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**‘The Madman out of The Attic’**  
Gendered Madness in *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Villette*,  
and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

**Hannah Jayne Bury**

## Abstract

The nineteenth-century 'madwoman' is critically established, but not always contentiously questioned or repudiated, within Brontë scholarship. This dissertation will therefore explore the possibility that the quintessentially 'mad' female can be replaced by the heavily flawed, and often equally 'mad' man, who continuously controls and represses her. Through a diachronic analysis of Bertha Mason and Lucy Snowe in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, Catherine Earnshaw in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Helen Graham in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, this project will demonstrate *how* and *why* the middle-class, 'sane' and respectable man can be met with character divergences and vices of his own. This undermines his credibility as a 'doctor' or a dictator in his treatment of women, which in turn vindicates and questions the validity and the ultimate cause of female 'madness' in the first instance. Chapters One and Two will trace Bertha and Catherine's respective downfalls to death through 'madness', and their connecting relationships with both Rochester and Edgar. Chapter Three will examine how Lucy does manage to survive her mistreatment; yet, she is left without purpose or a definitive identity of her own as a result. In contrast to the preceding chapters, Chapter Four will inverse and redeem the trends of the nineteenth-century woman, ones which so heavily affected Bertha, Catherine and Lucy, as Helen survives her unfavourable experience. While Bertha, Catherine and Lucy react and succumb to their patriarchal repression in different ways, only Anne Brontë offers a solution to the polemical issues which all three authors raise. As she emancipates her heroine Helen, in contrast to repressing her further, she negotiates how an alternative and a more optimistic fate potentially awaits women who are entrapped within the rigid patriarchal systems of nineteenth-century literature and culture.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my fiancé Tom, my family and my excellent tutor Dr Alex Tankard. I am forever grateful for their continued support, humour and kindness during this testing, yet immensely rewarding, postgraduate programme. This thesis is also written for, and dedicated to, all women: ‘young’ and ‘old’, ‘rich’ and ‘poor’, ‘sane’ and ‘insane’.

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## Introduction

Gendered depictions of nineteenth-century mental illness underpin the male-female relationships of *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Villette* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Within these texts, men generate ‘madness’ in middle-class women in an attempt to control and repress them. In some instances, it is evident that the ‘madman’ is more insane than the ‘madwoman’ he manages; or, at the very least, his own vices far overshadow hers. Women’s justified rage or despair to this patriarchal mistreatment is often culturally constructed by men as ‘madness’, which within this dissertation refers to the presence of mental illness and insanity.<sup>1</sup> By comparison, the term ‘cure’ refers to ways of removing this madness; for these female characters, this often requires an alternative ‘medicine’ than the remedies which men provide. This project will therefore prove that male functions of exacerbating, rather than eradicating, female madness ultimately result in woman’s objectification and loss of personal identity.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, a dichotomy between nature and culture signifies links between sanity and insanity. In this dissertation, ‘nature’ will refer to a natural world outside of domesticity, and the freedom which it provides, whereas ‘culture’ will represent the interior space of women’s social lives; for example, the marital home or quasi-asylum provided in order to contain madness. Only Helen in *The Tenant* forms an exception to this pattern of mental illness and repression: she overcomes her plight by infracting the same patriarchal systems of hegemonic masculinity which destroy Bertha, Catherine and Lucy.

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<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, female ‘madness’ was often synonymous with sexuality. While divergences between mental illness and female sexuality are explored if and when they arise in this dissertation, I am more interested in the cultural construction of ‘madness’, that is, the patriarchal repression which causes and contributes mental illness and insanity in women, rather than biological causes.

<sup>2</sup> Mindful of the limited scope of this dissertation, I have chosen to narrow my texts in order to represent at least one example from Charlotte, Emily and Anne. While *Agnes Grey*, *Shirley* and *The Professor* do feature male-female relationships, my chosen novels instead provide the most fruitful representations of female ‘madness’ in relation to patriarchal tyranny, in terms of how this impacts woman’s connecting relationships and her overall fate.

Long before the inception of this project, I was passionate about feminist representations within literature, and my growing interest led me to combine this area with themes of mental illness. I wanted to closely identify the patterns which exist between the triad of nineteenth-century women, men, and madness, patterns which this dissertation will emblematised. During my initial research, I re-read Gilbert and Gubar's canonical text, which originally coined the phrase (a phrase which also forms its title) *The Madwoman in The Attic*. As the reader will realise later, many of their writings have informed my own.<sup>3</sup> Yet, I decided to inverse their title to suit the premise of this project. It is not enough to regurgitate the nineteenth-century 'madwoman' alone: instead, 'The Madman out of The Attic' exemplifies how the equally flawed patriarchal figure, and his ability to roam outside of the madwoman's space in a way which she cannot, is more disturbing than her initial illness. I was also persuaded by Showalter's text *The Female Malady*, as she outlines how 'madness [is] one of the wrongs of women'.<sup>4</sup> It is 'the essential feminine nature unveiling itself before scientific male rationality'.<sup>5</sup> The term 'wrongs' in particular is loaded with problematic connotations. Although Showalter is accommodating for a universal view of women and madness, I strongly refuted this claim because it is rather the 'wrongs' of men which, in turn, construct the madness in women. Even the basis of her title, *Malady*, is gynocentric when destabilised into 'ma-lady'. It is hardly surprising that for women, 'madness 'seal[s] her fate, her experience, her pain'.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In their discussion of *Wuthering Heights*, for example, Gilbert and Gubar establish a similar premise to my second chapter in terms of nature and culture, as they state: 'certainly at every point the two houses are opposed to each other [...] Emily Brontë thought in polarities [...] [f]or divided from each other, the once androgynous Heathcliff-and-Catherine are now conquered by the concerted forces of patriarchy'. They also assert that culture and nature are not wholly separate because 'culture does require nature's energy'. My interpretation will instead argue that nature and culture are consistently opposed, not linked, and that patriarchy does conquer some characters through culture; yet, nature ultimately manages to revive them again. See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 273-6; p. 303.

<sup>4</sup> Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Ussher, *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 246.

Why, then, do nineteenth-century mental illness depictions seem to prioritise women, when men across the Brontë oeuvre are overtly flawed themselves?

Before examining *how* and *why* women become mentally ill, or how men generate this in the first instance, one must begin with the nineteenth-century home. Rather than a sanctuary of domesticity, the home (especially within the context of these novels) becomes the ideal ‘prison’ for men to capture and contain the quintessential madwoman. Tosh outlines how ‘the wife must be subject to her husband’ within this framework.<sup>7</sup> From the turn of the eighteenth century, proto-feminist Wollstonecraft questioned the limitations of women in her seminal work, which marks a generational shift in feminine representation and opinion.<sup>8</sup> Soon after, early nineteenth-century movements began to embrace the view that ‘husband and wife are one person, and the husband is that person’, and so the movement towards domesticating the middle-class Victorian woman began.<sup>9</sup> Queen Victoria’s reign promoted ideals for the mid-Victorian family, as she established the importance of harmonious domesticity. The Brontë writings, which predominantly took place over the 1840s, were not ignorant to this ideal.<sup>10</sup> Patmore and Ruskin’s essentialist views of women further elevated the female sex as paragons

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<sup>7</sup> John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and The Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 64.

<sup>8</sup> In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft explores issues of gender inequality, such as women’s inability to enjoy financial independence. The nineteenth century encouraged women to be subservient to their husbands, which demonstrates how it would be some years before gender inequality could be balanced. As Wollstonecraft highlights on behalf of women, ‘men endeavour to sink us still lower, merely to render us alluring objects for a moment’, a misfortune which continued beyond her death. See Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Sylvania Tomaselli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> Lee Holcombe, ‘Victorian Wives and Property’, in *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, ed. Martha Vicinus (London: Methuen and Co. Limited, 1980), p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Queen Victoria and King Albert’s marriage set the national standard for family practices throughout the nineteenth century. The Brontë sisters would have of course been familiar with this domestic standard, which in turn complicates and compromises how female ‘madness’ coexists alongside it. See Walter L. Arnstein, *Queen Victoria* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 49-67 for a more detailed discussion on their marriage, and also see Appendix, Figures One and Two for visual depictions of Victoria and Albert in domestic and marital bliss.

of domesticity.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, such views are infinitely compromised when dissecting the madwoman's rejection of normative behaviour, that is, the standards of conformity wholly defined by men and their society. The basis or the sentiment of these ideologies regarding nineteenth-century femininity can absolutely be seen through my four chapters, ideologies which culminate in Patmore and Ruskin's shared view a decade after Charlotte Brontë's final publication, as the 'home was not a place, but a projection of the feminine'.<sup>12</sup> This projection of the 'angel in the house' trope is often an immensely inhabiting, rather than an idealistic, aspiration for women to strive for.

Unfortunately for the sisters and the women who they wrote about, important parliamentary reform which aided women did not occur until years after the writers' deaths.<sup>13</sup> The nineteenth century is often labelled 'the century of nerves', which encapsulates the prominence of mental illness as a widespread calamity.<sup>14</sup> Through the Lunacy Act's introduction in 1845, more adequate care was encouraged for the provision of the mentally ill, a movement which would have affected and influenced the Brontë family's lives and writings. In terms of Victorian psychiatry, the different representations of mental (and, when appropriate, physical) illness in my chosen texts can sometimes be linked to Thomas John Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine*, which was 'owned by the Brontës', and regularly 'consulted for

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<sup>11</sup> As a bestselling narrative poem in 1854, *The Angel in the House* was popular amongst its contemporary readership: woman was encouraged to 'sing her worth as Maid and Wife'. In a similar fashion, John Ruskin's lecture 'Of Queen's Gardens' established similar expectations, as 'the woman's power is for rule, not for battle – and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision'. See Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* and John Ruskin, 'Of Queen's Gardens' in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Victorian Age*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (London: W. W. Norton, 2012), pp. 1613-4; pp. 1615-6.

<sup>12</sup> Judith Flanders, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childhood to Deathbed* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), p. xxxi.

<sup>13</sup> The Matrimonial Causes Act 1857 and the Married Women's Property Act 1870, for example, were later developments of the nineteenth century. The former retained an unequal gender balance, as it was much easier for a man to seek divorce than his wife. The latter movement, however, showed how female emancipatory politics were beginning to gain momentum towards fin-de-siècle first-wave feminism, as women could keep their property and earnings.

<sup>14</sup> Jane Wood, *Passion and Pathology in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 5.

familial health concerns' by patriarch Patrick.<sup>15</sup> Biographical extracts taken from contemporary epistles will also be consulted when appropriate, in order to shed further light on Charlotte, Emily and Anne's experiences of female repression and mental illness.

Megan Rogers 2017 research provides a modern expansion of Gilbert and Gubar's concept. '[T]he madwoman disrupts expected patriarchal plots', Rogers writes, because she 'serves as a wild alternative to the subservient housewife'.<sup>16</sup> A similar premise can be applied to this dissertation, as my chosen heroines are encompassed and defined by normative standards of femininity. However, this disruption is felt in a non-linear way across the project: for Bertha and Catherine, they are removed altogether from the 'plot' which Rogers establishes through their inevitable deaths, while Lucy and Helen stay within its boundaries; yet, Helen's emancipation spans far wider than Lucy's incomplete existence. The theoretical grounding of my arguments concerning the polarised nature and culture, and what this means for female sanity, is rooted within Plumwood's ecofeminist approach.<sup>17</sup> All three Brontë sisters modify characters through their own love for the natural world, a more liberating environment which exists outside of social parameters. In some cases, this 'replaces the "angel in the house" version of women by the "angel in the ecosystem version'.'<sup>18</sup>

I have entitled my chapters, and their respective epigraphs, with the same intention I did when forming a title for this thesis. Chapter One will discuss how 'mad' Bertha in *Jane*

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<sup>15</sup> Beth Torgerson, *Reading the Brontë Body: Disease, Desire, and the Constraints of Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Megan Rogers, *Finding the Plot: A Maternal Approach to Madness in Literature* (Ontario: Demeter Press, 2017), p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> The purpose of this dissertation is to focus on the feminist aspects of my four texts in terms of how men cause, or contribute to, female 'madness'. However, in parts these can be enhanced by considering 'ecofeminism', by which I mean the relationship between woman and her natural environment, and what in turn this means for the operation of 'madness' within a male-female framework.

<sup>18</sup> Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 9.

*Eyre* can be vindicated through a consideration of repressive Rochester's own vices.<sup>19</sup> Continuing with the theme of female imprisonment and ineffective treatment, Chapter Two negotiates Catherine's madness in *Wuthering Heights* through the binary of nature and culture. The dissertation will then revisit Charlotte Brontë in Chapter Three through her final novel *Villette*. In a dissimilar way to *Jane Eyre*, Brontë's account of Lucy Snowe's mental illness is heavily inflected with a very real, non-fictional loss; the novel 'was written after she experienced the illnesses and deaths of Branwell, Emily, and Anne'.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the reader will see that I present a radical shift in Chapter Four when examining *The Tenant*, as Anne Brontë promotes female emancipation through Helen. In its entirety, the dissertation will show that 'madness' manifests itself ubiquitously: yet, in order '[t]o understand madness we must look further and wider than the individual – to the whole discourse which regulates "women"'.<sup>21</sup> A more holistic view of mental illness will therefore redeem the nineteenth-century madwoman, in contrast to the repressive patriarch who continually limits her.

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<sup>19</sup> Jean Rhys's postcolonial response to *Jane Eyre*, her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, is relevant to this idea. However, due to the strict word count of this dissertation, her work will not be a part of the following discussions. Yet, a brief comment on this text (a text which accounts for Bertha's perspective) primarily establishes how Rochester represses and removes any aspect of Bertha's voice in *Jane Eyre*.

<sup>20</sup> Torgerson, *Reading the Brontë Body: Disease, Desire, and the Constraints of Culture*, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Ussher, *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?*, p. 289.

## Chapter One: ““You, sir, are the most phantom-like of all”:<sup>22</sup> The Repression of Rochester’s Women in *Jane Eyre*’

‘There is always the other side, always’<sup>23</sup>

– Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)

In *Jane Eyre*, Edward Rochester’s own flaws override those of his ‘mad’ wife, Bertha Mason. In Brontë’s preface to the second edition, she establishes how ‘appearance should not be mistaken as truth’, which supports Rochester’s morally and psychologically questionable characterisation.<sup>24</sup> Her suggestion that ‘[c]onventionality [and] morality’ are ‘diametrically opposed’ helps to clarify the nuances which she introduces in terms of gender and mental illness.<sup>25</sup> This chapter will posit that Rochester is absolutely ‘representative of the patriarchal world’, a position which enables his overarching power.<sup>26</sup> In light of Brontë’s assertion, Rochester is conventional yet immoral, while in many ways Bertha is wholly *unconventional* through her illness, but this madness does not necessarily correlate with immorality. His inhumane treatment of Bertha is based on superficial and selfish motives, in contrast to her overall welfare, and her consequent rejection is entirely proportional to this mistreatment.

Primarily, a more universal view of mental illness helps to humanise Bertha. The most recent criticism on *Jane Eyre* focuses precisely on this thematic area.<sup>27</sup> As Yurdakul suggests, ‘it is perfectly clear that the real sufferer is Bertha. Before she marries Rochester, she is a rational and beautiful woman’.<sup>28</sup> Within the novel, it is not difficult to see *why* Bertha was

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<sup>22</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1996), p. 246. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

<sup>23</sup> Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (London: World Books, 1966), p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> Charlotte Brontë, ‘Preface to the Second Edition’, in *Jane Eyre* (London: W. M. Thackeray, 1848), p. viii.

<sup>25</sup> Brontë, ‘Preface to the Second Edition’, p. ix.

<sup>26</sup> The most recent article from this year compares Bertha’s representation in *Jane Eyre* to Jean Rhys’s adaptation *Wide Sargasso Sea*. It discusses the plausibility of Bertha’s ‘alternative’ identity, one she is exempt from in *Jane Eyre*. See Selin Yurdakul, ‘The Other Side of the Coin: The Otherness of Bertha’, *British and American Studies*, 25 (2019), pp. 63-9.

<sup>27</sup> Yurdakul, ‘The Other Side of the Coin: The Otherness of Bertha’, p. 66.

<sup>28</sup> Yurdakul, ‘The Other Side of the Coin: The Otherness of Bertha’, p. 64.

demonised; yet, by adopting a more holistic view of the repressed madwoman, modern readers can recognise this conflict between appearance and reality which Brontë foregrounds in her preface.<sup>29</sup> Patriarchal supremacy is paramount when dissecting nineteenth-century medical literature, as opinions concerning the ‘madwoman’ were predominantly male. Prichard’s chapter on ‘Moral Insanity’, for example, outlines the condition as ‘a morbid perversion of natural feelings, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses’.<sup>30</sup> Bertha’s ‘natural’ or original persona is, to paraphrase Prichard, ‘perverted’ through Rochester’s pseudo-medical treatment. This is a calamity which inevitably culminates in her madness. Similarly, Haslam asserts ‘[t]hat insanity is a disease, which for a cure [it requires] isolation’ in his section entitled ‘Confinement’; he labels mad individuals ‘miserable objects’.<sup>31</sup> These assertions *do* justify Rochester’s decision to isolate Bertha, as she is stowed away in Thornfield’s attic like a physical object herself. She is a ‘disgusting secret’ (p. 258), literally segregated and concealed from others in Rochester’s domain. It is possible that Bertha’s non-normative behaviour may be a *natural* response to Rochester’s *unnatural* mistreatment, as he confines rather than cures her. It is also significant to note that the Brontëan era was categorised as ‘psychiatric Victorianism’, as attitudes towards mental health began to change.<sup>32</sup> There was a newfound belief, through the Lunacy Act of 1845, that ‘the asylum rather than the attic was identified as the madwoman’s appropriate space’.<sup>33</sup> Yet, Brontë ignored these changing attitudes. Consequently, her personal understanding of female insanity, alongside her secondary

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<sup>29</sup> Brontë, ‘Preface to the Second Edition’, p. ix.

<sup>30</sup> In an epistle to her publisher, Brontë signifies her familiarity with Prichard’s works, as she writes: ‘I agree that the character [of Bertha] is shocking, but I know that it is but too natural. There is a phase of insanity which may be called moral madness’. See Charlotte Brontë, ‘Letter to W. S. Williams: 4 January 1848’, quoted in Carolyn Vellenga Berman, *Creole Crossings* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 122. For a more detailed discussion on ‘Moral Insanity’, see James Cowles Prichard, *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind* (London: Haswell and Barrington, 1835), pp. 12-26.

<sup>31</sup> John Haslam, *Considerations on the Moral Management of Insane Persons* (London: Hunter, 1817), p. 13; p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, p. 17. The Lunacy Act 1845 marked a change in social attitude towards the mentally ill, as new asylums began to offer refuge and adequate treatment for ‘mad’ individuals.

representation of it through Bertha, is arbitrary rather than absolute when validating Bertha as a ‘bad’ or a ‘mad’ woman.

It is extraordinary, then, that Brontë promotes her own ideologies of female emancipation in *Jane Eyre* only to later undermine them. She writes that ‘[i]t is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than their custom pronounced necessary for their sex’ (p. 95) when discussing female autonomy in Chapter Twelve. However, she proceeds to stigmatise Bertha for this very thing. This suggests that while Brontë was not ignorant to wider desires for female liberation, she was reluctant to extend this privilege to *all* women, including the mentally ill. Brontë’s unsympathetic portrayal of Bertha is somewhat surprising given her own plight with insanity.<sup>34</sup> She conducted personal visits to different asylums, where she ‘witnessed the practical questions of dealing with the insane’.<sup>35</sup> Rogers notes that, by focusing solely on Bertha’s malady, others are encouraged to ‘not see Bertha Mason as woman’ by allowing her mental illness to consume her identity.<sup>36</sup> This concept is shown through the titular character’s mixed feeling towards Bertha. She labels her a ‘maniac’ (p. 259), but contrastingly states that Rochester is ‘cruel’ because Bertha ‘cannot help being mad’ (p. 265), which mirrors Brontë’s own ambivalence. From one perspective, Bertha’s misfortune resonates with Jane’s own ‘thorns and toils’ (p. 85) of life, but from another Jane merely adopts the same prejudices and scorn as Rochester. Rochester’s mockery with regards to female madness is most disturbing, however, as he informs Jane that: ‘once I have fairly seized you, to have and to hold, I’ll just – figuratively speaking – attach you to a chain like this’ (p. 238). Despite Rochester’s ridicule, one can detect sincerity and seriousness

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<sup>34</sup> Haworth, Brontë Parsonage, ‘Charlotte Brontë’s Letters’, ser. MSBPM/40-45. Brontë repeatedly confided in Ellen Nussey over the course of her younger years. On 9 June 1838, in one detailed epistle, she spoke about her ‘mental and bodily anguish’. This biographical information is intriguing, if not rather surprising, when analysing her contradictory representation of the ‘madwoman’ in *Jane Eyre*. See Hannah Bury, ‘EN7203 Research Methods: Research Diary’ (University of Chester, unpublished postgraduate assignment, 2019), p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> John Pfordresher, *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote Her Masterpiece* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2017), p. 162.

<sup>36</sup> Rogers, *Finding the Plot: A Maternal Approach to Madness in Literature*, p. 22.

in his statement. It is an act he does regularly to his wife, as ‘[a]t last he mastered her’ (p. 259) in both physical and emotional dominance. This is supported by Gilbert and Gubar’s claim that Rochester ‘had married Bertha Mason for status, for sex, for everything but love and equality’, which in turn challenges Zieger’s assertion that wealthy women ‘lure[d] their unsuspecting white male victims’ to their fate.<sup>37</sup> Rather, Rochester ‘lures’ and entraps Bertha, and eventually Jane, to their own fates through his selfish motivations. Within the realm of nineteenth-century thought, this would have been a completely acceptable patriarchal practice, a concept strongly realised but not entirely regretted by Brontë.

Rochester and Bertha’s tumultuous relationship can also be perceived through a semiotic approach. Stoddard Holmes’s essay is useful for navigating Rochester’s physical disability, but she is equally guilty as other scholars of ‘miss[ing] what is most interesting’ about *Jane Eyre*.<sup>38</sup> She considers the most poignant emblems of Rochester’s characterisation, but ignores Bertha’s.<sup>39</sup> Instead of adopting Stoddard Holmes’s approach, in which she dissects Rochester’s ‘multidimensional *ugliness* [which] resides on the highly *mutable* surfaces of the social body’, one can otherwise consider the *immutable*, mental ugliness inherent within him.<sup>40</sup> He is an archetypal Byronic Hero, a motif repeated across the Brontë oeuvre.<sup>41</sup> From an early

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<sup>37</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 356; Susan Zieger, *Inventing the Addict: Drugs, Race, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century British and American Literature* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), p. 219.

<sup>38</sup> Martha Stoddard Holmes, ‘Visions of Rochester: Screening Desire and Disability in *Jane Eyre*’, in *The Madwoman and The Blindman*, eds. David Bolt, Julia Miele Rodas and Elizabeth J. Donaldson (Ohio: The Ohio State University, 2012), p. 151. In her chapter, Stoddard Holmes compares film depictions of Rochester to Brontë’s original characterisation. While her argument is persuasive, it can be enhanced by considering the contrast between Bertha’s elevation and Rochester’s literal ‘fall’.

<sup>39</sup> Hannah Bury, ‘EN7203 Research Methods: Research Paper – The Madman Out of The Attic’ (University of Chester, unpublished postgraduate assignment, 2019), pp. 7-8.

<sup>40</sup> Stoddard Holmes, ‘Visions of Rochester: Screening Desire and Disability in *Jane Eyre*’, p. 153 (my emphasis). See also Bury, ‘EN7203 Research Methods: Research Paper – The Madman Out of The Attic’, pp. 7-8.

<sup>41</sup> The Byronic Hero is a significant trope within nineteenth-century texts such as *Jane Eyre*. When one considers the Romantic Lord Byron’s poetry, such as ‘The Giaour’, he writes: ‘Who thundering comes on blackest steed, With slackened bit and hoof of speed? [...] Dark and unearthly is the scowl, That glares beneath his dusky cowl’. This mirrors Rochester’s introduction in *Jane Eyre*. As Brontë describes: ‘a horse was coming; the windings of the lane yet hid it, but it approached’ (p. 97). Like the mysterious nature of Byron’s character, Rochester’s own enigmatic approach masks his true nature, a nature which is attractive in appearance but troubling in reality. See Lord Byron, ‘The Giaour’, in *Lord Byron: The Major Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 207-47.

age, the three sisters were encouraged to read the ‘dangerous poems [by] the dashing wicked Byron’, a description also reminiscent of Rochester.<sup>42</sup> A consideration of Rochester’s connecting relationships sheds light on his own vices. With reference to Stoddard Holmes’s argument, Rochester is spatially ‘beneath’ other characters, as he is consistently ‘stooping’ or ‘sat down’ (p. 98). Pfordresher claims that male figures are Brontë’s ‘rivals in one way or another’, but that they simultaneously and ‘paradoxically need her help’.<sup>43</sup> This suggests that Rochester is entirely autonomous and tyrannous, vulnerable only through his physical disability at the end of the novel. This is paramount in light of Bertha’s mental disability: despite his own desire for support and empathy, he ignores and isolates Bertha’s.

Stoddard Holmes’s argument can be extended by considering Bertha’s physical *elevation* in contrast to Rochester’s physical *redundancy*. This is most clearly exemplified through the symbolic significance of her attic. Despite a divergence in status and gender, one can read Bertha’s physical and moral elevation in contrast to Rochester’s, as a way of illuminating the *true* discrepancy between them. She resides in the ‘third-storey of Thornfield’ (p. 258), referred to as ‘that woman upstairs’ (p. 270) and eventually adopts her place ‘on the roof [...] above the battlements’ (p. 379) before her inevitable death.<sup>44</sup> Even during their confrontation, Bertha ‘in stature [is] almost equalling her husband’ (p. 259). However, although her attic spatially indicates an elevated position, Bertha still occupies a limited, liminal space. The same ‘battlements’, where Jane ‘longed for a power of vision that might overpass the limit’ (pp. 94-5) of her own repression is precisely where Bertha flings ‘herself from the battlements’ (p. 380) of Rochester’s prison. The ‘black as a vault’ (p. 92) attic emphasises Bertha’s confinement within a ‘vault’, or a cell, full of misery and isolation. The same repressive language which describes Jane and Rochester turbulent relationship resonates with Bertha’s

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<sup>42</sup> Patricia Ingham, *The Brontës* (Oxon: Routledge, 2003), p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> Pfordresher, *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote Her Masterpiece*, p. 105.

<sup>44</sup> Bury, ‘EN7203 Research Methods: Research Paper – The Madman Out of The Attic’, p. 7.

attic; within Thornfield, the same ‘border’ and ‘enclosure’ (p. 218) imprisons them both. Rather than connotating safety and security, these terms are analogous with the repressive, animalistic association of Bertha’s attic, a habitation for Rochester’s ‘strange wild animal’ (p. 258). This challenges recent criticism which states that the ‘Thornfield attic has not been [and cannot be] interpreted as an animal environment’.<sup>45</sup> Through this extension of Stoddard Holmes’s argument, one can perceive how Bertha tinges Rochester’s virtues, and in turn exposes his vices as proprietor, husband and human.

The wedding veil is another important emblem of Bertha’s repression. Gilbert and Gubar claim that Bertha represents Jane’s ‘truest and darkest double’.<sup>46</sup> This can be extended to show how a liminal boundary occurs not *between* Jane and Bertha but *outside* of it: an internal division *within* Bertha herself is most important here. The veil can be read as a literal act of ‘unveiling’ this hidden identity, ‘a reflection [which reveals] oneself, the truth, the ideal, the illusion’ and ‘the inner degradation of the subject’.<sup>47</sup> This binary is more complex than Gilbert and Gubar allow: it is central to Bertha’s struggle between her true feelings, and the limited mobility she has within her situation. She ‘rent [Jane’s veil] in two parts’ and ‘trampled on them’ (p. 250), Brontë writes, and each segment shows how Bertha’s identity is blurred: one segment symbolises the original identity she had prior to her union with Rochester. By contrast, the other segment represents her current self, one consumed by a loveless marriage and a consequent malady. Bertha’s identification as ‘Mrs Rochester’ (p. 257) is just as artificial, just as damaged, as the veil she clutches. The fact that she ‘tramples’ on both parts of Jane’s

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<sup>45</sup> Deborah Denenholz Morse, ‘The Forest Dell, The Attic and The Moorland: Animal Places in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*’, in *Time, Space, and Place in Charlotte Brontë*, eds. Diane Long Hoeveler and Deborah Denenholz Morse (Oxon: Routledge, 2017), p. 162.

<sup>46</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 360.

<sup>47</sup> Michael Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 124-5.

veil encapsulates her recognition that, within Rochester's domain, she is helpless despite whether she mourns her former self *or* rejects all that presently represents her.

Another significant symbol within *Jane Eyre* is Rochester's association with fire, as the novel 'contains about eighty-five references to domestic fires'.<sup>48</sup> While some scholars have acknowledged this link, none of them have directly paired it with the elemental danger he imposes on women.<sup>49</sup> Gilbert and Gubar argue that 'Charlotte Brontë consistently uses the opposed properties of fire and ice to characterize Jane's experiences'.<sup>50</sup> However, this fire symbol is most strongly realised through Bertha and Rochester's dynamic. Rochester is closely affiliated with fire at several points: he initially commands Jane to '[c]ome to the fire' (p. 106) and showcases a 'strange fire in his look' (p. 133), which foreshadows his inherent danger. From a symbolic perspective, fires are primarily believed to 'kill by burning up or burning out'.<sup>51</sup> Although Thornfield is eventually 'burnt up' as a 'blackened ruin' (p. 376), it is Bertha who is ultimately destroyed. As her death enables Jane and Rochester's marital denouement, 'a neglected handful of fire [which] burnt low' (p. 383) remains. Therefore, Rochester's 'fiery' presence is weakened and minimised by Thornfield's destruction, but his overarching status as 'master' (p. 227) survives. Rochester retains his own personal 'fire' or power, despite Bertha's repeated attempts to destroy him with her own. Her final attempt only results in a 'terrible spectacle' (p. 377) of failure: his consequences are temporary, while Bertha's deathly fate is sealed. Furthermore, Pfordresher states that this future is foreshadowed by his 'mistaken

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<sup>48</sup> David Lodge, *The Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel* (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 116.

<sup>49</sup> Eric Soloman, 'Jane Eyre: Fire and Water', *College English*, 25.3 (1963), pp. 215-17 reads Rochester's 'fire' in terms of sexual passion; Micael M. Clarke, 'Brontë's "Jane Eyre" and the Grimm's "Cinderella"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 40.4 (2000), pp. 695-710 links the symbol to fairy tale tropes (specifically in relation to Bertha as a 'witch') while more recently Erik Gray, 'Metaphors and Marriage Plots', *Partial Answers*, 12.2 (2014), pp. 267-286 discusses the importance of metaphors, such as fire, in the development of romantic relationships.

<sup>50</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 339.

<sup>51</sup> Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, p. 72.

marriage to Bertha Mason, [where her] own bestiality takes to its logical limits Rochester's animal propensities'.<sup>52</sup> This can be inverted, rather; Rochester fuels Bertha's downfall rather than his own. He complains of Bertha's 'violent and unreasonable temper' and 'the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man *bound* to a wife' (p. 270, my emphasis). Yet, 'bad man' (p. 337) Rochester conveniently forgets that, legally and physically, Bertha is *bound* to him, as the solicitor claims: 'I would remind you of your lady's existence [...] which the law recognises, if you do not' (p. 256). The fire symbol thus illuminates his powerful status within 'a universe of male sexuality'.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, it is emblematic of his patriarchal danger, a danger which destroys Bertha and threatens Jane beyond the parameters of the novel. By contrast, St. John is burdened with ice imagery: he remains 'white as a glacier' (p. 334) and was 'frozen over' (p. 350). Brontë's polarisation of fire and ice, or Rochester and St. John, can be read as an artistic expression which suggests that patriarchal supremacy, of any kind or intensity, is unfavourable for women. Both symbols, and the men which they represent, are destructive when taken to the extreme. Jane rejects St. John and favours Rochester through love; yet, the notion that neither man is wholly preferable means that it is impossible, for either clandestine Bertha or plain Jane, to enjoy a happy medium or marital fulfilment with either one.

An intersectional approach of feminism is applicable to Bertha's repression: she is limited by Rochester not only through gender, but also through multi-layer facets of race and mental illness.<sup>54</sup> Earlier this year, Yurdakul argued that Bertha 'is oppressed both as a woman and as an individual of a colonized country'.<sup>55</sup> However, her repression cannot be limited to this alone. Instead, Crenshaw's views are useful for navigating Bertha's repression, as both an individual of Creole heritage and madness, as she states:

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<sup>52</sup> Ferber, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, p. 119.

<sup>53</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 351.

<sup>54</sup> Bury, 'EN7203 Research Methods: Research Paper – The Madman Out of The Attic', p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Yurdakul, 'The Other Side of the Coin: The Otherness of Bertha', p. 65.

Race and culture contribute to the suppression of domestic violence in other ways as well [...] In this sense the home is not simply *a man's castle* in patriarchal terms [...] *women of color* [often struggle] to seek *protection* against assaults from *within* the home.<sup>56</sup>

Crenshaw's sentiment can be clearly seen in *Jane Eyre*, as 'Grace Poole gave [Rochester] a chord, and he pinioned [her hands] behind her: with more rope, which was at hand, he bound her to a chair' (p. 259). The semantic implications of 'chord', 'pinioned' and 'bound' clearly exemplify the legal, physical and emotional 'ties' which literally join Bertha to Rochester.<sup>57</sup> She has little autonomy within his *castle* or patriarchal domain, regardless of the presence or absence of madness. She is vulnerable despite whether her repression stems from external forces, or her husband 'within the home'.<sup>58</sup> An intersectional approach also justifies *why* Bertha's portrayal is so derogatory. Brontë's own experience in Brussels, for example, may have fuelled her prejudices towards Bertha's character. While studying abroad, Brontë informed Branwell that she disliked the nationals of Belgium because they 'lacked intellect [and] politeness or good-nature or good-feeling – they are nothing'.<sup>59</sup> Unsurprisingly, then, her cruel remarks towards Bertha are heavily discriminatory. Through Jane, Brontë emphasises how Bertha's 'discoloured' and 'savage' (p. 250) face is more alarming, as a racially different commodity, than her obvious distress as a repressed woman. Thus, Bertha's race contributes more to her physical difference, than her inherent sense of evil. While Bertha's race may have been disconcerting to a nineteenth-century contemporary reader, it does not warrant scorn from a modern perspective.

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<sup>56</sup> The phrase 'intersectional feminism' was coined by Crenshaw, and her approach corresponds well with this argument. In her research, she asserts that race and gender cannot be understood in isolation; instead, they continuously reinforce one another. See Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43.6 (1991), 1241-1299 (p. 1255) (my emphasis).

<sup>57</sup> Bury, 'EN7203 Research Methods: Research Paper – The Madman Out of the Attic', p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color', p. 1255.

<sup>59</sup> Charlotte Brontë, '1843 Letter to Branwell Brontë', quoted by Pfordresher, *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote Her Masterpiece*, p. 161.

Bertha is also affected by congenital insanity, a deterministic idea exacerbated by Rochester's mistreatment. In an epistle to Ellen Nussey, Brontë despaired that 'very few people in the world [could] understand [madness]', and that 'those who see the explosion despise [her]'.<sup>60</sup> It is therefore not implausible to suggest that her stigmatisation of Bertha is an attempt to repel the archetypal madwoman altogether. Brontë despises Bertha's own 'explosion' because she is so dangerously reminiscent of her former self. Even her admission that she 'should spit fire and explode sometimes' mirrors Bertha's own 'fiery eyes' (p. 251) and the act of being 'violent, unfeminine and untrue' (p. 365).<sup>61</sup> Bertha's congenital insanity is important here, as it mirrors the madness prevalent within Brontëan genealogy.<sup>62</sup> According to Rochester, Bertha is truly 'mad; and she came of a mad family [...] her mother, the Creole, was both a madwoman and a drunkard!' (p. 257). Fortuitously, Rochester vindicates rather than villainises Bertha: the 'germs of insanity' (p. 271) were pre-determined as a matter of biological essentialism, rather than personal vice. However, while some critics read Bertha's madness as 'hereditary and unavoidable', medical opinions on the matter are somewhat torn.<sup>63</sup> From a perspective of nurture, one can read Rochester's environmental influence as the dominant exacerbator in Bertha's illness. It originates *from* him, a concept supported by Busfield as she states that '[f]actors in the individual's environment' often influenced 'an individual's constitution'.<sup>64</sup> It is possible that Bertha's hereditary patterns of madness are merely a secondary cause or influence; her absent narrative voice within *Jane Eyre* only increases this possibility. Rochester's unreliable, one-sided narration regarding Bertha's medical history is

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<sup>60</sup> Charlotte Brontë, '1836 Letter to Ellen Nussey', quoted by Pfordresher, *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote Her Masterpiece*, p. 167.

<sup>61</sup> Brontë, '1836 Letter to Ellen Nussey', p. 168.

<sup>62</sup> The Brontë sisters were all impacted or affected by mental illness in some way throughout their lifetime. In particular, each would have been familiar with 'the challenges involved in private supervision of a disordered mind', especially when considering the troublesome influences of Patrick and Branwell Brontë. See Paul Marchbanks, 'Dependency Care and Mental Difference in the Novels of the Brontë Sisters', *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, 4.1 (2010), 55-72 (p. 55).

<sup>63</sup> Pfordresher, *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote Her Masterpiece*, p. 121.

<sup>64</sup> Joan Busfield, *Men, Women and Madness* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Limited, 1996), p. 145.

not justifiable evidence alone. Instead, his own flaws parallel with the very ones he highlights in her, as Mrs Fairfax reminds Jane and the reader that ‘the Rochesters have been rather a violent than a quiet race in their time’ (p. 92). This trajectory is evident through the recurrent nature of Rochester’s victims: the women he controls. Just like the cyclical nature of heredity, Rochester’s own pattern or history means that he too can be held accountable. His antics exemplify ‘a warning of what Jane instinctively knows is just about to happen’.<sup>65</sup> Although Rochester attempts to reassure her that ‘madness’ is not necessarily a vice, as he questions: ‘If you were mad, do you think I should hate you?’ (pp. 265-6), Jane quickly ripostes with: ‘I do indeed, sir’ (p. 266). Ultimately, one must question the sincerity of Rochester’s promises. If he can treat his own wife in this derogatory manner, then it is logical to suggest that he would use the same medium of madness to scapegoat Jane. This, in turn, questions the plausibility of Rochester’s ‘mad’ wife in the first instance.

Another example of Bertha’s trajectory is seen through Jane’s dream in Chapter Twenty-Five. Many scholars have read her dreams as a psychoanalytic burden, as she is allegedly ‘doomed to carry her orphaned alter ego everywhere’.<sup>66</sup> Instead, this interpretation will show how Bertha’s presence can be felt within these dreams; their symbolic significance is not limited to Jane alone. Jane’s dream regarding Thornfield’s ruin is a premonition; it foreshadows later events. With this in mind, one can read the dream as a subconscious attempt, or a sense of responsibility, to emancipate Bertha in a way which she cannot do herself. Significantly, this is implausible within a universe where Rochester rules. For example, Jane imagines ‘that Thornfield Hall was a dreary ruin [...] wrapped up in a shawl, I still carried the unknown little child’ (p. 249), only for this ‘child’ to then ‘roll from her [knee]’ (p. 249) into the abyss below. One can identify Bertha’s own infantilisation and vulnerability here, as she

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<sup>65</sup> Pfordresher, *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote Her Masterpiece*, p. 170.

<sup>66</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 358.

too is entrapped within Thornfield; '[c]oncealing the mad-woman [...] was something like covering a child with a cloak' (p. 265), which explicitly supports this link. Rochester rejects Jane's prophecy, as he claims that her dream is the result of 'an over-stimulated brain' and that 'nerves like [hers] were not made for rough handling' (p. 251). He stifles her voice in a similar way to Bertha; each woman is 'a prisoner in his dungeon' (p. 143). As two repressed women who marry the same man, Jane and Bertha share a liminal, yet powerful, connection within an alternative realm which excludes Rochester. However, in both scenarios of Jane's dream and the novel's ending, Jane fails to save Bertha from him. She drops the 'child', and so she drops Bertha, existing only to fill the space which she leaves behind.

Rochester's repression can also be read through *Jane Eyre's* fairy tale elements. Within this allegorical universe, only Rochester has autonomous control. From his first meeting with Jane, Brontë foregrounds this hierarchal power; their meeting occurs in the very same chapter where Jane scorns the stipulations which patriarchal society places on women. Rochester, '[t]he man, the human being, broke the spell at once' (p. 97). This sentiment extends to the world he dominates, and everything he dominates within it: he claims that he has 'a right to get pleasure out of life' and, through any means, he '*will* get it' (p. 119, emphasis in original). Rochester, as 'master' (p. 113) of his castle, is reminiscent of the Bluebeard allegory, as Jane herself likens Thornfield to 'Bluebeard's castle' (p. 92).<sup>67</sup> Thornfield is dominated by Gothicised tropes: for example, Jane the 'witch' (p. 130) and Bertha the 'Vampyre' (p. 250) concord with both Rochester's narrative and his patriarchal control. By defining his women as metaphysical entities, he demonises them in a way which detracts from himself. Especially within a nineteenth-century context, one is less likely to fear or suspect the normative, supremacist male

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<sup>67</sup> 'Bluebeard', a seventeenth-century tale about one disturbed husband who murders and stows away his many wives, is important here. While Rochester's destruction is more implicit, this comparison does strengthen the link between his tyrannical power and the women who feel its effects through the fairy-tale tropes which Brontë adopts. See Heta Pyrhönen, *Bluebeard Gothic: Jane Eyre and Its Progeny* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), pp. 21-65 for a more comprehensive analysis of *Jane Eyre's* fairy tale elements.

over the non-normative ‘mad’ female. This suggests that men like Rochester are more monstrous in what they *do*, rather than what they aesthetically appear to *be*. This concept is supported by Heiniger’s claim that ‘Rochester’s fairy tale *connections* [allow him] [...] to recognize Jane’s fairy nature’.<sup>68</sup> Most importantly, though, these ‘*connections*’ allow the reader to recognize *him*.<sup>69</sup> Rochester’s disguise as a ‘gipsy’ (p. 171) adds strength to this interpretation. It is the most overt example of his trickery; he literally conceals his true disposition and ‘his daily disguise as Rochester the master of Thornfield’.<sup>70</sup> In a physical and metaphorical sense, he repeatedly deceives others: at the party in Chapter Eighteen, ignorant to his façade, Blanche Ingram and her companions claim that ‘something not right [...] [s]he knows all about us!’ (p. 170). As an absolute ‘ruler’ over the women in his domain, he is able to thoroughly know and control them. Most significantly, Rochester’s imitation and flexibility of the female gender, and the manipulative power it rewards him, starkly contrasts with the strict social stipulations which women are repressed by.

Brontë’s ambivalent creation of Bertha mirrors her society: attitudes towards mad individuals were beginning to change. Yet, the nineteenth-century madwoman is more suitably, by patriarchal standards, confined within her attic by the equally flawed man who operates outside of it. This same element of repression is seen in the following chapter on *Wuthering Heights*. Like Bertha, Catherine Earnshaw desires freedom from an artificially constructed world which both causes, and contains, her madness.

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<sup>68</sup> Abigail Heiniger, *Jane Eyre’s Fairytale Legacy at Home and Abroad* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 30 (my emphasis).

<sup>69</sup> Heiniger, *Jane Eyre’s Fairytale Legacy at Home and Abroad*, p. 30.

<sup>70</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 353.

## Chapter Two: “‘Is he actually so utterly indifferent for my life?’”:<sup>71</sup> The Nature and Culture of Catherine’s Madness in *Wuthering Heights*’

‘The immature but very real powers revealed in *Wuthering Height* were scarcely recognised; its important nature misunderstood’<sup>72</sup>

- Charlotte Brontë, ‘Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell’ (1850)

*Wuthering Heights*, like *Jane Eyre*, can be read in terms of how madness underpins male-female relationships. This chapter will dissect how Catherine’s malady occurs when she is removed from the natural world; her identity is altered by the cultural threats posed by marriage and motherhood.<sup>73</sup> Within the novel, an often ambivalent dialectic exists between Catherine and Heathcliff, or, as Eagleton states, ‘an illusory resolution of *real* contradictions’.<sup>74</sup> The ‘*real*’ meaning of madness, exemplified through Catherine’s ‘perilous illness’ (p. 72) and Heathcliff’s obsessive ‘passion’ (p. 245), is caused by the contradictory forces of nature and culture.<sup>75</sup> Edgar represents and controls the ‘cultural’ sphere at Thrushcross Grange, while

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<sup>71</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (London: W. W. Norton, 2003). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

<sup>72</sup> Charlotte Brontë, ‘Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell’ in *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Richard J. Dunn (London: W. W. Norton, 2003), p. 309.

<sup>73</sup> For clarification purposes, first-generation Catherine Earnshaw will be referred to as ‘Catherine’, and second-generation Catherine Linton will be referred to as ‘Cathy’.

<sup>74</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1975), pp. 97-8 (my emphasis). Although Eagleton’s text approaches *Wuthering Heights* from a Marxist perspective, his acknowledgment that it is a novel comprised of an ‘exhausting confrontation of contending forces’ supports the premise of this chapter.

<sup>75</sup> The binary opposition of nature and culture in *Wuthering Heights* is a well-established thematic area. Duthie considered how the two main houses, the Heights and the Grange, exemplify different ‘cultures’ or lifestyles for characters in contrast to the outside world. Criticism at the turn of the twentieth-century focused on how Brontëan Yorkshire roots influenced what characters in *Wuthering Heights* deemed to be ‘culturally’ acceptable. In the past decade, Asl explored Brontë’s resistance to patriarchal culture through a psychoanalytic lens of ‘nature’, while Akcesme argued that removing *Wuthering Height*’s female characters from ‘nature’ into ‘culture’ destroyed friendship bonds and female solidarity. See Enid L. Duthie, *The Brontës and Nature* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1986), pp. 221-246; I. E. Gorak, ‘*Wuthering Heights* and *Shirley* as Regional Novels’, *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 32.4 (1990), pp. 449-466; Moussa P. Asl, ‘Unwelcomed Civilisation: Emily Brontë’s Symbolic Anti-Patriarchy in *Wuthering Heights*’, *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies*, 2.2 (2014), pp. 29-34 and more recently Banu Akcesme, ‘Fighting Against the Encroachment of Patriarchal Power on Female Domains in *Wuthering Heights*’, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6.5 (2017), pp. 27-40.

Catherine and Heathcliff are infinitely tied to the ‘natural’ Heights. Most significantly, Catherine’s situation is paradoxical: as an individual, she is dominated by Edgar’s patriarchal values. Yet, she is simultaneously liberated by Heathcliff, despite the presence of his own madness. Free from cultural constraint, he contributes to her illness, but ultimately, he is her only cure. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how and why Catherine *needs* nature, that is, the natural world and its medicinal properties. The more Edgar attempts to contain Catherine, the more she desires to escape. Plumwood’s ecofeminist argument suggests that ‘women’s “uncontrollable” bodies make them part of the sphere of nature’.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, Catherine’s equally ‘uncontrollable’ malady means that she can never be truly redefined by Edgar’s cultural standards of femininity.

Catherine’s madness primarily stems from her initial transition between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. She is captured and contained by Edgar’s cultural world, which in turn jeopardises her mental state: her natural roots and comforts are removed. As Nelly reports, Catherine was a ‘wild, wicked slip’, as she had ‘the bonniest eye, and the sweetest smile’ (p. 33). This initial conflict, in terms of her character trajectory, is supported by contemporary reviews of the novel. *Wuthering Heights* was labelled ‘[a] more natural unnatural story’: a contradictory narrative of oppositions.<sup>77</sup> This encapsulates how Catherine is torn between two divergent worlds. The Grange, as representative of culture, is both the place of her ‘master’ (p. 101) or husband, and a place of repression. Upon Catherine’s first perception, the Grange is ‘a splendid place carpeted with crimson’, with ‘a pure white ceiling’ and ‘a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains’ (p. 38). The semantic connotations of ‘crimson’ and ‘white’ are significant; primarily, ‘white’ seems to reflect the ‘stainless, spotless,

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<sup>76</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 37.

<sup>77</sup> Unknown Author, ‘Review of the 1847 *Wuthering Heights*’, *Atlas*, XXIII (1848), p. 59.

innocent' attributes of those within it.<sup>78</sup> By contrast, 'crimson' is closely affiliated with the '[w]arning of or indicating danger'.<sup>79</sup> This challenges Duthie's claim that '[t]here is, despite its affluence, a curious air of emptiness and *defencelessness* about the Grange'.<sup>80</sup> Rather, the opposite is true: the Grange possesses and damages Catherine; it transforms her originality, her 'bold, saucy look' and 'ready words' (p. 34) into a '*defenceless*' being herself.<sup>81</sup> The phrase 'silver chains' exemplifies its ambivalent nature. The Grange's elegance initially attracts Catherine, but the repressive 'chains' attached to its façade foreshadows how she will become entrapped and mad within this realm of culture. Even upon her first arrival, she is literally detained by the Lintons' canine as Heathcliff reports: 'The devil had seized her ankle, Nelly! [...] She did not yell out – no!' (p. 39), while 'Edgar stood on the hearth weeping silently' (p. 38). Despite the Grange's cultivated enigma, its means of capturing Catherine are anything but civilised. The incident, however, also foreshadows her incompatibility with Edgar; his sensitivity is no match for her resilience.

Catherine's aesthetic transformation from her natural roots, into 'a very dignified person' and 'a lady' (p. 41), can also be read through the Grange's modification of her. Her pre-cultured, 'natural' self is concealed by the Grange's influence; she is encouraged 'to mind and not grow wild again' (p. 41). When reunited with her animals at the Heights, Catherine 'dare hardly touch them lest they should fawn upon her splendid garments', as she was 'displaying fingers wonderfully whitened with doing nothing, and staying indoors' (p. 42). This exemplifies *how* Edgar begins to redefine Catherine into a paradigmatic 'angel in the house' ideal; she is prompted to abandon her natural foundations in favour of the Grange's ideology,

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<sup>78</sup> OED Online, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/228566?rskey=q3VIGv&result=1#eid> [accessed 9 August 2019]

<sup>79</sup> OED Online, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/160134?rskey=AcJzYE&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 9 August 2019]

<sup>80</sup> Duthie, *The Brontës and Nature*, pp. 224-5 (my emphasis).

<sup>81</sup> Duthie, *The Brontës and Nature*, pp. 224-5 (my emphasis).

an ideology strictly regulated by culture. Catherine's 'wonderfully whitened' persona is greatly jeopardised by the Heights' earthy, 'heavy black' (p. 4) nature. It threatens to taint her newly polished identity, an identity which the Grange actively 'whitens' in order to conceal what Edgar both fears and is excluded from. In Chapter Seventeen, Catherine's jewellery was, as Nelly narrates, 'fastened with a silver thread, which, on examination, I ascertained to have been taken from a locket hung around Catherine's neck' (p. 131) after her inevitable death. The Grange firmly replaced Catherine's nature with culture, which in turn culminates in her madness. Miller suggests that individuality is defined by 'an exterior environment', a semiotic approach which can absolutely be seen here.<sup>82</sup> Despite Catherine's metaphysical escape from the cultural world through death, the same repressive attachment or reminder of the Grange's 'silver thread' remains. This repression is not solely specific to Catherine, however. Second generation Cathy (as a cyclical re-invention of the first) is equally inhabited by Edgar's patriarchal domain. She initially insists that '[t]he Grange is not a prison, Ellen, and you are not my jailer' (p. 186), but her helplessness is later highlighted as 'she was forbidden to move out of the garden, and it fretted her sadly to be confined to its narrow bundles' (p. 237). Thus, the Grange continues to exert its cultural power beyond the parameters of the first generation. Catherine fails to overcome her trajectory, a similar trajectory which is repeated many years later. Edgar's ideals of femininity, in terms of what women *could* and *should* be, is only further reinforced through Cathy's equally limited existence. Through his daughter, Brontë ultimately exposes the controlling behaviour he continues to exercise in a cultural world solely regulated by his own authority.

Catherine's mental illness can also be seen as a consequence of choosing social convention over natural desire. Catherine favours marriage with Edgar because she would 'like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood' and admits that she would 'pity him – hate

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<sup>82</sup> Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p. 51.

him, perhaps, if he were ugly or a clown' (p. 61) when contemplating his virtues. This superficial assertion is met with Nelly's warning that she is 'ignorant [to] the duties [she] undertake[s] in marrying' (p. 65). From a nineteenth-century perspective, marriage was the 'life plan of most women, and the single state [was] a fate to be avoided like the plague'.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, it is evident *why* Catherine initially pursues a course which constitutes her downfall. The cultural conventions of mid-Victorian society, such as marriage, exclude the uncultivated desire of nature which ensures Catherine's sanity. Her superficiality with regards to Edgar, as she would scorn him if he were 'ugly', is reversed when discussing Heathcliff. The contrast between them 'resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country, for a beautiful fertile valley' (p. 55). Primarily, Catherine favours Edgar because the Grange's aesthetically pleasing culture, and everything within it, is most attractive. Contrastingly, the destructive impact which Heathcliff has on others is most 'bleak' and despairing. This metaphor echoes two alternate and opposing states *within* the natural world; yet, it is Heathcliff who draws Catherine back to her preferred nature in the end. His presence is unpleasant to others, but stable and secure to Catherine: it will triumph over Edgar's temporal, deteriorating culture. Her failure to recognise this from the onset, however, only accelerates her vulnerability to mental illness.

Edgar adopts a quasi-medical role in assisting Catherine, as he uses culture in order to cure her 'delirium' (p. 69). This proves to be futile, however; only nature can cure Catherine's malady, a sphere which firmly excludes Edgar. Her revelation in Chapter Twelve highlights how her husband exacerbates her illness, rather than eradicates it, as she claims that:

utter blackness *overwhelmed* me [...] I couldn't explain to Edgar how certain I felt of having a fit, or going raging mad, if he persisted in teasing me! I had no command of tongue, or brain, and he did not guess my *agony*, perhaps; it barely left me sense to try and *escape* from him. (pp. 97-8, my emphasis)

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<sup>83</sup> Joan Perkins, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 3.

Here, Catherine's assertion that she has neither 'tongue' nor 'brain' can be translated to a lack of voice and thought, qualities she enjoyed at the natural Heights, as 'her tongue was always going – singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody' (p. 33). Edgar stifles her autonomy more than he succeeds in healing her. It is scarcely surprising that she is unable to *escape* from her illness and the inhabitation it entails. Other critics argue that Catherine's madness stems from hereditary disposition, or due to her own self-betrayal in marrying Edgar.<sup>84</sup> While these readings are persuasive, they justify only the biological essentialism of Catherine's plight without considering the influence of her environment. Rather, Catherine's madness occurs due to her medical 'treatment', a mode of nurture. By contrast, nature is her redemption rather than her ruin. Catherine warns that she will 'get wild' because she is 'in danger of becoming seriously ill' (p. 91). She reiterates a desire to re-enter the natural world, through death, in order to escape culture. Madness is a *natural* rejection to an *unnatural* world or reality: 'an image of madness as a poetic escape, or a sane response to an insane world'.<sup>85</sup> Nineteenth-century middle-class women were expected to retreat 'into the home, where they were to cultivate "the art of femininity"'.<sup>86</sup> Catherine's deviation from conventionally normative behaviour means that, due to her social immobility, she exists only 'in a half dream [...] her mind filled with all sorts of strange ideas and illusions' (p. 102). She straddles a liminal space, a 'half' (p. 102) or incomplete existence, between her cultural sphere and the nature which she refuses to leave behind. Catherine's illness is literally contained by Edgar, in terms of her embedded status as wife and patient at the Grange. Consequently, Catherine is unable to recognise her original

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<sup>84</sup> See, for example, Herbert Dingle, *The Mind of Emily Brontë* (London: Martin Brian and O' Keeffe, 1974), pp. 52-81 and more recently Abigail Moeller, "'Why am I so Changed?': Witnessing the Hysteric's Trauma Narrative through Movement in Place in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*' (Haverford College, conference paper presented 9 June 2015), <https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/bitstream/handle/10066/16667/2015MoellerA.pdf?sequence=2> [accessed 10 August 2019]

<sup>85</sup> Ragnhild Banton, 'Politics and Power', in *The Politics of Mental Health*, eds. Banton *et al* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1985), p. 20.

<sup>86</sup> Jennifer Harding, *Sex Acts: Practises of Femininity and Masculinity* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), p. 2.

identity prior to marriage. As her 'natural' self diminishes, her new identity gains momentum and becomes stronger. Catherine states: 'My God! Does he know how I'm altered? [...] Is that Catherine Linton? He imagines me in a pet – in play, perhaps' (p. 95). 'I was incapable of making her comprehend it to be her own', Nelly narrates, 'so I rose and covered it with a shawl' (p. 96). Catherine's loss of identity, alongside her final malady, catalyses her downfall. Yet, Catherine cements her absolute refusal to be identified as 'Mrs. Linton' (p. 73) through a concealment of this reflection.

Initially, Catherine flourishes, as Dr. Kenneth reassures Nelly that 'a stout, hearty lass like Catherine does not fall ill for a trifle' (p. 101). The rapid decline of her mental health, then, compromises Edgar as Isabella reports: '[Heathcliff] told me of Catherine's illness, and accused my brother of causing it' (p. 114). Edgar's world of 'culture' is toxic rather than tender. This is supported by a semiotic reading of books, an emblem repeated across *Wuthering Heights*, as Edgar is 'continually among his books, since he has no other society' (p. 95). Within the context of madness, his books can be seen as a kind of pseudo-medicine. Catherine rejects this treatment, as she claims, in disgust: '[w]hat, in the name of all that feels, has he to do with books when I am dying?' (p. 95). As Nelly details, 'Linton had laid [a book] there, for she never endeavoured to divert herself with reading, or occupation of any kind' (p. 122). Edgar's culture, as a remedy for Catherine's madness, contrasts with Lockwood's observation of her own personal library at the Heights. It 'was select, and its state of dilapidation proved it to have been well used, though not altogether for a legitimate purpose' (p. 16). Here, the term 'purpose' encapsulates how Catherine's own 'purpose' or motive is diametrically opposed to Edgar's: while his books are used to medicate and control her, Catherine's library is a repository for her private enjoyment. This in turn clarifies *how* the division between freedom and restraint, or nature and culture, inflects the operation of male-female relationships. It is not that Catherine rejects reading as a female occupation which 'diffused among women' in the nineteenth

century.<sup>87</sup> It is more so that she rejects Edgar as her own ‘doctor’ or dictator; his library is far more prescriptive than her own. Rubin’s assertion that each society has a ‘sex/gender system – a set of arrangements [...] [which] are satisfied in a conventional manner, no matter how bizarre some of conventions might be’ can be challenged.<sup>88</sup> In *Wuthering Heights*, the *same* object or ‘culture’ of books is apparent, but it manifests itself in *different* ways within the novel. Thus, Edgar’s ‘set of arrangements’, or his misappropriation of books in order to treat Catherine’s illness, are repelled rather than ‘satisfied’, and her rejection is anything but ‘conventional’.<sup>89</sup> Through a re-examination of Rubin’s statement, there is an aperture between appearance and reality, logic and illogic. As a nineteenth-century wife under the influence of her husband, Catherine *should* adhere to Edgar’s rules. Yet, her unwillingness to internalise and accept these ‘cultural’ remedies means that her overall conformity to the Grange’s carefully established ‘sex/gender system’ is impossible.<sup>90</sup> Inevitably, Catherine will always belong outside of culture, despite her physical inhabitation within it. Edgar lacks the capacity to ‘cure’ his wife, leaving him to ‘[r]eturn to [his] books’ (p. 100) and an equally artificial sphere which, like him, Catherine no longer cares for.

Edgar’s contribution to Catherine’s madness can also be explored through Brontë’s reversal of their gender roles; she teases the boundaries or injustices of nineteenth-century gender but does not necessarily correct them. Buchbinder claims that ‘[i]t is possible for a man to impersonate the feminine, just as a woman may impersonate the masculine’.<sup>91</sup> This

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<sup>87</sup> Leah Price, ‘Women and Reading in Victorian England’, <http://www.victorianweb.org/gender/reading.html> [accessed 9 August 2019]

<sup>88</sup> In this original quotation from her essay, Rubin is discussing how ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ systems translate into ‘products of human activity’ when considering the operation of male-female relationships, that is, outcomes such as marriage (for financial gain). While she focuses predominantly on Marxist ideologies in relation to this concept, her sentiment can be applied to *Wuthering Heights* when observing Catherine’s illness, and Edgar’s association with it, in a holistic way. In either case, both Rubin and Brontë refer to how the operation of gender systems affect women the most. See Gayle Rubin, ‘The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy” of Sex’, in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 32.

<sup>89</sup> Rubin, ‘The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy” of Sex’, p. 32.

<sup>90</sup> Rubin, ‘The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy” of Sex’, p. 32.

<sup>91</sup> David Buchbinder, *Studying Men and Masculinities* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p. 25.

challenges Tosh's assertion that masculinity is associated 'with reason, authority and resolve [...] [a] disassociation from the feminine'.<sup>92</sup> Instead, Victorian gender ideologies are shown to be flexible and inconsistent in *Wuthering Heights*. While Catherine is brutishly described as a 'wild, hatless little savage' (p. 41), Edgar is 'a doll' (p. 44) and a 'soft thing' (p. 57). Before she transitions from her natural roots into Edgar's cultural sphere, Catherine is successfully manipulative. She 'captures' him at the beginning, before he is able to 'capture' her: 'he looked askance through the window: he possessed the power to depart, as much as a cat possesses the power to leave a mouse half killed, or a bird half eaten' (p. 57). As Brinton suggests, Catherine is 'playfully destructive' at the beginning.<sup>93</sup> She displays more agency and initiation in her courtship prior to marriage, which undermines expected traits 'which underpinned the association of masculinity with physical self-reliance and personal bravery'.<sup>94</sup> She toys with Edgar as a predator does with its prey.<sup>95</sup> Yet, this entails a false sense of security; as Edgar's wife, she will soon have no agency at all.<sup>96</sup> As Gilbert and Gubar suggest, 'Heathcliff is always merely "Heathcliff" while Edgar is variously "Mr. Linton", "my master", "Mr. Edgar"' with each phrase conveying 'the power and status he has independent of his physical strength'.<sup>97</sup> While Heathcliff is Catherine's constant, impersonal Edgar's world of 'culture' is more disturbing than 'devil' (p. 106) Heathcliff. Therefore, Catherine's initial strength proves to be futile when considering her later malady.

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<sup>92</sup> Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and The Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, p. 47.

<sup>93</sup> Ian Brinton, *Brontë's Wuthering Heights* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 83.

<sup>94</sup> Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and The Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Catherine's portrayal as a masculine woman is most poignant when considering the biographical criticism of Emily Brontë, who was 'stronger than a man' and 'a dictator'. This mirrors Catherine's initial control over Edgar and her desire for power. See Charlotte Brontë, 'Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell', p. 311.

<sup>96</sup> Within the context of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine is wholly inhabited as a wife and quasi-patient of Edgar. Parliamentary reform which would have aided her, such as the first Matrimonial Causes Act, was not legalised until 1857. Even then, Catherine's grounds for divorce would have been very limited and difficult to prove. See Perkins, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England*, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 281.

In contrast to Edgar's medical treatment, Catherine craves her indigenous moors prior to death, as she begs: 'Do let me feel it – it comes straight down the moor – do let me have one breath!' (p. 97). This is contextually significant when considering Brontë's own natural environment, as she too roamed the Yorkshire wilderness. Duthie states that '[f]or Emily, even more than for her sisters, this air was literally and metaphorically the breath of life'.<sup>98</sup> Unlike Edgar and Isabella, Catherine and Heathcliff cannot truly thrive until they escape cultural confines. Unfortunately for Catherine, her experiences only amplify her vulnerable mental state; she was 'wearying to escape into that wonderful [natural] world [...] to be really with it, and in it' (p. 125). This mirrors the author's own rejection to both convention and medical intervention. When succumbing to tuberculosis, for example, Brontë 'declare[d] that "no poisoning doctor" shall come near her' because '[N]ature shall be left to take her own course'.<sup>99</sup> Like Catherine, Brontë envisioned a life, and a consequent path to death, situated within the comforting natural world. She rejected the same cultural danger which threatens her own heroine.

Catherine's madness is also closely linked to her pregnancy. Showalter posits that 'women were more vulnerable to insanity than men, because the instability of their reproductive system interfered with their sexual, emotional and rational control'.<sup>100</sup> This suggests that pregnancy was a contiguous counterpart to female madness or puerperal insanity, a calamity exacerbated by Edgar, as Catherine struggles with her status as 'the lady of Thrushcross Grange [...] the wife of a stranger' (p. 98).<sup>101</sup> When reinforcing an ecofeminist approach, Plumwood argues that reproduction can 'dominate and distort women's lives'

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<sup>98</sup> Duthie, *The Brontës and Nature*, p. 240.

<sup>99</sup> Haworth, Brontë Parsonage, 'Charlotte Brontë's Letters', ser. MSBPM/40-45.

<sup>100</sup> Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, p. 55.

<sup>101</sup> The term 'puerperal insanity' was coined in the nineteenth century, and the concept explicitly links mental illness with pregnancy. See Nancy Theriot, 'Diagnosing Unnatural Motherhood: Nineteenth-Century Physicians and "Puerperal Insanity"', *American Studies*, 30.2 (1989), pp. 69-88.

outside of their natural environment.<sup>102</sup> If Catherine survived, Cathy's direct connection to Edgar would have interweaved with, and ultimately sealed, Catherine's entrapment within the Grange. Maternity in mid-Victorian England was 'the major role in many women's lives' and had the capacity to 'drive women mad'.<sup>103</sup> Even the term 'hysteria' has etymological connotations of 'hysteron'.<sup>104</sup> It is therefore significant that Catherine's death occurs immediately after childbirth: this questions whether pregnancy was the primary cause of madness, or a secondary by-product of it. As de Beauvoir exemplifies, 'woman is repeatedly told she is to bear children' and that if 'she feels hostility towards the husband, [she may] hate the offspring of the detested man'.<sup>105</sup> Such is the case in *Wuthering Heights* when considering this link between malady and the downfall of women. Brontë's pessimistic portrayal of motherhood is reminiscent of her mother Maria's death.<sup>106</sup> In the novel, mothers are passive and functional: they pass soon after providing important characters. Dingle's assertion that 'Frances is needed to produce Hareton: she [...] does her job, and is promptly killed off' supports this argument.<sup>107</sup> Primarily, Mrs Earnshaw's death 'happened in less than two years after' (p. 31) Heathcliff's arrival, and, quite suddenly, 'Isabella was dead' (p. 154), leaving her young son behind. Motherhood is an inherently important function within this world of culture, but it is reductive for Catherine in nature. When her inevitable death occurs, Catherine's sole identity is motherhood. The verbs associated with her passing exemplify her devotion to *nature*, yet she retains her label of *culture* as both a mother and wife. Indeed, 'the *mother* died, having never recovered sufficient consciousness to *miss* Heathcliff, or *know* Edgar' (p. 128, my

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<sup>102</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 38.

<sup>103</sup> Ussher, *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness?*, p. 259.

<sup>104</sup> Busfield outlines how 'hysteria' was female-centric in the nineteenth century; it was 'the paradigmatic female mental disorder'. From a contextual perspective, this supports a link between Catherine's reproductive purpose and her consequent malady. See Busfield, *Men, Women and Madness*, pp. 15-6.

<sup>105</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), p. 537.

<sup>106</sup> It is credible to suggest that motherhood is a pessimistic theme in Brontë's writings, as well as her life, given Maria's premature death. See Philip K. Wion, 'The Absent Mother in Emily Brontë's "*Wuthering Heights*"', *American Imago*, 42.2 (1985), pp. 143-164.

<sup>107</sup> Dingle, *The Mind of Emily Brontë*, pp. 78-9.

emphasis). As Harding states, the ““mother”” is rarely in a position to ‘make authoritative statements’.<sup>108</sup> Although motherhood defines Catherine in death, the semantic difference between ‘*miss*’ and ‘*know*’ emphasises how Catherine valued Heathcliff and Edgar in different quantities. Her connection to Heathcliff is steeped far deeper in nostalgic emotion than her passive, one-dimensional relationship with Edgar.

This rejection of motherhood links to Catherine’s natural desire for childhood regression. Krishnan states that characters in *Wuthering Heights* ‘exercise their wills to facilitate illness, thereby exerting power over their *circumstances*’.<sup>109</sup> Catherine does actively encourage the prospect of illness, as she tries to ‘break their hearts by breaking [her] own’ (p. 92), but her *circumstances* of culture, her marriage to Edgar, exerts power over *her* rather than her having the potential to control *them*. Motz asserts that ‘the adolescent girl struggle[s] to retain her childlike state and to assert *control* over her body’.<sup>110</sup> This mirrors Catherine’s desire to be ‘a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them!’ (p. 98). Under nineteenth-century marital laws, Catherine is essentially Edgar’s property, who ‘sunk into, and merged’ with him.<sup>111</sup> Yet, she recognises that her rightful identity is deeply rooted in her childhood nature. Catherine’s individualism is redundant, and her desire to regress is mirrored through her fragmented identity:

The ledge [...] was covered with scratched writing on the paint. This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small – *Catherine Earnshaw*, here and there varied to *Catherine Heathcliff*, and then again to *Catherine Linton*. (pp. 15-6, emphasis in original).

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<sup>108</sup> Harding, *Sex Acts: Practises of Femininity and Masculinity*, p. 93.

<sup>109</sup> Lakshmi Krishnan, “‘It Has Devoured My Existence’”: The Power of the Will and Illness in *The Bride Of Lammermoor* and *Wuthering Heights*’, *Brontë Studies*, 32.1 (2007), 31-40 (p. 31) (my emphasis).

<sup>110</sup> Anna Motz, *The Psychology of Female Violence: Crimes Against the Body* (Oxon: Routledge, 2001), p. 197 (my emphasis).

<sup>111</sup> Perkins, *Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England*, p. 2.

This plurality signifies her struggle between the three identities: her *tabula rasa* infant identity, her identity of nature and ultimately her identity of culture.<sup>112</sup> Regardless of this, Catherine is more truly Heathcliff than truly Edgar – and thus inherently natural and ungoverned, rather than cultural and controlled – as, despite an attempt to separate her identities, each name is ‘scratched’ and disorderly. Catherine’s true nature is immutable, despite her cultural chains; ‘if Catherine is Heathcliff – if identity rather than relationship is in question – then their estrangement is inconceivable’ as an individual of nature.<sup>113</sup>

Paradoxically, then, despite ‘fierce, pitiless, wolfish man’ (p. 81) Heathcliff’s madness or instability, he is the only antidote or cure to Catherine’s illness: he mourns the loss of his ‘departed idol’ (p. 248) after her death. This challenges de Beauvoir’s argument that, in terms of male-female gender politics, man ‘desires [women], but she will never be more than one element in his life: she does not encapsulate his destiny’.<sup>114</sup> The opposite is true for Catherine and Heathcliff, as she insists that ‘[w]hatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same’ (p. 63). Her justification for choosing Edgar over Heathcliff mirrors her dichotomised position in terms of nature and culture:

My love for Linton is like the *foliage* in the woods. Time will *change* it, I’m well aware, as winter changes the trees – my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal *rocks* underneath – a source of little visible delight, but *necessary*. (p. 64, my emphasis).

Nature’s power is so intense that it fully overrides the temporal and superficial essence of culture. Like the ‘*foliage*’, Edgar’s world of culture is partial to decay and deterioration. In contrast, Heathcliff’s unyielding, permanent foundation transcends Edgar’s world and beyond.

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<sup>112</sup> The philosophical concept of *tabula rasa* supports the original basis of Catherine’s identity as ‘Catherine Earnshaw’: it is her primary sense of self, a ‘blank slate’, which is later tainted and influenced by both identities of ‘Linton’ and ‘Heathcliff’ in different ways. For a more detailed examination, see Robert Duschinsky, “‘Tabula Rasa’ and Human Nature”, *Philosophy*, 87.342 (2012), pp. 509-529.

<sup>113</sup> Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*, pp. 101-2.

<sup>114</sup> de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 341.

Gilbert and Gubar's assertion that '*Wuthering Heights* seems at times to be about forces or beings rather than people' can therefore be developed.<sup>115</sup> By extension, it is evident that these 'forces', 'beings' and 'people' co-exist together in a natural synergy: they are not as isolated as Gilbert and Gubar suggest. This coalition of humans with the natural world is supported through an extract of Brontë's own poetry, as she writes:

Though Earth and moon were gone,  
And suns and universes ceased to be  
And thou wert left alone  
Every existence would exist in thee.<sup>116</sup>

This sentiment is exemplified in *Wuthering Heights*, as Catherine states: '[i]f all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be [...] if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn into a mighty stranger' (p. 64). Thus, although male-female relationships are often represented in terms of culture and madness, Brontë perpetuates a view which suggests that Catherine and Heathcliff can only survive when they are firmly placed *outside* of these parameters. Nature possesses the power to eradicate both Catherine's malady and their romantic obstacles. Duthie argues that a 'disillusioned view of human existence would ultimately have coloured Emily's attitude to nature itself. But this is never the case [because] the physical universe [...] is not modified by the human situation'.<sup>117</sup> Rather, nature and humans are contingent, not separate. Catherine exits life in a state of 'mad resolution' (p. 127), while Heathcliff's own nerves are thoroughly 'disordered' (p. 247) prior to his demise. Although their respective states of madness inhabit and destroy them both in culture, they can thrive within an alternative world after death. Catherine, with Heathcliff's assistance, becomes

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<sup>115</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 252.

<sup>116</sup> Emily Brontë, 'No Coward Soul is Mine', in *Emily Brontë: The Complete Poems*, ed. Janet Gezari (London: Penguin, 1992), ll. 20-4.

<sup>117</sup> Duthie, *The Brontës and Nature*, p. 209.

wholly *natural* again through a somewhat *unnatural* contradiction: they continue to ‘yonder under’t Nab’ (p. 257), long after Edgar and his cultural sphere ‘die blissfully’ (p. 217).

Catherine is destroyed by madness in a cultural world defined by patriarchy. In a paradoxical sense, Heathcliff is Catherine’s only cure. He inevitably contributes to her death, but most importantly he saves her because, in Brontë’s ethereal and fictive universe, he *is* her; as Catherine notes, ‘he’s more myself than I am’ (p. 63). Nature, and all it represents, is the only effective ‘medicine’ for her malady. Thus, it is evident that *Wuthering Heights* ‘confronts the tragic truth that the passion and society it presents are not fundamentally reconcilable’.<sup>118</sup> However, this is not necessarily unfavourable: rather, Catherine’s ability to become unshackled from her *cultural* society in order to embrace her *natural* passion is a liberating truth, rather than a tragic one. This same patriarchal repression is also prevalent in the next chapter on *Villette*: like Catherine, Lucy Snowe also feels the destructive effects of male ‘medicine’ and madness.

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<sup>118</sup> Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*, p. 100.

**Chapter Three: “My mind has suffered somewhat too much; a malady is growing upon it – what shall I do?”:<sup>119</sup> “Observing” the Unwell and Unconventional Lucy Snowe in *Villette***

‘I am the lackey who follows “orders”  
[...] *I have not got the authority*’<sup>120</sup>

- Erica Jong, ‘The Prisoner’ (1975)

This chapter will explore how Lucy’s madness is exacerbated by Dr. John and M. Paul’s patriarchal influence. Millett argues that ‘[i]n Lucy, one may perceive what affects her life in a male-supremacist society’.<sup>121</sup> While Dr. John’s medical status awards him with overt power, M. Paul observes her more covertly. In either case, Lucy is overshadowed by a critical gaze of patriarchal authority; ‘I was vaguely threatened with, I know not what doom, if I ever trespassed the limits proper to my sex’ (p. 329). This encapsulates how female autonomy, especially when linked to ‘madness’, is futile when considering men’s overarching influence. Lucy’s status as a mentally ill narrator, rather than a ‘faithful’ (p. 184) one, blurs the boundaries between lie and truth; appearance and reality, in terms of her madness and her relationships with both men.

The onset of Lucy’s first illness is primarily intensified by Dr. John’s medical control. Jin-Ok suggests that ‘Lucy is not the object of a gaze, but is the active gazer’.<sup>122</sup> Lucy with her ‘direct, inquiring gaze’ (p. 88) is ‘a mere looker-on at life’ (p. 129): she discreetly watches others, rather than openly participating in events. Yet, her downfall stems from the capacity of others to observe and control *her*. This is seen through the young doctor, who observes her in order to influence her, as he warns: ‘[w]e each have an observant faculty. You, perhaps, don’t

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<sup>119</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994), p. 145. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

<sup>120</sup> Erica Jong, ‘The Prisoner’, in *Here Comes and Other Poems* (New York: Signet, 1975), p. 229.

<sup>121</sup> Kate Millett, ‘Sexual Politics in “*Villette*”’, in *Villette: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Pauline Nestor (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1992), p. 32.

<sup>122</sup> Kim Jin-Ok, *Charlotte Brontë and Female Desire* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), p. 96.

give me credit for the possession; yet I have it' (p. 295). This challenges Torgerson's claim that 'Lucy learns to read Dr. John, but Dr. John never learns to read Lucy'.<sup>123</sup> Instead, there is an opposition or an aperture between them; while Lucy is empathetic in her observation, Dr. John takes advantage of his supreme position as man and doctor. For example, in Chapter Twenty-Three, he instructs others to '[t]rust her with me, I am a medical man' (p. 244), which correlates with the assertion that 'doctor is master, the patient slave'.<sup>124</sup> Dr. John diagnoses Lucy with 'Hypochondria' (p. 170). Lucy views the disorder as 'a chamber of torture', as she 'can neither say nor do much' (p. 170). This suggests that the consequential treatment for her malady, one orchestrated by Dr. John, is more frightening and repressive than a label of mental illness in itself. Under Dr. John's medical gaze, Lucy is a 'slave' entrapped within his 'chamber' or domain. This idea can also be linked to the wider context of Brontë herself, and the disorder was also recorded in Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine* as causing 'distressing gloom'.<sup>125</sup> In Lucy's case, it is questionable as to whether her own melancholic state of 'gloom' is merely a symptom of her existing disorder, or one implemented by Dr. John.

A more holistic view of Victorian society, and its regulations of normative behaviour for women, can be seen through Dr. John. It is possible that Dr. John, with his ability to straddle the 'separate spheres' of domesticity and public life, feels threatened by Lucy's equal ability. As an individual who exists and observes from the peripheral margins of society, his subsequent diagnosis may be an attempt to resituate Lucy within women's limited social

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<sup>123</sup> Torgerson, *Reading the Brontë Body: Disease, Desire, and the Constraints of Culture*, p. 79.

<sup>124</sup> Banton *et al*, *The Politics of Mental Health*, p. 34.

<sup>125</sup> When transcribing a letter from Brontë to Margaret Wooler, I could decipher some of her own personal experiences with hypochondria, as she wrote: 'I can never forget the concentrated anguish of certain insufferable movements'. From a graphological point of view, the letter was physically incomplete. This only further supports the overt distress and impatience associated with Brontë's malady, in addition to the thoughts which she wrote on the page. Haworth, Brontë Parsonage, 'Charlotte Brontë's Letters', ser. MSBPM/40-45. Moreover, Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine* described one symptom of hypochondria as having a 'dislike of particular persons, places, or things' while Brontë compared her experience to being buried 'in a subterranean dungeon'. This supports links between female repression and medical control. See Thomas John Graham, *Modern Domestic Medicine* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1827), p. 347 and Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 229; 235.

circle.<sup>126</sup> Lucy observes, in the doctor who is ‘full of faults’ (p. 27), ‘a seeming contradiction in the two views which have been given to Graham Bretton – the public and the private’ (p. 128). In his character, ‘there was something that pleased, but something too that brought surging up into the mind all of one’s foibles and weak points’ (p. 86). Here, the literally doubled identity of Dr. John, who also goes by the name of Graham Bretton, indicates a conflict between who he truly is, and who he appears to be. Within his domain, Lucy is ‘racked and oppressed in mind’ (p. 146), despite Mrs. Bretton’s claim that her ‘son is master and must be obeyed’ (p. 167). ‘It would not do to contradict; he must have his own way’ (p. 175). However, this weakens his overall credibility, as Lucy narrates: ‘[n]ot one bit did I believe him; but I dared not contradict: doctors are so self-opinionated, so immovable’ (p. 239). Just like Mrs. Bretton, Lucy cannot criticise or challenge Dr. John’s dominant views; yet, her internal rejection does signify an understanding of the real illness or unhappiness which he partially overlooks. This contrast between appearance and reality is both dangerous for Lucy’s recovery, but also ‘undermines the values [Dr. John] ostensibly symbolizes’.<sup>127</sup> Thus, the trajectory of who is truly ‘mad’ and incompetent is once again brought into dispute.

Lucy’s isolation is prevalent during her illness at the Bretton household. Under Dr. John’s regime, she is placed in a ‘very safe asylum’ (p. 159). The term ‘asylum’ emphasises how his domain is a strictly regulated place of psychiatric control, one which exists under the

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<sup>126</sup> In nineteenth-century England, the ‘separate spheres’ debate or ideology referred to the respective positions of middle-class men and women. The ‘True Women’ assumed ‘the cardinal virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity’ within the confinements of her home, while men had the capacity to both enjoy this inner circle, but also act outside of it. See Linda L. Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), p. 65.

<sup>127</sup> Sylvia A. Pamboukian, *Doctoring the Novel: Medicine and Quackery from Shelley to Doyle* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2012), p. 96.

pretence of a nurturing home.<sup>128</sup> This starkly contrasts with Lucy's own belief that she is 'sane' (p. 155), despite the fact she is dominated within this 'asylum'. The nineteenth-century home, as a prototypical projection of the feminine space, is distorted through Lucy's illness. Even during Dr. John's absence, the unsettling and 'penetrating' (p. 157) eyes of his portrait continue to observe her. What is most poignant, however, is Brontë's negotiation of Lucy's repression through sea metaphors. Her room or 'asylum' is described as 'a cave in the sea': she is encompassed by 'foam and deep water', powerless against 'the rush of its largest waves' (p. 168). The oceanic depth of Lucy's narration mirrors the intangible and claustrophobic essence of her illness and isolation. Essentially, she is stagnant and unreachable – segregated from the vast horizon which represents her society – leaving her instead to occupy a diminutive 'cave' away from civilisation. Lucy cannot compete with or overcome the 'waves' of medical and social power which Dr. John exerts over her.

In light of Lucy's non-conformity, one can perceive why Dr. John favours Polly Home over Lucy as a potential romantic partner. The connotations of Polly's surname, 'Home', reinforces how her identity is thoroughly rooted within the heart of domesticity, as she aspires to 'exist in his existence' (p. 20) from the onset. As an 'angel in the house', 'small, delicate creature' (p. 246) Polly is fully committed to Dr. John despite his evident faults, because 'her natural place seemed to be at his side' (p. 263).<sup>129</sup> As Polly refrains from mental illness, one might question whether Lucy's own malady is exacerbated by the doctor, but only *because* her

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<sup>128</sup> Brontë herself visited different asylums, so she was not ignorant to the impact of isolation of the mentally ill. She clarifies this on numerous occasions in *Villette*, as Lucy most poignantly reflects on how 'few persons can enter into or follow out of going mad from solitary confinement [...] [it is] a subject too intricate for examination' (p. 255). As Showalter highlights: 'In 1853, Brontë had visited both Pentonville prison and Bethlem, and she had seen how frighteningly effective solitary confinement could be', which consequently encourages a scornful rather than a sympathetic view of Dr. John's medical treatment. See Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, p. 69.

<sup>129</sup> As I foregrounded in the introduction, pioneers such as Patmore and Ruskin readily believed that women existed to enhance and improve the lives of their husbands. Polly's unmoving desire to do this for both Dr. John and her father is beneficial in this sense, while Lucy's rejection of conventional femininity isolates her and enhances her later malady.

original identity is unconventional. Unlike Polly, she questions, rather than readily accepts, the demands of men like Dr. John. For example, Brontë outlines how Lucy ‘has about her an external coldness’.<sup>130</sup> She is excluded from the warmth and compassion which other characters enjoy. It is this isolation, in conjunction with patriarchal control, which heightens her susceptibility to mental illness; her frostiness is incompatible with the warmth of Polly’s domestic hearth. The graphological structure of the novel further supports this. While Polly and Dr. John’s union represents tranquillity and contentment, as illustrated through their chapter entitled ‘Sunshine’, Lucy is structurally and metaphorically a ‘Cloud’ in the chapter which follows. She exists, but she is a shadow, void of romantic emotion. As a ‘mad’ social anomaly, Lucy is irreconcilable with the values that her society upholds; meanwhile, Dr. John continues to cause, rather than cure. As Mallett emphasises, ‘the domestic ideal offered no place to the single woman [...] she had either to exist on the margins of society, or sink out of it altogether’.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, Lucy’s illness starkly contrasts with Dr. John’s happy denouement: despite his own vices, his overarching status means that he will continue to flourish in contrast to the women who struggle beneath him.

As Lucy’s first illness is influenced by Dr. John, one can also suggest that the reoccurrence of her malady is affected by the equally dominant M. Paul. Dr. John demonstrates what Downie defines as ‘the powerlessness of the individual against “expert” medical opinion’.<sup>132</sup> His medical authority, his façade, conceals his true self. By comparison, M. Paul is more covert in his control. In either case, patriarchal control was paramount in nineteenth-

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<sup>130</sup> In an epistle to her publisher, Brontë justifies the change of her heroine’s name from ‘Snowe’, to ‘Frost’, before reverting back to the original ‘Snowe’. In either case, the semantic connotations of both terms exemplify Lucy’s physical and emotional ‘coldness’ or distance from those around her. This, in turn, enhances her later malady due to her immense isolation from others. See Charlotte Brontë, ‘Letter to W. S. Williams: November 6<sup>th</sup> 1852’, in Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 392.

<sup>131</sup> Phillip Mallett, ‘Woman and Marriage in Victorian Society’, in *Marriage and Property*, ed. Elizabeth M. Craik (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), p. 167.

<sup>132</sup> Robin Downie, ‘Madness in Literature: Device and Understanding’, in *Madness and Creativity in Literature and Culture*, eds. Corinne Saunders and Jane Macnaughton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 61.

century culture, and two forces are more damaging than one. From Lucy's arrival at the Pensionnat, Lucy describes how '[t]he little man fixed on me with his spectacles' (p. 58) as he conducts a physiognomic reading of her.<sup>133</sup> This is the first instance where M. Paul 'reads' Lucy in order to later dominate her. Shuttleworth delineates such practices 'not [as] a neutral system of character classification' but as an 'explicit goal of redrawing the map of social hierarchy'.<sup>134</sup> M. Paul's control is wholly concerned with, in a similar way to Dr. John's, the use of his 'gaze' or quasi-medical opinion to govern women. This same concept of comprehending and navigating the 'social hierarchy' is seen most clearly through M. Paul's lunettes and his lattice.

M. Paul's lunettes can be seen as a direct instrument of observing and objectifying Lucy. Newman asserts that Lucy is '[l]iterally and figuratively seen through M. Paul's lunettes [...] her own immobility thus dissipates'.<sup>135</sup> Her premise can be extended, however: Lucy 'destroys' the 'really terrible' (p. 304) lunettes, before they can 'destroy' her. By destroying them, Lucy temporarily reclaims her individual power. The lunettes possess a 'blank and immutable terror' (p. 305), and once they are broken 'each clear pebble became a shivered and shapeless star' (p. 306). Lucy's poetic description of the broken spectacles illustrates how M. Paul also becomes 'shapeless' and without purpose in this moment. Through his inability to see Lucy, he despairs that she is 'resolved to have [him] quite blind and helpless in [her] hands!' (p. 306). This temporarily inverts their power dynamic. Through his male gaze, M. Paul can affect both her actions and her mental stability. Thus, Lucy's act of destroying his lunettes protects her from this invasion. However, her assertion that each broken part becomes a 'star'

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<sup>133</sup> Physiognomy was a popular phenomenon in the nineteenth century. Individuals believed that they could denote a person's moral constitution by reading and comprehending their facial expressions. For a more detailed discussion of this practice, see Johann Caspar Lavater, *The Science of Physiognomy* (New York: Van Winkle and Wiley, 1817), pp. 20-32.

<sup>134</sup> Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>135</sup> Beth Newman, *Subjects on Display: Psychoanalysis, Social Expectation, and Victorian Femininity* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004), p. 51.

is important. The term ‘star’ has many etymological meanings; yet, in a figurative context it is defined as ‘a source of inspiration or enlightenment’.<sup>136</sup> Lucy’s description can also be seen as ‘inspirational’ or ‘enlightening’. The broken lunettes, and all that they represent, enables a liberating respite from M. Paul’s observation. Yet, Brontë revisits this gaze through M. Paul’s alternative mode of female observation. He later adopts a private space overlooking the Pensionnat garden, ‘virtually for a post of observation’. ‘There I sit and read for hours together: it is my way – my taste. My book is this garden; its contents are human nature – female human nature. I know you all by heart’ (p. 340), M. Paul explains. As I illustrated in the previous chapter, there is an overwhelming association of men with ‘books’, physical or metaphorical: they are used in order to access the psychological interior of women. However, in *Villette*, this is more discreet. M. Paul literally occupies a liminal space; he is physically separated from Lucy, but this does not hinder his subsequent control over her. Therefore, through an analysis of both the lunettes and the lattice, one can suggest that Lucy never truly recovers from her illness. After her primary illness under Dr. John’s regime, she is met with a different, but an equally intrusive, male gaze throughout the remainder of the novel.

The similarities *between* Dr. John and M. Paul shed a more powerful light on Lucy’s circumstances under the watchful eye of patriarchy. M. Paul, in contrast to Dr. John’s ‘good looks’ (p. 92), is a ‘dark little man’ who showcases a ‘harsh apparition’ (p. 118). He is explicitly likened to ‘a species of tyrant or Blue-beard’ (p. 125), which links back to ideologies prevalent in the first chapter.<sup>137</sup> ‘The madwoman in the attic’ trope is just as prominent in *Villette*, as Dr. John and M. Paul physically inhabit Lucy for their own benefit. This suggests that nineteenth-

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<sup>136</sup> *OED* Online, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/189081?rskey=dMohV9&result=1#eid> [accessed 25 August 2019]

<sup>137</sup> As I also illustrated in Chapter One, it is apparent that Charlotte Brontë’s comparison of Bluebeard Gothic tropes is prevalent in relation to male characters. This once again highlights the conflicts between appearance and reality. Aesthetic constitution is ultimately meaningless, because she perpetuates a view which suggests that men who control women are always tyrannous at heart, regardless of physical appearance.

century women could or should be locked away if they fail to meet patriarchal demands. In Chapter Fourteen, M. Paul entraps Lucy in the Pensionnat's attic so she can 'rehearse' for him. Yet, this entrapment taints the rest of their subsequent encounters, as Millett outlines how M. Paul 'has been [Lucy's] jailer all through the novel'.<sup>138</sup> She can view him only as a continued threat rather than a compassionate equal. As Lucy narrates: 'to the solitary and lofty attic I was borne, put in and locked in, the key being on the door, and that key he took with him, and vanished [...] [t]he attic was no pleasant place' (p. 123). Therefore, Gilbert and Gubar's premise, in which they argue that the limitations of literary heroines mirror the anxieties of nineteenth-century woman writers, is reinforced. Brontë's repeated references to physically inhabited women echo how Lucy's autonomy is removed in order to satisfy man's demands; her voice is literally suppressed by his own.

The secret garden is also significant when dissecting Lucy's repression through mental illness. As a milieu of safety and seclusion, Lucy's garden is invaded by Dr. John and M. Paul as they intrude upon her private thoughts and activities. Gilbert and Gubar argue that Lucy favours the garden because it protects her from 'every activity which Madame Beck cannot control'.<sup>139</sup> However, this can be extended: Lucy finds Madame's gaze 'curious' (p. 61) and sceptical, yet wholly innocent. Instead, the male gaze is much more damaging. Most significantly, Lucy enjoys true emotional feelings only within the garden: she 'linger[s] solitary' around its parameters, enjoying 'one taste of the evening breeze' and 'the seclusion, the very gloom of the walk' (pp. 97-8) in complete privacy. The garden is a liberating distraction from her mental illness and the patriarchal forces which enhance it, although this relief is only temporary. Dr. John 'penetrated at last the "forbidden walk"' (p. 102), leaving Lucy's area 'trodden down' with his 'footprints' (p. 105). The connotations of 'forbidden'

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<sup>138</sup> Millett, 'Sexual Politics in "Villette"', in *Villette: Contemporary Critical Essays*, p. 39.

<sup>139</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, p. 410.

convey a sense of shame or secrecy, and as Lucy's medical authoritarian, Dr. John sees no fault in infiltrating it. In a quasi-sexual manner, his 'penetrating' force is entirely intrusive. The term 'trodden' encapsulates how he destroys her only safe place; as a result, he metaphorically tramples on her mental wellbeing. Similarly, M. Paul also challenges Lucy's garden. He informs her that he 'marked her early preference for this alley, noted her taste for seclusion' (p. 341). In either case, Lucy's autonomy and comforts are jeopardised: her temporary escape from an overwhelming world cannot be shielded from this all-pervading male gaze.

Poovey questions: 'Is woman a primarily sexual or moral creature? Is she man's temptress or his moral guide?' when exploring nineteenth-century womanhood.<sup>140</sup> This is an anxiety prevalent in *Villette*: the unconventional and often ambivalent depictions of femininity are important when navigating Lucy's mental health. The depictions of Cleopatra and Vashti are significant, as Lucy simultaneously admires and fears them. Shuttleworth claims that '[t]he creation of the feminine in male-executed art is directly allied to the medical construction of women'.<sup>141</sup> Dr. John and M. Paul's taste for conventionality challenges this: they oppose, rather than resonate with, these unorthodox images. A more fitting analysis, perhaps, is Eliot's contemporary review of *Villette*, in which she discusses how it is a 'wonderful book' which possesses a 'preternatural' power.<sup>142</sup> 'Preternatural' is a derogatory adjective widely used across the Brontë oeuvre, for example within *Jane Eyre*.<sup>143</sup> Yet, in *Villette*, non-normative women (that is, women who defy male-defined convention) can be seen as 'preternatural' in a commendatory sense. Women who go beyond what is 'normal' or 'natural' are admirable, not

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<sup>140</sup> Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1988), p. 32.

<sup>141</sup> Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*, p. 238.

<sup>142</sup> Like Brontë (or her pen-name Currer Bell), Eliot also used a pseudonym to disguise her true identity as Mary Ann Evans. She too recognised the judgments and obstacles which creative women faced in Victorian society. See George Eliot, 'Letter to Mrs. Bray: 15<sup>th</sup> February 1853', in *George Eliot's Life*, ed. J. W. Cross (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1885), p. 220.

<sup>143</sup> In *Jane Eyre*, for example, Brontë describes Bertha's laugh 'as tragic, as preternatural a laugh as any I ever heard [...] I should have been superstitiously afraid' (p. 93) in order to describe non-normative characteristics of women. However, while this is derogatory for Bertha, *Villette*'s 'preternatural' power can be read as admirable.

scornful. The first image of unconventional femininity is seen through Cleopatra, a ‘huge, dark-complexioned gipsy-queen’ who ‘ought likewise to have worn decent garments’ (p. 187). One contemporary advice booklet, published only a year prior to *Villette*’s publication, warned that ‘pictures representing every form, semi or wholly clothed’ would evoke sexual subversion in women, which would result in ‘hysteria or other nervous disorders’.<sup>144</sup> This is particularly influential when considering M. Paul’s reaction; his overt disgust is evident as he objects to Lucy’s perception of Cleopatra. He claims that respectable women ‘ought infinitely to surpass [the] fallible, self-indulgent sex, in the power to perform [their] duties’ (p. 190). In contrast, Dr. John ‘did not simper’ (p. 192) in his observation. Regardless of each man’s reaction, it is most important that Lucy’s own judgements are formed on the basis of Dr. John and M. Paul’s. It is only after witnessing these that Lucy is confident enough to formulate ‘a woman’s rather obscure and stammering explanation’ (p. 192) or opinion. Her vulnerability, as a consequence of her mental illness, means that her self-definition is influenced by these men who surround her.

Lucy’s malady can also be read through her focus on Cleopatra’s ‘perfect rubbish of flowers’ (p. 187). This oxymoron highlights the unorthodox nature of mental illness in its entirety. Flowers are emblematic of femininity and therefore, by nineteenth-century standards, can be perceived as conventional. A gift valued by men and women alike, they are prized for their aesthetic beauty. Contrastingly, for the unconventional Lucy and Cleopatra, they are artificial and meaningless. As Lucy states:

I like to see flowers growing, but when they are gathered, they cease to please. I look on them as things rootless and perishable; their likeness to life makes me sad. I never offer flowers to those I love; I never wish to receive them from hands dear to me. (p. 316)

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<sup>144</sup> E. J. Tilt, *The Elements of Health, and Principles of Female Hygiene* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852), p. 211.

The boundary between Lucy's interior mental anguish and her exterior environment is blurred: flowers, an object closely associated with men, are worthless. Their verisimilitude 'likeness to life' (p. 316) catalyses Lucy's hatred. For example, Lucy fails to gift flowers to M. Paul on his birthday, as she informs him: 'you shall be indifferent to me, as the shabbiest bouquet in your pyramid' (p. 319). With this in mind, woman is expected to be 'a living object of art' who exists 'only for the pleasure and pride of [men]', just like Cleopatra.<sup>145</sup> Lucy admires her; she is unorthodox in nature. Yet, in a literal sense, she will be forever passive, an inanimate spectacle entrapped within a painting. Unlike Cleopatra, Lucy does have the capacity to define her self-worth through her *own* narrative, but her ongoing repression hinders her from doing so. The effects of Dr. John and M. Paul on Lucy's sanity are far more tainting than the materials used to paint Cleopatra's image.

Similarly, Lucy encounters another paragon of unconventional femininity through Vashti. Torgerson states that 'male artistic representations of women are as problematically materialistic as Dr. John's scientific understanding of women'.<sup>146</sup> Vashti, in a similar way to Cleopatra, is equivocal in her physical image. She is 'a marvellous sight' but also a 'spectacle, low, horrible, immoral' (p. 240). This exemplifies Lucy's own ambivalence: she recognises the social implications of Vashti's unorthodox nature, a similar trajectory linked to her own madness, but equally she admires her unique individualism. Most importantly, Lucy's own individuality is once again limited through a habitual pattern of forming her opinion on the basis of men. During the continuation of her illness, she is somewhat exempt from her true thoughts. Dr. John 'judged [Vashti] as a woman, not as artist: it was a branding judgment' (p. 242). On the basis of this judgment, Lucy's nerves were 'a deep, swollen, winter river' (p. 242). This reinforces previous discussions of Dr. John's provision of Lucy in an 'asylum': his

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<sup>145</sup> Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*, p. 65.

<sup>146</sup> Torgerson, *Reading the Brontë Body: Disease, Desire, and the Constraints of Culture*, p. 82.

treatment is intensely claustrophobic, and Vashti's presence manifests this discomfort. As Poovey encapsulates, unconventional women were 'an "anomaly" and therefore a "problem"' in the nineteenth century.<sup>147</sup> Consequently, unconventional women like Lucy, Cleopatra and Vashti will always be ostracised within patriarchal society.

The most significant symbol of Lucy's mental illness and patriarchal repression can be read through the nun.<sup>148</sup> Rather than representing a doctrine or moral code of Lucy's self-control, the nun epitomises an overall rejection to Dr. John and M. Paul's corruption. Many scholars argue that the nun represents Lucy's chastity, but this interpretation will posit that she *defends* Lucy against patriarchal repression rather than *threatens* her directly in any way.<sup>149</sup> While Dr. John dismisses the nun's presence as 'a case of spectral illusion' (p. 233), M. Paul accepts her existence and suggests that 'her business is as much with you as with me' (p. 344). This reinforces the ambiguity between appearance and reality: Dr. John continues to blame Lucy's 'madness', while M. Paul's statement links the nun's overall purpose to the men in question. The nun appears during emotionally heightened moments, such as when Lucy buries her secret letters from Dr. John and when she meets M. Paul in the secret garden. Although the nun frightens Lucy, she does not actively harm her. Instead, one can suggest that she appears, specifically during moments dominated by men, in an attempt to distract or warn Lucy about their intentions. This can be seen through Lucy's immobility around the nun; rather than a response of fear, Lucy's halted movements – in relation to Dr. John and M. Paul – could indicate a moment of contemplation or forewarning. Furthermore, Lucy's physical characterisation can be directly allied with madness using stone metaphors, thus strengthening

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<sup>147</sup> Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> One of the novel's key denouements, the nun's revelation, clarifies how the haunted 'nun' is in fact Ginevra's beau Alfred; he disguises himself in order to visit her. However, this argument will instead focus on the nun's semiotic significance as a female figure and a sense of consciousness for Lucy.

<sup>149</sup> Showalter postulates that '[t]he nun appears whenever Lucy is struggling to keep her sexual desires in check', while Jin-Ok argues that '[t]he nun symbolises Lucy's sexual hopes with respect to Dr. John [and] her suppression and sexual access'. See Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, p. 70 and Jin-Ok, *Charlotte Brontë and Female Desire*, p. 91.

this view. When justifying her mental wellbeing to Madame Beck, she claims that she is ‘no more excited than this stone’ (p. 69). In turn, Lucy ‘neither fled nor shrieked’ (p. 277) around the nun, during such moments associated with Dr. John and M. Paul, and later ‘watched [her] fixedly’ (p. 344) as a *surveillant* in the garden. In an epistle to Ellen Nussey, Brontë wrote: ‘I am not made of stone – and what is mere excitement to him, is fever to me’.<sup>150</sup> The stone metaphor can therefore be allied with the progression of male-female relationships. Brontë’s assertion illustrates how a combination of patriarchal power and female weakness is conflicting and dangerous in *Villette*, a possibility emblematised by the nun as Lucy’s moral sense of consciousness. A coalition of the nun’s presence *with* Lucy’s links to Dr. John and M. Paul illustrates how such men are more disturbing than the aesthetically fearful nun herself. However, this protection is ultimately futile: the nun eventually dissipates from Lucy’s defence and her overall life; ‘[s]he will be seen in the Rue Fossette no more’ (p. 440).

One can conclude that Lucy never truly recovers from her illness. She ends her narrative in complete emotional isolation, mirroring the very ways in which it began. When revisiting Brontë’s own pessimism at the time of writing *Villette*, this is scarcely surprising.<sup>151</sup> She offers no remedy or solution to the controversies she raises. Through Lucy, Brontë succeeds in ‘extending the disruptive energy of nervous illness beyond the space of the text’.<sup>152</sup> Unlike Bertha and Catherine, Lucy escapes death; yet, each woman is defeated by patriarchal control. This contrasts with the forthcoming and final chapter, as Anne Brontë negotiates an alternative way for women to overcome madness and repression.

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<sup>150</sup> Charlotte Brontë, ‘Letter to Ellen Nussey: January 20<sup>th</sup> 1851’, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume Two, 1848-1851*, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 557.

<sup>151</sup> In an epistle to George Smith, Brontë justifies her feelings at the time of writing *Villette*: ‘I got so miserable about it [...] You will see that *Villette* touches on no matter of public interest’. With this in mind, one can comprehend Brontë’s overall despair (the very same despair which she rewards Lucy), but also the immensely intimate nature of the novel. As she implies, it is a matter of ‘personal’ rather than ‘public’ interest. See Charlotte Brontë, ‘Letter to George Smith: 30 October 1852’, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume Three, 1852-1855*, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 74-5.

<sup>152</sup> Athena Vrettos, ‘From Neurosis to Narrative: The Private Life of the Nerves in *Villette* and *Daniel Deronda*’, *Victorian Studies*, 33.4 (1990), 551-579 (p. 577).

**Chapter Four: “[I]f you oppressed me, in body, mind, or estate, you should at least have no reason to suppose ‘I didn’t mind it’”:<sup>153</sup> Helen Graham’s Strength over Subordination in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall***

‘If I have warned [...] or prevented one thoughtless girl from falling into the very natural error of my heroine, the book has not been written in vain’<sup>154</sup>

- Anne Brontë, ‘Preface to the Second Edition’ (1848)

While Bertha, Catherine and Lucy fail to overcome patriarchal boundaries, Helen Graham transgresses them. The flawed or ‘mad’ patriarch is just as evident in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Helen’s unyielding courage, and her resistance to the madness which affects Arthur, ensures her survival. When Charlotte reviewed Anne’s novel, she foregrounded the importance of its sincerity. ‘She must be honest; she must not varnish, soften or conceal’, Charlotte writes, ‘the subject matter was unfortunately chosen – it was one the author was not qualified to handle “at once” vigorously’.<sup>155</sup> The apparent contradiction in Brontë’s statement is most important here: it is precisely Anne Brontë’s willingness to tackle unorthodox subject matter, a subject which directly challenges patriarchal systems, that is admirable rather than ‘unfortunately chosen’.<sup>156</sup> Through Helen, Brontë demonstrates how women can navigate their own journeys to freedom. By doing this, she exposes the abhorrent truths surrounding nineteenth-century men and madness, while commending woman’s ability to resist this influence.

Despite the contrasts between *The Tenant* and other texts, one premise remains the same across this dissertation. The concept of nature, with its feminist undertones, resurges

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<sup>153</sup> Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 2001), p. 229. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

<sup>154</sup> Anne Brontë, ‘Preface to the Second Edition’, in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>155</sup> Charlotte Brontë, ‘Letter to W. S. Williams: 31<sup>st</sup> July 1848’, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume Two*, p. 94.

<sup>156</sup> Brontë, ‘Letter to W. S. Williams: 31<sup>st</sup> July 1848’, p. 94.

through Helen's preference for the natural world over the suffocating interior of her social life. This is supported by Duthie's claim that 'Anne Brontë was keenly conscious of the contrast between the beauty of nature and the havoc which men make of their lives'.<sup>157</sup> The countryside is juxtaposed with 'the corruptions and temptations of London' (p. 208) that constitute Arthur's downfall, a downfall which Helen resists as Arthur: 'did not wish me to be Londonised, and to lose my country freshness' (p. 169). Her resistance to this corruption therefore ensures her sanity; while she escapes the corruptive city, Arthur embraces it. The notion that nature possesses a therapeutic power is common across the Brontë canon. Yet, while other heroines in preceding chapters suffer regardless, Helen can enjoy liberation in nature *despite* her occupation in a male-dominated household at Grassdale.

This connection between Helen and nature is further strengthened by revisiting Plumwood's ecofeminist approach. Helen's emancipation can be primarily understood through this framework, as Brontë interweaves gender politics with symbols of nature. In her examination of this thematic area, Plumwood dissects women's 'closeness to nature' as she posits that there is a 'critical dimension of gender to the story of human [in] relation to nature'.<sup>158</sup> In *The Tenant*, Helen oscillates between nature and culture, or freedom and restraint, as she rejects society's stringent boundaries. Helen detests her society's claustrophobic view of women's movements and autonomy, an ideology upheld by the people of Linden-Car, including Mrs Markham herself who insists that women should retain their 'proper place' (p. 46) inside of domesticity. This view disgusts Helen, as she states: 'you would have her to be tenderly and delicately nurtured, like a hot-house plant – taught to cling to others for direction and support' (p. 26). Helen's metaphor exposes the prescriptive views of gender which encourage women to become infantilised and subservient. Symbolically, a

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<sup>157</sup> Duthie, *The Brontës and Nature*, p. 111.

<sup>158</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 8; p. 10.

house-plant is tended to in order to regulate its growth. When translating this into gendered terms, women have little to no agency in impacting their own personal development. Plumwood also asserts that '[f]eminine "closeness" to nature has hardly been a compliment', which is challenged when applying her sentiment to Helen's character.<sup>159</sup> In contrast, Helen favours a more liberated view of gender, one which her countryside nature allows away from societal influence. Rather than resuming her passive place as a 'house-plant', Helen prefers instead to pass her time uninhabited and 'sheltered from the hot sun by [...] overhanging trees' (p. 52), far away from social observation and objectification. Moreover, at Mrs Markham's party in Chapter Eleven, Helen remains within nature, instead of integrating with her new society. Her presence within the garden, for example, is described as 'penetrating' and 'semi-transparent', as she cowers within the 'thickness' (p. 67) of its foliage. As a consequence of her social non-conformity, Helen is labelled a 'strange lady' (p. 14) and isolated by her new peers. Plumwood also argues that nature inevitably encompasses 'the sphere of irrationality, of faith and of madness'.<sup>160</sup> This is partially true when considering previous chapters; Bertha, Catherine and Lucy were all tainted by madness in more ways than one. However, this is untrue of Helen. In a similar way to Catherine, she seeks solace in the natural world rather than a claustrophobic world of culture. Yet, her embedded and undisturbed position within nature preserves her sanity, rather than prevents it.

Helen's residence at both Grassdale and Wildfell Hall is also significant when considering her connection to nature, and how this in turn affects her sanity. Neither habitation is favourable: the former provides material comforts yet no freedom, while the latter provides *more* freedom, but this privilege affords Helen even *less* comfort. It is paradoxical, then, that

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<sup>159</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 19. Plumwood's connection between humans and nature (as potentially derogatory) are persuasive when considering, for example, Bertha's representation in *Jane Eyre* as an animal, a 'hyena' (p. 259). However, Helen's own connection to nature is more desirable than depressing.

<sup>160</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, p. 20.

each place is inherently unnatural and inorganic to Helen. Despite the etymological connotations of their names, the two houses emblemise the natural qualities of ‘grass’ and the ‘wild’ – the places where Helen is most comfortable. Therefore, one can perceive Helen’s irrefutable connection to nature despite her inhabitation within Grassdale and Wildfell Hall. Grassdale, the place of Helen’s occupation as a married woman, is described as a ‘prison’ (p. 304); ‘the atmosphere of Grassdale seemed to stifle’ (p. 300) her. Similarly, dilapidated Wildfell is equally repressive, despite its primary function as a place of ‘liberty and hope’ (p. 304). It is a haunted house which accommodates an equally haunted woman, as only she is ‘cold and gloomy enough to inhabit’ (p. 18) it. Some critics argue that Brontë’s use of Wildfell as her primary backdrop to the plot is reductive, because it merely copies the archetypes of *Wuthering Heights*.<sup>161</sup> However, Emily’s tropes work in different ways to Anne’s. While I demonstrated how the natural Heights was associated with Catherine’s sanity in Chapter Two, Wildfell is instead a ‘grim, dark pile’ (p. 305) of misery in *The Tenant*. It displays ‘the wildest and loftiest eminence’, with its ‘isolated black thorns’ (p. 17). ‘[T]he broken windows and dilapidated roof had evidently been repaired’, yet ‘[a] faint, red light was gleaming from the lower windows’ (p. 18). Thus, in contrast to Catherine, the fragility and danger associated with Wildfell mirrors the ‘isolated’ and ‘broken’ essence of Helen as a whole. She attempts to ‘repair’ her identity after escaping Arthur’s clutches, but patriarchal danger continues to overshadow her; the ‘red light’, or the warning, of Arthur’s presence is evident until his death later on in the novel. In either case, Helen remains ‘a slave’ and ‘a prisoner’ (p. 287) to the patriarchal order until the threat and the memory of her husband passes away.

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<sup>161</sup> Hollis Berry asserts that ‘parodic undertones of *Wuthering Heights* emerge quite clearly’ in *The Tenant*. In contrast, Jakubowski claims that ‘[t]he house becomes an embodiment of the betrayal and abuse Helen has to endure’, rather than a place of sanctity and security, which is more reminiscent of Brontë’s intention here. See Elizabeth Hollis Berry, *Anne Brontë’s Radical Vision: Structures of Consciousness* (Columbia: University of Victoria Press, 1994), p. 85 and Zuzanna Jakubowski, ‘Moors, Mansions and Museums: Transgressing Gendered Spaces in Novels of the Brontë Sisters’, *European University Studies*, Vol. 49.3 (2010), pp. 69-87.

A further exploration of Helen's rejection to patriarchal influence can be read through a semiotic approach, most explicitly through the rose motif. Helen's rose offers a symbolic indication of her connection to the natural world, and what this in turn signifies for her character trajectory. Duthie identifies how '[t]here is no trace of her in that instinctive emotional response to a wild and stern environment'.<sup>162</sup> Yet, Helen's initial description as 'a sweet, wild rosebud gemmed with dew' (p. 132) challenges this. Brontë's description here can however be juxtaposed with Helen's self-reflection at the end of *The Tenant*, as she states that '[t]he rose is not so fragrant as a summer flower, but it has stood through hardships none of them could bear' (p. 378). This comparison between the 'flower' and the 'rose' exemplifies Helen's resilience. When she initially meets Arthur, she is youthful and aesthetically beautiful, an unfortunate combination of characteristics which blinds her to his corruptive ways. Nevertheless, as a fully-developed 'rose' later on, Helen is infinitely older and wiser. This means that she will not make the same mistake when progressing with Gilbert; she is stronger through her experience. Gardening literature of the 1840s exclaimed that '[t]he culture of flowers is exactly in the happy medium between what is too hard and what is too easy'.<sup>163</sup> When considering the rose emblem in light of this, one can see how Helen has too suffered a fate which was 'too hard' through a frigid and abusive marriage; yet, a more optimistic and 'easy' future potentially awaits her. The rose therefore represents this 'happy medium'. Helen is no longer shackled: although her repression does change her, she succeeds in her venture to freedom because she possesses the internal strength to evolve and overcome her plight.

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<sup>162</sup> Duthie, *The Brontës and Nature*, p. 105.

<sup>163</sup> This nineteenth-century source, written only a few years prior to *The Tenant*'s publication, foregrounds and supports the connection between Helen's natural world and the toils she endures outside of it. It is highly possible that Brontë herself may have read or at least recognised this source during the novel's genesis, given her own fervent interest in nature. Jane Loudon, *Instructions in Gardening for Ladies* (London: John Murray, 1840), pp. 244-5.

An alternative view of Helen's ability to overcome patriarchal repression can be read through her paintings. They are an outlet or a practice of artistic expression, a sanctuary from her miserable marriage. Yet, they further highlight her unorthodox character because she treats painting not only as an occupation, but as a means of survival. Contemporary attitudes would have further isolated Helen. In her examination of nineteenth-century women and painting, White asserts that it was 'perfectly acceptable for women to paint so long as that activity is regarded as an accomplishment', suitable only for 'whiling away one's leisure hours'.<sup>164</sup> 'I cannot afford to paint for my own amusement' (p. 37), Helen insists instead, as little Arthur explains how 'Mamma sends all her pictures to London' (p. 37) to be sold for financial gain. Most importantly, the symbolic nature of her painting originates with Arthur. The lasting taint of her husband is seen predominantly through the images she creates of him. Losano's suggestion that Helen 'has some kind of artistic control over the raw material that is Arthur's portrait' supports this possibility.<sup>165</sup> Helen responds to Arthur's intense inspection of her paintings in Chapter Eighteen, for example, by physically destroying his portrait: '[t]o show him how I valued it, I tore it in two, and threw it in the fire' (p. 127). She removes Arthur's power, his male gaze, by destroying the object of its scrutiny. This foreshadows how she will eventually 'triumph'; like his portrait, she will physically dispose of his image, and the remnants of her former life, in favour of an alternative and more liberating existence. At Wildfell, Gilbert explains how Helen: 'took [the portrait] from me; and quickly restoring it to the dark corner, with its face against the wall, placed the other against it as before' (p. 39).

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<sup>164</sup> Helen's decision to paint as a mode of income would have been considered entirely unacceptable and unorthodox by her peers, especially as a middle-class woman who is legally bound to her husband. See Roberta White, *A Studio of One's Own: Fictional Women Painters and the Art of Fiction* (New Jersey: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), p. 16.

<sup>165</sup> Antonia Losano, 'Anne Brontë's Aesthetics: Painting in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', in *The Brontës in the World of the Arts*, eds. Sandra Hagan and Juliette Wells (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), p. 56.

When revisiting the same portrait later on, Helen observes that '[t]he frame [...] is handsome enough; it will serve for another painting' (p. 307). This suggests that Arthur can be recycled – he can be replaced – despite his literally overhanging presence as a representative of the repressive patriarchal order. Regardless of this, Helen's autonomy in limiting and rechanneling this power only increases her resistance to patriarchal systems thereafter.

It is significant, then, that Helen literally 'paints' a new life for herself after fleeing Arthur. However, these images are tainted with more than just the paint she uses. Helen creates images 'mostly of landscapes and figures' (p. 36), which reward the reader with their symbolic value. As I reiterate the underlying link between women and nature, Helen's paintings reveal not only her talent, but also a reflection of her inner self within nature's image. One painting presents a 'sky of clear and silvery blue, with a few red streaks on the horizon' (p. 36). This directly portrays her plight: she can enjoy a calmer existence away from Arthur, but her legal binding to him is perceived through the 'red streaks' of danger which threaten to corrupt this tranquillity. Just like her painting, a more ominous presence overshadows Helen's horizon: only after Arthur's death can she be 'at length released from her afflictive, overwhelming toil' (p. 351). This warning of patriarchal danger is not central to Arthur alone, however. Just as Arthur confiscates Helen's painting materials and 'deliberately proceeded to cast them into the fire' (p. 285), Hargrave also attempts to threaten her autonomy. Yet, while Arthur tests Helen's social agency, Hargrave is sexually imposing, leaving her with no alternative choice than to 'protect herself with the very equipment of her profession [...] [the] palette-knife serve[s] as protection against erotic advances'.<sup>166</sup> Helen 'snatched up [her] palette-knife and held it against him' (p. 279), and so she inverts dominant gendered power into a collaborative force or dynamic between masculine authority and female resistance. Therefore, Helen's willingness to contest both Arthur and Hargrave's

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<sup>166</sup> Losano, 'Anne Brontë's Aesthetics: Painting in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', p. 59.

attempts to appropriate her talent as an artist, and her sexuality as a woman, highlights her strength rather than her subordination.

Despite Helen's mistreatment, *The Tenant* exposes how it is Arthur's sanity which is compromised rather than hers. In his examination of middle-class domesticity, Tosh observes that 'when husbands spent more time at home, the separation of spheres tended to break down', and that 'the conventions of domesticity saddled husbands with unreasonable expectations which burdened their wives'.<sup>167</sup> However, this can be challenged: rather than emblematising the ideal Victorian husband, egotistical Arthur is Helen's 'greatest enemy' (p. 243). In terms of Tosh's first assertion, Helen's distance from Arthur, rather than her proximity to him, begins to 'break down' when he is *away* from the home, not *within* it. Moreover, Tosh's latter statement can be reversed: Arthur defies, not desires, the 'conventions of domesticity' which Helen has the capacity to provide.<sup>168</sup> Instead, he favours corruptive society and is 'given up to [the] animal enjoyments' (p. 191) of alcohol as a result. Brontë's unorthodox depiction of the Victorian marital household is most effectively described in terms of Hollis Berry's definition instead, as she states that '[i]f Patmore's view accurately reflects Victorian mores, then Anne Brontë's study of marital tyranny radically departs from the mainstream'.<sup>169</sup> This deviation from idealised domesticity was unsurprisingly shocking for Brontë's contemporary readership, as one review slandered *The Tenant* for its 'disgusting scenes of debauchery, blasphemy and profaneness'.<sup>170</sup> However, others praised the author for being tenacious enough to write a novel which confronted and criticised the 'foul and accursed undercurrents' which existed beneath a 'snug, respectable, whitewashed English society'.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, p. 63; p. 77.

<sup>168</sup> Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, p. 77.

<sup>169</sup> Hollis Berry, *Anne Brontë's Radical Vision: Structures of Consciousness*, p. 94. As I established in the introduction, Patmore's values influenced mid-century ideals of women. While the heroines in Chapter One, Two and Three depart from this paradigm of their own accord, it is significant that it is Arthur, rather than his wife, who rejects this ideology here.

<sup>170</sup> Unknown Author, 'Mr Bell's New Novel', *Rambler* (September 1848), pp. 65-6.

<sup>171</sup> Charles Kingsley, 'Review', *Fraser's Magazine* (April 1849), p. xxxix.

This mirrors a dichotomy in both the novel's initial reception, but also wider social attitudes: many abhorred *The Tenant's* content, while others admired its uncompromising attack on the hypocritical domestic sphere which Patmore and Ruskin would later apotheosise. The discrepancy in dates is also significant, as the first review possibly reflects an impulsive, ill-thought judgment. By contrast Kingsley's response, written nearly a year after *The Tenant's* publication, could eschew initial disapproval of the novel in favour of a more carefully considered opinion; readers had longer to contemplate, and begin to accept, the polemical issues which Brontë raises.

Arthur's degeneration begins and ends with his dipsomania.<sup>172</sup> It ultimately leads to a collapse of his physical and mental health, the latter being something he identifies in himself as he asks Helen: 'why shouldn't I have nerves as well as you?' (p. 200). For Arthur, his addiction to the 'rank poison' (p. 149) of alcohol is integral to his later condition, and his deterioration may be read as a form of poetic justice or revenge on the Rochesters, Edgars, Dr. Johns and M. Pauls who dominate and dictate the Brontëan universe. Here, Brontë presents an alternative perspective which challenges hegemonic masculinity in *The Tenant*. In terms of madness, Helen's sanity is preserved at the very point where Arthur's begins to fail; through Arthur's weakness, her own nerves are no longer 'racked and torn to pieces' (p. 199). The earlier Beer Act of 1830 was proposed through the fear that 'alcoholism was already affecting middle and upper-class homes'.<sup>173</sup> From a contextual perspective, this would have unaffected Arthur. He is continuously 'excited with wine' (p. 235), as Helen notes that '[i]t was now something more to him than an accessory of social enjoyment: it was an important source of enjoyment within itself' (p. 204). As he lays 'in a kind of half delirium' (p. 332), Arthur is no longer able to control himself, and by extension, his wife. Contemporary sources

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<sup>172</sup> 'Dipsomania' was coined by the German physician Christoph Hufeland in 1819. The term, alongside similar labels such as 'drunkard' and 'habitual drunkenness', referred to an excess consumption of alcohol, or alcoholism.

<sup>173</sup> Torgerson, *Reading the Brontë Body: Disease, Desire, and the Constraints of Culture*, p. 21.

suggested that some individuals ‘are drunkards by choice, and others by necessity’, yet every drunkard is affected by ‘a partial moral weakness’.<sup>174</sup> This examination of dipsomania is overwhelmingly reminiscent of Brontë’s own brother, Branwell.<sup>175</sup> In a similar way to Branwell, Arthur’s ‘past life [...] degenerated his once noble constitution’ (p. 339), as his trajectory was most ‘entirely the result of his own infatuation [and] imprudence’ (p. 245). Unfortunately for Branwell and for Arthur, each was ‘so very often owing to his own fault [...] he thought nothing but stunning or drowning his distress of mind’.<sup>176</sup> Thus, the ongoing nature of Arthur’s mental and physical degradation mirrors Brontë’s very real despair outside the parameters of her literary writing. Yet, Helen’s own increasing strength seems to counteract or rebalance the tragedy of her husband’s madness.

This ongoing dialectic of gendered power can further be realised through the chess metaphor in Chapter Thirty-Three. Female repression is seen not only through Helen and Arthur. Brontë interweaves other relationships with the same themes of superficiality and infidelity, such as Lord and Lady Lowborough’s marriage. In a redemptive move, Helen’s pleas do alter the course of Hattersley and Millicent’s fate, as they are paradigmatic of what Arthur and Helen *could* have been: ‘should you wish to be the tyrant of her life [...] to make her thoroughly miserable?’ (p. 295). Helen’s chess game with Hargrave reiterates how she will remain subject to patriarchal power so long as she stays at Grassdale, an event which significantly occurs prior to the palette-knife incident previously discussed; the chess game

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<sup>174</sup> Robert Macnish, *The Anatomy of Drunkenness* (Glasgow: W. R. M. Publisher, 1827), p. 2.

<sup>175</sup> The unfortunate and ‘mad’ alcoholic is a trope also seen through Hindley in *Wuthering Heights*, which suggests that this figure is prevalent across the Brontë canon in order to shed light on the very real effects of dipsomania. As the first Brontë sibling to die prematurely, the memory of Branwell’s debauchery is strongly regretted in the works of his surviving sisters, especially considering he passed only two months after *The Tenant’s* publication. Patrick’s repeated attempts to cure Branwell’s ‘delirium tremens’, (as detailed in *Modern Domestic Medicine*) just as Helen does by encouraging Arthur’s religion and redemption, were proven to be futile. See Graham, *Modern Domestic Medicine*, pp. 159-162.

<sup>176</sup> Charlotte Brontë, ‘Letter to Ellen Nussey: 31<sup>st</sup> July 1845’, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume One, 1829-1847*, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 412.

reminds ‘the reader of the inner battle which accompanies it’.<sup>177</sup> After Hargrave’s victory, he taunts Helen. He realises that she was ‘certain of success’ in her ability, yet she ends up ‘inextricably entangled in the snare of [her] antagonist’ (p. 236). Hargrave, in a similar way to Arthur, is her opponent and her ‘antagonist’ in an unbridled and ruthless realm of gender which exists outside of the games room. Nevertheless, it is equally significant that Helen attempts to reclaim this power, just as she later does in her art studio with the portrait and the palette-knife. ‘You acknowledge my superiority?’, Hargrave questions, in which Helen quickly and effectively ripostes with ‘[y]es – as a chess player’ (p. 237). This ultimately restructures the gendered boundary between the game and reality, a boundary which Hargrave, on behalf of the patriarchal order, believes to be impermeable for women but not men. For Helen, game politics do not equate to gender ones, despite her temporary inferiority in each.

Most importantly, Helen’s eventual escape encapsulates her true strength. In a diary extract written around the time of *The Tenant*’s genesis, Brontë questions: ‘What changes shall we have seen and known and shall we be much chan[g]ed ourselves? I hope not for the worst at least’.<sup>178</sup> Her premise mirrors the same ‘change’ she instils in her heroine: Helen’s plight is not without consequence, but she confronts her uncertain future because it is the morally correct course to take. Helen differs from the other heroines I examined in previous chapters, because she repudiates her miserable existence; she refuses to accept or succumb to it. Helen’s escape is crucial, regardless of the fact it is ‘a violation of her sacred duties as a wife’ (p. 359). Rather than adhere to society’s belief that ‘*matrimony is a serious thing*’ (p. 104, emphasis in original), Helen values the ‘serious’ nature of her own happiness far more than an arbitrary standard of social conformity. Hoeveler’s assertion that ‘[w]omen sometimes

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<sup>177</sup> Hollis Berry, *Anne Brontë’s Radical Vision: Structures of Consciousness*, p. 76.

<sup>178</sup> Anne Brontë, ‘Diary Paper: 31<sup>st</sup> July 1845’, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume One*, pp. 410-1.

survive in the Brontë universe [...] but in the end their own efforts do not seem to have been the factors that made the difference' can be challenged in light of this.<sup>179</sup> Helen survives only through her determination to escape patriarchal repression; when considering the legal implications and repercussions of this in mid-Victorian England, she is relatively helpless.<sup>180</sup> Although she is 'fully alive to the evils that may, and must result upon the step' she takes, she is adamant that she will 'never waver in [her] resolution' (p. 283).

Determined and fully prepared to leave Arthur, Helen begins her escape; yet, Brontë is keen to demonstrate how Helen's journey towards emancipation is a tumultuous one. As the terms 'toil', 'jolting' and 'stoppages' (p. 305) exemplify, Helen encounters numerous obstacles beyond the physical boundary of Grassdale, as she questions: '[w]as it all blackness and desolation?' (p. 305). Her deviation is both physically and emotionally testing in accordance with society's strict stipulations; yet, despite her struggles, Helen succeeds in her venture. In the preface, Brontë uses the following metaphor, which in turn can be applied to Helen's experience: 'truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it [...] as the priceless treasure too frequently hides at the bottom of a well, it needs some courage to dive for it'.<sup>181</sup> The person, Brontë explains, is 'likely to incur more scorn and obloquy for the mud and water [...] than the jewel he procures'.<sup>182</sup> This encapsulates Helen's fate: her freedom is not unreachable, but equally it is not without restraint and effort; she demonstrates immense 'courage' and resilience in striving to capture it. After succeeding, Helen's 'jewel' or asset of her newfound freedom is worth far more than the unfavourable

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<sup>179</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), p. 186.

<sup>180</sup> Since Arthur subjugates Helen through legal and emotional means, rather than physical abuse, his mistreatment would have been hard to prove. Unfortunately for Helen, the Matrimonial Causes Act was not introduced until 1857, almost a decade after *The Tenant's* publication. Even so, the Act made it much harder for a woman to seek divorce than a man. This only reiterates the lengths Helen was willing to go in order to secure her freedom and happiness.

<sup>181</sup> Brontë, 'Preface to the Second Edition', p. 3.

<sup>182</sup> Brontë, 'Preface to the Second Edition', p. 3.

efforts taken to obtain it in the first instance. In Helen's case, 'mud and water' – or the negative memories of her marriage and former life – are marks or tarnishes which can be removed; they will fade with time. In contrast, the everlasting gift of Helen's most valued 'jewel', her freedom, bestows an infinite, robust and priceless value which cannot be easily removed once she seizes it.

Unlike the previous chapters in this dissertation, *The Tenant* is drawn 'farther from the realm of familiar Brontëan romance and nearer to the social problem novels of the mid nineteenth century'.<sup>183</sup> Brontë's intention is not a denouement of marriage or death as such; rather, she rewards her heroine for creating a stable future which excludes the patriarchal influence which once undermined it. Brontë 'paints' an alternative fate for women in the face of adversity; they *can* demarcate the boundary between the illusion and the reality of freedom. Brontë attempts to rebalance once immovable patriarchal barriers in order to achieve feminine agency, and so Helen comes full circle. Through her heroine, Brontë dared to write and advocate what her seminal sisters failed to carry out completely. As Chitham so eloquently states, she can therefore be recognised 'not as a minor Brontë, but as a major literary figure in her own right'.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Losano, 'Anne Brontë's Aesthetics: Painting in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', p. 46.

<sup>184</sup> Edward Chitham, *A Life of Anne Brontë* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 186.

## Conclusion

‘Freedom and justice do wonders for one’s mental health’<sup>185</sup>

- Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (2005)

Despite the ‘mad’ woman’s deviation from nineteenth-century gender ideologies and expectations, it is evident that she cannot be solely blamed. Instead, patriarchal influences inevitably contribute to, if not cause altogether, her ‘madness’. When considering the vices of Rochester, Edgar, St. John, M. Paul and Arthur, female madness can be perceived as a justified response to mistreatment. This dissertation has exposed how madness is univocally gendered in the nineteenth century, but these interpretations (across the Brontë canon and beyond) are not exhaustive. This project has not had, for example, the advantage or the scope of Gilbert and Gubar’s extensive analysis in order to explore every intricacy of the Victorian ‘madwoman’. However, it has been my absolute intention to identify recurrent patterns of patriarchal power, patterns which often occur in subliminal and surprising ways. Through exemplar novels from all three Brontë sisters, I have interrogated and destabilised the once rigid boundary between the ‘madwoman’, and the equally flawed man who represses her; ‘woman [was] essentially different from man [...] a creature who needed constant and superintendence by medical men’.<sup>186</sup> This therefore raises the ultimate contestation of who is truly ‘mad’. The ongoing dialectic of gendered power ultimately overrides any initial difference in sanity, which ultimately answers my primary question within the introduction: despite the presence of male madness or mistreatment, nineteenth-century women are scapegoated primarily because male supremacy triumphs over female weakness.

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<sup>185</sup> Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 44.

<sup>186</sup> Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, p. 37.

In 1847, Charlotte negotiated how ‘[i]magination is a strong, restless faculty which claims to be heard and exercised [...] are we to be quite deaf to her cry and her insensate struggles?’.<sup>187</sup> To paraphrase her words, Charlotte and Emily remained ‘quite deaf to [the] cry and insensate struggles’ of Bertha, Catherine and Lucy.<sup>188</sup> However Anne inversed this concept of female repression through Helen’s emancipation; she oversteps her overidealistic place as ‘angel in the house’ into a more liberating existence outside of domesticity. *The Tenant* illustrates the accretive effect or pattern of the imprisoned, to the ultimately uninhabited, woman. While it may be difficult to discern Charlotte and Emily’s exact intentions, Anne’s own cannot be ignored, as Helen escapes mistreatment through her own volition. While Charlotte and Emily do acknowledge male vice, only Anne offers a more defined extension of the repressed woman’s narrative. As the nineteenth century progressed beyond the Brontë era towards fin-de-siècle first-wave feminism, many more developments continued to promote female emancipatory politics beyond the works of Anne Brontë.<sup>189</sup>

By exposing Charlotte and Emily’s reluctance to reward their heroines with a more optimistic fate, I emphasised how they were familiar with, and partially sympathetic to, the nineteenth-century ‘madwoman’ through their own experiences; yet, they were tentative in just how far this sympathy would go. Gilbert and Gubar’s research was valuable in supporting my own interpretations. I explored Catherine’s nature and culture conflict, and ‘observed’, the obscurities of *Bildungsroman* Lucy Snowe. However, my explicit interrogation of the flawed patriarchal figure or ‘madman’, rather than the ‘madwoman’ in her entirety, emphasises how one should look *beyond* the ‘madwoman’ which Gilbert and Gubar so heavily prioritise at the forefront of their seminal works. Instead, by acknowledging the rigidity of the nineteenth-

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<sup>187</sup> Brontë, ‘Letter to G. H. Lewes’, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: Volume One, 1829-1847*, p. 559.

<sup>188</sup> Brontë, ‘Letter to G. H. Lewes’, p. 559.

<sup>189</sup> For example, during the late 1850s, the *English Woman’s Journal* was the first Victorian periodical created by a feminist organisation. Towards the end of the nineteenth-century, many activists such as Frances Power Cobbe and Millicent Garrett Fawcett paved the way for the suffrage movement and women’s right to vote, a campaign which continued well into the early twentieth century.

century patriarchal systems which encompass women, one can comprehend *how* and *why* she becomes ‘mad’ in the first instance. I also demonstrated how Catherine and Helen’s favourability of nature, over societal culture, was embedded within ecofeminist theoretical groundings. I examined, through aspects of Plumwood’s research, why women desire a natural environment away from the confines of patriarchal society. It is most important, however, that Catherine and Helen’s fates are diametrically opposed despite this ecofeminist link. This suggests that, by revisiting the premise of Rogers’s research, the ‘madwoman’ should exist at the forefront, rather than the margins, of her own narrative. Of course, this was Anne’s intention with Helen – in terms of patriarchal repression, not necessarily madness – whereas Emily allows Catherine’s own voice and autonomy to be ultimately overcrowded and destroyed by Edgar.

Bertha, Catherine, Lucy and Helen all reject their place as ‘angels in the house’, an ideology formally established in Patmore’s narrative poem after Emily and Anne – shortly followed by Charlotte – were laid to rest. The nineteenth-century home is perhaps only favourable for women if it operates on their own terms, as within these texts the triad of women, men and madness coexists within a place of confinement, not contentment. The ‘madwoman’ is inhabited both within and outside of her attic: although, her ‘jailer’, husband, doctor or observer is well equipped to take her place. For the Brontës, this was often an implausible and impractical reality, and so only one solution remains. According to Caminero-Santangelo, one must ‘open up an imaginative space for women to be able to escape from madness by envisioning themselves as agents’.<sup>190</sup> Yet, this does not go far enough. Regardless of whether the ‘madwoman’ is situated within the nineteenth century or beyond, she cannot be truly free *only* by ‘envisioning’ or ‘imagining’ a future of liberty. By adopting Anne’s vision, rather than

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<sup>190</sup> Marta Caminero-Santangelo, *The Madwoman Can’t Speak: Or Why Insanity is Not Subversive* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 181.

Charlotte or Emily's, women can achieve this by paving their own way, resilient enough to reject the patriarchal source of their madness. By recognising their own strength, women can progress from the unfulfilled fantasy of emancipation, into an absolute reality of it, both within and beyond the boundaries of literature.

Word count: 17,581

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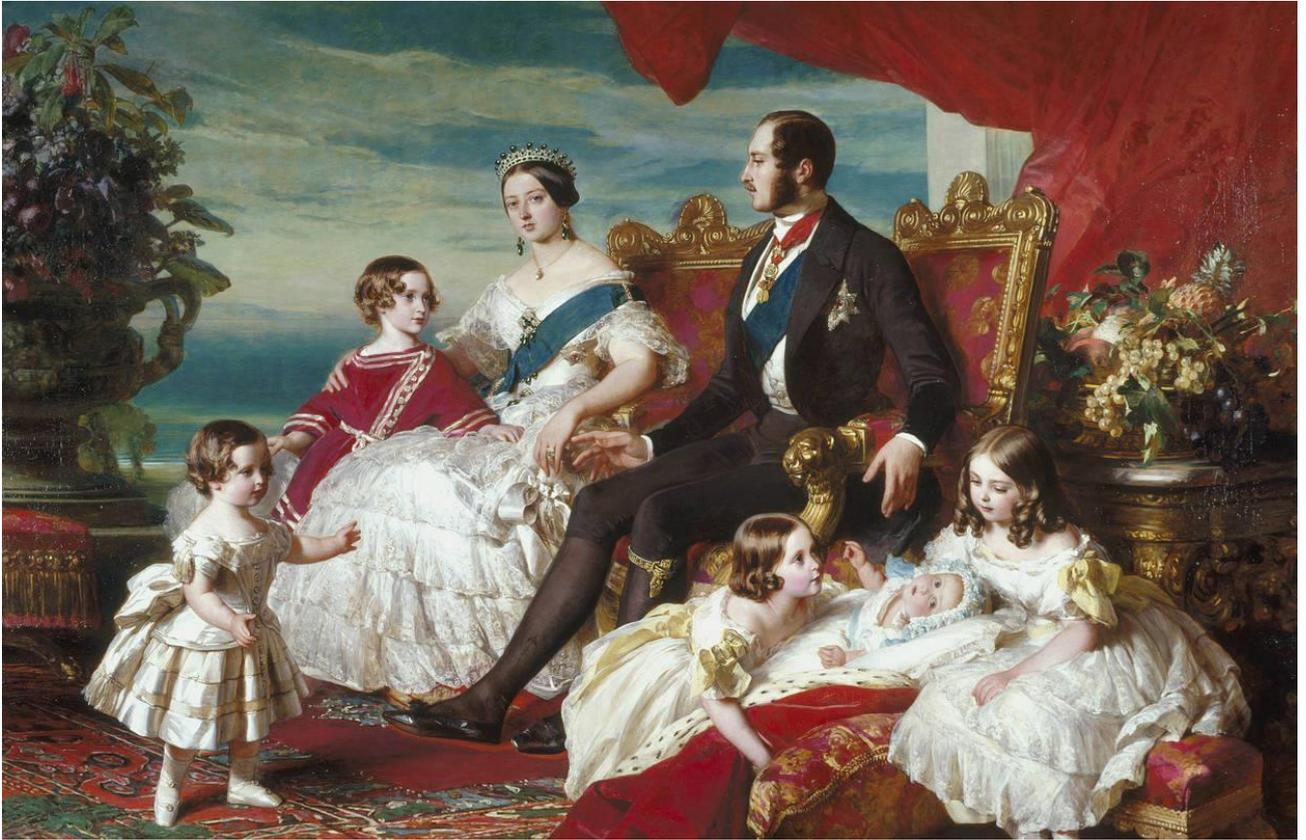
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Appendix

Figure One



Franz Xaver Winterhalter, 'The Royal Family' (1846)

## **Figure Two**

J. E. Mayall, *Carte-de-visite* of 'Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at Buckingham Palace'  
(1860)

<https://vitabrevis.americanancestors.org/2017/12/royal-cdvs/>