloody attack on Mason and the consequent necessity for stealth and secrecy, the mad midnight visitor who tears Jane's wedding veil in two, even the urgent and frenzied preparations for the wedding--all lead directly to the purely Gothic climax. Yet the understandably human relationship between Jane and the eccentric with whom she falls gradually and irrevocably in love tempers the whole wildly improbable Gothicism. Mr. Rochester appeals to the reader not as a Byronic hero, the

romantic wish-fulfillment of a lonely young writer's dream, but as a human being caught in a tangle of uncontrollable circumstances, a man who reacts as a real man, a confused and headstrong man, highly indignant that he is not fated to be as other men are. Rochester remains self-determined, attempting to dominate the situation because he cannot tolerate actuality. His involvement with his ward's plain and forthright governess brings into play will against will in a struggle which makes dramatic use of the Gothic as background for reality.

At the height of his exasperation with their conflicting ideologies, Rochester exclaims of Jane that "'never was anything at once so frail and so indomitable,'" and he admits that "'it is you, spirit--with will and energy, and virtue and purity--that I want'" (II: XXVII, 103). Both Jane and Mr. Rochester move as fully realized characters against the Gothic backdrop. They materialize mainly through their conversation: the lightness of their repartee, their open interest in each other, the contrast of their attitudes which sparks reaction and response. In one of the first interviews which Rochester conducts with the governess the conversation suddenly takes a very personal turn. Rochester reveals later that his interest had been aroused by Jane from the moment of their first encounter--"'I was at once contented and stimulated by what I saw: I liked what I had seen and I

wished to see more. . . . I wondered what you thought of me--or if you ever thought of me . . .'" (II: XXVII, 98). But Jane, as narrator, first tells about the interview, and only her reactions are revealed:

He had been looking two minutes at the fire, and I had been looking the same length of time at him, when, turning suddenly, he caught my gaze fastened on his physiognomy.

"You examine me, Miss Eyre," said he: "do you think me handsome?"

I should, if I had deliberated, have replied to this question by something conventionally vague and polite; but the answer somehow slipped from my tongue before I was aware:--"No, sir."

"Ah! by my word! there is something singular about you," said he: "you have the air of a little nonnette; quaint, quiet, grave, and simple, as you sit with your hands before you, and your eyes generally bent on the carpet (except, by-the-by, when they are directed piercingly to my face; as just now, for instance); and when one asks you a question, or makes a remark to which you are obliged to reply, you rap out a round rejoinder, which, if not blunt, is at least brusque."

(I: XIV, 167)

Having set the tone for their relationship, Jane maintains an honesty which is, at best, brusque. The originality of her response, ingenuous and uncalculating, pleases Rochester and advances her to a position of equality which leads to mutual affection. Her attitude never changes. During the final scenes, as potentially melodramatic as pen could devise, Jane does not meet Rochester's pitiful cry from his desolation and blindness with anything but her previous love, that blending of subservient admiration and dominating

honesty. When Rochester morosely contemplates the future "'when, at some fatal moment, you will again desert me-- passing like a shadow, whither and how to me unknown,'" Jane requests his pocket comb to tame his wild appearance. A pang of regret makes him ask, "'Am I hideous, Jane?'" and she candidly replies, "'Very, sir: you always were, you know'" (II: XXXVII, 265). The humanizing of their relationship has the effect of making the Gothic acceptable, just as the Gothic background overshadows their personal relationship with uncertainty and instability which seems all too humanly real.

A pure Gothic climax discloses Rochester's dreadful secret as he and Jane stand before the altar. It remains pure Gothic throughout the wild scene of denunciation at the church, the visit to his mad wife's attic cell, Jane's exoneration and escape to her own room. However, the final encounter between the estranged couple, in which Rochester pleads his case so convincingly to twentieth-century ears, is the scene played between two human beings, confused and suffering, who are being torn apart by conflicting principles. Rochester begins in submission, "'You know I am a scoundrel, Jane? . . . Then tell me so roundly and sharply--don't spare me'" (II: XXVII, 78). He affirms his love, he persists rationally, he appeals emotionally. Jane's rejection of his offer of a liaison drives him to passion: "'Jane! will you

hear reason? . . . because if you won't, I'll try violence.'"

Jane, who becomes exhilarated by the passion of the moment, by her power and influence over him, admits that "the crisis was perilous; but not without its charm" (II: XXVII, 82-83). Her words to him are soothing, but her control lies in the venerable weapon of tears. The scene has a familiarity, an authenticity. Rochester bases his strongest plea on the morality of their relationship, since his wife is no wife to him, is little more than an animal. His question influences Jane: "'Is it better to drive a fellow-creature to despair than to transgress a mere human law--no man being injured by the breach?'"⁵ He continues then with the losing point in his argument, one which touches Jane in the area of her self-respect and self-reliance:

"Who in the world cares about you? or who will be injured by what you do?"

Still indomitable was the reply--"I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unstained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad--as I am now."

(II: XXVII, 102)

Thus begins the transition between the Gothicism,

⁵That his argument is persuasive, that Jane is aware of wronging Rochester is shown later on the moors when she is tempted to return to him: "I could go back and be his comforter--his pride; his redeemer from misery; perhaps from ruin. Oh, that fear of his self-abandonment--far worse than my abandonment--how it goaded me!" (II:XXVII, 108).

climaxed by the scene of the disrupted wedding, and the non-Gothic atmosphere to be established in the section of the book devoted to Jane's life at Marsh End and Morton. Jane's flight from Rochester begins on a moral note and mounts in rapid crescendo into a full chorus of religious symbolism. One can read into the days of trial and suffering a nearly complete order of Passion symbology. But it is perhaps more important to recognize in the language of the narrator a calling-forth of her faith to support her action, perhaps as much to free her from her sin of omission against the man she is deserting as to sustain her through the physical suffering and terrors of the lonely days and nights. The biblical paraphrase rouses the reader, the familiar words waken echoes:

"Will you give me a piece of bread?"

"I want a night's shelter. . . ."

"Don't shut the door. . . ."

"I believe in God. Let me try to wait his will."

"Young woman rise."

[Someone] broke some bread . . . put it to my lips.

"What . . . do you expect me to do for you?"

. . . three days and nights. . . .

I was comforted.

On the third day I was better.

[The woman] refused to give me shelter.

"You have rescued me from death."

"Be at peace."

(II: XXVIII and
XXIX passim)

Even the names of the three young Rivers are steeped in religious symbolism: Die (as they fondly call Diana), Mary, and St. John.⁶

Now, having passed from an atmosphere of heavy Gothicism softened by extraordinary human rapport, through a period of religious reaffirmation, the protagonist finds herself in a vigorously non-Gothic atmosphere. The Rivers are a closely allied family, affectionate, tolerant of one another (and most particularly of brother St. John). Their impulses are honorable and charitable, their home environment rural and wholesome. Their servant describes their home, called both Marsh End and Moor House, as "'aboon two hundred year old--for all it looked but a small, humble place,'" but the young people "'did so like Marsh End and Morton, and all these moors and hills about. They had been in London, and many other grand towns; but they always said there was no place like home . . .'" (II: XXIX, 137).

⁶This is not, of course, the only way in which this scene can be read. Robert B. Martin in Accents of Persuasion: Charlotte Brontë's Novels (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966) proposes an interesting parallel between the flight scene and Lear's wanderings: "Jane's lonely and terrible wandering before she comes to Moor House is the most vivid of the entr'actes of the book, and it takes much of its colouring from its likeness to Lear's suffering on the heath . . ." (p. 84).

Into this atmosphere, idealistically contrived-- though troubled by the emotional and spiritual conflict between Jane and St. John--the next Gothic climax intrudes. The voice which Jane hears, the mystic triple cry in the night--"Jane! Jane! Jane!"--has honorable literary ancestors. Charlotte Brontë's use of it takes something from Moll's passionate cry for Jemmy and even more from the demands of the Lord when he calls to Samuel. The cry comes to Jane, and the tone of the novel shifts abruptly. The return from non-Gothic to Gothic is as dramatic as it is sudden. The last section of the novel reaches additional peaks in Gothicism. Jane first views the blackened ruin of Thornfield Hall amid "the silence of death":

The lawn, the grounds were trodden and waste: the portal yawned void. The front was, as I had once seen it in a dream, but a sheet-like wall, very high and very fragile-looking, perforated with paneless windows; no roof, no battlements, no chimneys--all had crashed in.
(II: XXXVI, 247)

The innkeeper adds further emotion to the disclosure when he reports to Jane, "'I was the late Mr. Rochester's butler.'" He responds to Jane's horror by assuring her, "'I mean the present gentleman, Mr. Edward's father . . .'" (II: XXXVII, 248).

Ferndean, to which Mr. Rochester has withdrawn--scarred, maimed, and blinded--is itself a Gothic setting of the wildest order. It has earlier been mentioned as "'more retired and hidden'" than Thornfield Hall, as a place so

unhealthy and wretched that Rochester would not conceal his lunatic wife there (II: XXVII, 80). To this remote retreat Jane goes in pursuit of her love. The woods around Ferndean seem almost impenetrable, the house lies submerged in the gloom, "scarce . . . distinguishable from the trees; so dank and green were its decaying walls" (II: XXXVII, 255). This scene fitting for the seclusion of the seared and maimed body of Rochester, it is even more appropriate for his intellectual and spiritual withdrawal from life and his rejection of all society.

The tale of the destruction of Thornfield Hall, of the madwoman's ravings and deeds and of Mr. Rochester's heroism, describes the summit of all Gothic scenes. Yet it does not take place before the eyes of the reader--it is a hearsay tale which evokes sympathy but not terror. Charlotte Brontë's skillful handling of the Gothic elements throughout the novel dictates the off-stage use of this Gothic device.⁷

The author handles with equal dexterity the final scenes, with their potential pathos and sentimentality. They display an intermingling of Gothicism and humanity, initiated in the atmosphere of Thornfield Hall prior to the wedding day. Jane's sense of humor, her understanding of Rochester

⁷ This restraint is more than movie producers filming the novel have been capable of demonstrating. To the camera-eye, the burning of Thornfield Hall is one of the most important scenes in Jane Eyre.

and her love for him, her control of the tone of their dialogue--these demonstrate the author's sensitivity toward the situation and her ability to sustain the reader's belief in these characters as sympathetic human beings. The Gothic elements again serve as a backdrop which emphasizes the reality and the human qualities of the two important people in the tale.

For there is never any doubt that Jane and Rochester are the important characters whose actions and emotions form the core of the novel. Roger Fry has said that "one of the chief aspects of order in a work of art is unity," and that the achievement of this unity is "due to a balancing of the attractions of the eye about the central line of the picture."⁸ In Jane Eyre Charlotte Brontë accomplishes this balance by a subtle overlapping of several patterns which at no time detract from the central line of the novel. The shift of scene, evoking one atmosphere after another, creates one strong pattern. The emotional tension has a pattern of its own. The action, happening sometimes off-stage, sometimes on-stage, overprints another pattern. The interpersonal relationships wax and wane in another pattern. But through it all, the main outline of Jane and Mr. Rochester, their attraction, disruption, distraction, and union, makes clear

⁸Roger Fry, "An Essay on Aesthetics" in Problems in Aesthetics, edited by Morris Weitz (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 57.

its single purpose. The interweaving of the pattern, achieved by the placement of these climaxes, gives strength to the novel.

To guide the reader in his understanding of the pattern of the plot Charlotte Brontë uses a simple device to begin the Thornfield section of Jane Eyre. On leaving Lowood for her new position as Adèle's governess, the narrator tells the reader, "A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play; and when I draw up the curtain this time, reader, you must fancy you see a room in the George Inn at Millcote . . ." (I: XI, 117). But the reader must not let the author trick him into thinking that any such simple division as a shift in setting is going to clarify the complexity of the structure of a good novel. True, there are five geographically separated settings for the novel, as there are five acts in the traditional drama, each unique in its atmosphere and meaning in the life of the protagonist. But the tensions which control man's life will not be so easily partitioned. Jane's story begins first at Gateshead where she lives with the Reeds. The second setting is that of her girlhood spent at Lowood where she suffers and matures. Her real story begins in the third setting at Thornfield Hall where she experiences love and then self-denial. A brief excursion back to Gateshead interrupts in the midst of the development of the emotional tension at

Thornfield Hall. Her flight from Thornfield, sometimes considered an entr'acte, takes place about two-thirds of the way through the novel. Many critics have felt that the novel breaks in two at this point. The fourth section consists of the ten chapters devoted to her life at Marsh End and in Morton.⁹ The fifth and final setting is at Ferndean, Mr. Rochester's wilderness retreat from the world. The reader must remember that the scenes of this novel, while experienced in sequence by the protagonist, are all viewed in retrospect and revealed by the emotionally-involved narrator who recounts the tale.

She also reveals subjectively everything which can be learned about the characters in the story.¹⁰ Jane and Mr.

⁹ These chapters have been variously interpreted. Kathleen Tillotson in Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), says, "They are the least appreciated part of the novel: but an essential part of its unity, knitted alike to the Thornfield and the Lowood chapters" (p. 310). This is appreciation of sorts, but it is humble tribute indeed to a section of the novel which is an integral part of a complex and beautifully achieved structure.

¹⁰ Excellent studies of point of view may be found in such works as Philip Momberger, "Self and World in the Works of Charlotte Brontë," English Literary History, XXXII:3 (September 1965), 349-369; Earl A. Kneis, "The Art of Charlotte Brontë: a Study of Point of View in Her Fiction," unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, 1964, and his later "The 'I' of Jane Eyre," College English, 27:7 (April 1966), 546-556; Percy Lubbock, "Point of View" from The Craft of Fiction (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921); and Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: the Development of a Critical Concept," PMLA, LXX:5 (December 1955), 1160-1184; as well as the comprehensive study by Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

Rochester are really the only two whom the reader can accept in full sympathy. The author reveals the atmosphere of the novel, the undertone of Gothicism and the overtone of humanity, not only through description and setting, through actions and observations, but also by the very characters of the protagonist and her master as they come into reality in the developing story. Jane appears first as a child, and her character is asserted both in the scenes in Gateshead and at school in Lowood. Her maturity begins to be sensed as she takes her place as teacher: first at Lowood, later with Adèle at Thornfield, and finally in the village school in Morton. She is most clearly revealed as a woman loved and in love; she appears as a true woman first in Thornfield and then continuously ever after, through her experiences in Marsh End and at Morton, and finally at the woodland manor of Ferndean.

Mr. Rochester, too, passes through various stages as the action progresses. Apparently bored when first introduced to the reader, he then shows himself domineering and troubled--interchangeably and inexplicably--and finally defeated until Jane finally resurrects him. The atmosphere of the novel does not so much affect Mr. Rochester as his emotions and actions affect the atmosphere. In fact, he functions as the thunderhead from which the storms evolve, but a thunderhead eventually subdued and placated by a small,

rather plain, out-spoken governess.

The atmosphere of Jane Eyre, then, might be called humanized Gothic, or, in the manner of the painters, "Gothic Scene with Figures in the Foreground"--and, in this case, those figures are living, breathing, nineteenth-century people. However, in labeling the atmosphere one only admits to a unity in the pattern, which is not the same as a unity in the structure. But such a unity exists.

Though this unity can be sensed through the atmosphere, it will take a closer examination of the details of this novel--and most particularly of the symbolism--to lead to the conclusion that the unity not only exists, but is organic and was predetermined and masterfully achieved. Sir Herbert Read has made the statement that "without deliberate structure creative activity tends to be fragmentary and disjointed."¹¹ A statement of this kind would not have come as a surprise to Charlotte Brontë. This writer demonstrates a dependence on a substantial structural framework for all her novels. The structure is preplanned; the balance or rhythm of her work is organically justified. Taking this as a premise, the reader may begin to discern the craftsmanship which has gone into the creation of these novels, and particularly into the creation of Jane Eyre.

¹¹Herbert Read, English Prose Style (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 154.

Now that modern criticism has analyzed and documented as many literary devices as there are leaves on a tree, it may seem rather odd that, for a clue to Jane Eyre, one should return to a book as dated and disputed as E. M. Forster's Aspects of the Novel (unprecedented as it was in the 'twenties). But in Forster's discussion of A la recherche du temps perdu, particularly of Proust's rhythmic treatment of the recurring or expanding symbol¹² the clue to the structure of Jane Eyre may be found.

Of the recurring symbol Forster proposes:

There are times when it means nothing and is forgotten, and this seems to me the function of rhythm in fiction; not that it be there all the time like a pattern, but by its lovely waxing and waning to fill us with surprise and hope.¹³

Within Jane Eyre there are a number of recurring symbols. They wax and wane, some insistent and inescapable--as fire or storm--others barely noticeable and only faintly familiar when they recur.

That Charlotte Brontë was aware of the necessity for

¹²Edward K. Brown in his lecture on "Expanding Symbols," published in Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), pp. 30 ff., discusses Forster's use of the term "rhythm"--to which Edwin Muir has taken such justifiable exception--and transfers it into a more acceptable image of the "expanding symbol," which he declares "is of special use when the idea or feeling the novelist is rendering is subtle or otherwise elusive" (p. 55).

¹³E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1927), p. 167.

balance and proportion in her novels becomes obvious after an examination of the four novels which are her complete expression. But the basis of her most successful novel, Jane Eyre, may not be quite as apparent unless one investigates the functional use of the structural symbol in this complex story. Of all the symbols which might be considered, one alone--the mirror--functions thematically, metaphorically, and structurally, as though it were a product of that influence she wrote of which will have its own way, which insists on certain words being used.

One of the most sensible and constructive examinations of the recurrent symbol may be found in David Lodge's discussion of repetition in "The Novelist's Medium and the Novelist's Art." The first three propositions which he supports are of vital interest in a study of the symbolism in Jane Eyre. He contends that

Firstly, the significance of repetition in a given text is not conditional on its being a deliberate and conscious device on the author's part. . . .

Secondly, the significance of repetition in a given text is not conditional on its being consciously and spontaneously recognized by a majority of intelligent readers.

Thirdly, the significance of repetition is not to be determined statistically.¹⁴

¹⁴David Lodge, "The Novelist's Medium and the Novelist's Art: Problems in Criticism" in Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 82-87.

The expanded symbol of the mirror must be measured against these three propositions. If the importance of a symbol were to be based on computer-count alone there is little doubt that the fire image would be considered the dominating image in the novel. But there is also little doubt that Charlotte Brontë uses this image most conscientiously and self-consciously to convey her awareness of the inflammable nature of the attraction between Jane and Mr. Rochester and the icy relationship between Jane and St. John. Then, too, in Jane Eyre the overpowering imagery of nature functions as it should in a novel in which the characters are so deeply under the influence of the wind and weather, the storm and spring verdure, and the isolation and propinquity brought about by the restrictive forces of nature. An awareness of these elemental images, as well as that of eroticism (which a delayed reaction to Freud seems to have engendered in certain of the mid-twentieth-century critics) has brought forth an interesting variety of articles on symbolism in Jane Eyre.¹⁵ The extent of this kind of study

¹⁵Many excellent studies are to be found, among them discussions of the fire imagery: Jerome Hamilton Buckley, The Victorian Temper (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951); Eric Solomon, "Jane Eyre, Fire and Water," College English, XXV: 3 (1964); and David Lodge, "Fire and Eyre: Charlotte Brontë's War of Earthly Elements," op.cit. Nature symbolism is discussed in Robert B. Heilman, "Charlotte Brontë, Reason, and the Moon," Nineteenth Century Fiction, March, 1960; and in Mark Schorer's introduction to Jane Eyre (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1959); and a mythological approach is taken

is limited only by the critic's decision as to which of the symbols he selects for analysis. Symbols important to the theme of the novel and delineation of character have been sought out and pursued. The majority of these discussions limit their analysis to a primary concern with the human experience reflected in Charlotte Brontë's use of the thematic metaphor; many restrict themselves to a personal or psychological interpretation of the author's life story.

But for a more objective study the emphasis must be on the work itself. For the purpose of fusing symbol with structure, of indicating the unity of thematic symbol with the form of the novel, an investigation of the mirror symbol is worth while. In the function of the mirror symbol, and the mirror qualities in other imagery, the structure of the novel becomes unified--demonstrated most apparently in the basic form of reversal which takes place between the Thornfield section of the novel in which Rochester dominates and

by R. A. Hughes, in "Jane Eyre: the Unbaptized Dionysos," Nineteenth Century Fiction, March, 1964. Erotic imagery is proposed by Richard Chase, "The Brontës: A Centennial Observance," Kenyon Review, IX (1947), 495; G. Armour Craig, "The Unpoetic Compromise: On the Relation Between Private Vision and Social Order in Nineteenth-Century Fiction" in Society and Self in the Novel: English Institute Essays, 1955 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956); Wayne Burns, "Critical Relevance of Freud," Western Review, XX (1956), 301-314; Joseph Prescott, "Jane Eyre: a Romantic Exemplum with a Difference," Twelve Original Essays on Great English Novels (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1958); and David Smith, "Incest Patterns in Two Victorian Novels," Literature and Psychology, XV: 3 (1965), 135-162.

the Marsh End section which explores the personality of St. John Rivers.

If one were to believe Hamlet that "to hold, as't were, the mirror up to nature" would show "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure," (Hamlet, III: 2, 25 ff.), then he would be agreeing that the figure in the mirror must be the exact duplicate of reality--in fact, a kind of mimetic reality. He would be agreeing with Byron: if the ocean is a "glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form/Glasses itself in tempests" (Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto IV, stanza 183), then, when one looks at a reflective surface, he sees a true picture of the actual.

Charlotte Brontë gives no indication of such a belief. Her use of the mirror symbol, on the contrary, is as traditional as the Greeks' use of it in the Narcissus myth, as modern as the mid-twentieth-century physicists' revelation of the undependability of parity.¹⁶ In the mirror, one does

¹⁶Two excellently clear explanations will prove helpful to anyone who is, like me, a practicing non-scientist: Hermann Weyl, Symmetry (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952) and Philip Morrison, "The Overthrow of Parity," Scientific American, April, 1957. Morrison explains that with the 1957 stereochemistry disclosure of positive evidence that organic substances have an asymmetrical arrangement of atoms, based on the discoveries of two Nobel Prize-winning Chinese-American physicists, Tsung Dao Lee and Chen Ning Yang, physicists began to explore the need to amend Leibnitz's "great principle" that "two states indiscernable from each other are the same state." Mirror invariance became dead, as science affirmed what Lewis Carroll's Alice had suggested: that in the mirror world "things go the other way," or as

not expect to find a figure repeated as though it had been rotated around a perpendicular axis. If one turns to a mirror and raises his right hand the figure opposite raises his left--which is not a repetition of reality. Man sees a face which he accepts as an actual reproduction of his real self; but, as chances are that he is far from symmetrical (has not the face which Martin Gardner refers to as super-imposable upon its mirror image [See f. 16 below.]) the face in the mirror which he calls his own only approximates the real one known to his friends and family. He views unreality in a mirror image.

Weyl extends this conception of reversal into the realm of music when he discusses reflection as inversion in time:

A melody changes its character to a considerable degree if played backward, and I, who am a poor musician, find it hard to recognize reflection when it is used in the construction of a fugue. . . .¹⁷

Charlotte Brontë uses the mirror symbol again and again in the course of Jane Eyre. Each time the author indicates the reversal which the mirror accomplishes, or the symbol of unreality which it implies. She does everything

Martin Gardner rephrases it: "the ordinary world is turned upside down and backward: it becomes a world in which things go every way except the way they are supposed to" (Martin Gardner, editor of Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking-Glass in The Annotated Alice, New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1960, pp. 180-181).

¹⁷Weyl, op. cit., p. 52.

possible to prepare the reader for the mirror structure of the novel itself.

Five major scenes in Jane Eyre show the protagonist looking into a mirror. On each occasion she studies the reflection and sees in it either a view of herself which differs from the one observed by others, or (perhaps the same thing) a symbolic image removed from actuality. Charlotte Bronte first mentions a reflection, not a true mirror, merely the mirror-like glass in a wardrobe door in which the child, Jane, sees "subdued, broken reflections" which frighten her by their distortions. Her description of the dreaded red-room in which she is imprisoned continues as she explains that

. . . to my left were the muffled windows^[18]; a great looking-glass between them repeated the vacant majesty of the bed and room. . . . I had to cross before the looking-glass; my fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed. All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality: [italics not in original.] and the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp, Bessie's evening stories^[18] represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors, and appearing before the eyes of belated travellers.

(I: II, 11)

Others do not see Jane as a spirit, a phantom, fairy, or imp.

¹⁸ Both windows and folk tales, along with pictures and dreams, are extensions of the mirror symbol, as each shows an unreal representation of the actual, an imitation of reality which might deceive the unwary.

She sees herself possessed of what Charlotte Brontë likes to call "preternatural" powers and indulges in an effort to avoid acknowledging the reality of her unloved treatment, her supposedly inferior condition. But the author sets the fantastic self-vision against a background which "looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality." Here in Charlotte Brontë's first use of the symbol of the mirror the author distinguishes for the reader between reality and the "visionary hollow" of the reflection. She has forewarned that a reversal takes place in the very function of the mirror.

The next use of the mirror symbol in its most obvious form takes place in Thornfield when Jane becomes assured of the hopelessness of her position as rival of the beautiful Miss Blanche Ingram. The humble governess addresses herself:

"Listen, then, Jane Eyre, to your sentence: tomorrow place the glass before you, and draw in chalk your own picture, faithfully; without softening one defect: omit no harsh line, smooth away no displeasing irregularity; write under it, 'Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain.'"

(I: XVI, 205-206)

Rochester later describes to Jane how she appeared at the time, speaking of "the sweet charm of your freshness . . . something glad in your glance and genial in your manner . . . your face became soft in expression, your tones gentle . . . I think you good, gifted, lovely'" (II: XXVII, 98-99). Yet Jane sees quite another person in the mirror as she prepares

to draw her self-portrait, the so-called "real head in chalk" (I: XVI, 206).

Conversely, the mirror can image a false optimism, a vision of promise doomed not to be fulfilled. Immediately after his declaration of love, Rochester bids Jane goodnight, and she retires to her room. In the morning she wonders if the whole experience has been a dream, saying, "I could not be certain of the reality." She then continues:

While arranging my hair, I looked at my face in the glass, and felt it was no longer plain: there was hope in its aspect, and life in its colour: my eyes seemed as if they had beheld the fount of fruition, and borrowed beams from the lustrous ripple. I had often been unwilling to look at my master, because I feared he could not be pleased at my look; but I was sure I might lift my face to his now, and not cool his affection by its expression.

(II: XXIV, 23)

The hope and life which Jane sees in herself are real, but the beams borrowed from the "fount of fruition" are fated to be dimmed before any part of her alliance with Mr. Rochester comes to bear fruit.

Jane sees in the mirror the horrible visitation of the mad woman to her bedroom. Rochester later interprets it as "'half dream, half reality'" (II: XXV, 59), a perceptive description of actuality viewed in a mirror. The mad creature examines herself in Jane's wedding veil, as Jane explains: "'I saw the reflection of the visage and features quite distinctly in the dark oblong glass'" (II: XXV, 57). She sees a travesty of the first Mrs. Rochester as bride, and a

negation of herself as the bride of the man she intends to marry. A further acknowledgment of this negation comes when Sophie urges her to look at herself in her wedding gown:

"Stop!" she cried in French. "Look at yourself in the mirror: you have not taken one peep."

So I turned at the door: I saw a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger.

(II: XXVI, 62)

It is a stranger indeed, a bride, fated not to be a bride, a dream fulfillment which will become a nightmare figure. The mirror reflects the general outline and shape, but without reality.

Of the principle involved in the symbolic significance of the mirror, J. E. Cirlot in A Dictionary of Symbols states that "every case of duplication concerns duality, balanced symmetry and the active equipoise of opposite forces."¹⁹

Charlotte Brontë uses these opposite forces successfully in the basic structure of the novel. Just fourteen years before the publication of Jane Eyre, Tennyson told of the unreality of the mirror world in "The Lady of Shalott" in which he revealed that to this lady ". . . moving thro' a mirror clear/
That hangs before her all the year,/Shadows of the world

¹⁹J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, translated by Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), p. 81. He also quotes Marius Schneider (Barcelona, 1948) in suggesting that the mirror, "like the echo . . . stands for twins (thesis and antithesis)" (p. 202).

appear."²⁰ Charlotte Brontë develops fully this world of shadow and unreality in the basic structure of Jane Eyre.

Throughout the novel, Charlotte Brontë suggests the presence of a mirror in many of the scenes, and always the mirror reflects not actuality, but a reversal of actuality. There are mirrors in the rooms at Gateshead, at Thornfield, and at Marsh End. Further extensions of the mirror symbol are suggested by the false promise of marriage in the charade at Thornfield, the reference to the shadows of the guests seen as through a magic lantern, the self-revealed gypsy disguise, and the brother-sister love which Jane wishes to arouse in St. John; all these express the inadequacy of a pretense which mimics reality.

The idea of the unreal image, developed in several metaphors, appears well over two hundred times in Jane Eyre. There are direct references to mirrors and looking-glasses and the extended image employed in the mirror function of the window, the picture, the folk tale, and the dream. Of these later extensions, the folk tale is, almost by definition, an unreality masquerading as reality--surely as much so as the mirror. The picture, particularly the portrait, can be accepted as a form of the mirror image, a frozen or stop-action mirror figure which reflects not reality, but the

²⁰ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott," ll. 46-48 in Complete Poetical Works, edited by W. J. Rolfe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1898), p. 27.

pseudo-reality envisioned by the painter. Jung sees the painter's function as "mediating between conscious and unconscious."²¹ The three water colors which Jane displays to Mr. Rochester during their first interview are images of fantasy which have been called up from the depths of her unconscious by Jane during her stay at Lowood. The author does not mention the mirror during the entire section of the novel devoted to Jane's years at the school, but the paintings reflect what Jane experiences in terms other than reality. The Blakean symbolism of these paintings seems to call for the psychologist, not the literary critic.²²

Of the other paintings the reader may speak with more assurance: the self-portrait, the portrait of the imagined face of Blanche Ingram, the sketch of Mr. Rochester from memory, and the idealistic representations of St. John Rivers and Rosamund Oliver. In these Jane demonstrates her artistic skill by materializing immobile mirror images, not of things as they are, but as they could be, or might be, or should be. Even Jane's descriptions of the bird drawings in the opening chapter reveal the unreal world into which Jane

²¹C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, translated by R. F. C. Hull, Bollinger Series, Vol. XX of Collected Works (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959), p. 197.

²²One attempt at analysis may be found in a brief article by Lawrence E. Moser, S. J., "From Portrait to Person: A Note on the Surrealistic in Jane Eyre," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 20:3 (December, 1965), 275-281.

escapes. Bewick's History of British Birds offers the unloved ten-year-old a mirror image of life, filled with identifiable objects but organized into an unreality which appears a thousand times more interesting than the dreadfully lonely reality. This pictured world serves the youthful Jane as Roger Fry suggests a mirror-view of the street may serve the adult mind, creating a work of art "intimately connected with the secondary imaginative life, which all men live to a greater or less extent," a fascinatingly attractive imaginative world "rather than a copy of actual life."²³

It is interesting to compare Jane's childhood reading of Bewick's introduction, and the visual images which it induces, with her water color paintings done later when she was at school in Lowood. The reader does not learn Jane's age when she does these paintings, but as she shows them willingly to her employer as examples of her skill in art they may be assumed to be moderately recent works, done perhaps when she was seventeen or eighteen.

An additional link, making it a three-way link, exists between Jane's early escape literature, her self-expressive water color paintings, and the poignant dream which she has during the night before her flight from Thornfield. In her remembrance of her childhood response to the Bewick intro-

²³Roger Fry, op. cit., p. 51.

duction, she tells that his words caused her to envision the "dreary space" with its Alpine heights of ice and snow, these "death-white realms" where the desolate scene is under "the cold and ghastly moon glancing through the bars of clouds at a wreck just sinking" (I: I, 3).

In the first of the Lowood paintings there are "the clouds, low and livid, rolling over a swollen sea . . . there was no land. One gleam of light lifted into relief a half-submerged mast, on which sat a cormorant." The third painting "showed the pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar winter sky: a muster of northern lights reared their dim lances, close serried, along the horizon" (I: XIII, 159-160).

Although no human figure appears in her childhood visions of Bewick's descriptions there are two symbols which seem to represent the child or those who influence her: the one bird who inhabits the "'solitary rocks and promontories'" and the ever-present moon, appearing either as "a newly-risen crescent" or large and full, "cloud-hidden, cold and ghastly" (I: I, 2).

In the paintings which she does as a young woman these beings take shape: the first painting includes "a cormorant, dark and large, with wings flecked with foam" holding in its beak an object of inestimable value--here, a "gold bracelet, set with gems." The second presence in the picture appears as "a drowned corpse" whose "fair arm was the only limb

visible," the arm from which the bracelet has been snatched. There is only "one gleam of light" (I: XIII, 159-160).

In the second and third paintings the bird-child-participant has become the viewer; the corpse with its arm and lost treasure has taken on the shape of a woman's head, or head and shoulders. In the second painting the "dim forehead was crowned with a star. . . . On the neck lay a pale reflection like moonlight. . . ." In the third painting there rises "a colossal head, inclined towards the iceberg, and resting against it. . . . Above the temples, amidst wreathed turban folds of black drapery, vague in its character and consistency as cloud, gleamed a ring of white flame, gemmed with sparkles of a more lurid tinge" (I: XIII, 159-160). [Mr. Rochester's first question, "'Were you happy when you painted these pictures?'" gives an interesting indication of his sensitivity.]

The dream which besieges Jane during the last few hours before her flight from the unbearable situation at Thornfield seems to be linked by images and expressions to these earlier visions. Jane sees herself back in the red-room at Gateshead. A light mounts the wall and, trembling, pauses on the dark ceiling overhead. She describes it:

I lifted up my head to look: the roof resolved to clouds, high and dim; the gleam was such as the moon imparts to vapours she is about to sever. I watched her come--watched with the strangest anticipation; as though some word of doom were to be written on her disk. She broke forth as never moon yet burst from cloud; a hand

first penetrated the sable folds and waved them away; then, not a moon, but a white human form shone in the azure, inclining a glorious brow earthward. It gazed and gazed on me. It spoke to my spirit: immeasurably distant was the tone, yet so near, it whispered in my heart--

"My daughter, flee temptation!"

"Mother, I will."

(II: XXVII, 105)

The continuing repetition of imagery from childhood and girlhood now finds release in the dream during this night of intense emotional trial. This dream expresses, finally, these images which have mirrored Jane's turbulence and irresolution. The dream seems to be the culmination, too, of the dreams of the burden of the infant which Jane has been envisioning throughout her involvement with Rochester. A dramatic shift has been made: she has now become the acknowledged child, visited, comforted, and advised.

In the progression of this developing dream, through the troubled daydreams of childhood based on the book she read at Gateshead, the imaginative daydreams expressed in the paintings of her late girlhood at Lowood, the final unrestrained nightmare in the full complexity of her young womanhood at Thornfield, Jane sees her problems reflected as unrealities. Her verbalized pictorial response to Bewick, her paintings of fantasy which reflect some inner impulse, the dream of tension in which her moon-mother materializes as guide and comforter to assure her that what she has planned to do is

right--all these: recounted story, picture, and dream, function as the mirror functions throughout the novel.

In other dreams, too, Jane mirrors reality in terms of the symbol. The child-burdened dreams of Jane's days of courtship are persistent and describable--not troubled turmoil of emotion and frustration, but vividly visual experiences with an infant, a "baby-phantom." She tells of

. . . a dream of an infant: which I sometimes hushed in my arms, sometimes dandled on my knee, sometimes watched it playing with daisies on a lawn; or again dabbling its hands in running water. It was a wailing child this night, and a laughing one the next: now it nestled close to me, and now it ran from me; but whatever mood the apparition evinced, whatever aspect it wore, it failed not for seven successive nights to meet me the moment I entered the land of slumber.

(I: XXI, 285)

Later, she dreams of herself "'burdened with the charge of a little child, a very small creature, too young and feeble to walk'" (II: XXV, 54). And in her succeeding dream, when she sees so prophetically the destruction of Thornfield Hall, she describes herself as carrying "'an unknown little child: I might not lay it down anywhere, however tired were my arms--however much its weight impeded my progress, I must retain it.'" At the climax of the dream, the child, now resting in her lap, rolls to the ground (II: XXV, 56).

Charlotte Brontë may have felt, in those pre-Jungian, pre-Freudian days, that she was consciously symbolizing Jane's preoccupation with domesticity, her yearning to be

Rochester's wife and the mother of his child.²⁴ Even granting her the handicap imposed by the times, when psychoanalysis and dream interpretation had not yet become a national amateur sport, does not do much toward shaping this dream into a night-vision of reality. It remains a fear dream, a dream of impediment, of frustration, of incompleteness. And it still mirrors the image of reality, life-like symbols demonstrating the contrast between the imagined and the actual.

Charlotte Brontë uses this reality of vision, shown in the mirror, the folk tale, the painting, and the dream, in the symbol of the window. This object serves two purposes, as Kathleen Tillotson suggests, "the double impression of constraint and freedom."²⁵ But parts of this conception of repression and release shown in window imagery are also present in the symbol of the mirror: the restricted dimensions, limiting and focusing attention; its untroubled glass surface (St. John is once described as "serene as glass," II: XXXIV, 207); the real presence of the protagonist on her side of the glass and the uncertainty aroused about the image held within the frame (Adele sees Mr. Rochester's return when she looks

²⁴An interesting extension of this dream image of the infant may be found in Charlotte Brontë's use of the metaphor of birth, found repeatedly in the second half of the novel. Such apparently subconscious use of imagery suggests significant connotation. Jane sees agony, hope, love, and pity in terms of birth, usually as a deformed or suffering infant.

²⁵Tillotson, op. cit., p. 300.

through a window--in actuality, she witnesses the arrival of a stranger, I: XVII, 244). The window, although not described as such, must also at times have served as a quasi-mirror: when the room was well lighted and Jane looked out into the dusk or night, it must have reflected the blurred image of the viewer overprinted on the shadowy picture of what lay beyond the pane. This is surely intensified unreality.

At one time Charlotte Brontë merges these images, giving emphasis to the impression of the similarity between the window and the mirror. When Jane first visits the elegant drawing-room of Thornfield she comments on its magnificent details and ends with the statement that "between the windows large mirrors repeated the general blending of snow and fire" (I: XI, 132). These antithetical elements, snow and fire, blended in the reflective confusion of windows and mirrors, give substance to the belief that in the symbol of the mirror Charlotte Brontë demonstrates the function of the reversal image.

Besides the uses of the mirror in the imagery of the novel already noted, other paired symbols reinforce the idea of a reversal and a duality. Jane receives the two offers: love without marriage or a loveless marriage; she effects a double escape: once fleeing from Rochester and finding a haven with St. John, once deserting St. John in an emotional flight to Rochester. Jane and Rochester are twice in

contrasting positions: he is first strong, striking in appearance, wealthy, determined to have Jane despite her moral withdrawal; she is small, plain, and poor. A second mirroring takes place at the end of the story when his physical condition and self-pitying social withdrawal are in contrast to Jane's self-possession and mature determination.

The author shows contrast among the other characters, too. Jane as a child finds a reversal in Adele as a child. Jane as a plain and humble worker appears in contrast to the wealthy and pampered Blanche Ingram on the one hand and the animal-like, irrationally violent Bertha Mason on the other. Pairs of sisters demonstrate this same unequal mirror image: Eliza and Georgiana Reed, Mary and Diana Rivers. Jane's relatives, too, echo this reversal: her Aunt Reed's selfish acts of rejection are contrasted with her Uncle Eyre's munificence. Charlotte Brontë implies that the Jane Eyre who arrives at Thornfield that cold October evening mirrors the image of the real Jane Eyre who seeks Mr. Rochester in his hidden seclusion of Ferndean. The symbol of the mirror functions in this novel in more than verbal imagery and specific character delineation. Charlotte Brontë demonstrates brilliance in handling of the novel form in her adaptation of this metaphoric use of the thematic symbol to the functioning use of it as a structural symbol. The success of Jane Eyre lies in its balance and proportion. In spite of Walter Allen's

declaration concerning the book that "as a construction it is artless,"²⁶ most critics have sensed the strength of the contrapuntal effect in the contrast between Rochester and St. John Rivers, and have attributed much of the success of the novel to the understanding Jane gains of Mr. Rochester after her encounter with the lesser man. When St. John declares, "'Reason, and not Feeling, is my guide'" (II: XXII, 180), the author absolutely clarifies the attitudes of these contrasting characters. An understanding of their relative positions leads toward a comprehension of the force of the basic structure of the novel. They are set in diametrical opposition to one another. Their appeals to Jane in relation to love and marriage epitomize their differences. Jane herself points to this parallel when she feels coerced by St. John, besieged by his persistence, almost convinced by his determination:

I felt a veneration for St. John--veneration so strong that its impetus thrust me at once to the point I had so long shunned. I was tempted to cease struggling with him--to rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence, and there lose my own. I was almost as hard beset by him now as I had been once before, in a different way, by another.

(II: XXXV, 238)

The devised contrast between these characters makes apparent the reversal on which Charlotte Brontë has constructed this novel and suggests the complex link between imagery and

²⁶Walter Allen, The English Novel (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1955), p. 218.

structure, between the metaphoric use of the symbol in imagery and the structural use of the reversal in form.

The novel builds toward the climax of the interrupted marriage ceremony and Jane's consequent flight from Rochester, finds its second phase in Jane's second life with the Rivers family, its solution in the mysterious call which she hears in the night, and its resolution in Jane's happiness with the maimed and blinded Rochester. But even when stated so simply the plot admits to further complications. A carefully devised reversal takes place when Jane joins the Rivers family at Marsh End. An entirely new life begins for her. The same general outline takes shape: she is a young woman alone, appealing to the man with whom she associates, determined to support herself by her own talents, besieged by pleas to reorganize her life in a way which does not seem right to her. But how reversed are the details. New solutions are proposed in her career in the village school which she runs so successfully, in the legacy which frees her from dependency, in the offer of marriage by St. John Rivers, in the career as missionary which is hers for the taking. The plot, then, while moving chronologically through Jane's life from childhood to womanhood, does not fit the convenient graph of introduction, development, climax, and denouement, primarily because of the obvious importance of the reversal demonstrated in the second life which Jane begins to live with

the Rivers family. She has, in truth, moved into the mirror world.

Roger Fry clarifies the function of the mirror as a structural symbol in Jane Eyre, or for that matter in any literary work, in his discussion in "An Essay on Aesthetics," in which he discusses how the mirror functions in relation to art. In explaining the difference between a scene viewed in reality and that same scene reflected in a mirror, Dr. Fry suggests:

If we look at the street itself . . . we are reacting to life itself in however slight a degree, but in the mirror, it is easier to abstract ourselves completely, and look upon the changing scene as a whole. It then, at once, takes on the visionary quality, and we become true spectators, not selecting what we will see, but seeing everything equally, and thereby we come to notice a number of appearances and the relations of appearances. . . . The frame of the mirror, then, does to some extent turn the reflected scene from one that belongs to our actual life into one that belongs rather to the imaginative life.²⁷

Just such a transformation takes place within the structure of Jane Eyre. The plot pattern develops, cumulative in intensity, to the emotional climax when Jane renounces her love for Rochester. She has shown the development of a strong will, of a passionate involvement with her master, of a religion which drives her to self-denial and the rejection of a man who is in absolute sympathy with her. At the point of emotional climax Jane steps through the

²⁷Roger Fry, loc. cit.

mirror into a world where life exists as a reversed image.²⁸ She now exposes a rapidly weakening will, an unimpassioned involvement with her cousin, an insight into her religion which drives her to reject her earlier act of self-denial, and--at the pitch of this new awareness--a rejection of the man who is totally out of sympathy with her emotionally.

According to the ancient mythical beliefs in the mirror, Jane should be able to use it to free her soul as she passes through to the other side. In fact, she experiences the awareness which Fry suggests, and is able to "notice a number of appearances and relations of appearances." She thus frees herself by developing an understanding which permits her to break back through the barrier, to return from St. John's mirror world to the real world occupied by Rochester. The reader thus finds the thematic symbol of the mirror used structurally: two contrasting pictures. One, the actuality from which Jane flees, is dominated by Rochester, the virile, rugged, passionate man, with his oddly peopled home which he determines to maintain, his acceptance of the

²⁸Robert Martin (op. cit.) seems to have missed the full force of the reversal in the mirror image when he comments that the "two men are hardly mirror images, however, for Rochester is capable of reformation, since he can sympathize with Jane's need for the part of the relationship that he cannot offer her; for natures unlike his own, St. John has nothing but contempt" (p. 88). It is exactly this presence of such indications of their contrary natures which makes St. John the mirror image of Rochester.

burden of his mad wife, his passionate dedication to Jane as she is. In the other world, as it could be, Jane encounters St. John Rivers, virtuous and ascetic, a religious man with a passion for principle and not person, a home of no importance to him, a celibacy hard-won and often discussed, and a determination to entrap Jane into becoming the missionary he has envisioned. Image after image crowds the novel to make clear to the reader that Rochester and St. John are opposites in appearance, principles, and passion.

Consider, for example, one of the slightest of the many images, one which illustrates the subtle, persistent, all-permeating imagery used so skillfully by Charlotte Brontë in her revelation of this thematic symbol. This token image, enforcing this understanding, this small use of phraseology shows, as vividly as bold colors and vigorous metaphors, Jane's relationship to the two men. Jane shows simply by her use of the word half in connection to St. John:

As for me, I daily wished more to please him: but to do so, I felt daily more and more that I must disown half my nature, stifle half my faculties, wrest my tastes from their original bent, force myself to the adoption of pursuits for which I had no natural vocation.

(II: XXXIV, 211-212)

In contemplating her acceptance of St. John's proposal to join him in his mission she complains, "'Alas! If I join St. John, I abandon half myself . . .'" (II: XXXIV, 219). And St. John responds to her withholding acceptance of his proposal, "'Do you think God will be satisfied with half an

oblation?' " (II: XXXIV, 221-222).

But if Jane has shown her awareness of the incomple-
tion of the mirror world which involves her, so she shows her
awareness of the intensity of the real world to which she
returns. She completes her action in hurrying to Mr. Rochester
in his woodland retreat with an abandonment of the reversal--
as it were, an undoing of the mirror reversal. In her
escape back to reality, she negates the half-image created
around St. John. To the landlord she cries, "'If your post-
boy can drive me to Ferndean before dark this day, I'll pay
both you and him twice the hire you usually demand'" (II:
XXXVI, 253). To break her bondage within the mirror world,
the substitute world, the half-world, Jane has burst into the
world where forces are twice as strong as normal forces.

Although the most important use of the mirror as a
structural device is surely the effective treatment of reversal
in the ten chapters of the novel devoted to Jane's life at
Marsh End and Morton, there are other, less important, but
equally effective uses of the device. In the principle of
forecasting which appears at various points in the story,
Jane suggests the unreality, the projected idea, the mirror
vision. Later the actuality takes place. As a child at the
Lowood school Jane speaks of her natural inclination toward
emotional involvement when she says to little Helen Burns
that it seems natural "that I should love those who show me

affection'" (I: VI, 70). This may be considered as a vision, an imagining, as this unloved little girl has never yet found anyone to show her affection so that she can love them. The forecast finds fulfillment in Jane's association with Mr. Rochester, defined when she assures herself, "'Mr. Rochester approves you: at any rate you have often felt as if he did . . .'" (I: XVI, 200) and her later admission that "while I breathe and think I must love him" (I: XVII, 225).

Another mirrored forecast proposed by Jane is her joking allusion to the future when she accuses Mr. Rochester of his far-eastern inclination toward passion. She declares that while he indulges himself, "'I'll be preparing myself to go out as a missionary to preach liberty to them that are enslaved . . .'" (II: XXIV, 39). This whole unreality comes close to being a reality a few chapters later when St. John urges her to become a missionary and travel with him to India.

A third forecast appears as a mirror image when Rochester tells Jane about his hunting lodge, Ferndean Manor, and about its unhealthy situation and hidden location. In this dramatic description he plays on Jane's sympathy, describing the estate as too wretched even for a person whom he hates. But later, in physical ruin, he despairs of himself; his escape to Ferndean fulfills the imagined picture he has drawn for Jane.

Jane forecasts even more dramatically the extent of the injuries which will be visited on Rochester. In her period of shock following the revelation of the existence of Rochester's mad wife, Jane has been lying in seclusion in her room. An unreal voice speaks to her of her need to desert her lover, to run from him, and casts a mirror image of Rochester's coming suffering:

"No; you shall tear yourself away, none shall help you: you shall, yourself, pluck out your right eye: yourself cut off your right hand: your heart shall be the victim; and you, the priest, to transfix it."
(II: XXVII, 76)

Charlotte Brontë employs another, and equally as effective, mirror device by repeating--with reversal and counter-reversal--one significant picture of Jane and Mr. Rochester in a simple act of sympathy.

At the moment of their first encounter, Jane and Rochester are faced with a situation of dependency. The master has been injured and cannot reach his horse without the aid of his ward's small governess. Rochester comments, "'Necessity compels me to make you useful.' He laid a heavy hand on my shoulder, and leaning on me with some stress, limped to his horse" (I: XII, 146). To intensify their relationship, the author presents another scene in which the physically strong man needs the support of his steadfast young employee. She brings him word of a stranger who awaits him, called Mr. Mason from Spanish Town. The dialogue reveals

Rochester's dependence on Jane:

He hardly seemed to know what he was doing.

"Do you feel ill, sir?" I inquired.

"Jane, I've got a blow;--I've got a blow, Jane!"
He staggered.

"Oh!--lean on me, sir."

"Jane you offered me your shoulder once before; let me have it now."

"Yes, sir, yes; and my arm."

(I: XIX, 263)

The reversal of this image appears in the description of the wedding day which becomes a nightmare, the day of the marriage which will not be sanctified, will not exist. Jane is a bride who is no bride, a woman whose happiness evaporates before her very eyes. In this scene unreality begins for Jane; the mirror world which envelops her for one full year begins to close in around her. The image of dependence becomes reversed: Jane, the steadfast and determined young woman, leans on the arm of the man who gives the illusion of being her protector. Jane recalls the day:

I know not whether the day was fair or foul; in descending the drive, I gazed neither on sky nor earth: my heart was with my eyes; and both seemed migrated into Mr. Rochester's frame. . . . At the churchyard wicket he stopped: he discovered I was quite out of breath. "Am I cruel in my love?" he said. "Delay an instant: lean on me, Jane."

(II: XXVI, 63)

On Jane's return from her flight into the reversal world, begun on this day involved in unreality and night-

mare overtones, the real and actual image of the dependency of Mr. Rochester on his rediscovered loved one brings the reader back to the reality of the first appearance of this vignette. Now, on her return from Morton, when she rejoins Rochester in the country house where he has been hiding, Jane sees their interdependence in terms of her early imagery of birds; "just as if a royal eagle, chained to a perch, should be forced to entreat a sparrow to become its purveyor" (II: XXXVII, 266). But Jane is not in a dream world, she is not escaping into the imaginary world of unreality. Instead she serves as much as his aid and comfort as she did in the early days of their association.

The chapter ends on a note of the acknowledgment of their interdependence, of their emotional stability and mutual need and trust:

Then he stretched his hand out to be led. I took that dear hand, held it a moment to my lips, then let it pass round my shoulder: being so much lower of stature than he, I served both for his prop and his guide. We entered the wood, and wended homeward.

(II: XXXVII, 270)

The theme of Jane Eyre which is so clearly revealed in these closing incidents has been suggested to the reader throughout the novel. Jane, a young woman working hard to be self-sustaining and self-esteemed, strives to be respected by those whom she admires. Her struggle for self-recognition, and for a relationship with Rochester which she can respect and contribute to, rings out as modern a note as any heard

in the eighteen-forties. But more than just the story of a young person persisting through determination and self-reliance, through the undefeatable vigor of assurance and resolve, the novel speaks to the reader across the years through the universality of its theme.

At the annual meeting of the Brontë Society on January 26, 1907, G. K. Chesterton delivered a speech in which he discussed Charlotte Brontë's spirit of romanticism. Chesterton is reported to have evaluated Charlotte Brontë's basic principles which are expressed in the theme of Jane Eyre:

Charlotte Brontë represented in the nineteenth century the supreme central point of Romanticism, just as the spire of Amiens or Cologne did in the history of architecture. She was a person who said: "I believe in all the virtues, but I do not believe the virtues are tame things. I believe they are violent things, and I will express them violently." This was the highest point of human art whenever this occurred.²⁹

Jane holds fast to her conception of virtue as she sees it; in her denial of the forceful emotional attraction of Rochester she fights temptation with a resistance significantly based on the Christian tradition. The reality of Christ's temptations, which must have been ever-present in Charlotte Brontë's thinking, seem to be mirrored in the fictional temptations of the character, Jane Eyre. In the moment of her struggle

²⁹G. K. Chesterton, "Charlotte Brontë and the Realists," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xvi, IV, 1907.

to free herself from the almost-irresistible appeal of Rochester, an unnamed presence tempts her to depend on Rochester for her life's subsistence, almost as though she were told that under her protector's care she could live by bread alone. The bread which he could supply would take the place of the stones of hardship and deprivation which she encounters in her terrible days of wandering on the moors. She is tempted to cast herself down from the heights of respectability to which she has risen as governess and let Mr. Rochester bear her up and protect her from the scorn of the world. She is tempted to accept the luxuries of exiled living, the material glories which she could find in the outcast's world which her lover would establish for her.

But Jane has a strong will, as the reader has learned from the beginning of the novel, and she continues to live by the law "given by God; sanctioned by man," to hold to the principles which she received while she was sane, before she was confused by her love for Rochester (II: XXVII, 102). Something of the integrity of this indomitable and incorruptable young governess, of the intensity of her feelings and her beliefs, something of the universality of her struggle gives the novel an undying appeal.

However dated the dialogue, however outmoded the manners, the steadfast character of the protagonist remains wholly believable; the disastrous nature of the circumstances

encompassing her and the tempting solution offered to her seem real. The credibility is reinforced by the contrast presented in the reversed world which Jane occupies for the year following her dramatic flight. Reality returns with the reaffirmation of her love for Rochester. With skill the author firmly establishes the reader's belief.

CHAPTER III

SHIRLEY

In Shirley, Charlotte Brontë has written a novel with a highly organized three-voiced contrapuntal structure. The novel has seldom been viewed as an organic unity; more often critics consider it to be a heterogeneous gathering together of dissimilar threads of plot. Shortly after its publication, such an attitude was expressed by G. H. Lewes in his severe critical attack in the Edinburgh Review of 1850. Lewes was looking for an echo of the moving message the world had received in Jane Eyre, and Shirley is not a second Jane Eyre. The critic expressed his disappointment:

But in Shirley all unity . . . is wanting. There is no passionate link: nor is there any artistic fusion, or intergrowth, by which one part evolves itself from another. Hence its falling-off in interest, coherent movement and life.¹

¹G. H. Lewes, Edinburgh Review, January, 1850. In response to this review, Charlotte Brontë wrote to Lewes what Maréchal Villars had remarked to Louis XIV: "'I can be on my guard against my enemies, but God deliver me from my friends!'" (Charlotte Brontë, letter 408 in The Brontës: Life and Letters edited by Clement Shorter, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908, II, 106). Both M. R. Watson, "Form and Substance in the Brontë Novels" in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad, edited by Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958) and Robert B. Martin, Accents of Persuasion (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966) agree with the early analysis that there is too much of everything and all without order. Robert B. Heilman, "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic" in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad, suggests that while the novel is not pulled together formally and the characters are not fully realized, "still it accommodates the widest ranging of an extraordinarily free sensibility" (p. 127).

In Shirley, one part does not evolve from another, and Lewes was right in abandoning all attempt to find an "artistic fusion or intergrowth." But unity is there, and the passionate link is there; the passionate link exhibited by the characters of the novel as they seek for a solution to their bewildering and pressing personal experiences with the problems of mankind. The link exists in their seeking and not in their finding.

The reader can easily identify the themes of Shirley, the themes which are Charlotte Brontë's cry from the beginning of her writing: that man is isolated, that he needs independence and self-respect, and that man seeks his counterpart in woman and woman in man to bring each to fulfillment. Robert Moore, who takes a major part in the development of two of the three voices in this fugal structure, speaks of man's primary need when he declares, "'Something there is to look to . . . beyond man's personal interest. . . . To respect himself, a man must believe he renders justice to his fellow-men'" (II: XXX, 245-246).² His concern with self-respect more than his conclusion indicates the main tenor of Charlotte

²All quotations from Shirley are from The Shakespeare Head Brontë, Volumes III and IV of Charlotte Brontë's work, edited by T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1931) and are indicated as Shirley volume I or II, chapter, and page. The work originally appeared as Shirley--A Tale, 3 volumes (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1849).

Brontë's writings.

Caroline, who has been barred from the sickroom, finally visits Robert at the time of his convalescence from the attempt on his life. To her query, "'And you sit alone?'" Robert replies, "'Worse than alone'" (II: XXXIII, 290). He acknowledges that man not only exists in isolation, but in an isolation which no one else wants to penetrate; the reader hears the poignantly lonely note of Charlotte Brontë's cry. Man must expect no outside help. Caroline comes to this realization in her half-satisfying, half-tormenting relationship with young Martin Yorke. When he refuses to help her see Robert, Caroline declares, "'See him I will. If you won't help me, I'll manage without help,'" to which young Yorke replies, "'Do: there is nothing like self-reliance--self-dependence'" (II: XXXIV, 302).

The words of Robert Moore finally give the reader the key to the tone of the novel: "'I believe--I daily find it proved--that we can get nothing in this world worth keeping, not so much as a principle or a conviction, except out of purifying flame, or through strengthening peril'" (II: XXX, 244). This struggle to get the things worth keeping concerns the author, the characters in the novel, and, ultimately, the reader.

The contrapuntal structure of Shirley leads toward the resolution of this struggle. The author introduces the

reader to three voices, offers three ways to solve life's problems, shows three apparently unrelated areas of activity through which man attempts to find independence, self-respect, and personal satisfaction. She introduces and reintroduces each voice with emphasis and detailed attention, presenting each one from a variety of points of view, involving people from several walks of life. These organically related voice-parts form the single harmonic texture of the novel, each retaining its linear quality, yet each contributing to the organic unity of the novel. These three modes of solving life's problems involve the comfort or demands of religion, the reciprocal duties and rewards of earning one's livelihood, and the needs and responses of human relationships--especially that of marriage.

The novel begins with a declaration by the voice speaking for religion, but in its least harmonious tones. The opening scene depicts the three curates whose domestic behavior sets the mood for the reader's distrust of religion. They are joined by the rector, Mr. Helstone, who stands in firm contrast to the young men's wastrel social existence. The landlady of one remarks, "'The old parsons is worth the whole lump of college lads; they know what belongs to good manners, and is kind to high and low'" (I: I, 4).

In his study of Shirley, Robert Martin has rightly remarked that "in no other novel of Charlotte Brontë's is

there so much talk of churches, parish schools, clergymen and the religious affiliations of characters, and in no other is there so little sense of Christianity having any effects upon its adherents."³ The voice of Christianity speaks, is heard, but with a message less than perfect.

The second voice soon makes a statement, since the economic problems of the community concern all. The revolt of the workers against industrialization, the mill-owners' stubborn and often inhuman defense of their rights, the inciting to riot and murder instigated by outside organizers--these have become the major problem of the whole community.⁴ An interweaving of the two voices takes place as rectors and vicars line up in sympathy with mill-owners or workers.

The third voice enters early in the novel with its own complexities as Caroline Helstone and Robert Moore are mutually attracted yet selflessly forbearing in their relationship. The tension between them develops throughout the novel. This third voice becomes dominant after the introduction of Shirley (Chapter Eleven) and the much later introduction of the man whom she loves, Louis Moore (who is

³Martin, op. cit., p. 115.

⁴Asa Briggs, in his informative address "Private and Social Themes in Shirley" (reprinted in Brontë Society Transactions, part 68, XIII: 3, 202-219) refers to the pressure on the mill-owners through "collective bargaining by riot" (p. 208). He relates how closely Charlotte Brontë has followed the history of this workers' revolt in her portrayal of the plot against Robert Moore.

mentioned in Chapter Five but does not enter until Chapter Twenty-Three). Their love-and-power struggle, their social conflict, and ultimate rapport suggest that man finds it hard to achieve human compatibility. This third voice, the plea for solution to life's problems through human relationships, finds its strength not so much in its continuing presence as in its apparently workable resolution--the results of personal adjustment and generous compromise--an ultimate resolution which does not seem to be available through either of the other approaches. The plea for love, for harmonious satisfaction through compatible marriage, chimes in continuously, overriding the other voices.

It must not be thought, however, that the structure of this contrapuntal interplay is monotonous and regular or superficial and apparent. On the contrary. The introductions of the voices speaking for religion, speaking for satisfaction through livelihood, or through love, make a complex pattern; religion opens the novel as the first to be heard, the socio-economic tones--dramatic and violent--are overpowering when they enter, but the insistent theme of harmony through personal relationships dominates in the end. Charlotte Brontë dextrously handles the interweaving of these three voices; sometimes they interrupt one another with strident contrast, sometimes they modulate from one to the

next subtly and almost imperceptibly.⁵ In every aspect of man's problems considered within the novel these three voices offer their solutions. With a subtle shifting of emphasis Charlotte Brontë leads the reader to the conclusion reached by the main characters--that only through harmonious human relationships can man hope to achieve independence, acquire self-esteem, and alleviate the isolation which besets him. This voice becomes dominant, then, through the principle of hierarchy, explained by DeWitt H. Parker in "The Problem of Aesthetic Form": as that species of organization of the modes of organic unity which designates some one element of a work of art as occupying "a position of commanding importance there."⁶

But the early dominance of this third voice is not immediately apparent in the structure of the novel. In fact not until the novel has dealt with a series of major problems

⁵Sometimes the transition is managed with great skill by an association of ideas or on a pivot word. Note, for example, the juxtaposition of the words "die" and the end of Chapter Thirty and the beginning of the next chapter. Hartley, as he shoots Moore cries out "'... he shall die without knowledge'" (II: XXX, 228). The chapter ends in the unresolved climax of action. The next chapter has an abrupt change of subject: the issue of Shirley's marriage is being considered. The first sentence reads: "The die was cast" (II: XXXI, 229). The word has changed its meaning, the chord has moved from unresolved seventh to the tonic, but the same note rings out.

⁶DeWitt H. Parker, "The Problems of Aesthetic Form" in Problems in Aesthetics, edited by Morris Weitz (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), p. 183.

does the proposed solution begin to come clear to the reader.

The major problems considered in Shirley concern man and his relationship to the world around him. The novel raises a series of questions that must be answered; it asks the questions in many ways, suggests in its three separate voices a variety of responses and proposed solutions. The questions are repeated, posed again and again, that a workable answer may be supplied. The questions themselves are basic: Which is more important, man's urge for independence or his sense of duty? Can man, as a human being, win over the impersonal forces which seek to repress and overpower him? Which is trustworthy: emotion or reason? The questions are raised in moments of mortal conflict and over the tea-cups, by stalwart young men and pale young women, in dread and in hope. Three voices answer the question. The interweaving of problems and proposed solutions creates a pattern of complexity. But throughout the pattern the three main voices--the three melodies: one speaking for God and His solace, one speaking for independence of self-sustaining man, one speaking for harmonic domesticity--may be heard in contrapuntal design.

One of the major problems which confront the characters in Shirley is that of freedom: should man be independent and self-willed or should he be loyal, with a sense of duty and responsibility? The voice speaking for religion answers

first in response to this question. The novel begins with an exposure of the wayward and irresponsible young curates who glide through life on the crest of self-indulgence, whose sense of responsibility has been reduced to the vanishing point. Running counter to the lack of Christian service shown by the curates are the actions and attitudes of the other clergymen in the district, particularly Mr. Hall, as well as the occupations of the dedicated churchwomen who people the novel--although the money raised by their needlework and other endeavors is directed away from the starving parishioners and applied instead to "the conversion of the Jews, the seeking up of the ten missing tribes, or to the regeneration of the interesting coloured population of the globe" (I: VII, 122-123).

Of all the local ladies who may live Christian lives two come to the reader's attention. One is Miss Ainley of whom the Vicar of Nunnely says "that her life came nearer the life of Christ than that of any other human being he had ever met with" (I: X, 203). But even with this high praise the author gives a warning against emulating the good woman's ways which may be selfless but are uncritical. The narrator comments, "The clergy were sacred beings in Miss Ainley's eyes: no matter what might be the insignificance of the individual, his station made him holy . . . the white surplice covered a multitude of sins" (I: XIV, 295).

Mrs. Pryor, too, emerges as a truly religious person who has accepted the duties and burdens placed upon her by her creed. Early in the book the reader learns that Shirley's Christian upbringing is the result of Mrs. Pryor's good ways, and Caroline refers to her liberal charities. Yet when the reader is introduced to these women neither seems to have found completion or satisfaction in life.

The author shows Shirley's religious attitude as more appealing if less Christian. That completely independent young woman speaks throughout the novel on the side of freedom and self-direction, yet when her conversation turns to religion her point of view reflects Christian charity. After casually remarking, "'I am always easy of belief when the creed pleases me,'" she explains that her "'landed-proprietor and lord-of-the-manor conscience'" is uneasy. "'To ease my mind, and to prevent harm as far as I can, I mean to enter on a series of good works. Don't be surprised, therefore, if you see me all at once turn outrageously charitable'" (I: XIV, 290). Shirley's good works to her fellowman come closest to suggesting that independence and a response to duty may both exist in one person.

The novel also deals with man's problem in his resistance of organized force. In the area of religion one might suppose that the question would center on the Dissenters' revolt against the Established Church, which it does. But

it is not so much what Charlotte Brontë says of the faithful followers of the Church of England as what she says against Dissenters which indicates how her sympathies lie. The reader learns that the principle of revolt is more important to them than the principles they are revolting against. As Mrs. Yorke says when she suggest that her Dissenting young son stay home from church, "'Martin hates to go to church, but he hates still more to obey'" (II: XXXIV, 295).

The two individual Dissenters who are fully characterized in Shirley turn out to be the arch villains. The mill-owner Robert Moore accuses the Rev. Moses Barraclough, the recognized ringleader in the frame-breaking incident:

"I saw you one night a week ago laid dead-drunk by the roadside, as I returned from Stillbro' market; and while you preach peace, you make it the business of your life to stir up dissention. You no more sympathize with the poor who are in distress, than you sympathize with me: you incite them to outrage for bad purposes of your own; so does the individual called Noah o' Tim's. You two are restless, meddling, impudent scoundrels, whose chief motive principle is a selfish ambition, as dangerous as it is purile."

(I: VIII, 149)

The novel clearly depicts another Dissenter, Michael Hartley, "'that mad Calvinist and Jacobin weaver'" (I: XIII, 259), who avenges Moore's pursuit and apprehension of the frame-breakers by shooting Moore, intending to kill him.

The whole class of Dissenters, grouped and condemned en masse, are mercilessly routed in conflict over a disputed

passage, the "straits of Royd Lane . . . so narrow that only two could walk abreast without falling into the ditch which ran along each side." From one direction comes the Established Church, represented by twelve hundred children of the combined parishes of Whinbury, Nunnely, and Briarfield, reinforced by Sunday School teachers and the full complement of clergy; from the other, "'The Dissenting and Methodist schools, the Baptists, Independents, and Wesleyans, joined in unholy alliance.'" The Chapel is routed by the Church which comes marching firmly, coolly, purposely forward to the stirring notes of "Rule, Britannia" (I: XVII, 334-335).

Of the whole assembly of the faithful of the Established Church, the narrator declares with affectionate allegiance and a cynical plea:

It was a joyous scene, and a scene to do good: it was a day of happiness for rich and poor: the work, first of God, and then of the clergy. Let England's priests have their due: they are a faulty set in some respects, being only of common flesh and blood, like us all; but the land would be badly off without them: Britain would miss her church, if that church fell. God save it! God also reform it!

(I: XVI, 332)

Another major problem presented in the novel, responded to by the three voices, and dealt with on the levels of religion, of economics, and of human relationships concerns the decision man must make between the influence of emotion or reason in his life. In the area of religion the reader sees the security of conventional beliefs, and though reason is too

intellectual a control to imply as guiding the members of the Established Church, at least it can be called anti-emotionalism. Metaphorically Robert suggests the function of the clergy, particularly through the sermon, when he refers to Caroline's corrective influence on him. When she wants him to read Shakespeare, he suggests it is "with a view to making me better; is it to operate like a sermon?"

(I: VI, 97). Later when she chastises him for his unemotional and materialistic proposal to Shirley, he refers to Caroline as his pastor and priestess. Her home life has given her this unresisting acceptance of the sensibility of order based on Christian faith.

She gives every indication of unperturbed acceptance of the Creed. The author only hints of the doubts which beset Caroline. In a time of extreme discouragement, when her loss of Robert seems inevitable, she reminds herself of the accepted belief in the progress of the soul, but she ends by asking, "The soul's real hereafter, who shall guess?"

(I: X, 194). The narrator reports:

Caroline was a Christian; therefore in trouble she framed many a prayer after the Christian creed; preferred it with deep earnestness; begged for patience, strength, relief. . . . She believed, sometimes, that God had turned His face from her. At moments she was a Calvinist, and, sinking into the gulf of religious despair, she saw darkening over her the doom of reprobation.

(II: XX, 36)

The reader may remember that Caroline's earlier choice of poetry was Cowper, that she was stirred by the poet's dread

acceptance of his doom in "The Castaway." So although Caroline seems to find comfort and assurance in the non-emotionalism of her church, the author does not fully assert that such an approach satisfies her.

Shirley's free uninhibited emotional response to nature demonstrates the contrast between emotion and reason. The reader learns that "earth [is] an Eden, life a poem, for Shirley. A still, deep, inborn delight glows in her young veins . . . the pure gift of God to His creature, the free dower of Nature to her child" (I: XXII, 78).

Shirley's declaration of faith in nature has often been quoted. In refusing to go into the church after the excitement of the momentous walk of the Whitsuntide festival, Shirley voices her regret that she will miss the sermon, "'all sense for the Church and all causticity for Schism.'" She tells Caroline:

"Here I must stay . . . Nature is now at her evening prayers. . . . Caroline, I see her! and I will tell you what she is like: she is like what Eve was when she and Adam stood alone on earth."

(II: XVIII, 1-2)

Rejecting the idea of Milton's Eve ("Milton tried to see the first woman; but, Cary, he saw her not. . . . It was his cook that he saw.") Shirley continues:

"I would beg to remind him that the first men of the earth were Titans, and that Eve was their mother: from her sprang Saturn, Hyperion, Oceanus; she bore Prometheus. . . . That Eve is Jehovah's daughter, as Adam was His son. . . . I will stay out here with my mother Eve, in these days called Nature. I love her, undying,

mighty being!"

(II: XVIII, 2-4)

Meanwhile throughout the novel the other voices have been speaking. The second voice, which proposes that by socio-economic means man may make his life truly satisfying, speaks out in answer to the question: should man be independent and self-willed, or should he be loyal, with a sense of duty and responsibility? This question finds its answer among the rioters. Charlotte Brontë introduces individual unemployed workingmen sympathetically, but her sympathy does not go out to the mob in action. The girls, Caroline and Shirley, stay alone at the rectory with two housemaids on the night of the assault on the mill and are threatened with attack by the rioters that night. Only the barking of the Rector's dog frightens the men and saves the girls from attack (II: XIX, 22). But the author offers no sympathy for these men who are over-zealous in asserting their independence against authority.

Asa Briggs in his lecture on the Luddite riots explains that the only answer which the rioters would have accepted after they had reached this pitch of violence would have been the promise of more jobs, a fall in food prices, and a rise in the standard of living.⁷ Charlotte Brontë does not propose that such an answer could come from Robert Moore or from any

⁷ Briggs, op. cit., p. 214.

mill-owner. Moore, with his export trade stopped entirely by Orders in Council, is on the brink of bankruptcy. He suffers the breakage of his frames by the rioters, their destructive attack on his mill, and finally the vengeful attempted murder on his person. He cannot, through prosperity, and will not, through sympathy, give the rioting workers any of the things they demand.

Charlotte Brontë, wisely guided by history, offers no solution for the conflict between worker and mill-owner. That her sympathy is with the poor may be gathered from her often-quoted statement: "Misery generates hate" (I: II, 30), a statement which, as Asa Briggs points out, was later selected by Sir William Beveridge for the motto of his Full Employment in a Free Society of 1944.⁸ Others in his community praise Moore, on his part, for his hard spirit, his determined cast of mind, his scorn of low enemies, and his resolution not "to truckle to the mob" (I: VI, 101). He exhibits the courage to stand strong for his beliefs, though other manufacturers, dreading assassination, neither defend their own rights nor side with those who do. But Caroline points out to Robert Moore that "'there is something wrong in your notions of the best means of attaining happiness'" (and this is essentially the theme of the whole story) "'as there

⁸Ibid., p. 215.

is . . . in your manner . . . to these Yorkshire workpeople'" (I: V, 77).

Charlotte Brontë again poses the serious problem: man must make the choice between the desire for independence and the less pleasant demands of duty. Again later in the novel she supplies the answer offered by the same second voice, the voice speaking for man's livelihood, for a socio-economic answer to life's problems. Caroline's despair over her frustrated love for Robert, her loneliness in the home of her unemotional uncle, and her desire to avoid the misery and dependence of the spinsters in her community, all cause her to want to become a governess, the only position for which she feels suited. She and Shirley discuss woman's prospects in business:

"Caroline . . . don't you wish you had a profession--a trade?"

"I wish it fifty times a day. As it is, I often wonder what I came into the world for. I long to have something absorbing and compulsory to fill my head and my hands, and to occupy my thoughts."

"Can labour alone make a human being happy?"

And here again the question strikes at the heart of the book.

Caroline answers:

"No; but it can give varieties of pain, and prevent us from breaking our hearts with a single tyrant master-torture. Besides, successful labour has its recompense; a vacant, weary, lonely, hopeless life has none."

(I: XII, 250)

But when Mrs. Pryor hears of Caroline's idea of going to work

in a stranger's house, the former governess reveals the odiousness of the position, the degradation of treatment, and the isolation.

Louis Moore gives a second sounding of this same note. As the tutor of Henry Sympson (and the former tutor of Shirley while she lived with her uncle Sympson), he moves outside the family circle as a satellite, scorned by his employers. In his moment of action and independence, when Louis Moore the suitor stands before the woman he has selected to be his wife, he rejects his menial position as tutor as his major gesture of self-assertion. He declares to Shirley, "' . . . for the first time I stand before you myself. I have flung off the tutor, and beg to introduce you to the man: and remember, he is a gentleman'" (II: XXXVI, 334). The question of dignity and respect emerges as an essential part of the conflict between independence and duty.

The second voice of the contrapuntal composition picks up the current problem of man and his impatience with organized force and answers it in a way which is strident and violent in its proposition. The workers are human beings, the machinery of the woolen industry is the force they cannot tolerate. An early statement in the novel explains the situation:

Misery generates hate: these sufferers hated the machines which they believed took their bread from them: they hated the buildings which contained those machines; they hated the manufacturers who owned those buildings.

In the parish of Briarfield, with which we have at present to do, Hollow's Mill was the place held most abominable; Gérard Moore, in his double character of semi-foreigner and thoroughgoing progressist, the man most abominated. And it perhaps rather agreed with Moore's temperment than otherwise to be generally hated; especially when he believed the thing for which he was hated a right and expedient thing. . . .

(I: II, 30-31)

Moore declares his position in an argument with the fanatic Barraclough:

"Here I stay; and by this mill I stand; and into it will I convey the best machinery inventors can furnish. What will you do? The utmost you can do--and this you will never dare to do--is burn down my mill, destroy its contents, and shoot me. What then? Suppose that building was a ruin and I was a corpse, what then?--you lads behind these two scamps, would that stop invention or exhaust science?--Not for the fraction of a second of time! Another and better gig mill would rise on the ruins of this, and perhaps a more enterprising owner come in my place."

(I: VIII, 149)

But workers are human beings, trapped by socio-economic problems beyond their control or comprehension, stubbornly determined to resist the inhumanity of the force working against them.

William Farren, one of the saner rioters, declares that "'them that governs mun find a way to help us: they mun mak' fresh orderations'" (I: VIII, 151). But "them that governs" neither find a way to help the workers nor to relieve the mill-owners until June 18, 1812, when "the Orders in Council were repealed, and the blockaded ports thrown open" (II: XXXVII, 351). As the workers chafe against the inhumanity of the machines that are robbing them of livelihood, so

the mill-owners chafe against the regulations of the government which drive them toward bankruptcy. Men like Yorke and Moore suffer from the results of the war against Napoleon which seems never-ending; they urge peace at any price. They feel they cannot hold out until the British shall eventually win. Their struggle against stringencies and restrictions causes them to favor capitulation. The harder they are plagued from below, the more stubborn their resistance; the harder they are repressed from above, the more eager they are for national compromise. Their politics grow "'narrow, selfish, and unpatriotic'" according to the loyal Tories (I: XI, 224). The worker becomes angered by the machinery, by the inhumanity of the mill-owners who do not care about starvation and degradation; the mill-owner becomes angered by the war-time restrictions, by the unfeeling government which does not care about his imminent financial collapse. The voice which speaks for man's salvation by socio-economic means tells of the problem, tells of it from the first chapter in the book to the last, in one form or another, but nowhere offers a solution for man's problems except through the miracle of Wellington's military success.

Throughout the novel the second voice of the composition has been making its statement concerning the values of emotion and reason in man's life. Suffering and desperation goad the rioters; a hate which directs them goads them

to action. William Farren says simply of Robert Moore, "'Folks hate him'" (II: XVIII, 8), and Robert Moore is shot in revenge. And yet the rioting accomplishes nothing. Moore continues to bring in wagon-loads of frames, then continues to store his goods waiting for the lifting of the Orders of Council. As the rioters attack with violence, so are they repressed with violence: battled against by civilian and soldier, arrested, imprisoned, transported, even executed. Emotion drives them to violence, violence overtakes them.

Moore combats this with a clear mind and well-formulated plans. Rational belief in his rights fortifies him and makes him calm in the face of danger. Caroline says of him, "'Mr. Moore himself hates nobody; he only wants to to his duty, and maintain his rights . . .'" (II: XVIII, 9). At the moment of attack he has arranged for the support of friends and soldiers; he has fortified his mill; he does not fire on the rioters until they have fired on the mill. After the attack he rides for the doctor to aid the injured rioters, but in a like unemotional manner he sets out to bring the ring-leaders to justice. He finds employment for the destitute William Farren--but without revealing his part in the matter. He remains unemotional and controlled in all he does until two experiences change him. One concerns marriage. In a moment of rationalized assurance that Shirley is attracted to him and that he should be "'rich with her, and ruined

without her,'" vowing that he "'would be practical, and not romantic'" (II: XXX, 235), he proposes marriage--in a manner as blundering and unemotionally candid as could be devised. Shirley's scornful rejection of him does much to arouse doubts about the efficacy of reason. He leaves the community that same night in search of the malfactors who incited the rioters and does not return until they have all been apprehended. On the ride home to the Hollow after months away this second experience takes place: Moore is shot and almost killed. His brush with death, followed by his convalescence during two lonely months of isolation in the Yorke upstairs bedroom, adds to his understanding of himself and his emotions. His treatment of the man who shot him most clearly defines his change in attitude:

The murderer was never punished; for the good reason that he was never caught; the result of the further circumstances that he was never pursued. . . . Mr. Moore knew who had shot him, and all Briarfield knew; it was no other than Michael Hartley, the half-crazed weaver once before alluded to, a frantic Antinomian in religion, and a mad leveller in politics; the poor soul died of delirium tremens, a year after the attempt on Moore, and Robert gave his wretched widow a guinea to bury him.

(II: XXXVII, 349)

The third voice, the voice suggesting that through human relationships one may find the solution to life's problems, speaks to the question involving independence and duty throughout the novel. In estimating woman's place in the scheme of life, both Caroline and Shirley find that

woman has not yet been assigned to a satisfactory position--with one very important exception, that of the well-beloved wife.

Shirley has a vigorous response to her treatment. She claims to be as masculine as her name, refers to herself as "'Shirley Keeldar, Esquire,'" and invites the local gentlemen to choose her as churchwarden, as magistrate, as captain of yeomanry (I: XI, 223). Later she confides to Caroline, "'Men, I believe, fancy women's minds something like those of children'" (II: XX, 37). The passion Shirley allows to enter into the rendering of a song troubles the minds of the listening representatives of the upper class:

Was it proper to sing with such expression, with such originality--so unlike a school-girl? Decidedly not: it was strange, it was unusual. What was strange must be wrong; what was unusual must be improper. Shirley was judged.

(II: XXXI, 248)

According to the observations made by Caroline and Shirley, they most dread to become dependent spinsters. The dread of the dependency of spinsterhood overshadows the novel and causes Caroline to want to become a governess. In pondering the question concerning her place in the world, Caroline finds that her desire for independence will not allow her to submerge herself in petty, unappreciated duties towards others.

The alternative, marriage, seems to lead more likely to a state of misery than one of compatibility and sympathy.

The consequence of a bad marriage stands always before them. Mr. Helstone's marriage embittered him; that of Caroline's mother and father ended in separation; Mrs. Pryor--before she discloses that she is Caroline's mother--speaks out against her own marriage. When Caroline suggests to her that "'where affection is reciprocal and sincere, and minds are harmonious, marriage must be happy,'" Mrs. Pryor replies, "It is never wholly happy. Two people can never literally be as one" (II: XXI, 68). Minor characters reinforce this impression.

Ideal marriage forms part of the dreams and confidences of Caroline and Shirley, as it does for most young women, then and now. Kindness must be one of the characteristics of the men who will win them. And by this word they are implying that their husbands will treat them with respect and consideration, will make them feel wanted, will save them from isolation. After a plea against passion--words which will be cancelled out by later action--Shirley praises the quality in a man which all of Charlotte Bronte's heroines admire. Caroline, stimulated by the talk of woman's rights and woman's independence, asks:

"But are we men's equals or are we not?"

"Nothing ever charms me more than when I meet my superior--one who makes me sincerely feel that he is my superior."

"Did you ever meet him?"

"I should be glad to see him any day: the higher above me, so much the better: it degrades to stoop--it is glorious to look up."

(I: XII, 238)

So the essential conflict announced by the voice speaking for resolution through human relationships is a conflict solved by compromise. Woman must be independent--that is, she must be valued for herself--but she must simultaneously devote herself to the duties of her marriage, the duties of respecting, honoring, and looking up to her husband--her superior.

This third voice responds to the problem of man overpowered by inhuman organized force, speaking for man's salvation through the understanding of other men. On this level man--or woman--struggles against society, that is, against the social conventions and restriction of class and the acquired reputation perpetuated by gossip.

This powerful inhuman force, the force of gossip, victimizes Caroline. She knows little of her parents, and accepts without question what she hears about them. Her father she knows by more than reputation, by a vague and unpleasant childhood memory. But her mother seems equally real to her, yet real only through gossip. Mr. Helstone takes pride in never having mentioned Caroline's parents to his niece during the twelve years she has lived in his house. The narrator reports that,

. . . never in her life had she heard her mother

praised: whoever mentioned her, mentioned her coolly. Her uncle seemed to regard his sister-in-law with a sort of tacit antipathy; an old servant . . . spoke with chilling reserve; sometimes called her "queer," sometimes said she did not understand her.

(I: XI, 207)

When Mrs. Pryor identifies herself, Caroline cries out, "My own mother! is she one I can be so fond of as I can of you? People generally did not like her, so I have been given to understand," to which Mrs. Pryor answers, "They told you that? Well, your mother now tells you, that, not having the gift to please people generally, for their approbation she does not care . . ." (II: XXIV, 123).

But more powerful than the depersonalized force of gossip is the seemingly impenetrable barrier of class. Louis Moore as tutor has lost his heart to Shirley Keeldar, his pupil, long before the novel begins. Through their love story Charlotte Brontë presents the conflict of man against organization, tutor against the snobbery of class. And the voice, the third voice in the complex contrapuntal structure, speaks for hope through the adjustment of human relationships. Louis is moneyless, a scorned and belittled tutor, and his position is clear. Shirley, while completely free from the prejudices and narrow-minded snobbery of her class, suffers from pressure by her family; but she primarily fears that the man she loves may be humble or subservient--not her master. She tells her uncle (but not in Louis' presence), "I will accept no hand which cannot hold me in check."

She completely rejects her uncle and the standards of their class. She tells him:

"Your thoughts are not my thoughts, your aims are not my aims, your gods are not my gods. We do not view things in the same light; we do not measure them by the same standard; we hardly speak the same tongue."
(II: XXXI, 261)

But Shirley must do more than cast off the class restrictions imposed by such as her uncle. The strength of this third voice proposes a workable compromise between the heiress, proud and independent, and the tutor who has been subjected to social chastisement over the years.

Louis conducts his courtship on two premises which at first glance seem outrageously impracticable. They are: that as Shirley's superior he will raise her by marriage, and that she appeals to him because of her faults. He asserts his first power over her by winning the loyalty of her dog Tartar, usually sullen and unfriendly to any but Shirley, now devoted to Louis--deserting his place of honor by Shirley's feet to go to Louis' side whenever he appears. One word and one gesture are enough to cause the great dog to leave his mistress and rest against the knee of the tutor. Such power extends beyond the dog.

Louis recognizes his power over Shirley. She first relinquishes herself to his control when she turns to him after she has been bitten by a mad dog, telling him that she has cauterized the wound herself, but expects the worst.

After giving him the responsibility for action in case of dire need she becomes pacified and untroubled. He remembers the interview with a new sense of power:

" . . . it was unutterably sweet to feel myself at once near her and above her: to be conscious of a natural right and power to sustain her, as a husband should sustain his wife."

(II: XXIX, 223)

As he finally forces their relationship to a moment when a mutual declaration of love can no longer be avoided he again becomes aware of his power. He notes, "'I suppose I hardly was like my usual self, for I scared her; that I could see: it was right; she must be scared to be won'" (II: XXXVI, 334).

Shirley, too, recognizes his power. One look betrays her when she and Caroline share confidences. Caroline reports, "'Whatever I am, Shirley is a bondswoman. Lioness! she has found her captor. Mistress she may be of all around her--but her own mistress she is not'" (II: XXXV, 316).

But the power is not one-sided. In a way new to Victorian love stories this novel conveys the strong physical attraction which Shirley exerts upon Louis. The potential passion suggested in the adolescent Henry Sympson and Martin Yorke comes into full maturity in the relationship between Shirley and Louis. When they joke about an imaginary courtship of his it leads to a direct confrontation between them. She taunts him:

"Never would you have gathered the produce of the gold-bearing garden. You have not the courage to confront the sleepless dragon."

To which he replies:

"You look hot and haughty."

"And you far haughtier. Yours is the monstrous pride which counterfeits humility."

"I am a dependent: I know my place."

"I am a woman: I know mine."

(II: XXXVI, 329-330)

But the most vivid revelation of the association between them occurs in Shirley's withdrawal into isolation after she has publicly accepted Louis as her fiancé. A week after they have declared their affection and demonstrated their relationship to Shirley's uncle, after the promises have been exchanged and the vows given, Louis finds himself bewildered by Shirley's strange attitude:

"I am not easy--not tranquil: I am tantalised--sometimes tortured. To see her now, one would think she had never pressed her cheek to my shoulder, or clung to me with tenderness or trust. I feel unsafe: she renders me miserable: I am shunned when I visit her: she withdraws from my reach. Once, this day, I lifted her face, resolved to get a full look down her deep, dark eyes: difficult to describe what I read there! Pantheress!--beautiful forest-born!--wily, tameless, peerless nature! She gnaws her chain: I see the white teeth working at the steel! She has dreams of her wild woods, and pinnings after virgin freedom.

(II: XXXVI, 343)

Unwilling to submit to his powers, she cannot find satisfaction without him. Having finally agreed on the day for the marriage,

. . . vanquished and restricted, she pined, like any other chained denizen of deserts. Her captor alone could cheer her; his society only could make amends for

the lost privilege of liberty: in his absence, she sat or wandered alone; spoke little, and ate less.

(II: XXXVII, 352)

Charlotte Brontë writes of something more than that matching of man to woman, a romantic pairing off, in the human compromise which will lead to happiness. Shirley and Louis suggest the first compromise half-laughingly, in the tone of Mirabell and Millamant. Louis declares:

"I have you: you are mine. . . . our lives are riveted: our lots intertwined."

"And are we equal then, sir? Are we equal at last?"

"You are younger, frailer, feebler, more ignorant than I."

"Will you be good to me and never tyrannize?"

"Will you let me breathe, and not bewilder me?"
(II: XXXVI, 336)

But the true compromise comes when Shirley reveals that the langor with which she meets all problems before her wedding day, her resignation of all responsibility, has behind it the best of motives. The narrator discloses:

She furthered no preparations for her nuptials; Louis was himself obliged to direct all arrangements: he was virtually master of Fieldhead, weeks before he became so nominally: the least presumptuous, the kindest master that ever was; but with his lady absolute. She abdicated without a word or a struggle. "Go to Mr. Moore; ask Mr. Moore," was her answer when applied to for orders. Never was wooer of wealthy bride so thoroughly absolved from the subaltern part; so inevitably compelled to assume a paramount character.

In all this, Miss Keeldar partly yielded to her disposition; but a remark she made a year afterwards proved that she partly also acted on system. "Louis," she said, "would never have learned to rule, if she had not

ceased to govern: the incapacity of the sovereign had developed the powers of the premier."

(II: XXXVII, 352-353)

Thus the voice for human relationships declares above the other voices in the fictional fugue that man's happiness relies on his winning over inhuman forces, in making personal adjustments and in overcoming the restrictions imposed by others.

Throughout the novel the third voice has been speaking and holding silent, and then speaking again. Over and over the voice which declares that man's problems may be solved by human reconciliation offers tentative suggestions which might lead to man's happiness. The area of man's association with other men is explored and explained, demonstrating what happens to those who follow their emotions, what happens to those who depend on reason for guidance. The author favors emotion.

Caroline, a young woman of natural affections and easily stirred emotions, has, for twelve years, met with silence and sternness from her uncle the rector who considers all females weak and inferior. The most casual reader recognizes her love for Robert Moore as Moore must too. Yet Caroline sees that he tries to divert this affection into a relationship less emotional, though just as familiar. She believes that her problem is that "she had loved without being asked to love--a natural, sometimes an inevitable

chance, but big with misery" (I: VII, 116). The use of the idiom of gestation gives added poignance to her despair. She later tells Shirley, "'Love hurts us so, Shirley: it is so tormenting, so racking, and it burns away our strength with its flame . . .'" (I: XIV, 289). As a result of this frustration of natural emotions Caroline attempts to live by reason, an artificially induced rationality imposed by self-discipline. She makes a conscious decision: "She will determine to look on life steadily, as it is; to begin to learn its several truths seriously, and to study its knotty problems closely, conscientiously" (I: VII, 116).

Caroline responds to repression of emotion by failing in health. The fever she contracts she cannot overcome, only the health-giving emotion aroused between her and her newly-found mother gives her the will to recover. Caroline, in her exceptional modesty and unassuming humility, has managed to overlook all the hints dropped by Robert Moore that in him reason and circumstance have subdued hope and emotion. Moore states to Yorke on two separate occasions that these are not the times for marrying, and a man on the brink of bankruptcy may not have a private life. He says as much to Caroline on many occasions, hinting of the day coming when he can speak out, of the demand he will put on her, of the fact that his heart is no longer his own.

His overt acts are of two kinds: he admits to

Caroline that he sees her form when she is not there--in a crowded room, in the blowing of a white curtain in an empty room; and he tries to delay their partings--once when they hear her uncle coming he declares, "'I don't want to go; on the contrary I want to stay'" (I: XIII, 281), and again when she visits him after the shooting he inquires, "'Why must you always go, Lina, at the very instant when I most want you to stay?'" to which Caroline replies, "'Because you most wish to retain when you are most certain to lose'" (II: XXXV, 319). Finally, when Wellington's success and the government's response improve Robert's economic conditions, his rational behavior then allows him to act in his own behalf and offer marriage to Caroline. Even then, he uses a practical approach, but his motivation is purely emotional.

The balance tips towards emotion. The voice which claims that human beings may solve their problems by working out satisfactory relationships, one with the other, has not much to say for the wholly rational being. Robert is the nearest man to the rational one, and yet he too has suffered an adjustment and a mutation. He gives in to the emotions which he has been sublimating. He selects, for his counterpart, a young woman who has always appealed to him through her feminine sensitivity, one lovely and whole only when she allows her emotions to flow freely. He sees his brother,

superficially calm and aloof but basically turbulent, married to a young woman of undisclosed emotional depths. He notes the compromise which these two have made to find completion. His only stronghold on reason is his restraint from emotional alliance until the practical problem of a pending bankruptcy has been solved by orders of parliament.

The reader is asked to accept the conclusion which seems to come from the novel: that in religious life alone man cannot find the solution to his problems; that in the association of worker and employer, in the attack on socio-economic troubles, man cannot find his salvation; that man's only hope for happiness and completion rests in his ability to create an interpersonal understanding built on the companionship which ends isolation, on man's respect for woman's abilities, and on woman's worshipful acknowledgment of man as her master and superior: in short, in the compatible marriage. Charlotte Brontë does not suggest that all marriages are good marriages, or that all women--or even all men--will marry. She suggests, though, that the ideal state is that of genuinely reciprocal married love. She idealizes this condition by creating an image of Man and Woman, not specific but generic, a Caroline-Shirley marrying a Moore.

The first indication that she wants to show the two sides of man and the two sides of woman, as contrasted to

the individualized characters in the novel, comes in her reference to man's two natures in the words of Robert Moore:

"I find in myself, Lina, two natures; one for the world and business, and one for home and leisure. Gerard Moore is a hard dog, brought up to mill and market: the person you call your cousin Robert is sometimes a dreamer, who lives elsewhere than in Cloth-hall and counting house."

(I: XIII, 280)

Caroline recognizes his two natures when she sees him "smiling in his way which gave a remarkable cast of sweetness to his mouth, while his brow remained grave . . ." (I: XVI, 319). Later, meeting him unexpectedly after a social event she notes that "his social hilarity was gone: he had left it behind him in the joy-echoing fields round the school; what remained now was his dark, quiet, business countenance" (I: XVII, 349).

The reader first envisions the two sides of Robert Moore, as the narrator says "the same man, only seen on a different side" (I: VIII, 144); then the reader sees the person of Moore moving in two directions within the frame of the story, called by two names: Robert and Louis, representing--in his personal reaction to a series of situations and circumstances--the complete man. Walter Allen in The English Novel suggests that "in the brothers Moore there are two Rochesters, diminished and tamed to fit an action and a

background that had to be broadly realistic."⁹ But the hero is not so much two Rochesters as one Moore--the outwardly rational and inwardly emotional Man.

Similarly the author presents only one woman, emotional and responsive Woman, journeying in the guise of Caroline and Shirley, cancelling out--by their very reflective natures--the idea of duplication. R. B. Martin notes that "each has qualities the other lacks. If Shirley has courage, dignity, and pride, Caroline has boundless sympathy with those she loves."¹⁰ Here are the two natures of woman, not split in one person, as Moore seems to be in the beginning of the story, but in two selves which, united, fulfill the requirements for womanhood. Martin further suggests that in Shirley and Caroline, Charlotte Brontë "splits the consciousness that Jane [Eyre] represents into two parts."¹¹ And when these two parts are united the reader becomes aware of the universality of the character just as in the character of Robert-Louis and begins to sense, then, that the ultimate solution for mankind is demonstrated in the compatible marriage of these universalized characters.

The prominence of the third voice, this voice of human

⁹Walter Allen, The English Novel (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1954), p. 219.

¹⁰Martin, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

¹¹Ibid., p. 122.

compatibility, becomes the dominant theme at the close of the novel. Charlotte Brontë pays final lip-service to the influence of the Established Church in the community and to the importance of economic security in attaining domestic tranquility. But the possibility that Caroline-and-Robert and Shirley-and-Louis will live useful, complete lives results directly from their having made the compromise of personality and the adjustment of circumstances to assure a compatible marriage. So says the third voice.

Charlotte Brontë has attempted a most complex and delicately balanced structure in Shirley. This young but skillful writer interweaves the three voices, though they appear at times random and interruptive, achieving harmony through polyphony--an early attempt at what was to be so magnificently accomplished by Joyce in Ulysses--what Northrop Frye has called a unity "built up from an intricate scheme of parallel contrasts."¹²

¹²Northrop Frye, "Specific Continuous Forms" in "Rhetorical Criticism: Theory of Genres," Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 314. Jacob Korg, in the only serious structural study of the novel ("The Problem of Unity in Shirley," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XII, September 1957, 125-136) suggests that the characters exist in three concentric circles around the center which is egoism, embodied in the dog Tartar. Unfortunately the idea of the rings would hold true for almost any novel, where the protagonist and friends hold the center of interest, his associates move around at a little distance, the people he knows only slightly exist in the circle farthest removed from the center.

Charlotte Brontë had neither the experience nor the intuitive craftsmanship to succeed absolutely in creating such an involved organization. But she demonstrates skill in counterbalancing voice against voice, persuasion against persuasion. She creates an organic unity in which each voice retains its individuality while allowing the message of the author to reach the reader through that one voice which dominates.

Much of Shirley's distinctive quality results from the author's handling of language--some excellent, some reprehensible--through diction, power of description, choice of point of view, and use of other literary devices.

Charlotte Brontë uses diction in the speech of the characters to differentiate to some extent among the three voices of the counterpoint. Much of the time the reader cannot tell from the language itself which voice is speaking; he must depend on action and authorial comment. But the church group, the mill workers, and the young people in their courtship scenes in the homes have differences in their manner of speech. For the most part, the clergy and the churchwomen speak in Charlotte Brontë's manner: the English pure (with some syntactical and grammatical problems); the allusions biblical and homeletic, with a smattering of the Classics and standard British authors; the attitude, on the whole, reasonable and conservative. An exception

appears in the curates, especially Mr. Donne, a Southerner. His accent and idiom invite Yorkshire ridicule. The narrator indicates through phonetic spelling where the humor lies: "'When I gor him' (such was Mr. Donne's pronounciation) about to spring, I thought I should have fainted'" (I: XV, 308).

The simple workmen in the mill speak in dialect, but a dialect neither so phonetically spelled nor so accurately recorded word by word that the reader cannot follow. Charlotte Brontë includes interesting diction of the trade in the everyday speech of people of the area. Moore calls one rioter "'a double-dyed hypocrite'" (I: VIII, 147), and Caroline tells the foreman, "'My notions are dyed in faster colours than yours, Joe'" (II: XVIII, 13). Moore, after his proposal based on materialistic ambitions, admits his error to Shirley and complains that "'it has won me bitter wages . . .'" (II: XXX, 239).

In a similar use of metaphor to indicate character, Louis, the penniless suitor of an heiress, says that he would "'reward'" an imaginary bride with his love, and would be "'repaid a thousandfold.'" Shirley, in retaliation, accuses him of having a pride which "'counterfeits humility'" (II: XXXVI, 230). Shirley has already implied her emotional attachment to Louis Moore when, in her refusal of Robert, she continually refers to a brother-sister affection.

Although he does not know of his brother's involvement, Robert reports the "sense of Cain-like desolation" (II: XXX, 239) which he feels at the time.

Both Robert and Louis Moore naturally lapse into French on occasion, particularly for terms of endearment. The reader finds it harder to understand the smattering of French in the interior monologues of the Yorkshire school-boy, Martin Yorke--for though his father has been presented as almost bilingual, no indication of continental influence shows in their home. Caroline occasionally speaks with a stilted pomposity, religiously associating New Testament mottos and Old Testament heroes generally admired in Sunday School lessons, and seemingly dependent on the single-volume editions of the literary giants found in a rectory parlor bookcase. However, this does not seem at all out of character.

Although the population between the covers of Shirley threatens at times to equal the combined parish registries of Nunnely, Briarfield, and Whinbury, the reader has little difficulty in distinguishing one character from another nor in separating them into the categories of interest which are here being called the voices of the fugue. The clergy and churchwomen form one group, although they speak at times for economics. The mill workers and owners form the second voice. The courting couples and their

families and friends form the third voice, although these, too, speak of the other concerns. Diction partly clarifies this grouping.

Charlotte Brontë's descriptive abilities come into play throughout the novel. The narrator sets the stage in descriptive passages which make clear the geographic locations of homes and scenes of action. The descriptions of Briarmains and Fieldhead are particularly praise-worthy, also the atmosphere of the ancient forest of Nunnwood which Shirley and Caroline plan to visit and the woodland solitude in which Caroline encounters young Martin Yorke. Inga-Stina Ewbank suggests that "Charlotte's language only becomes truly imaginative when she is working on a mind in an agony of passion,"¹³ yet it seems hardly possible to find more poetic passages than those in which Charlotte Brontë describes the isolation of man in nature--such a passage, for example, as the one which includes the statement that:

. . . there came a day when the wind ceased to sob at the eastern gable of the Rectory, and at the oriel window of the church. A little cloud like a man's hand arose in the west: gusts from the same quarter drove it on and spread it wide; wet and tempest prevailed a while.

(II: XXV, 135)

Another such passage declares:

This is an autumn evening, wet and wild. There is

¹³Inga-Stina Ewbank, Their Proper Sphere (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 183.

only one cloud in the sky; but it curtains it from pole to pole. The wind cannot rest: it hurries sobbing over hills of sullen outline, colourless with twilight and mist. The rain has beat all day on that church tower: it rises dark from the strong enclosure of its graveyard: the nettles, the long grass, and the tombs all drip with wet.

(II: XXIII, 100)

The author's historic descriptions, while handled lightly and informatively, come a little late in the novel for the casual twentieth-century reader. Those who know the Luddite riots as early examples of worker-resistance, and know little more, unless roused to research, are left with a hazy half-comprehension until they reach the final pages of the final chapter to set them straight on the relation of dates to historic facts. The topical interest in national events must have carried the nineteenth-century reader sailing boldly into a thoroughly understandable situation, but some of the universality of the appeal of the story becomes hampered by the author's assumption of reader awareness of facts.

In the matter of the handling of point of view Charlotte Brontë has left something to be desired. With the planned interweaving of three distinctly separated voices it is impossible for the author to depend, as she has in the past and will again in Villette, on the single confession of the first-person narrator. The difficulty in Shirley is that there is a fluctuation among kinds of narration: one part seems to be coming from a full dramatized

narrator, materialized off and on throughout the book to include the reader in a personal relationship, and particularly discernible as a person in the opening and closing of the novel. This narrator makes the reader aware of time, partially by slipping occasionally into the present tense, but mostly by asserting, in the final passage of the book, dates and changes which have been made by time.

Two completely personal passages, describing events of which the narrator claims to have been reminded by something in the story, are in no way integrated into the action or theme of Shirley and seem to serve merely as the outlet for personal reminiscence by the dramatized narrator-- suspiciously appropriate to the author's personal experiences. One (I: XIV, 300), appears to be a reference to Mme. Héger of the school in Brussels; the other (II: XXIII, 100), to the death of Mary Taylor's sister. There is an omniscient narrator, undramatized, who speaks of the future of the Taylor children and who appears to be self-critical of the style of writing, explaining, within the text and even in a footnote, the use of French words in place of English (a use which, nonetheless, irritates as being pseudo-intellectual and affected). One cannot improve on the simplicity of the words of Walter Allen who, after criticizing the inclusion of the curates, remarks that,

"the omniscient narrator is also a bore."¹⁴

Charlotte Brontë's dependence on obvious literary devices seems to have resulted from her decision to divide her message into three contrapuntal voices. Almost all of the scenes in which Caroline takes part are shown from Caroline's point of view--a negation of the omniscience introduced elsewhere.¹⁵ But the author must relate the emotions and personal reactions of some of the other characters. She does so partly through the dialogue, as when Robert Moore recounts his proposal to Shirley verbatim to his friend Yorke and later to Caroline. But the reader finds himself embarrassed by the contrived revelation of Louis' interest in Shirley, when the tutor recites, word for word, the schoolgirl composition which she had written years before. The author uses a notebook of intimate confessions to reveal Louis' inmost thoughts and feelings, as well as the exact dialogue between him and Shirley. The narrator asks the reader to "come near, by all means, reader:

¹⁴Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

¹⁵And this leads to a deception of the reader, who sees the affair developing between Shirley and Robert as Caroline sees it and is therefore surprised and quite possibly annoyed when he finds that his view is personal, biased, and not authorial. The same kind of deception takes place in the hiding of Mrs. Pryor's identity until Caroline discovers it--this identification, known to some of the characters in the story but not known to the reader, is a reversal of dramatic irony.

do not be shy: stoop over his shoulder fearlessly, and read as he scribbles" (II: XXIX, 221). Equally contrived is the suspense created by timely interruption of the tête-à-têtes of Robert and Caroline, just at the point in the dialogue when Robert may be expected to acknowledge his affection.

As for the allusions within the book, many fall into the area of public domain, that seemingly bottomless traveler's pack of classical, biblical, and historic names--supposedly connotative; fragments of the precepts of Christ; verses from hymns and old ballads; and obvious--if generalized--references to Shakespeare and Milton. Less commonplace are some of Charlotte Brontë's other allusions. She mentions, though does not quote, several French writers whose names may serve to enlighten some of her readers: Chenier, Rousseau, Racine, Corneille, La Fontaine, St. Pierre, and Bossuet. Beyond the standard British authors called upon to give depth to the novel, the author mentions some less usual ones: Christopher Smart, William Cowper, and Mrs. Radcliffe. Goldsmith arrives obliquely through a reference to Tony Lumpkin's mother; Congreve, by the suggestion of an echo of the bargaining scene between Mirabell and Millamant; Carlyle, by metaphoric use of "the whole garment" and "a rent sleeve;" and Burns, by an uncredited couplet from "Tam O'Shanter." The characters in Shirley respond to allusions nicely--when Mrs. Pryor suggests that

Caroline "let the morrow take thought for the things of itself," Caroline answers by referring to the "evil of the day" (II: XXI, 63). There is also an occasional allusion Charlotte Brontë uses ironically, as when the narrator reports that under the new curate, Mr. Macarthy, the church schools flourished "like green bay trees" (II: XXXVII, 348).

Out of her own personal interest, Charlotte Brontë credits Admiral Nelson with his title of the Duke of Brontë (II: XXVI, 158) and uses "wuthering" as an adjective (II: XXXIII, 289). Robert's nurse, Mrs. Horsfall, has a name of historic interest, the actual surname of a gentleman of Marsden, outspoken in his sympathy for the mill-owners of Leeds, and consequently murdered by Luddite rioters of April 28, 1811.¹⁶

Of Charlotte Brontë's skill in writing, only a few examples need be mentioned. The use of repetition with variation in the beginning of the first paragraphs of the book promises well for the style to follow. The first paragraph's opening, "Of late years, an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of England: they lie very thick on the hills . . ." is changed, in the opening of the third paragraph, to read, "Of late years, I say, an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of

¹⁶Briggs, op. cit., p. 208.

England; but in eighteen-hundred-eleven-twelve that affluent rain had not descended" (I: I, 1-2). Sentence cadence varies effectively. Such sentences as, "Total ruin I know will follow loss, and I am aware that gain is doubtful; but I am quite cheerful: so long as I can be active, so long as I can strive, so long, in short, as my hands are not tied, it is impossible for me to be depressed'" (I: XVI, 320) contrast with those like, "The funds prospered" (I: XVI, 319). Charlotte Brontë demonstrates rhetorical control in cumulative paragraphs, built from terse statements of truth to the ramifications of the emotional reaction to those truths, as in the paragraph beginning, "Misery generates hate" (I: II, 30). (See pages 107 and 109 of this study.)

It is a popular attitude that one should sense failure in Charlotte Brontë's book Shirley. More distractions and tangents have waylaid critics of this book than have beset reviewers of any other of her novels. From Lewes' review in 1850 to whatever else is being said at this exact moment, reviewers, critics, and readers, expectant of another Jane Eyre, have expressed disappointment in the novel which must have seemed to the author at the time to be the finest work she could produce. Charlotte Brontë wrote to James Taylor:

Shirley is disparaged in comparison with Jane Eyre; and yet I took great pains with Shirley. I did not hurry; I tried to do my best, and my own impression

was that it was not inferior to the former work; indeed I had bestowed on it more thought and anxiety . . .¹⁷

Mrs. Gaskell picks up the author's own words and continues in the biography:

Miss Brontë took extreme pains with Shirley. She felt that the fame she had acquired imposed upon her a double responsibility. She tried to make her novel like a piece of actual life,--feeling sure that, if she but represented the product of personal experience and observation truly, good would come out of it in the long run. She carefully studied the different reviews and criticisms that had appeared in Jane Eyre, in hopes of extracting precepts and advice from which to profit.¹⁸

Shirley was the author's third novel to be written, second to be published. She began writing it in the last months of 1847 and continued to write throughout the next two years. The novel was published in October 1849. For critics whose primary concern is biographical these dates are of the utmost importance. The unified small band of Brontë writers had their hours of triumph in 1847 when each of the three sisters published her first novel--and when the devoted sisters still held some hope for the brilliant future they had all anticipated for their favored brother

¹⁷Charlotte Brontë to James Taylor on September 5, 1850, in Shorter, op. cit., letter 466, II, 166.

¹⁸Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, The Life of Charlotte Brontë (London, J. M. Dent and Sons, 1908), p. 277. Additional letters from Mrs. Gaskell may be found in The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell edited by J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966) which gives a vivid account of Mrs. Gaskell's relationship with Charlotte Brontë.

Branwell. But before Charlotte had advanced well into Shirley, she alone was left. The deaths of Branwell, Emily, and Anne followed hard on one another during eight months of trial and tragedy. Even the most objective follower of New Criticism must sense Charlotte Brontë's suffering and loss beneath the surface of this novel, but this is far from all that may be found there.

In analyzing the characters in Shirley, critics squander much time and effort on assigning personal qualities of both Emily Brontë and Charlotte's good friend Mary Taylor to the fictional Shirley,¹⁹ with a token of effort given to the detection of the personality of Anne Brontë reflected in the fictional Caroline. That each of these characters in Shirley represents a contrasting kind of young woman cannot be denied. But, Mrs. Gaskell's memory notwithstanding, the characters are born of Charlotte Brontë, and are as genuinely suited to the imagined situations

¹⁹Mrs. Gaskell in her pioneering biography makes such dogmatic statements as "The character of Shirley herself, is Charlotte Brontë's representation of Emily" (*ibid.*), though, to her credit it must be reported that this intrepid biographer does include Charlotte Brontë's letter disclaiming historical sources for the characters: "'You are not to suppose any of the characters in Shirley intended as literal portraits. It would not suit the rules of art, nor of my own feelings, to write in that style. We only suffer reality to suggest, never to dictate. The heroines are abstractions, and the heroes also. Qualities I have seen, loved, and admired, are here and there put in as decorative gems, to be preserved in that sitting'" (*ibid.*, p. 285).

which unfold in the novel as a skilled and practiced writer could be expected to accomplish.²⁰

Another bothersome and time-wasting exercise for critics seems to concern the evaluation of Charlotte Brontë's service to the world as a socio-economic explicator of the case against the Luddite rioters in the Heavy Woolen district of West Riding during 1811 and 1812. If such a social study had been her purpose there would be ample reason for complaint. But history brings life to her novel; she does not try to bring life to history. As the omniscient narrator of Shirley explains:

. . . though I describe imperfect characters (every character in this book will be found to be more or less imperfect, my pen refusing to draw anything in the model line), I have not undertaken to handle degraded or utterly infamous ones. Child-torturers, slave-masters and drivers, I consign to the hands of jailers; the novelist may be excused from sullyng his page with the record of their deeds.

(I: V, 65)

The author tries to discover what adjustments man must make in his life. Her interest is not in documenting

²⁰ According to the thorough research documented by Earl A. Kneis in "Art, Death, and the Composition of Shirley" Victorian Newsletter, 28 (Fall 1965), p. 22-24, the author's date on the manuscript indicates that she had completed the first volume of Shirley (Chapters I through XI) by September, 1848, the month of Branwell's death. Emily died three months later. Little beyond this one volume had been completed by March 2, 1849. By April 16 a letter to her publisher reports that she was beginning to write again. Kneis further states that "the remaining portion of the novel, however, was written quite rapidly, in an attempt to avoid reality by immersion in the fictional world" (p. 24). The novel was finished three months after Anne's death, in May of 1849.

specific social problems.

There has been a certain amount of speculation as to why the young author, who had met with such success in the first-person narrations of an intimate story of one private life lived out in the author's well-known and well-loved locality of Yorkeshire, should move back some forty years in time, and south some few miles into an area she knew but did not love, among people whose occupation was not that of the Brontë rural environment. A suitable answer to part of the question has been offered by Kathleen Tillotson in her excellent study of Charlotte Brontë in Novels of the Eighteen-Forties. She suggests that such a shift in time is auspicious: "The past, being past, can be possessed, hovered and brooded over . . . the past, not being the present, is stable. . . ." ²¹

One further complaint of the critics, familiar through repetition, deserves mention, mainly because it is vastly more justified than most of the reiterated comments. Objections have been raised to the overpowering presence of

²¹Kathleen Mary Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 94. She continues by suggesting why an author is drawn to a "purpose" or "problem" novel: "Speaking largely, any original effort at the imaginative translation of actuality must increase the interest of the art-form which receives it" (p. 119). The writer is thinking out a problem, and "the debate, whether it is in his own mind or with recognized opponents, takes shape outside of him; no doubt he takes sides, but that is less important than that he shows sides" (p. 121).

the curate at the opening of the book, and even--though less vigorously--to their reappearance throughout the story, particularly in the authorial summary and dismissal of them in the thoroughly stylized tying-up-of-ends of the final chapter. Charlotte Brontë's publisher first objected when he accepted the book for publication. The author's firm rebuttal that the curates must stay in because they are authentic seems to have deeper significance than the one usually ascribed to it. The authenticity which she defended is more aptly applied to the quality and quantity of Christianity embodied in each of these three young men than to their personal cowardice, bravado, or appetites.²² Whether or not the author knew these young ecclesiastics seems to be quite beside the point.

The reader may be deceived by the length and diversified subject matter of the first chapters: the concern with detailed representation of the three curates who are, at best, minor characters; the over-emphasis on Mr. Yorke; the oblique introduction of the economic and social problems of

²²Amy Cruse in The Victorians and Their Reading (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935) reports that there was strong reaction against the portrayal of the curates from the beginning. "A good man people," she comments, "thought this vulgar, some thought it irreverent and lacking in respect to the Church." Charles Kingsley began to read Shirley and disliked the first curate chapter so thoroughly that he discarded the novel and gave up the author "'with the idea that she was a person who liked coarseness'" (p. 267).

the riots; and the omission of any mention of either Caroline or Shirley. What appears to be an approaching of the main subject from the far corner of a distant field causes critics to accuse Charlotte Brontë of writing ex tempore and without a settled purpose.

But the careful balance of the three voices of Shirley can be discovered through close reading. As they are discerned, the pattern of the argument becomes clear, and the diverse characters and their interrelated motivations form a firm basis for the contrapuntal motifs of this complex and artfully constructed novel.

CHAPTER IV

VILLETTE

Charlotte Brontë's story of Villette begins dead center in the spiral of life, in an isolated heart of loneliness. A little girl visits temporarily with her amiable godmother and that lady's dearly beloved son, and yet she exists as an observer, as one not to be admitted into the world of love.

The novel continues always cyclic in motion. In this pattern the protagonist moves through contrasting areas of sun and shadow, illusion and reality, light and dark, passing the same identifiable points again and again, in each circle swinging higher and wider, with an occasional dip as though a former cycle were being re-experienced. What happens in the world through which the protagonist whirls is of very little consequence; the important things happen within her. In the middle of her circling through life, in the period of those years included in the novel, Lucy Snowe swings wide and free. As the novel comes to a close the tether shortens. At the end she is once more drawn into the cone of silence in the center of the pattern. She is once more the observer, isolated in her loneliness.

E. K. Brown offers some interesting suggestions about the author's use of just such an anticipated repetition as the basis of rhythm in the novel. He indicates the strength

of composition where repetition "expected and then presented, enforces the idea or feeling, makes it more emphatic in its resonance." He believes the structure best "where repetition is enveloped in variations, but never so enveloped that it appears subordinate."¹

Charlotte Brontë deals in Villette with a pattern based on the complete circle through which Lucy Snowe passes from isolation to depression, from depression to a reconciliation with life, from reconciliation occasionally into elation, and then a sliding through each of the areas back to isolation again. She experiences four complete cycles in the course of the novel, each time beginning and ending in isolation--or at least depression. Robert A. Colby in "Villette and the Life of the Mind" speaks of Lucy's history as "a kind of apotheosis of deprivation,"² an estimate justified by the return to isolation at the end of the novel, the only ending in Charlotte Brontë's four novels which is not a happy one.

From the first appearance of the novel in January of 1853 the reaction of critics was mixed. Some response was completely enthusiastic. George Eliot wrote to Mrs. Bray on

¹E. K. Brown, "Phase, Character, Incident" in Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), pp. 29-30.

²Robert A. Colby, "Villette and the Life of the Mind," PMLA, LXXV: 4, pt. 1 (September, 1960), 410-419, p. 412.

February 15, 1853:

I am only just returned to a sense of the real world about me for I have been reading *Villette*, a still more wonderful book than *Jane Eyre*. There is something almost preternatural in its power.³

Harriet Martineau, on the other hand, took Charlotte Brontë to task both in her review in The Daily News and in personal correspondence, objecting highly to the stress on passion and on the author's thesis that woman depends on love as the sustaining and single force in her life. Matthew Arnold made the most familiar of the derogatory pronouncements to Arthur Hugh Clough in a letter of March of that year:

Miss Brontë has written a hideous, undelightful, convulsed, constricted novel. . . . one of the most utterly disagreeable books I ever read.⁴

As the years passed, most critics have approved of the emotion and feeling developed within the characters of the novel and have tended to associate Charlotte Brontë's own personal development with the sensitivity revealed in *Lucy Snowe*. *Fannie Ratchford* shows the overtones of the juvenilia in this novel, particularly the echo of *Zamorna* and his captive bride in the persons of Dr. John and his delicate bride, Polly.⁵ That Charlotte Brontë was freeing herself

³George Eliot in The George Eliot Letters, edited by Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), II, 87.

⁴Matthew Arnold, Letters to Arthur Hugh Clough, edited by Howard Lowery (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), I, 132.

⁵Fannie Ratchford, The Brontë's Web of Childhood (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), pp. 22-40.

from the dream world of Angria has been suggested by several critics after Miss Ratchford. Among them is the excellently analytic Kathleen Tillotson. For the strong emotional release experienced by Lucy and enjoyed by M. Paul, as well as the cold but heroic proportion of Dr. John, are reminiscent of the wholly romantic stories of the author's youth.

But more than the tone of the novel, or even its sources, has troubled the critics over the years. The major problem seems to have been to discern an acceptable structure in the novel. Viewing the novel primarily as a linear composition, readers, critics--even the publishers--have been aware of a break in emphasis when Lucy gives up Dr. John and turns her attention toward the professor. In answer to just such a complaint from George Smith, her publisher, Charlotte Brontë wrote in December of 1852:

I must pronounce you right again, in your complaint of the transfer of interest in the third volume from one set of characters to another. It is not pleasant, and it will probably be found as unwelcome to the reader as it was, in a sense, compulsory upon the writer.⁶

By responding to this compulsion in her writing Charlotte Brontë demonstrates her genius. For what is right for this sensitive author at the moment of composition is best for the novel. In her act of creating she gives free play to

⁶Charlotte Brontë to George Smith, December 6, 1852, in The Brontës: Life and Letters, edited by Clement Shorter (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), letter 599, II, 289.

the inner prompting which she feels toward the pattern taking shape in her book. The form which results, the structure which takes shape within the novel, the pattern which compels and directs the hand of the author is the force which must not be curbed.

The same balking at what they consider two linear developments has been the most frequent complaint of the modern critics.⁷ One must think three-dimensionally, beyond linear progression, in order to make sense out of the structure of Villette.

Colby, in his excellent analysis of the novel, gives a hint of the kind of structure which underlies Villette when he suggests that "in the very framework of Villette and in the point of view from which it is told, there is embedded that circularity of life and literature, romance and reality that envelops its incidents, characters, and

⁷In studies otherwise acutely perceptive some of the most reliable of the critics of Villette have been troubled by its structure: Inga-Stina Ewbank, Their Proper Sphere (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 174; J. A. Falconer, "The Professor and Villette: a Study of Development," English Studies, (April, 1927), p. 33; Robert B. Martin, Accents of Persuasion (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966), pp. 169 and 177; Arnold Shapiro, "A Study in the Development of Art and Ideas in Charlotte Brontë's Fiction," Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1965, pp. 228-268; Melvin R. Watson, "Form and Substance in the Brontë Novels" in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad, edited by Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958) p. 115.

thought."⁸ The example which he gives, of a novel written about a person thinking of writing a novel about a man who does not write a novel (II: XXXIII, 165),⁹ while cyclic in its own way, is less organic than the suggestion here being made: that the pattern of the novel itself is a series of concentric circles, a spiral perhaps, which repeatedly carries the protagonist from isolation to elation and back to isolation.

The first of these well-defined cyclic progressions takes place in the first fifteen chapters of the book, the part of the story which carries Lucy from her childhood around to the point at which she seeks to confess to the priest Père Silas. The stages through which Lucy passes as she swings from dark to light and back to dark again are demonstrated by her change in circumstance and her consequent change in attitude. The first chapters of the book find her isolated, an outsider. In her godmother's house in Bretton, in her sequestered life with Miss Marchmont, in the brief visit to London, she remains the observer. Her depression, short-lived but full of anguish, takes place when she

⁸ Colby, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

⁹ All references to Villette are from The Shakespeare Head Brontë, volumes V and VI of Charlotte Brontë's work, edited by T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1931) and are indicated as Villette volume I or II, chapter, and page. The work originally appeared as Villette, 3 volumes (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1853).

wanders unprotected and the intended victim of drunken pedestrians on the night of her arrival in Villette, after she has been momentarily set on the right path by a courteous young man, who turns out to be Dr. John. Her reconciliation with life follows when Mme. Beck accepts her, first as child's nurse and then as teacher. The sudden shadow of isolation comes during this early section of the novel as she observes life from her hidden garden corner--her allée défendue--and the isolated teacher's desk, but the climate persists as one of reconciliation, especially during the play-acting scene when Lucy tries to please M. Paul and flirt with Dr. John at the same time. Although the scene does not reach the level of elation it has the possibilities indicated in its liveliness. The discovery of Dr. John's attraction to Ginevra brings on depression, and is followed by Lucy's complete physical isolation during the long holiday. The mood shifts to the depression of fever and the extravagant gesture of a Protestant seeking the confessional. This leads directly to isolation as Père Silas sends her from the church with a promise but little solace.

The second cycle continues from the mental isolation following the dismissal by the priest and the physical isolation of complete collapse. With a sudden swoop Lucy swings past depression into the area of reconciliation when Dr. John saves her, the Bretton family accepts her, comforts

and cares for her. Her social activities with John, in the art gallery and then at the concert, lead Lucy to her initial sense of elation as John rejects Ginevra and smiles on Lucy. Though she seems momentarily depressed when she returns to the school a brief period of reconciliation actually takes place, since everyone welcomes her and makes her feel needed. Her mood grows to elation as she receives letters and attentions from Dr. John and finally is invited to spend an evening of passion in the theatre by his side. The fire, and the consequent reunion with Polly and her father, signal Lucy's oncoming dark times. She recognizes Dr. John's interest in Polly and though she knows that she should be reconciled by the attention which the de Bassompierres and the Brettons show her, her own emotional disappointment overshadows their friendliness, bringing on depression. In the shadow of depression she buries John's letters and accepts his offer of brotherly love.

In the third cycle, again she swoops forward, this time from depression to elation, as her association with M. Paul shines forth with affection--mutually shown, mutually accepted. One sudden overcast of darkness clouds this period of elation as she hides from M. Paul when he seeks her, causing her to examine her own heart and berate her own emotions. The elation she experiences has a sudden ending brought on by the interference of Paul's family and friends.

Lucy again plunges into the dark of depression followed by the void of isolation. Her protestantism, her insular ways, M. Paul's own financial and emotional commitments, come between her and the happiness she has been experiencing. Her belief that M. Paul has left for his three-year sojourn in the West Indies without a farewell is the advent of sorrow. In this period of detachment, of isolation, of being the observer, she makes her strangely hallucinatory night visit to the park en fête.

The fourth cycle begins with this isolation at the fête. Then there is a dramatic shift in mood and Lucy sweeps suddenly into a new period of elation. M. Paul reappears, offers her his gift, his love, and the promise of the great full life. The final swing carries Lucy--though now reconciled by career, legacy, and memory--into the deadly silent, empty, center of life without her love. And so the novel ends, as it began, in isolation.

Viewed as a series of circular recurrences of mood and emotional tension, the novel appears structurally sound. Other critics have sensed the idea of the cycle without exactly stating its function. For example, Phyllis Bentley, in her booklet for the National Book League, suggests the circling motion when she describes the characters in Villette. She speaks of the main characters, which she finds excellently drawn, and says that "around this core, their inter-relations

rather too neatly and skilfully arranged, circle three other groups," the Brettons, the de Bassompierres, and Ginevra and her lover.¹⁰ Without actually suggesting the cyclic structure of the entire novel, Miss Bentley has indicated the circular motion within the novel.

In one of the most telling devices, Charlotte Brontë creates this sense of orbiting by repeating scenes or experiences which the characters have in various parts of the book, almost as though indicating a signpost already past which reappears. Sometimes the identical scene is re-enacted. Occasionally there is a reversal, or the characters shift. Often details become symbolic. In all cases the reader notices that he has passed this way before, and he suffers from that disturbing sensation of re-experiencing a lost moment out of the past.

Part of the strength of this device rests in its ability to limit the cosmos in which Lucy orbits. The restriction brings about a concentration of emphasis. José

¹⁰Phyllis Bentley, The Brontë Sisters, published for the British Council and the National Book League (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), p. 28. Falconer (op. cit.) on the contrary feels that the "character grouping in more complicated and less symmetrical, that is, less artificial, than in any of her other novels" (p. 35). Although he is disagreeing with Miss Bentley's evaluation of the "too neatly and skilfully arranged" grouping of the characters, he expresses a dissatisfaction with the bilateral division so often assigned to the novel. He sees the distraction of Dr. John by the two minor characters (Ginerva and Polly) as a break with the linear two-part division.

Ortega y Gasset has made the statement that "the author must see to it that the reader is cut off from his real horizon and imprisoned in a small, hermetically sealed universe--the inner realm of the novel."¹¹ By a continuous rounding of experiences, Charlotte Brontë assures the readers' occupation of this universe. By reminding first the character and then the reader of the familiarity of the sights the author indicates the repetitious circuit of Lucy through life and through the novel.

Lucy herself points out several of these repeated experiences. The most obvious repetition comes in her awakening from fever and collapse on the streets of Villette only to find herself apparently back in her godmother's house in Bretton. The familiarity of the furniture, of the decorative objects in the room, calls to mind her former experience, her former isolation in the world of love. Lucy reacts emotionally:

Bretton! Bretton! and ten years ago shone reflected in that mirror. And why did Bretton and my fourteenth year haunt me thus? Why, if they came at all did they not return complete?

(I: XVI, 212)

¹¹José Ortega y Gasset, "Notes on the Novel" in The Dehumanization of Art: and Other Writings on Art and Culture (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1956), p. 83. Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (London: Oxford University Press, 1954) senses in most of the Brontë novels an echo of Richardson in "that nightmare-like impression . . . of a closed-in world with the heroine as captive or in frantic flight" (p. 149). The achievement of Villette is the inclusion of the reader in this closed-in world.

The reawakening in a dislocated town of Bretton brings back a second visitation of her school-girl love for Graham Bretton--now known to the reader as Dr. John. The similarity of expression in the boy Graham--particularly as he appears in the portrait in Lucy's room at La Terrasse, this continental version of Bretton--is noticeable in the expression occasionally discernible in the adult Dr. John (I: XVIII, 245). Other reminiscences of the past come to light as Lucy lives again, briefly, in the security of the Bretton family. Polly takes her former position as spoiled and protected, oblivious of others in her devotion to one she loves, and still ready to seek Lucy for comfort and reassurance. At both periods Polly fails to notice Lucy's interest in John, at both periods she turns to Lucy to smooth the way for her.¹²

But the reappearance of familiar scenes means more than merely a recurrence of childhood experiences relived with greater intensity in maturity. Repeated scenes may occur closely related in time. Lucy responds to her two attacks of melancholia in a similar manner. Discouraged because she has sensed Dr. John's interest in Ginevra, alone

¹²In another recurrent scene Polly reacts to John's letter--studying the handwriting and the seal, postponing the delight of reading it (II: XXXII, 146-157)--just as Lucy had reacted to the first letter she received from John (I: XXI, 302-309).

in the school over the long vacation with only an idiot child to tend, she finally succumbs to fever. Then one night she rouses herself to action:

One evening--and I was not delirious! I was in my same mind--I got up, dressed myself, weak and shaking. The solitude and the stillness of the long dormitory could not be bourne any longer. . . . I felt, too, that the trial God had appointed me was gaining its climax, and must now be turned by my own hands, hot, feeble, trembling as they were. . . . that insufferable thought of being no more loved--no more owned, half-yielded to hope of the contrary--I was sure this hope would shine clearer if I got out from under this house-roof. . . .
(I: XV, 201-202)

In a similar manner Lucy rouses herself from the bed where she lies in sorrow over the supposed desertion by M. Paul. The drug administered by Mme. Beck has not worked:

Instead of stupor, came excitement. I became alive to a new thought--to reverie peculiar in colouring. A gathering call ran among the faculties, their bugles sang, their trumpets rang an untimely summons. Imagination was roused from her rest, and she came forth impetuous and venturous. . . . To my gasping senses she made the glimmering gloom, the narrow limits, the oppressive heat of the dormitory, intolerable. She lured me to leave this den and follow her forth into dew, coolness and glory.

(II: XXXVIII, 255)

In the first escape, Lucy seeks "a certain quiet hill, a long way distant in the fields" (I: XV, 202), in the second, "the park, the summer park with its long alley all silent, lone and safe" (II: XXXVIII, 256). The first experience led to a reconciliation with John. The reader can but wonder, will the second lead to a reconciliation with M. Paul?

Several other times Lucy herself comments on a

repeated scene. When John takes her back to school after her convalescence at La Terrasse she recalls:

Just such a night was it as that on which, not a year ago, I had first stopped at this very threshold; just similar was the scene. I remembered the very shapes of the paving-stones which I had noted with idle eye, while, with a thick-beating heart, I waited the unclosing of the door at which I stood--a solitary and a suppliant. On that night, too, I had briefly met with him who now stood with me.

(I: XXI, 287-288)

But this arrival at the school door, this giving over to the future beyond the door, becomes an experience which will be passed more than twice. After the triumphant day of reconciliation and elation in the Faubourg Clotilde where M. Paul has made Lucy the gift of her school and declared his love and his hopes for their future, the lovers return to Madame Beck's. Lucy reports:

We reached Madame Beck's door. Jean Baptiste's clock tolled nine. At this hour, in this house, eighteen months since, had this man at my side bent before me, looking into my face and eyes, and arbitered by destiny. This very evening he had again stooped, gazed, and decreed. How different the look--how far otherwise the fate!

(II: XLI, 308)

Both of these experiences essentially reverse the first time around.¹³

¹³In other cases a similar reversal takes place. When Lucy, desperately in need of money, leaves her position upon Miss Marchmont's death, the promised legacy is not supplied--instead "my wages were duly paid by her second cousin, the heir, an avaricious-looking man" (I: V, 40). Later, when money is no longer of great importance to Lucy the miserly heir sends one hundred pounds--"he was just recovering from a dangerous illness: the money was a peace-offering to his conscience" (II: XLII, 310).

Charlotte Brontë uses a variation of this device when she again has Lucy go through much the same experience with Paul as she has already been through with John. After she and John quarrel over the worthless Ginevra, Lucy soon reaches the point where she must have a reconciliation. She pleads:

"But let me unsay what I said in anger. . . . Let us agree to differ. Let me be pardoned; that is what I ask."

"Do you think I cherish ill-will for one warm word?"

"I see that you do not and cannot. But just say, 'Lucy, I forgive you!' Say that to ease me of the heartache."

"Put away your heartache, as I will put away mine; for you wounded me a little, Lucy. Now, when the pain is gone, I more than forgive: I feel grateful, as to a sincere well-wisher."

(I: XVIII, 241-242)

The scene with M. Paul appears to be quite different (as he and John are such completely different men), and yet essentially he and Lucy face the same problem in the same way.

M. Paul sounds contrite as he speaks to Lucy:

"Then it was my words which wounded you? Consider them unsaid; permit my retraction; accord my pardon."

"I am not angry, monsieur."

"Then you are worse than angry--grieved. Forgive me, Miss Lucy."

"M. Emanuel, I do forgive you."

"Let us hear you say, in the voice natural to you, and not in that alien tone, 'Mon ami, je vous pardonne.'"

He made me smile. Who could help smiling at his wistfulness, his simplicity, his earnestness?

"Bon!" he cried; "Voilà que le jour va poindre!
Dites donc, mon ami."

"Monsieur Paul, je vous pardonne."

(II: XXVII, 88-89)

Later M. Paul counterposes this request in a dialogue reminiscent of this one, just near enough in essence that it may remind Lucy (and the reader) of the familiarity of the situation. In the period of elation brought on by her growing sympathy and her understanding of M. Paul, Lucy has one of her withdrawals. Because she feels publicly coerced, she will not join the others in their tribute and give him his birthday present, although it lies ready in her lap. His natural disappointment carries over into their meeting after the school celebration. When Lucy tells him that she did know about the birthday custom, Paul answers in a way typically his own:

"It is well--you do right to be honest. I should almost have hated you had you flattered and lied. Better declare at once--'Paul Carl Emanuel--je te déteste, mon garçon!'--than smile an interest, look an affection, and be false and cold at heart."

(II: XXIX, 119)

The contrast between "Mon ami, je vous pardonne" and "Je te déteste, mon garçon" asserts more than a simple reversal. In this latter imagined condemnation, M. Paul has proposed that Lucy should tutoyer him. The translated (or half-translated) dialogue recorded in Lucy's memoirs does not indicate anywhere that their conversations have shifted into the familiar form. The reader may have been aware that for

some strange reason M. Paul addresses his cousin and close associate Mme. Beck as vous ("Laissez-moi! . . . Sortez d'ici!" II: XLI, 295) and that even on the final excursion to the Faubourg Clotilde while he promises Lucy his constancy through letters he addresses her formally, saying, "'Soyez tranquille'" (II: XLI, 299). But his tempestuous suggestion that Lucy might have said "Je te déteste" gives promise of the possibilities in their relationship, bringing this familiar scene into new focus as Lucy re-experiences it.

Occasionally the repeated scene becomes symbolic in significance as it reappears. Lucy's burial of John's letters has a strong resemblance to the earlier tale of the buried nun, and somehow links to a negation of the death image in the recurrent image of M. Paul busy with trowel and watering can, sustained by his love of gardening, of the growing, the yielding of nature (II: XXXVI, 205). Lucy gives her initial description of the old pear tree in the garden:

. . . you saw, in scraping away the mossy earth between the half-bared roots, a glimpse of slab, smooth, hard, and black. The legend went, unconfirmed and unaccredited, but still propogated, that this was the portal of a vault, imprisoning deep beneath the ground, on whose surface grass grew and flowers bloomed, the bones of a girl whom a monkish conclave of the drear middle ages had here buried alive for some sin against her vow.

(I: XII, 130-131)

Into this garden a missile is thrown by an unknown hand, a small ivory box containing violets and a love letter which Lucy knows cannot be meant for her. And into the soft earth of this garden, where the young nun was interred alive, Lucy

will bury her letters from John--not love letters but serving as an acceptable counterfeit to fill Lucy's need. Here her love will be buried alive as the nun was buried alive:

I knew there was such a hollow, hidden partly by ivy and creepers growing thick round; and there I meditated hiding my treasure. But I was not only going to hide a treasure--I meant also to bury a grief. That grief over which I had lately been weeping, as I wrapped it in its winding sheet, must be interred.

(II: XXVI, 57)

In addition to the repeated scene as an indication of the cyclic action of the novel, the author has embedded words which hint of the progress under way. The circle becomes a thematic metaphor within the novel, suggesting the presence of the same form in the larger view of structure. Naturalistic uses of the image appear in the story and their symbolic significance becomes apparent. Physical circles are mentioned: "a magic circle" forms around Polly in society (II: XXVII, 80, 86); with Paul and his friends in the park "hint, allusion, comment, went around the circle" (II: XXXIX, 273); when Lucy waits for him to leave his pupils and approach her she sees that "the semi-circle was almost traveled round" (II: XXXVIII, 248); at the lottery she notices "the alternation of hope and fear raised by each turn of the wheel" (I: XX, 281). The circle appears in common idiom: Mme. Beck is "quite a living catherine-wheel of compliments" (I: XIX, 247); and M. Paul "set his shoulder to the wheel" (I: XX, 278). But other uses of the

circle seem to indicate more specifically something of the structure. Lucy begins the metaphor by announcing, "I got on in my new sphere very well" (I: IX, 100); later she comments to herself, "'I suppose, Lucy Snowe, the orb of your life is not to be so rounded'" (II: XXXI, 140). At one point she suggests the sweep of the spiral course through life when she allies herself to a bird:

My heart did not fail at all in this conflict; I only wished that I had wings and could ascend the gale, spread and repose my pinions on its strength, career in its course, sweep where it swept.

(I: XVII, 206)

At the end of the novel the author seems to describe for her readers just what has been taking place in the circular structure. In reference to M. Paul the narrator says, "Certain points, crises, certain feelings, joys, griefs, and amazements, when reviewed, must strike us as things wildered and whirling, dim as a wheel fast spun" (II: XLII, 301).

The wheel which spins for Lucy does not always turn through the world of sunshine and pleasure, nor always a world clouded and dark. She passes from one climate to the next suddenly and disquietingly. The chapter titles indicate something of the abrupt changes which affect her: the most apparent are "Fraternity" followed by "The Apple of Discord" and "Sunshine" followed by "Cloud."

In fact, Charlotte Brontë uses contrast, expressions

diametrically opposed which follow one another, as one of the most insistent devices in this novel. She links words of opposite meanings: "backward or forward," "incomings and outgoings," "the best or the worst," and "Yes or No." She uses pairs of contrasting expressions: "Will it be long--will it be short? . . . Will it be cool--will it be kind? . . . So little had I hoped, so much had I feared," and "Sometimes he was studious; sometimes he was merry."

Occasionally the author italicizes the pair of dissimilar words in these expressions for added insistence on contrast: "'The merry may laugh with mamma, but the weak will only laugh at her,'" "'I believe you may; you believe you can't,'" and "'Hush! I will not: and go on I will.'" Her descriptions often point to a dichotomy in situations: "Three weeks of that vacation were hot, fair, and dry, but the fourth and fifth were tempestuous and wet," "He was as good to me as the well is to the parched wayfarer--as the sun to the shivering jailbird," and

How brilliant seemed the shops! How glad, gay, and abundant flowed the tide of life along the broad pavement! While I looked, the thought of the Rue Fossette came across me--of the walled-in garden and school-house, and of the dark, vast "classes," where as at this very hour, it was my wont to wander all solitary. . . .

(I: XX, 230)

The diction of the novel offers a continuing reminder that Lucy spins through a world made up of contrasting emotions and situations.

Contrast of characters gives part of the force to Villette. On the surface Lucy seems serious, sensitive, unloved for much of her life, and through much of the novel she is consciously striving to be disciplined in nature and behavior.¹⁴ The two other young women who share her story are set in marked contrast to her. Love completely protects Polly Home de Bassompierre and shelters her from participation in any of the realities of life. Ginevra Fanshawe shows herself as giddy, flirtatious, and fickle. The three men seem to be equally unlike one another. M. Paul Emanuel acts openly and emotionally, and yet he turns out to be dedicated to his beliefs and commitments. Dr. John Graham Bretton remains contemplative, conservative, and steadfast in whatever allegiance he has at the moment. The Count de Hamal, known only by reputation and reported action, acts always as an affected dandy. No character resembles any other in physical appearance.

¹⁴ Yet Lucy herself notes that various people see her as they wish to see her. Of her associates at school she remarks, "Madame Beck esteemed me learned and blue; Miss Fanshawe, caustic, ironic, and cynical . . . whilst another person, Professor Paul Emanuel to wit, never lost an opportunity of intimating his opinion that mine was a firey and rash nature--adventurous, indocile, and audacious" (II: XXVI, 64). Later she suggests to herself, "'Miss Fanshawe there regards you as a second Diogenes. . . . Dr. John Bretton knows you only as 'quiet Lucy'--'a creature inoffensive as a shadow. . . .'" This harsh little man [M. Paul]--this pitiless censor--gathers up all your poor scattered sins of vanity . . . and calls you to account for the lot, and for each item. You are well habituated to be passed by as a shadow in Life's sunshine . . .'" (II: XXVIII, 104-105).

Yet these residents of Villette show a much greater complexity in the delineation of their characters. The main characters are each shown as being made up of contrasting--almost conflicting--inclinations and responses; they seem to move through a two-part existence. Lucy recognizes this ambivalence, particularly in herself:

Besides, I seemed to hold two lives--the life of thought, and that of reality; and, provided the former was nourished with a sufficiency of the strange necromantic joys of fancy, the privileges of the latter might remain limited to daily bread, hourly work, and a roof of shelter.

(I: VIII, 92-93)

She notes the multiplicity of the parts she plays in the lives of others; one of her objections to her association with Dr. John is that "he wanted always to give me a rôle not mine" (II: XXVII, 85). She indicates her sensitivity toward the changing, passing scene when she tells the reader of her happiness found through M. Paul's sympathy:

I grew quite happy--strangely happy--in making him secure, content, tranquil. Yesterday, I could not have believed that earth held, or life afforded, moments like the few I was now passing.

(II: XXXV, 201)

Lucy notices the complexity of the personalities of the people around her. As narrator she feels the need to excuse what may seem to be inconsistencies in her attitude toward Dr. John: "The reader is requested to note a seeming contradiction in the two views which have been given of Graham Bretton--the public and the private--the outdoor and

the indoor view" (I: XIX, 249). She points out the difference between him and the fop, de Hamal (I: XIV, 185), and between him and the professor, M. Paul (I: XX, 282). The other characters, too, tell Lucy of Dr. John's duality or his changing nature. Ginevra remarks that she had thought Dr. John and she would be "'like two butterflies'" together, but, instead, she has found him at times "'as grave as a judge'" (I: IX, 112). John's mother teases her son by demanding of Lucy: "'Lucy, has he not rather the air of an incipient John Bull? He used to be slender as an eel . . .'" (I: XVII, 235). Of her own relationship with John, Lucy is most sensitive--and for the best of reasons. In her longing for love, after she has relinquished all hold on John, she recalls their relationship as being "half marble and half life; only on one hand truth, and on the other perhaps a jest" (II: XXXI, 141).

Toward Paul her senses are even more acute. Very early in their association, she feels his propensities for emotions and reactions. She remarks, a little wryly, about his directorship of the school play:

No sooner was the play over and well over, than the choleric and arbitrary M. Paul underwent a metamorphosis. His hour of managerial responsibility past, he at once laid aside his magisterial austerity; in a moment he stood amongst us, vivacious, kind, and social. . . .
(I: XIV, 176-177)

Later, when her understanding of him increases, she can comment that "never was a better little man, in some points,

than M. Paul; never, in others, a more waspish little despot" (II: XXVI, 66). In each of these cases the wonder is not that these characters are multi-faceted, or even that they themselves see their complexities, but that Charlotte Brontë has been able to create living human beings, as diversified as you and I, yet people whose form and substance are real to the reader and whose actions are, for the most part, unmistakably characteristic even in their multiplicity.

The author has a way of playing off one character against another. Of course, except for remarks of the others which Lucy quotes directly, all of the opinions and attitudes which the reader learns about are those of the narrator, Miss Lucy Snowe. Even the actions, as they are recorded in the narration, are only those which Lucy chooses to notice. But in her attention to the differences among other people Lucy serves as a reliable narrator. At both the art gallery and the concert she observes the reactions of those around her. During the musical performance she conscientiously reports Ginevra's rude and flighty behavior, and indicates John's reaction as well as her own. M. Paul's activities in the concert hall, faithfully noted and recorded, give this active little professor an added dimension in the mind of the reader.

But when Charlotte Brontë introduces the progression

of the three suitors in the story as they react to the voluptuous painting of "Cleopatra"¹⁵ she shows, through contrast, what Lucy would never have been able to reveal under ordinary circumstances. Lucy clearly exposes herself in her reaction to the painting. She first comments with a show of her common sense that the painting "represented a woman, considerably larger, I thought, than life" (I: XIX, 252). Lucy cannot see the painting as the creative expression of an artist; she sees only that the details--while painted distinctly--are inconsistent with life, with her understanding of how a woman would recline in a room. She prefers "little pictures of still life: wild flowers, wild fruit, mossy wood-nests" (I: XIX, 253)--things real but safe, tenderly natural but not things which would disturb the passions.¹⁶ But in the art gallery, though she may not be able to analyze her own reactions, she can sense the personalities of the three men she knows by their responses to the painting. M. Paul's sense of decorum is disturbed when he sees Lucy viewing the nude. He conducts her to a corner where

¹⁵Some discussion has been raised about the actual picture being described by Charlotte Brontë. It seems possible that "Cleopatra," under another title, might be one of the paintings seen by Charlotte Brontë on her visits to London just prior to the writing of the novel.

¹⁶Her reaction at the concert fits this pattern. The chorus of burghers, hearty and unimaginative, please her--but not the other singers.

she may study what she considers "a series of most specially dreary cadres" showing four pious stages in a woman's life (I: XIX, 254). When challenged on his opinion of "Cleopatra," M. Paul admits that though she appears to have a superb figure he would not like her for wife nor daughter nor sister (I: XIX, 258).

The young dandy, the Count de Hamal, gazes with admiration on the figure. Dr. John reports that the young count remarked that she is "'le type du voluptueux.'" Dr. John, reacting to this sensuous interpretation tells Lucy, "My mother is a better-looking woman. . . . I can only say, 'le voluptueux' is little to my liking'" (I: XIX, 260).

Through an art form, the essential difference between the natures of Lucy and Dr. John becomes apparent not only to the reader but to Lucy as well. At the theatrical performance of the great Vashti, Lucy becomes lost in the overwhelming passion which the actress arouses in her. Shortly before this scene, Lucy has declared that "a new creed became mine--a belief in happiness. . . . Feeling and I turned Reason out of doors . . ." (II: XXIII, 1-2). Her hope, aroused by John's attention, has begun to color her every movement; his invitation to the theatre has lifted her to a pitch of expectation. In this mood she sees an accomplished actress lay bare the passions of life. She responds characteristically, exposing the turbulence within

her nature:

It was a marvellous sight; a mighty revelation.

It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral.
(II: XXIII, 7)

Lucy feels that she must know John's reaction to "that sinister and sovereign Vashti," so she interrupts his concentration to ask him.

"Hm-m-m." was the first scarce articulate but expressive answer; and then such a strange smile went wandering round his lips, a smile so critical, so almost callous! . . . he judged her as a woman, not an artist: it was a branding judgment.

(II: XXIII, 10)

This brings about a remarkable change in Lucy's attitude: she recognizes John's lack of passionate involvement with the art form, while she has relinquished her resistance to her own feelings, has shifted from her position of observer at the art gallery and the concert to become a participant in a wholly emotional experience.

The core of the novel finds its expression in the contrast of this bilateral struggle within herself, often demonstrated in her light and dark moods. Robert B. Heilman has called this the "conflict between reason-judgment-common sense and feeling-imagination-intuition."¹⁷ The struggle

¹⁷Robert B. Heilman, "Charlotte Brontë, Reason and the Moon," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XIV: 4 (March 1960), 288. He further states that "in Villette as a whole Charlotte takes special pains to justify feeling, almost as if she had to beat down the principles of a too rational world" (p. 286). Miss Ewbank (op. cit.) picks up this concept and extends it to be seen in Lucy as a "psychomachia, a dialogue in her soul between Reason and Imagination . . ." (p. 189).

persists, for a time at least, as a pitched battle, for, as Walter Allen suggests, Lucy's "passionate feelings are counter-balanced by an equally passionate concern for conventional morality."¹⁸ Lucy's emotions free her. Throughout the novel, feeling remains the strongest single force working within the characters. No other descriptive verb appears as often as to feel. The reader learns that Lucy feels power, pain, jealousy, a thrill. She feels desolate, restless, safe, weary, excited, angry. The narrator discusses feelings, imagination, fancy, sentiment, intuition, inspiration, impulse, presentiment, instinct, dreams, tears. These are all Charlotte Brontë's words. Action also suggests feeling. Lucy weeps; she consoles a student with a demonstrative kiss. She is happy; she quarrels pettishly with Madame. Lucy feels: she receives "indulgent help, a fond guidance, and a tender forbearance" (II: XXXVIII, 245); she experiences "dead blank, dark doubt, and drear suspense" (II: XXXIII, 171).

Her first emotional release comes through her affection

¹⁸Walter Allen, The English Novel: A Short Critical History (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1954), p. 221. On the other hand, Charlotte Brontë felt that the novel had, on the whole, a sense of restraint in the handling of emotion. She wrote to her publisher: "Unless I am mistaken the emotion of the book will be found to be kept throughout in tolerable subjection" (Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams, November 6, 1852, in Shorter, op. cit., letter 596, II, 286.

for Dr. John--but in this association the contest between feeling and reason becomes tempestuous and uneven. Ultimately reason triumphs, but not without leaving Lucy wounded and suffering. Before she dares to believe that John's affection will continue she holds a dialogue with Reason. Lucy asks:

"But if I feel, may I never express?"

"Never!" declared Reason.

(I: XXI, 290)

When John's letters begin to arrive she notes "three or four closing lines half-gay, half-tender, "'by feeling touched, but not subdued'" (II: XXIII, 1).¹⁹ Her feeling for John does not diminish though his heart is lost to Polly. Lucy's response to emotion has played her false, she must now submit to the power of reason which she has been struggling against. Unaware of Lucy's true feelings, Polly confides in her that she immediately recognized something remarkable about John, commenting with unconscious irony, "'How strange it is that most people seem slow to feel the truth--not to see, but feel!'" (II: XXIV, 33).

Later Polly inquires about Lucy's impression of John, asking, "'Do you admire him?'" She has no idea that she

¹⁹The expression reminds one of the lines from Charlotte Brontë's poem "The Teacher's Monologue" (The Professor, Emma and Poems, New York: Cassell Publishing Company, n.d.): "And every sight and every sound/Combine my spirit to subdue/To aching grief . . ." (p. 258).

could be giving anguish. Lucy reveals that reason has won the struggle within her, but not without battering her newly-aroused feelings. She answers:

"I'll tell you what I do, Paulina," was my answer to her many questions. "I never see him. I looked at him twice or thrice about a year ago, before he recognized me, and then I shut my eyes; and if he were to cross their balls twelve times between each day's sunset and sunrise, except from memory, I should hardly know what shape had gone by."

(II: XXXVII, 223)

The frustration and repression she experiences in her silent love for John does not reappear in her relationship with Paul, but here too the battle must rage between emotion and reason. Paul's open discussion of passion indicates the first unmistakable suggestion of the incipient emotional involvement of Paul and Lucy. The subject seems to surprise Lucy. Paul, who believes Lucy to be in love with John, believes himself to have been cruelly treated by her, to have been denied a birthday tribute, accuses her:

"I think your judgment is warped--that you are indifferent where you ought to be grateful--and perhaps devoted and infatuated where you ought to be cool as your name. Don't suppose that I wish you to have a passion for me, mademoiselle; Dieu vous en garde! What do you start for? Because I said passion? Well, I say it again. There is such a word, and there is such a thing--though not within these walls, thank Heaven! You are no child that one should not speak of what exists; but I only uttered the word--the thing, I assure you, is alien to my whole life and views."

(II: XXIX, 119)

For Paul, the relinquishing of himself to the powers of his passions will not be easy. Lucy cannot consider the idea. Nonetheless, in spite of reason and sense, argument and

persuasion, obliviousness and denial, their emotions will win out. On the day of Paul's conducting the entire school on a breakfast outing Lucy senses the inevitability of this triumph. For a reason Lucy will not acknowledge she has not the courage to face a tête-à-tête on their return and hides until his departure. Then an understanding of her emotions and a sense of power cause her to say:

As that street-door closed, a sudden amazement at my own perverse proceeding struck like a blow upon me. I felt from the first it was me he wanted--me he was seeking--and had I not wanted him too? . . . Instead of the comfort, the certain satisfaction I might have won . . . here was dead blank, dark doubt, and drear suspense.

(II: XXXIII, 170-171)

But the light and dark of Lucy's life does not wholly result from this struggle between emotion and reason. There are other contrasting forces which change the atmosphere around her from gaiety to sorrow, or from shadow to light. The reader becomes conscious of the division of Lucy's world into areas influenced by the real and the unreal. According to Charlotte Brontë's letters, Villette was the author's idea of a novel based on the principles of reality. In explaining Lucy's shift of interest from Dr. John to M. Paul, Charlotte Brontë wrote to her publisher:

The spirit of romance would have indicated another course, far more flowery and inviting; it would have fashioned a paramount hero . . . but this would have been unlike real life--inconsistent with truth--at variance with probability.²⁰

²⁰Charlotte Brontë to George Smith, December 6, 1852, in Shorter, op. cit., letter 599, II, 288.

And yet she weaves much unreality into the story.

The suggestion of disguise in many of the scenes disturbs the sense of reality. When in John's company, Lucy often senses disguise. She becomes hurt that he sees her as someone real, not human--"'inoffensive as a shadow'" (II: XXVII, 84). But her ability to disguise herself from him relies on a mere symbol of illusion--by putting on a bonnet and shawl when she makes her night visit to the park she believes that John will not possibly be able to recognize her (II: XXXVIII, 264). Her irritation with John's plea that she should interpret Polly's attitude toward him brings on a realization of the position in which he has placed her: "With now welcome force, I realised his entire misapprehension of my character and nature. He wanted always to give me a rôle not mine" (II: XXVII, 85). She feels that both Brettons are arranging a disguise for her. When Mrs. Bretton gives her a pink dress to wear to the concert her immediate reaction is one of withdrawal. She complains to herself, "I would almost as soon clothe myself in the costume of a Chinese lady of rank" (I: XX, 261). Actually, when they pass a mirror at the concert hall and she sees herself walking with the Brettons in all their glory, Lucy does not recognize herself: by disguise she hides from herself (I: XX, 264). Later, in a wholly dissimilar situation, oppressed by sorrow for M. Paul, Lucy again unexpectedly passes a

mirror and again does not feel that it is herself she sees (II: XXXVIII, 253).

The awareness of disguise penetrates to the other characters as well. Ginevra, the least sensitive of all the members of this community, becomes bothered by the unreality of Lucy's behavior and appearance as an English teacher. She keeps plaguing Lucy with the question, "'Who are you, Miss Snowe?'" (II: XXVII, 72 ff.). Lucy parries the inquiry in fun, creating a further impression of intrigue, an illusion of incognito.

The ambiguity of names within the novel causes part of the sense of unreality. The trespassing count calls Lucy the Dragon, Ginevra calls her Crusty, Diogenes, and Timon. The boy Graham Bretton grows into the man Dr. John, though his mother and Polly call him Graham throughout the story. Little Polly Home's father inherits a title, and she therefore becomes Paulina de Bassompierre. And the professor answers sometimes to M. Paul, sometimes to M. Emanuel, and even--on occasion--to his whole name, Paul Carl David Emanuel.

The disquieting suggestion of transvestism furthers unreality, disquieting because it seems awkwardly handled and almost naively unrecognized by the characters, and perhaps even by the author. Lucy's masculinity appears in her abandonment of self in the role of Ginevra's lover in the school play, an abandonment made more apparent by her refusal

to assume the complete costume of a man. When she sees Dr. John in the audience she becomes more fully inspired to become Ginevra's stage lover in place of the real Dr. John--Lucy triumphantly "rivalled and out-rivalled him" (I: XIV, 176). Later John calls to mind the potential man in Lucy, telling her:

"I believe if you had been a boy, Lucy, instead of a girl--my mother's godson instead of her goddaughter, we should have been good friends: our opinions would have melted into each other."

(II: XXVII, 82)

Conversely Lucy senses the feminine in Dr. John. She comments that the gifts with which he has been showering Ginevra are "'the most delicate: such, one would have thought, as only a woman could have imagined . . .'" (I: XVIII, 244). Sometime afterward Lucy receives a letter from John's mother describing how she surprised the sleeping young doctor by decorating his head with a delicate tulle and feathered turban (II: XXIV, 27). It is a family joke, but a significant one in novel which vacillates between reality and unreality.

The turban itself forms part of a pair of identifying symbols found in the description of the prizes which Lucy and John win at the lottery following the concert. Lucy's "was a cigar-case, his a lady's head-dress--a most airy sort of blue and silver turban, with a streamer of plumage on one side, like a snowy cloud" (I: XX, 281). This masculine

emblem of Lucy's sturdy heart, her steadfast nature, stands in sharp contrast to the tribute to John's fluctuating allegiance and inconstant heart. But here, too, unreality sounds the overtone, not only in the actual facts of gender but in the reminder that Lucy is far from all-reasoning, John far from all-emotional.

Lucy's response to art and truth--which seem to be set in opposition to one another--from another area in which reality and unreality strive for ascendancy. Lucy takes part in a series of experiences of art, sometimes as observer, more often as participant. In relation to music she observes--and more as critic than connoisseur. The performance seems artificial to her, and she rejects art in favor of truth. In her experience with the Roman Catholic church she becomes both participant and observer. Masking her real need in a participation of unreality, she attempts to act out a confession--though in actuality she knows neither the surface ritual nor the spiritual significance. Later when Père Silas would convert her by showing her the glories of the church she resumes the role of observer. His reality appears as artifice to her.

In relation to painting her reaction shifts. At the gallery she does not acknowledge that her objection to "Cleopatra" could be on any puritanic grounds--she objects to the impracticality, the unreality of the picture. On the

contrary, she reacts quite otherwise when she sees the painting of Justine Marie, the deceased fiancée of M. Paul. Here, the unreal paint and canvas become a real rival for her suitor's love; her jealousy becomes real though the young woman remains an image in a portrait.

The novel includes many incidents which embody drama. Lucy experiences a series of scenes acknowledged to be unreal which have more power over her than the actuality of chalk and books and compositions to grade. Here Charlotte Brontë balances the real against the unreal, truth against art, dark against light. In the first of these, the school play, Lucy completely loses her sense of reality as she becomes the character which she pretends to be. In the second, and more emotional, the performance by Vashti, Lucy witnesses and participates in emotions which she has never dreamed of feeling. The reality of a human actress has become the unreality of the sufferings and passions of her part; the unreality of the pretending on-stage has become the reality of Lucy's feelings.

The whole effect of the myth of the nun serves a dramatic purpose, influencing Lucy through unreality, and yet never obliterating its force even when Ginevra explains the fantasy and exposes the hoax. If the tale of the nun serves no other purpose than to give Lucy full play for her

imagination it is a successful device.²¹ Actually it does much more. It sets the atmosphere of imaginative possibilities for the garden and the allée défendue, the scene of so much of Lucy's emotional life. It allows Lucy to make connections between the dead nun, her denied love for John, and the commitments which Paul has to the past. Lucy sees the vision of the nun in highly symbolic situations, deeply significant circumstances. She has the impression of viewing the nun at moments of either the extreme of elation or despair. The location of these visitations suggests a complexity: she sees the figure in her secret retreat in the attic, connected by association with both John and Paul; she sees it in the allée défendue--quite literally "the forbidden way"; in the "berceau"; in her bed. She must also remark the different reactions of those around her to her tale. John jokes about it, humors her, almost indulges her in her whimsy. Paul takes it absolutely seriously, and is more concerned with the meaning of the vision than with

²¹There are those who believe the nun's tale to have a much subtler purpose. D. H. Johnson, "'Daring the Dread Glance': Charlotte Brontë's Treatment of the Supernatural in Villette," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XX: 4 (March 1966), 325-336, suggests that the "business of the nun serves a thematic function" to mark the "successive stages by which Lucy Snowe moves toward self-realization and the eventual reconciliation of conflicting elements in her being" (pp. 325-326). Robert A. Colby (op. cit.) feels, on the other hand, that the nun is a "real jeu d'esprit" which mocks the traditional Gothic, a device by which the author distorts "outmoded literary conventions in a pointedly perverse way" (p. 419).

the possibility of its veracity. Materialistic, ordinary Ginevra knows of the reality, but her letter of explanation does little to lessen the power which this unreality has over the lives of the others.

Lucy's hallucinatory night visit to the park en fête presents the most dramatic and without doubt the most unreal adventure which she experiences. José Ortega y Gasset states (in quite another connection), "We are reminded of Poincaré's remark--which foreshadows the theory of relativity--that, if everything in our world contracted and shrank in the same proportion, we should not notice the difference."²² Such a transformation takes place for Lucy. She leaves reality (her bed in the dormitory)--by her own will but not through the control of her reason--and goes to the place of her imagining (the park). But as in all dreams, the recognizable becomes distorted: she finds the park not "all silent, lone, and safe"; not hers alone, "the moonlit, midnight park" (II: XXXVIII, 256). The festival exists in its full brilliance; festive gaiety bars her from participation. Now the whole world which Lucy inhabits shrinks simultaneously and with magnified intensity, and she sees the men and women who people her world drawn together in one grand

²²Ortega y Gasset, op. cit., p. 83.

travesty of reality. She cannot participate, merely observe, but she is no more real than any of the phantoms of fantasy whom she seems to recognize as her friends and associates.

The astonishing contrast of the following day brings reality into focus as violently as unreality has taken possession of the world the night before. Ginevra exposes the hoax of the nun's visitations. The ambitious young Ginevra elopes. Joiners and journeymen arrive to repair school equipment. And M. Paul seeks Lucy. Quite as unexpectedly forthright, Lucy declares herself to Paul when Madame Beck attempts to lure him away:

Pierced deeper than I could endure, made now to feel what defied suppression, I cried--

"My heart will break!"

(II: XLI, 295)

But, indeed, it will not break; on the contrary, emotion has now triumphed over reason, sunlight over shadow, reality over unreality. In her circling through life Lucy has reached the widest swing; surely her heart can now ascend the gale of passion, she can indeed spread and repose her "pinions on its strength, career in its course, sweep where it swept" (I: XVII, 206). This is the appointed time, this is the time of elation.

With all the concentration of cyclic construction, with all the intensity of the feeling of contrast, Charlotte Brontë at no time in the novel forgets the theme. In

Villette, as in her three earlier novels, Charlotte Brontë concentrates on loneliness, on the need to combat this loneliness by self-expression and self-reliance in work, and more especially by the need for the compatibility and mutual respect--the natural fulfillment of a satisfactory marriage.

Some keenness has been added to the author's vision. The narrator in Villette states quite calmly, "The longer we live, the more our experience widens; the less prone we are to judge our neighbor's conduct, to question the world's wisdom . . ." (II: XXVII, 75). In keeping with this expanding tolerance, Charlotte Brontë creates a hero, small and dark--with more than a suggestion of ugliness. The golden-haired upright doctor must marry a doll; the wealth-seeking, title-seeking schoolgirl must come to grief. But most important of the new visions, the author shows that a protagonist can fall in love a second time and, moreover, can bury within her heart an unfulfilled love which was doomed from birth. Lucy's attraction to John after she has recognized her love for Paul expresses an emotional entanglement far more complex than any experienced by Crimsworth, Jane, Shirley, or Caroline.²³

²³Robert Martin (op. cit.) observes, "Probably in no other Victorian novel is there such an adult recognition that a woman's sexual attraction to one man may persist beyond the growth of love for another. Mature love may succeed mere physical excitement, but it need not destroy it. Small wonder that Miss Brontë's contemporaries found her novels dangerously outspoken" (p. 170).

Charlotte Brontë personifies loneliness in Lucy. As a child she lives unloved in a world where love comes easily. In her first position as companion to a dying invalid, Lucy is filled with an understanding of the anguish of a woman living thirty years with a broken heart. She determines to go to London on impulse; she decides to earn her livelihood abroad even more casually. The idea of selecting Villette as her destination results from a fellow-passenger's chance remark during the crossing to the continent. A totally strange young gentleman rescues her at the diligence stop when she loses her luggage. Strange assailants approach her in the night. She has severed whatever tenuous ties she had with England, yet she has no direction in Villette. She stands alone, absolutely alone.

When she has secured her place in the school of Madame Beck she has not greatly changed her sense of solitude. She has no suitors, she likes none of her fellow-teachers. She exists estranged in an isolation which has caused Mrs. Tillotson to speak of "her sense of the other characters as mysterious and alien. . . ." ²⁴ Lucy says simply, "I went to church and I took walks, and am very well convinced that nobody minded me." The "gaiety, security and self-satisfaction" of the other teachers exclude her from

²⁴Tillotson, op. cit., p. 149.

their company (I: XII, 137). She knows, though, that she misses much of the satisfaction in life. Though she argues convincingly with herself on the importance of independence, her longing for love causes her to ask:

"But afterwards, is there nothing more for me in life--no true home--nothing to be dearer to me than myself, and by its paramount preciousness to draw from me better things than I care to culture for myself alone? Nothing at whose feet I can willingly lay down the whole burden of human egoism, and gloriously take up the nobler charge of labouring and living for others?"

(II: XXXI, 140)

The change comes when M. Paul begins to demonstrate his concern for her. He pillows her head on a shawl when he finds her sleeping in the empty classroom. Later he asks, "'You looked pale in your slumbers; are you home-sick?'" To which she gives the poignant reply, "'To be home-sick one must have a home, which I have not'" (II: XXXI, 142).

But Lucy's wisdom and disillusionment cause her to realize the importance of independence. When challenged by Polly as to why she teaches, she answers:

"Chiefly, I fear, for the sake of the money I get . . . for the roof of shelter I am thus enabled to keep over my head; and for the comfort of mind it gives me to think that while I can work for myself, I am spared the pain of being a burden to anyone."

(II: XXV, 43)

Polly asks if she likes it, and she replies honestly, "'Not always'" (II: XXV, 43). But later, when Polly begs her to give up teaching and be a companion to her, Lucy declines. As narrator she comments, "I had not that vocation. I could

teach; I could give lessons; but to be either a private governess or a companion was unnatural to me." She states her reason directly: "I was no bright lady's shadow . . ." (II: XXVI, 60). In Pamela's Daughters, Robert Utter and Gwendolyn Needham judge Villette to be "the first English novel, so far as these studies have gone, which deals with the heroine's work continuously and as an integral part of her life."²⁵

And Lucy's work gives her more than money and a roof to shelter her, more than the assurance that she will not be a burden to anybody. She has, in addition, the awareness of being wanted and needed. After her convalescence at La Terrasse with the Brettons she returns to the school to take up her duties. Ginevra's simple tribute, "'I am glad you are come back . . .'" (I: XXI, 295) voices the reaction of those around her at Madame Beck's. Lucy has more than work to do--she has independence. Phyllis Bentley comments on the author's excellent handling of this theme--"the terrible emotional intensity of the woman alone, maintaining her integrity against the world," which she refers to as one of Charlotte Brontë's "unique and splendid achievements."²⁶

²⁵Robert Palfrey Utter and Gwendolyn Bridges Needham, Pamela's Daughters (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), p. 340.

²⁶Phyllis Bentley, op. cit., p. 29.

Another quality unique to Charlotte Brontë is her attitude toward marriage, her belief in a marriage of two people with similarities of nature, yet who hold one another in a prescribed unchanging relationship. The husband must respect his wife's perceptive mind and her independent attitude, must treat her as a responsible thinking human being. The wife must acknowledge her husband's superiority of mind, of taste, and of ability. A passionate sexual response and an emotional interdependency can be found underlying the adherence to this formula of attitude.

Because the author has laid down firm rules for the survival of a marriage the reader becomes aware, early in the novel, which marriages are slated for success. Lucy does not consider Dr. John superior to her--the attitude which would lead to Charlotte Brontë's kind of ideal marriage--and he does not treat her with enough respect of intellect to fulfill his part. They also lack an intimation of forthcoming passion, and this lack of passion is essentially basic in Dr. John's personality. One incident related to Dr. John seems significant: the passion which stirs in Lucy at Vashti's performance reaches a climax as the cry of "Fire!" rings out in the theatre. As a result of the panic Dr. John and Lucy encounter Polly and her father, and the meeting leads to an immediate attraction of Dr. John to Polly. The narrator comments that is was later revealed

that the fire was a very little one: "it was but some loose drapery on which a spark had fallen, and which had blazed up and been quenched in a moment" (II: XXIII, 17). The passion which Dr. John sparks does not hold promise of great flame.

M. Paul, on the other hand, gives every indication of satisfying the requirements for Charlotte Brontë's conception of the ideal husband. He has a strong, indomitable personality: Lucy sees the Bonaparte in him. He responds emotionally when roused. He attacks Englishwomen in his classroom lecture when Lucy has hurt his feelings for the same reason that Lucy yawns over his Roman Catholic pamphlets when she feels that her principles are being undermined. They understand one another.

Although he respects Lucy's mind and her professional abilities enough to found a school for her, and arrange for her independence, he never doubts his own superiority--nor does Lucy. Only when he feels that she is encroaching on his intellectual territory does he become truly angry. When he tutors her in arithmetic her concentration and struggle delight him--he shows himself to be "very kind, very good, very forbearing." But this kindness becomes sternness as Lucy doubles her efforts and begins to succeed. "I was vaguely threatened with I know not what doom if I ever trespassed the limits proper to my sex, and conceived a

countraband appetite for unfeminine knowledge" (II: XXX, 217). One of M. Paul's most appealing weaknesses is his suspicion that Lucy knows both Latin and Greek, a knowledge which she "was supposed criminally and craftily to conceal" (II: XXX, 130). Such suspicions bring on his tirade against women of intellect. Lucy adds:

He believed in his soul that lovely, placid and passive feminine mediocrity was the only pillow on which manly thought and sense could find rest for its aching temples. . . .

(II: XXX, 131)

Lucy's reaction to his attitude exposes the complexity of this delicately balanced relationship between man and woman. When he asks whether she considers herself to be an ignoramus she replies:

"Not exactly. I am ignorant, monsieur, in the knowledge you ascribe to me, but I sometimes, not always, feel a knowledge of my own."

(II: XXX, 132)

Walter Allen comments that in these novels of Charlotte Brontë "self-regard is also and perhaps fundamentally a sexual self-regard,"²⁷ giving a clearer reading to Lucy's answer.

Supposedly in response to a plea by the Reverend Patrick Brontë that the novel should have a happy ending, Charlotte Brontë left what she considered an open end--one could accept or reject the unstated facts of death. In a

²⁷Allen, op. cit., p. 220.

letter to her publisher she jokes about the choice which remains for the reader, what Miss Ewbank refers to as "the merits of a do-it-yourself dénouement: 'Drowning and Matrimony are the fearful alternatives.'"²⁸

Lucy and Paul show an early awareness of the emotional possibilities in their relationship. Their actions take on symbolic significance, for them as well as for the reader. When Lucy knocks down the professor's spectacles and sees the shattered glass she becomes shocked and frightened. The professor reveals his understanding of their potential relationship in his response. He reproves her and then adds, "'Ah traitress! traitress! You are resolved to have me quite blind and helpless in your hands!'" (II: XXVIII, 96).

Charlotte Brontë uses much symbolism throughout the novel. The basic theme of isolation, resolved in Paul's saving love for Lucy, appears in the novel as the most overpowering negative force. But the author symbolically indicates the penetration of this isolation--Paul's prime function in Lucy's life. Paul penetrates Lucy's place of escape, the allée défendue. He meets her here, admits her to the hidden details of his way of life, shows her the window from which he has been watching her. The wall closes off one side of her hiding place, "all blank stone with the

²⁸ Ewbank, op. cit., p. 202, quoting Charlotte Brontë's letter to George Smith on March 26, 1853.

exception of certain attic loopholes high up" and one lower window "said to mark the chamber or study of a master" (I: XII, 132). Paul's window has become his opening into her isolation. The attic, too, which she considers a hide-away, has been penetrated by both Paul and John.

The key appears as one of the most frequently recurrent images. As a symbol of the release from isolation the key becomes significant, particularly as it appears so often in Villette in the hands of M. Paul. Even disregarding erotic imagery, the key cannot fail to imply the end of isolation and the prime function of M. Paul's love in opening the world for the lonely schoolmistress.

The unstated connotative reference to the myth of Danaë seem equally suggestive. Believing herself forsaken by Paul, Lucy has prepared to retire to the garden, to the allée défendue, to brood in her loneliness. She thinks she hears a workman coming; he opens the door for her. Looking up she sees that it is M. Paul. The myth leaps to her mind, "Once haply in life one golden gift falls prone in the lap--one boon full and bright, perfect from Fruition's mint" (II: XLI, 293). Paul too reminds the reader of the image when he tells Lucy of his ~~generous plan for her school~~, explaining that "'I determined to give myself the richest treat that I have known or shall know. . . . Reserve is neither my virtue nor my vice.'" Saying that he can keep

nothing hidden from her he supposes that "'my solitary first and last secret would presently have unravelled itself in your lap'" (II: XLI, 302).

Early in the novel one passage holds the metaphor of passion. Interesting enough, it describes the garden and the allée défendue, which will be the setting for many of the encounters between Lucy and Paul. Here Lucy reports she often comes on summer evenings

. . . to linger solitary, to keep tryst with the rising moon, or taste one kiss of the evening breeze, or fancy rather than feel the freshness of dew descending. . . . There was a large berceau, above which spread the shade of an acacia; there was a smaller more sequestered bower, nestled in the vines which ran all along a high and grey wall, and gathered their tendrils in a knot of beauty, and hung their clusters in loving profusion about the favoured spot where jasmine and ivy met and married them.

(I: XII, 131)

This reference to a kiss remains the only one in the story, either figurative or actual, until two symbolic uses of the image toward the end of the book. One evening as Lucy watches M. Paul in the garden with the younger students she notices that "his Spanish face, when he turned it momentarily, answered the sun's animated kiss with an animated smile" (II: XXXVI, 205). Later, when they visit the little house, soon to be Lucy's school, she describes it in a way which seems wholly significant, both of M. Paul and their relationship:

He did not knock, but taking from his pocket a key, he opened and entered at once. Ushering me in, he shut

the door behind us. No servant appeared. The vestibule was small, like the house, but freshly and tastefully painted; its vista closed in a French window with vines trained about the panes, tendrils and green leaves kissing the glass.

(II: XLI, 299)

In other uses of language besides the symbol Charlotte Brontë shows her proficiency as a writer. Her use of the first person narrator is handled here more successfully than in either of the other novels using this device. Part of its reliability grows from the limited scope of the point of view--nowhere does the reader learn of facts or attitudes which are not seen through Lucy's eyes. A possible exception may be the handling of time--Lucy forecasts her own future as well as Polly's and Ginevra's in a way which borders on omniscience. But perhaps Lucy does know these things at the time of the writing of the memoir. Another successful treatment of the confession-memoir is emphasized by Charlotte Brontë's handling of tense. In moments of intensity Lucy relates her experiences in the present tense. In moving from one tense to another Charlotte Brontë demonstrates great skill. The transition appears almost imperceptible. One example will serve to illustrate this dexterity. Lucy has roused herself from her drugged reverie and intends to make a night pilgrimage to the city park. The description of her escape begins in the past tense, in keeping with the narrative up to that point. She moves to the future for a moment and then picks up the present tense to heighten the

suspense:

. . . the chamber-door stood open. Will the dormitory planks sustain my tread untraitorous? Yes. I know wherever a board is loose, and will avoid it. The oak staircase creaks somewhat as I descend, but not much--I am in the carré.

(II: XXXVIII, 256-257)

Her dreamlike escape from the house continues to be described in the present tense, and then an equally smooth transition carries the reader back into the normal past tense of the narrative:

I see its moon over me; I feel its dew in the air. . . This solemn peace is not what I seek, it is not what I can bear: to me the face of that sky bears the aspect of a world's death. The park also will be calm--I know, a mortal serenity prevails everywhere--yet let me seek the park.

I took a route well known. . . .

(II: XXXVIII, 257-258)

Although Charlotte Brontë may be accused of her usual affluence of adjectives or nouns, a piling-up of descriptive words to the end that a strong impression may be made on the reader, this does not happen very often in Villette. More typical of this novel's style is a development from paragraph to paragraph--seen, for example, in the final description of the storm at sea. After a heart-felt "God, watch that sail! Oh! guard it!" the paragraphs build one on the other. The next begins, "The wind shifts to the west." The following paragraph starts, "That storm roared frenzied for seven days"; the next, "Peace, be still! Oh! a thousand weepers. . . ." The final paragraph begins, "Here pause:

pause at once" (II: XLII, 312-313).

A similar feeling of progression develops in dialogue. Lucy has said to Paul, "'It kills me to be forgotten, monsieur. . . . All these weary days I have not heard from you one word. . . .'" M. Paul picks up her phrase. "'All these weary days,' said he. . . ." is followed by the narrator's interruption to explain Lucy's use of French. Then the dialogue continues, "'All these weary days" I have not for one hour forgotten you'" (II: XLI, 296-297).

But awkwardness remains in the bilingual dialogue. The reader learns that M. Paul's English is limited to only a very few words; the narrator implies that Lucy and Paul speak together in French. Occasionally whole sentences, whole sections of repartée appear in French--shifting, for no apparent reason, into English and back into French. Sometimes Charlotte Brontë uses a French word in an English sentence, often when the English word seems equally serviceable (as, for example, her use of rencontre when encounter would serve just as well). But short of offering a bilingual novel, accurate in its recording of each language as it exists in the drama of the novel, there does not seem to be a completely satisfactory way of handling this problem. And if the author is showing off her hard-won erudition it is a small vanity indeed, and one she can surely be indulged in.

Two or three particular literary devices deserve

mention. One is the narrator's trick of intentionally withholding information from the reader. Early in the novel the narrator remarks:

It will be conjectured that I was of course glad to return to the bosom of my kindred. Well! The amiable conjecture does no harm, and may therefore be safely left uncontradicted. Far from saying nay, indeed, I will permit the reader to picture me for the next eight years, as a bark slumbering through halcyon weather. . . .
(I: IV, 39)

At another point in the novel the narrator withholds information which the reader fully expects to hear. Lucy and Paul, joined in understanding, have become personal in their discussion. Paul remarks, "*Elle est toute pâle . . . cette figure là me fait mal.*" But the sensitive Lucy cannot bear to think that he finds her unattractive:

"Do I displease your eyes much?" I took courage to urge: the point had its vital import for me.

He stopped, and gave me a short, strong answer; an answer which silenced, subdued, yet profoundly satisfied. Ever after that I knew what I was for him. . . .
(II: XLI, 298)

The final withholding comes in the next to last paragraph of the book. After the storm has been fully described, the shipwrecks reported and the closing in of sorrow and darkness, the narrator breaks off and declares:

Here pause: pause at once. There is enough said. Trouble no quiet, kind heart; leave sunny imaginations hope. Let it be theirs to conceive the delight of joy born again fresh out of great terror, the rapture of rescue from peril, the wondrous reprieve from dread, the fruition of return. Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life.

(II: XLII, 313)

Perhaps, as it has been suggested, this unstated ending was to placate Charlotte Brontë's old father, perhaps to satisfy her romantically-inclined audience. For whatever reason she included it, the author has managed to end her novel with a device of suspension, which--while not fooling for one moment the cynics among us--was enough to cause dear ladies to write Charlotte Brontë inquiring after the real truth about the fate of the dear but exasperating M. Paul.

It is always interesting to note particularly personal and autobiographical details in Charlotte Brontë's novels. As in Shirley, the author seems to be paying tribute to her sister Emily by her use of the words wuther and wuthering (here, "by the 'wuther' of wind amongst trees," I: XVI, 211). And earlier the reader may wonder at the reference to a character who appears nowhere else in the novel, a "special reference to one 'Charlotte,'" who "seemed to be on the brink of perpetrating a romantic and imprudent match" (I: VI, 60). As the novel was to appear as the work of Currer Bell, such a sly reference to "Charlotte" may have been in the form of a private joke. It is fruitless to pursue the argument for or against the novel as autobiographical in the larger sense. One must assume that many of the author's experiences in Brussels gave her ideas on which she based the development of her protagonist's emotional life. But the historicity of each event and the identification of each

character passes beyond the area of interest of the critic. The novel as a work of art must be judged aesthetically.

Virginia Woolf reports in The Common Reader on her truly penetrating analysis of the whole of Charlotte Brontë's work, in words which apply specifically to Villette, "We read Charlotte Brontë not for exquisite observation of character . . . not for comedy . . . not for philosophic view of life . . . but for her poetry." This poetry expresses an "untamed ferocity perpetually at war with the accepted order of things."²⁹ In addition to this poetry, the author has created a rounded, believed, sympathetic human being in Lucy Snowe. Robert Heilman defines these protagonists of Charlotte Brontë's as women who "vibrate with passion." He suggests that they have

. . . in the center an almost violated devotedness that has in it at once a fire of independence, a spiritual energy, a vivid sexual responsiveness, and, along with this, self-righteousness, a sense of power, sometimes self-pity, and envious competitiveness.³⁰

In addition to this sense of poetry, this creation of a life-like responsive character, Charlotte Brontë has also built into her work a highly developed sense of pattern and

²⁹Virginia Woolf, "Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights in The Common Reader: First Series (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), p. 200.

³⁰Robert B. Heilman, "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic" in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad, p. 119.

structure which she controls with a quick and skillful hand. The structure is so dextrously handled, in fact, that the novel may appear patternless--but after a close reading one can sense the firm foundation laid for plot and character development.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Charlotte Brontë wrote as she felt she must write, and she accomplished a series of novels expertly founded on the principles of organic unity. Her authorial vision necessitated her including the elements which DeWitt Parker enumerates as essential for organic unity.¹ In one or another of her novels there exist: the principle of theme, the dominant character of each work; thematic variation, in which the theme echoes and re-echoes with some alteration; balance, equating opposing and contrasting elements to create the whole; and evolution or rhythm. She demonstrates in practice that she has an acute awareness of the requirements for unity. In response to adverse criticism she said in a letter to her publisher:

No matter--whether known or unknown--misjudged or the contrary--I am resolved not to write otherwise. I shall bend as my powers tend. . . . I must have my own way in the matter of writing.²

¹DeWitt Parker, "The Problem of Aesthetic Form" in Problems in Aesthetics (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), pp. 175-184.

²Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams on September 21, 1849, in The Brontës: Life and Letters, edited by Clement Shorter (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), letter 378, II, 74.

Critics have long since given up the accusation that Charlotte Brontë wrote as a gifted dilettante interweaving her life story with the fragments of her remembered dreams of childhood, which were meticulously recorded in the minute volumes of her juvenilia. Critics no longer say that her novels are the fortuitous result of the amateur confessional. The author who produced these fine novels is, now, almost universally credited with a deep perception of life and a fine sensitivity toward it. To this must be added her great awareness of the elements of fiction.

Although Charlotte Brontë wrote for publication, she did not feel that she was writing to please an audience. Her juvenilia shows that she was truly a person who received extreme satisfaction from self-expression. No other young writer in literary history has left more tangible proof of his intellectual and emotional sustenance through the years of his development by the act of writing than Charlotte Brontë through the existence of the volumes of her juvenilia, hand-lettered and hand-bound as they may be. Her adult writing, while an outgrowth of these years of self-expression, was intended for publication, and she was therefore aware of the existence of her reading public. But she continued to write because of the importance of the creative act of writing in her life. In a letter to her friend Ellen Nussey she explained her attitude toward the public:

My own conscience I satisfy first; and having done that, if I further content and delight a Forçade, a Fonblanque, and a Thackeray, my ambition has had its ration; it is fed; it lies down for the present satisfied; my faculties have wrought a day's task, and earned a day's wages.³

This reaction has the air of self-consolation accompanying disappointment, but in the case of Charlotte Brontë such a statement has every possibility of being essentially true. These are the words of an author who had written, from a time in childhood when she was about ten years old until the publication of her first novel when she was thirty-one, entirely for herself and her brother and sisters; she was an author who had found satisfaction and release in these creative expressions intended for a very limited audience.

But to suggest that the published novels are the public appearance of private and wholly unprofessional writing is to miss the enormous transition from closet (or "children's study") romances to disciplined, organized, planned works of fiction. The Professor may perhaps be considered as the bridge between youth and maturity, between the twenty-year-long serial of fictional adventures (an almost indistinguishable intermingling of the stories by Charlotte Brontë and her brother Branwell) and the master-

³Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey on November 22, 1849, in Shorter, op. cit., letter 395, II, 89. Eugène Forçade had just written a very favorable review of Shirley in the Revue des deux mondes; Albany Fonblanque was a critic on the Examiner whom Charlotte Brontë respected.

fully executed Jane Eyre. Critics tend to defend the sudden appearance of Jane Eyre from the pen of an obscure Yorkshire lady writer by pointing out that much of The Professor indicates potential excellence. But a critic must also sense the importance of the late juvenilia as the logical beginning of this first novel offered for publication. The Professor forecasts the greater novels to come, but it also links the author to that active creative life which had persisted steadily for all of her thinking years, since she and the other little Brontës had first begun their fictional world of play and their creative life as authors.

The first successful novel from the pen of Charlotte Brontë is surely Jane Eyre, and yet, to trace the growth of the writer as reflected in her published works of fiction, one must begin with her first novel intended for publication. Thus her canon of published novels includes: The Professor (1846-1847, published posthumously in 1857), Jane Eyre (1847), Shirley (1849), and Villette (1853). A study arranged chronologically makes it possible to note Charlotte Brontë's growth as a craftsman, as well as her changing, developing attitude toward life. Within these novels Charlotte Brontë demonstrates an expert handling of the genre to maintain organic unity,--a sense of unity which increases as her skill as a writer develops.

In her approach to structure Charlotte Brontë is less

conventional than many of her contemporaries. Of course, as one might expect, she introduces characters and situations, develops complexities through conflicting motivation and circumstances (particularly those resulting from human confrontation), leads to a climax, a dénouement, and some kind of conventional settling of accounts and forecasting of resolutions. And yet, not one of her novels, with the possible exception of The Professor, can be stretched out along a linear plot graph of development-climax-dénouement. In one of the novels (The Professor) Charlotte Brontë presents a linear three-part balance (and none too successfully). In another (Jane Eyre) she uses an ascent to climax, a reversal to a second climax, and a resolution. In a third (Shirley) she speaks contrapuntally. In the last (Villette) she creates a spiral, a cyclic pattern.

She organizes these novels, even the least successful of them, on a patterned structure. The Professor, appearing as the author's first attempt to emerge from the dream world of Angria, shows two disadvantageous influences: it reveals much of the romanticism of youth, much of the let's-pretend of the young Brontës' coterie writing; and conversely, it displays the results of a sporadic but overly-earnest compliance with a pre-determined form. In The Professor Charlotte Brontë makes a conscious break with the romantic writing of her earlier days, showing a self-acclaimed

preference for the "plain and homely."⁵ In an effort to be straightforward and unromantic (an effort only partially successful) the author works out a most logical and orderly three-part division for her plot line. The triple emphasis reaches to the extreme; everything--setting, time, character development, theme--holds to the three-part organization. But however inexpertly Charlotte Brontë manipulates the device, she shows through her attention to structure what the reader may expect to find in the novels to follow.

Charlotte Brontë patterns her next novel, Jane Eyre, on the most understandable and definable structure: a linear development, a romantic tone (one almost Byronic), and an underlying structural device of antithesis, that is, a use of the mirror image in action to demonstrate the contrast between the overly-emotional world of Rochester and the overly-rational world of St. John Rivers. The dependence on a second climax, on the necessity of re-establishing the real world after the dissolution of the unreal world, on the function of structure based on thematic symbol, all these add complexity to what might have been a simple linear structure. But the idea of reversal serves the author as an organizing element of organic unity.

⁵Charlotte Brontë, Preface to The Professor, volume VII of Charlotte Brontë's works, Shakespeare Head Brontë, edited by T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1931).

In the writing of Shirley, Charlotte Brontë has become a writer who thinks about her audience. Perhaps the awareness of this audience and her feeling of obligation to her readers causes her to attempt a most complicated structure; one which gives every indication of being, in her eyes, the ideal novel form, at least at the time it was written. During those tragic eight months from September 1848 to May 1849 Charlotte Brontë suffered the loss of those she loved best: first Branwell, then Emily in December, followed by Anne in the spring. At first unable to write at all, she later escaped the pain of reality by turning to the rigorous demands of creative activity. No plan of procedure would have seemed too involved to her at this time when she wanted, more than anything, to lose herself in her work. Her use of counterpoint to interweave three voices speaking for three wholly separate areas of life is a most ambitious one. The voices propose a series of fundamental questions concerning man and his relationship to the world around him and within him. The questions are answered as each of the three voices offers the solutions which may give man some guidance through life. Charlotte Brontë uses an intricate pattern to interweave the voices; the questions are asked and answered again and again. The dominant voice, speaking for one person's need to compromise and to adjust to another person (especially in marriage) becomes the voice most clearly

heard, most easily believed.

Shirley, not considered successful at the time and still under-evaluated today, is followed by Villette, a return to the novel with a single voice, a single point of view, and a single thematic mood. But this novel does not come directly in the wake of Shirley. During the four years between these novels Charlotte Brontë altered her way of life. She still maintained a home for her aged father in the obscure village of Haworth, but she spent much of her time visiting London as well as other parts of England, and becoming acquainted with the literary world of the day. Another influence was surely the many books and periodicals sent to her by her publisher, publications which she read critically and analytically, much to her own enlightenment. Villette is far more artfully constructed than it appears on the surface. As her attitude has matured, so has her ability to manipulate the structure of a novel. Villette abandons linear structure altogether, and allows the protagonist to circle through life, through the contrasting areas of light and shadow, in four balanced concentric rounds, moving in a pattern of mood from isolation to depression, to reconciliation, to elation and then back through reconciliation and depression to isolation. The cycle recurs again and again; the reader notices that Lucy Snow passes and repasses the same point as she circles round. The novel begins in

isolation and returns to end there.

Charlotte Brontë uses language as an integrating force in each novel, gaining unity through language which supports the basic unity of structure. She attempts in her language to employ a series of devices which she did not originate; she found them in her reading, from the days of her childhood through the thirty-ninth year of her life. But from all the devices in literary history she not only selected those which were being used at the time by Dickens, Thackeray, Mrs. Gaskell, and others; she was able to select those which are the very devices which have been favored by writers ever since, and particularly in the twentieth century. These devices have proved to be trustworthy and effective. They include popular ones and exceptional ones. On the one hand, Charlotte Brontë manipulates the elements of the story: in Shirley, through interweaving voices, she presents a series of problems shown from several points of view in various guises; in Villette her emphasis lies in the familiar and yet dramatically successful use of contrast in motivation, proposed solutions, moods, settings, and characters. On the other hand, she handles language expertly: she excels in her application of extended metaphor used thematically, a device effective in English writing since medieval times and highly appreciated by present-day audiences. Her skill is revealed in the use of thematic

symbol which exists significantly in the prose and yet is there to reinforce the organic structure of the novel. The use of thematic metaphor is particularly well handled in two of the novels. She shows the opposing forces at work on Crimsworth in The Professor and the power of Jane's emotions revealed in her art work and her dreams in Jane Eyre. The thematic symbol appears as the mirror in Jane Eyre: it functions as a symbol in the story Jane tells, while it exists structurally as the basis of the form of the novel. The circle serves this double purpose in Villette. The narrator uses the circle metaphorically on repeated occasions, and it forms the basis of the novel's structure.

Through this dextrously handled language the themes of the novels reach the reader, and all of the themes lead to one conclusion: a reaffirmation of man's personal world as the important one. Charlotte Brontë's themes, which shocked and angered her contemporaries, concern an intense personal interest in emotional fulfillment. Like lyric poetry, her novels express a preoccupation with self--and this is possibly what drew critics to that seemingly fascinating occupation of finding autobiography in every written word. But Charlotte Brontë views self objectively, the generic self, the core of each man: author, protagonist, reader, and critic.

The author's words to G. H. Lewes make clear her

stand:

Come what will, I cannot, when I write, think always of myself and what is elegant and charming in femininity: it is not on those terms, or with such ideas, I ever took pen in hand: and if it is only on such terms my writing will be tolerated, I shall pass away from the public and trouble it no more. Out of obscurity I came, to obscurity I can easily return.⁶

The themes concern woman more than they concern man, but they are far from elegantly or charmingly feminine. Charlotte Brontë chooses for her themes: one's sense of isolation; one's need for independence through self-identification and self-esteem; and one's need to fulfill these requirements through a compatible marriage which results from a mutual respect and admiration combined with the wife's sense of her husband's superiority.

Charlotte Brontë presented her beliefs; she did not insist that they be accepted. To Ellen Nussey she wrote:

I am no teacher; to look on me in that light is to mistake me. To teach is not my vocation. What I am, it is useless to say. Those whom it concerns feel and find out. To all others I only wish to be an obscure, steady-going, private character.⁷

To feel and find out what Charlotte Brontë is, the reader has only to study her novels: the structure of them, their language, and the themes. One may learn through these

⁶Charlotte Brontë to G. H. Lewes on November 1, 1849, in Shorter, op. cit., letter 386, II, 80.

⁷Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey on November 22, 1849, in Shorter, op. cit., letter 395, II, 89.

aspects of composition that Charlotte Brontë reveals a developing, changing attitude. Initially she shows her romantic determination that life shall prove worth living, though one must realize that her first two novels were written when she was thirty-one and no longer a child. Her earliest novel centers on independence: the need for the end of isolation and the acquisition of the respect of oneself and mankind. The resolution of this novel in ideal marriage appears theoretical and unimpassioned.

Charlotte Brontë's belief that passion and not reason must control a man's life--and most particularly a woman's life--finds a voice in Jane Eyre. Although countering with an overtone of moral judgment against passion, she demonstrates that the workable solution of life's problems is to be found through emotional relationships. She casts off traditional Victorian standards and speaks for self-expression, self-reliance, and self-esteem. Jane Eyre, however, shifts the emphasis from self-esteem, which is there, to self-expression, which is vital. The struggle between passion and reason becomes the preoccupation of the author, and isolation has slipped forgotten into the shadows. One frightening experience of Jane's lonely escape on the moors, while terrifyingly fundamental to the human condition, finally becomes resolved in the beginning of Jane's life with the Rivers family.

In Shirley isolation broods as a dreaded destiny for Caroline, but it, too, disappears after only one long and bitter struggle with death. Then life becomes flooded with rosiness for that young woman. Here all themes take second place to that which speaks of the harmony to be found in compatible marriage. But the novel does not deal with unrealistic romanticism: on the contrary, the demands of human adjustment, of personal compromise and resignation, must be acknowledged before emotional fulfillment can be experienced. The strength of such a relationship relies on the upright supports of self-respect and respect by one's partner. Thus an amiable and harmonic existence is secured by a wife's being valued for her individual abilities and intelligence, a respect dramatically countered by her abnegation of power as she gives up self-pride in her worshipful regard for her husband. With such stringent demands on the personalities involved in the ideal marriage one cannot be surprised that the rare successful marriage is contrasted on all sides by the evils of incompatibility, spinsterhood, and the shadow of death.

In her last novel Charlotte Brontë faces reality without the romantic overtones which have such audience-appeal. In Villette Lucy Snowe begins as an observer of life, afraid to participate and not particularly encouraged to join in. When she relinquishes the passive for the active life her

mood turns to one of depression. She gradually accepts harsh reality in her life and becomes reconciled to a partial existence. When emotional satisfaction lifts her to the level of elation the reader might suppose that self-respect, devotion of an admirer, economic security, and emotionally satisfying love will bring the happy culmination to her life. Not so. Love suddenly ends with Paul's death. The reader must decide whether or not independence alone will compensate for Lucy's return to isolation. The final state of being is identified in Villette through woman's realization that emotional isolation looms always near. Death takes away what one struggles long to find. Completion comes only when one achieves self-esteem and self-reliance. Jane Eyre, Shirley Keeldar, and Lucy Snowe all find this completion.

At the end of Villette, the last novel she was to write, Charlotte Brontë indicates this sense of completion. She was, of course, unaware that she was stating her strongest beliefs for the last time. But her concluding thought carries the finality of a task accomplished in the words, "Here Pause: pause at once. There is enough said" (II: XLII, 313). And if not enough, at least much has been said by Charlotte Brontë on the subject of man's fundamental needs and the approach which he can use to satisfy these needs. Charlotte Brontë wrote in truth and she wrote with skill,

and this intensely forceful combination has assured her novels the respect, through the years, which they deserve.

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Another German study of woman's place as revealed by the characters in Charlotte Brontë's novels.

Heindl, Elisabeth. "Charlotte Brontë und der französische Geist." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Vienna, 1944.

This dissertation points out the similarity between the attitudes displayed by Charlotte Brontë in her novels and the feeling being revealed in French writing of the time.

*Howard, Margaret Adelia. "Charlotte Brontë's Novels: An Analysis of their Thematic and Structural Patterns." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, 1962.

Although the title might lead one to suppose that the dissertation would be on the structural patterns of the novels, actually it is a study of the search-for-love theme in the novels and its relation to the author's style.

Junge, Hans. "Der Stil in den Romanen Charlotte Brontës." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Halle, 1912.

A dissertation on the style of Charlotte Brontë analyzes the diction and effects created by language.

*Kneis, Earl Allen. "The Art of Charlotte Brontë: A Study of Point of View in her Fiction." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, 1964.

Dr. Kneis has continued to write on the Brontës. His dissertation (which we now have at the University on microfilm) continues what has now become a popular search into point of view and the narrator in the novel.

Nissl, Notburga. "Die Charaktere und die Technik ihrer Darstellung in den Romanen Charlotte Brontës (studiert an 'Jane Eyre')." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Innsbruck, 1937.

Another German dissertation discusses the methods Charlotte Brontë used in creating the characters in her most popular novel.

*Odom, Keith Conrad. "The Brontës and Romantic Views of Personality." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1961.

The author investigates the Brontës' attitude toward the

beliefs of the Romantics (their attitude toward childhood, organicism, emotion and passion, Byronism, and religious thought and feeling) in an attempt to establish them as Romanic writers.

*Shapiro, Arnold. "A Study in the Development of Art and Ideas in Charlotte Brontë's Fiction." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1965.

The author attempts to trace the development of Charlotte Brontë and to indicate her growth as an artist, pinpointing her characteristic themes: the isolated individual in the world; her criticism of society; and her view of personal relationships and their necessity. He concentrates on Charlotte Brontë's use of the first-person narrator.

Van Arsdel, Rosemary Thorstenson. "The Westminster Review, 1824-1857: with Special Emphasis on Literary Attitudes." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1960.

The periodical is reviewed and analyzed, suggesting the possibility of its influence on the Brontës during their productive years.

Vogele, Hermann. "Aufbau und Sprache in Charlotte Brontës 'Jane Eyre' und Emily Brontës 'Wuthering Heights': ein Vergleich." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Freiburg, 1954.

This dissertation is a Germanic study of construction and diction in these novels.

Wells, Augustin-Lewis. "Les Soeurs Brontë et l'étranger: étude des influences européennes sur leur pensée et sur leur oeuvre." Doctoral dissertation, Université de Paris, 1937. Published privately, Paris: L. Rodstein, 1937.

European influences on the writings and thought of the Brontës is discussed in this lengthy treatment. The dissertation includes a complete bibliography.

*Westbrook, James Seymour, Jr. "Sensibility and Society: A Study in Themes." Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1964.

This dissertation shows how five novelists handle sensibility within a social framework. Shirley is used to demonstrate "the difficulties encountered by strongly individual sensibilities as they come face to face with convention."

3. Articles and Chapters in Books

Benson, A. C. "The Message of Charlotte Brontë to the Nineteenth Century," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xxv, V, 1915.

An analysis of the contemporary point of view shows Charlotte Brontë's attitude toward such social questions as the place of woman. This issue of BST is now out of print but is still available in some collections, such as that of the University of California at Berkeley.

*Briggs, Asa. "Private and Social Themes in Shirley," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. lxviii, XIII, 1958.

This valuable article suggests the three themes in Shirley and evaluates the novel as "perhaps the first impressive regional novel in the English language."

*Burkhart, Charles. "Another Key Word for Jane Eyre," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XVI, 1961.

The author suggests that "nature" is the word -- referring to the conflict between reason and judgment.

*_____. "Brontë's Villette," Explicator, XXI:1, Sept. 1962.

A study of the moon imagery suggests the basic symbolism in the novel.

Cecil, Lord David. Early Victorian Novelists. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935.

This close analysis of Charlotte Brontë as a writer is destructive in tone and biased in attitude.

*Chase, Richard. "The Brontës: A Centennial Observance (Reconsiderations VIII)," Kenyon Review, IX:(Autumn 1947), 487-506.
/Reprinted as "The Brontës, or Myth Domesticated" in Forms of Modern Fiction. Edited by William Van O'Connor. Bloomington, Ind.: University of Indiana Press, 1954.

Chase accepts uncritically Rosamund Landbridge's theories as well as adding conclusions from an approach based on Jung and Toynbee. The study, considered by some to be highly overrated, is an interesting one.

Chesterton, Gilbert Keith. "Charlotte Brontë as a Romantic" in Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1916: A Centenary Memorial. Edited by Butler Wood. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd, 1918.

Chesterton's belief that "Romance is a spirit; and as for realism it is a convention" helps him see Charlotte Brontë as adventurous in an intensely individualistic and intensely womanly way.

Chesterton, Gilbert Keith. "Charlotte Brontë and the Realists," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xvi, IV, 1907.

This is merely a paraphrased report of an address given by Chesterton, in which he attacks the advice given to Charlotte Brontë by George Henry Lewes who urged the writer to "be realistic."

_____. Victorian Age in Literature. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1913.

Chesterton suggests that what the Brontës brought to fiction was "the blast of mysticism of the North." His analysis, while not exhaustive, is of interest for its point of view.

Clement, Brother David. "Note the Literary Allusions," English Journal, LIV, (January 1965), 59-60.

This reference to the allusions in Jane Eyre--from Bewick's History of British Birds to Gulliver--stresses the importance of noticing what the character reads into the allusion and how it affects the action and theme.

Colby, Robert A. "Villette and the Life of the Mind," PMLA, LXXV: 4, part I (September 1960), 410-419.

As a literary biography this study avoids a literal treatment of Charlotte Brontë's personal life, dealing entirely with her creative life.

Day, Martin S. "Central Concepts of Jane Eyre," The Personalist, XLI (1960), 495-505.

In a psychological approach to Jane's marriage problems the author investigates the underlying motivations of the protagonist.

de Selincourt, E. "The Genius of the Brontës," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xv, II, 1906.

An appreciative paper expresses de Selincourt's admiration of the style and imagination of the Brontë sisters.

Drew, Philip. "Charlotte Brontë as a Critic of Wuthering Heights," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XVIII:4 (March 1964), 365-381.

"She identifies the novel's main source of evil energy and its central metaphor," is Drew's summary of Charlotte Brontë's criticism in the preface to the 1850 edition of her sister's novel. She speaks of the strong language and rusticity, which she apologizes for, and she praises Nelly Dean, a character which tends to irritate modern readers. Her "literally accurate description" of Heathcliff earns great praise from the critic.

*Dunbar, Georgia S. "Proper Names in Villette," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 1960.

Although on the surface this seems to be a study of the names used in the novel, this article also suggests the basic intent of the novel. The critic seeks to find significance in the meaning of proper names, particularly through translation from the French.

Elliott, Rev. W. Thompson. "Atmosphere in the Brontës' Works," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xxxviii, VII, 1928.

The vicar of Leeds discusses the imagination of the Brontës and the atmosphere which they create in their novels. His analysis is that they created from "tragic genius."

Falconer, J. A. "The Professor and Villette: A Study of Development," English Studies, April, 1927.

The critic attempts a comparison by relating both novels to the biographical facts of the author's life.

Garnett, Richard. "The Place of Charlotte Brontë in Nineteenth Century Fiction" in Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1916: A Centenary Memorial. Edited by Butler Wood. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1918.

The author suggests that Charlotte Brontë's writing is subjective, as it delineates mental states and "only uses incidents as a means of producing those states."

Girdler, Lew. "Charlotte Brontë's Shirley and Scott's The Black Dwarf," Modern Language Notes, 71:187, March 1956.

The author compares Shirley with The Black Dwarf as Charlotte Brontë's story of "The Green Dwarf" echoes a similar incident in Ivanhoe. [See also Florence Swinton Dry, The Source of "Wuthering Heights", Cambridge, 1937, for a discussion of Scott's The Black Dwarf as the chief source of Wuthering Heights.]

Hadow, Sir E. A. "Education as Treated by the Brontës," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xxxv, VI, 1925.

This article discusses the various aspects of education --in schools and by governess and tutor--which appear in the Brontë novels. [See also Muriel Spark, "The Brontës as Teachers."]

Heaton, Dr. H. "The Economic Background of Shirley," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xlii, VIII, 1932.

A study of "Land and Loom," "Child Labour," "Coming of the Machine," and the trade depression in the woollen industry gives a factual basis for the events in the novel.

*Heilman, Robert B. "Charlotte Brontë, Reason, and the Moon," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XIV:4 (March 1960), 283-302.

Basing his interpretation on the moon symbolism in the novels of Charlotte Brontë, Dr. Heilman brings out the ever-present conflict between reason and intuition.

*_____. "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic" in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad. Edited by R. C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann, Jr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958.

This is a discussion of the kind of Gothic approach used by Charlotte Brontë in her treatment of symbolic dreams. The critic defines the author's "new" Gothic as "the new sense of the dark side of feeling and personality." Throughout the novels Heilman sees the author behind every first-person narrator.

Holgate, Ivy. "Shirley: Charlotte's Own Evidence," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. lxxiii, XIV:3, 1963.

In this article the critic discounts the idea that Charlotte Brontë consulted anyone about the subject of this novel, and that she shifted her subject from Chartism to the Luddite riots on the advice of anyone.

_____. "The Structure of Shirley," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. lxxii, XIV, 1962.

Miss Holgate suggests that there was a shift in location and emphasis from the York Chartists problem to the Luddite uprisings in "the Heavy Woollen district of West Riding" where Charlotte Brontë's friends the Taylors lived.

*Hughes, R. A. "Jane Eyre: The Unbaptised Dionysos," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XVIII:3, March 1964.

The critic finds Jane Eyre not a Christian narrative, in spite of Charlotte Brontë's representation of Helen Burns, Rochester, and St. John Rivers. He feels that "the Christianity of the novel is an overlay on the primary pattern, which pre-dates Christianity."

*Johnson, D. H. "'Daring the Dread Glance': Charlotte Brontë's Treatment of the Supernatural in Villette," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XX:4 (March 1966), 325-336.

The thematic function of the subplot of the ghostly nun is analyzed as a device for marking the successive stages by which Lucy Snowe reaches self-realization. The four-part structure of the plot is also presented.

Kneis, Earl Allen. "Art, Death, and the Composition of Shirley," Victorian Newsletter, XXVIII, 22-24.

Another study of the relationship between the deaths in the Brontë family and the resultant critical supposition that there are biographical echoes in Shirley shows, by scholarly investigation, the time lapse between fictional recounting and the events themselves.

* _____ . "The 'I' of Jane Eyre," College English, XXVII:7 (April 1966), 546-556.

In studying Charlotte Brontë's use of the first person in Jane Eyre, the author suggests that the protagonist's ability to re-create a scene brings about a novel which is not wholly subjective.

*Korg, Jacob. "The Problem of Unity in Shirley," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XII (September 1957), 125-136.

Unity as seen through patterns of characters, related to the romantic precept of egoism, is here presented with interesting implications.

Leavis, Q. D. "Dating Jane Eyre," Times Literary Supplement, XXVII, 436.

The critic points contradictory internal evidence as to the time of the action of the novel.

Lederer, Clara. "'Little God-Sister,'" Nineteenth Century Fiction, II:3 (December 1947), 169-175. [Then called The Trollopean.]

The biographical elements in Villette are discussed, particularly as they affect the characterization of M. Paul.

Lewes, G. H. Review of Shirley in the Edinburgh Review, January, 1850.

This venerated reviewer attacks the novel for its lack of structure.

*Lodge, David. "Fire and Eyre: Charlotte Brontë's War of Earthly Elements" in Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966.

Another critic sees the metaphoric implications of Charlotte Brontë's use of fire within the story.

*Marshall, William H. "The Self, the World, and the Structure of Jane Eyre," Revue des langues vivantes, XXVII (1961), 416-425.

This article relates the structure of the novel to the symbolic implications of self, particularly as related to the image of fire.

Momberger, Philip. "Self and World in the Works of Charlotte Brontë," English Literary History, XXXII:3 (September 1965), 349-369.

An evaluation of the introspective quality of Charlotte Brontë's style shows her response to the outer world. The critic suggests that "all of Charlotte Brontë's protagonists might be described as a version of a single type: the outcast."

Moser, Lawrence E., S. J. "From Portrait to Person: A Note on the Surrealistic in Jane Eyre," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XX:3 (December 1965), 275-281.

A brief note suggests that the surrealistic qualities of Jane's drawings reveal the personality of the author.

Prescott, Joseph. "Jane Eyre: A Romantic Exemplum with a Difference" in Twelve Original Essays on Great English Novels. Edited by Charles Shapiro. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1958.

Here the sexual repressions of Charlotte Brontë are discussed as being unintentionally revealed by the erotic imagery in Jane Eyre.

Read, Sir Herbert. "Charlotte and Emily Brontë," in Reason and Romanticism. New York: Russell and Russell, 1963.

In this Jungian interpretation Read sees Charlotte Brontë's "longing for a lost mother" as the psychological basis for the plot. (Originally published in 1925.)

Saintsbury, George. "The Position of the Brontës as Origins in the History of the English Novel," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. ix, II, 1899.

This evaluative study of the Brontës attempts to place them in literary history. The article has been reprinted many times.

Scargill, M. H. "All Passion Spent: A Revaluation of Jane Eyre," University of Toronto Quarterly, XIX (January 1950), 120-125.

A further investigation of the struggle between passion and reason reveals the emotional content of the novel.

*Shannon, Edgar F., Jr. "The Present Tense in Jane Eyre," Nineteenth Century Fiction, X:2 (September 1955), 141-145.

A study made in 1955 shows the stylistic complexity of the novel with particular attention to the lapses into the present tense. The critic sees these shifts as indicative of the structural divisions of the novel.

- Smith, David. "Incest Patterns in Two Victorian Novels," Literature and Psychology, XV:3 (Summer 1965), 135-162.
The author deals with what he considers incest patterns in Jane Eyre and The Mill on the Floss. He sees a perverted father-daughter relationship between Jane and Rochester.
- Snowden, J. K. "The Brontës as Artists and Prophets" in Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1916: A Centenary Memorial. Edited by Butler Wood. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1918.
The author distinguishes between Charlotte Brontë's romantic "yarns" and her stories "of real life." He finds Shirley without plot and without structure.
- *Solomon, Eric. "Jane Eyre, Fire and Water," College English, XXV:3 (1964), 215-17.
Mr. Solomon finds a "hard coherence of thematic and symbolic pattern" in Jane Eyre: the four-act division, parallel scenes, contrasting characters, and foreshadowing. The main theme -- the search for a home -- is supported by two pervasive images: fire (of passion) and water (of pure reason), between which "love must find a middle way."
- Spark, Muriel. "The Brontës as Teachers," The New Yorker, Jan. 22, 1966.
A merging of biography and criticism attempts to show, once again, that the Brontës' novels reflect their own experiences.
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles. "A Note of Charlotte Brontë" in Complete Prose Works, Vol. IV, Bonchurch Edition. Edited by Sir Edmund Gosse and T. J. Wise. London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1926.
Swinburne sees the everlasting quality of Charlotte Brontë's work and expresses his flowery opinion that the novels are evidence of a "noble and fruitful genius which found in the frail temple of her mortal life a minister so high and pure of spirit, so faithful and heroic of heart."
- "Sydney Dobell's Article on Currer Bell, Contributed to the Palladium in 1850," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xxviii, V, 1918. [?/?]
The publication has reprinted the lyric praise for Wuthering Heights which carries over into a criticism of the novels of Ellis and Acton Bell. Dobell believed these to be "rough and earlier statues for the hand which later shaped 'Jane Eyre' and 'Shirley'."

"The 'Taste' of Charlotte Brontë," Brontë Society Transactions, lxxiii, XIV:3, 1963.

This restatement of various contemporary reactions to Jane Eyre includes that of Queen Victoria.

*Tillotson, Kathleen. Novels of the Eighteen-Forties. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

In her thorough examination of Jane Eyre the critic emphasizes the function of the protagonist as an independent woman, and points out that the book was objected to at the time of its publication for its elemental passion.

Tompkins, J. M. S. "Caroline Helstone's Eyes," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. lxxi, XIV, 1961.

This article is based on the biographical approach which suggests that the character of Caroline is built on Anne Brontë. She supports this contention by internal evidence from the novel.

Traversi, Derek. "The Brontë Sisters and Wuthering Heights" in From Dickens to Hardy, vol. 6 of The Pelican Guide to English Literature. Edited by Boris Ford. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1957.

Although the critic opens his chapter with restrained praise of the author of Jane Eyre, it is in her sister's novel that the critic finds genius revealed.

Utter, Robert P. and Gwendolyn B. Needham. Pamela's Daughters. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937.

The authors show the heroine in her relationship to the basic prototype presented in Pamela. Lucy Snow is suggested as fitting the pattern, as does Jane Eyre. The fact that the heroines are governesses is considered to be important.

Vaughan, C. E. "Charlotte and Emily Brontë: A Comparison and a Contrast" in Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1916: A Centenary Memorial. Edited by Butler Wood. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1918.

Charlotte Brontë's "errors" in depicting scenes in her novels arose from her straying into "a field that was not hers." He suggests that she was the first English novelist to bring in the familiar French figure of the femme incomprise.

Ward, Mrs. Humphrey. "Some Thoughts on Charlotte Brontë" in Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1916: A Centenary Memorial. Edited by Butler Wood. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1918.

Among her praises of Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Ward points out the weaknesses in the novels, especially the curates in Shirley.

Weir, Edith M. "Contemporary Reviews of the First Brontë Novels," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. lvii, XI, 1947.

This article quotes fully from the contemporary reviews of the Brontë novels, beginning with Sydney Dobell's lyric praise and including many lesser reviews and some passages from Charlotte Brontë's letters in reference to the reviews.

West, Rebecca. "The Role of Fantasy in the Works of the Brontës," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. lxiv, XII:4, 1954.

In this discussion of the imaginative process by which the Brontës created real people, as opposed to girlish day-dreams, Miss West emphasizes Wuthering Heights but includes some treatment of Jane Eyre.

Woolf, Virginia. The Common Reader. London: The Hogarth Press, 1957.

The critic discusses the intensity of Charlotte Brontë's style and refers to Villette as her "finest novel." She is analyzed as having an "ardent love of nature" and as having, in common with Hardy, a power of personality and a narrowness of vision. (Originally published in 1925.)

Wroot, H. E. "Persons and Places: Sources of Charlotte Brontë's Novels," Brontë Society Transactions, pt. xlv, supplement to VIII, 1935.

A continuation of the investigations presented in the item listed below.

_____. "The Supplementary Parts: The Persons and Places of the Brontë Novels," Brontë Society Transactions, III, 1906.

This old-fashioned scholarship concentrates on the factual basis for the fictional representations in all four of Charlotte Brontë's novels. (All of volume III is now out of print but is available in Berkeley.)

4. Notes and Comments

Allen, Walter. The English Novel. New York: Dutton and Company, 1955.

Allen gives the literary setting of the time, a summary of each of the plots, and a suggestion of the importance of the narrator's role. He says, of Jane Eyre, "as to structure it is artless."

Batho, Edith C, and Bonamy Dobrée. The Victorians and After. New York: Dover Publications, 1950.

In a study of Victorian writers the authors evaluate the Brontë sisters and conclude that "Charlotte was a very considerable artist, Emily a supreme one."

Bentley, Phillis. The English Regional Novel. London: G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1941.

Miss Bentley, a fervid Brontë supporter, includes the novels of Charlotte Brontë in her study of the origin and development of the regional novel in England.

*Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. The Victorian Temper. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951.

In discussing "the pattern of convention" the author suggests the link in Jane Eyre to the flammetod in Goethe's metaphysical lyrics. He states that in Jane Eyre "an actual fire provided the visible means of purgation whereby the Byronic Mr. Rochester might attain the humility of a nobler self."

Dupont, V. "Trois notes sur les Brontës," Etudes anglaises, 1953.

M. Dupont shows the importance of the Brontës' reading of the Leeds Intelligence and Leeds Mercury.

Gerould, Gordon Hall. Patterns of English and American Fiction. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942.

The author suggests that Shirley is less important than Charlotte Brontë's other novels and that Villette has some of her "finest work."

James, Louis. Fiction for the Working Man: 1830-1850. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

This study of the "literature produced for the working classes in early Victorian urban England" refers to the statements of Methodism in the Brontës' work as discussed by Grace E. Harrison in The Clue to the Brontës, London: Methuen and Company, 1948.

Knight, Grant C. The Novel in England. New York, Richard E. Smith, 1931.

Calling both Brontës "the unorthodox Victorians," the author mentions the biographical elements in Jane Eyre and little else.

*Lester, John A., Jr. "The Consolations of Ecstasy," English Literature in Transition, VI:4 (1963), 200-11.

In an interesting study of the use of ecstasy in fiction the critic shows that the escape scene in Jane Eyre is an ecstatic experience.

Lovett, R. M. and Helen S. Hughes. The History of the Novel in England. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1932.

This biographical and literary treatment of the Brontës discusses the conflicting elements of realism and romanticism in their work.

McCullough, Bruce. Representative English Novelists: Defoe to Conrad. New York: Harper Brothers, 1946.

In a chapter called "The Subjective Novel," the author deals in character analysis of the protagonist in Jane Eyre and omits the other novels entirely.

Neill, S. Diana. A Short History of the English Novel. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952.

In her chapter "Passion Spins the Plot," the author speaks of Charlotte Brontë's imagination ("she did not attempt to discipline its fiery force") and interweaves biographical information about the Brontës' lives.

Parrot, Thomas Marc and Robert Bernard Martin. A Companion to Victorian Literature. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

A very brief biography of Charlotte Brontë is included with a survey of the social background and "history of the age."

Russell, Frances Theresa. Satire in the Victorian Novel. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964.

An interesting study of the satiric spirit and the objects of its attack, the book covers so many writers and so many books that each work can be only briefly mentioned.

Stang, Richard. The Theory of the Novel in England, 1850-1870. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.

The author points out the influence of Thackeray on Charlotte Brontë and briefly discusses her role as an author. The critics' reaction to Jane Eyre is also mentioned.

*Stevenson, Lionel. The English Novel: A Panorama. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960.

Stevenson speaks of Charlotte Brontë's strength in creating atmosphere, in asserting women's rights, and in contributing to the novels of social consciousness.

Tillotson, Geoffrey and Kathleen. Mid-Victorian Studies. London: University of London Press, 1965.

A general view of literary life in the mid-nineteenth century gives substance to the atmosphere for writers and readers of the time. Very little is included on Charlotte Brontë specifically.

*Watson, Melvin R. "Form and Substance in the Brontë Novels" in From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse. Edited by Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steinmann Jr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958.

Here is a novel-by-novel plot summary and a rudimentary study of structure -- not profound but suggestive.

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