Illness and Anger: Issues of Power in "Wuthering Heights" and "Shirley"

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Recommended Citation
https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-69d3-wb86

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ILLNESS AND ANGER:
ISSUES OF POWER IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND SHIRLEY

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of English
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Margaret Elise Jordan
1992
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Author

Approved, August 1992

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Deborah Denenholz Morse, under whose guidance this thesis was conducted, for her tireless and cheerful support. I am also indebted to Professors Terry L. Meyers and Christopher Bongie for their careful reading and criticism of the manuscript, and most especially for their willingness to read 79 pages at the last moment. Most of all, I give full thanks to my family for their patient, loving care while I wrote this thesis.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the treatment of illness, especially anorexia nervosa and depression, in Wuthering Heights, by Emily Bronte, published in 1847, and in Shirley, by Charlotte Bronte, published in 1849.

Through the mediums of biography, social commentary, and close textual readings, I concentrate on the Brontes' use of illness as a metaphor for the anger and frustration many women felt about the unsatisfactory options available to women in Victorian society.

Charlotte Bronte's novel is a Victorian social problem novel, consciously discussing the "Woman Question." Emily's novel is more obviously a Romantic text, exploring the same issues, although the question of possible fulfilling lifestyles for women is less clearly forefronted. I use Shirley as something of a blueprint for examining Wuthering Heights.

I conclude that both Emily and Charlotte Bronte call for an imaginative connection of the stereotypical and randomly attributed characteristics of maleness and femaleness. Without this imaginative connection, both women and men are unhealthy. For women, this separation results in fragmentation of the female psyche, which then leads to ill health.
ILLNESS AND ANGER:

ISSUES OF POWER IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND SHIRLEY
Illness is a strikingly noticeable feature of Emily and Charlotte Bronte's novels. Anorexia nervosa, consumption, madness, dog bites, and lingering malaise severely mark the texts of Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1847, and Charlotte's *Shirley*, published in 1849. My thesis will be a comparative study that examines the treatment of illness in these two works. I will concentrate on their use of illness as a metaphor for the anger and frustration many women felt about the unsatisfactory options available to women in Victorian society.

Any study of the Brontes must deal with the biographical aspects of their works; this is especially true of a study that discusses illness, since many of the Bronte family members died of tuberculosis comparatively early in life. *Wuthering Heights* was written the year before Emily's death of consumption; *Shirley* was written during Anne's illness, and in the year following the deaths of Anne, Branwell, and Emily. The Brontes' early childhood was marked by the death of their mother, Mrs. Maria Branwell Bronte, and the deaths of their two older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth--from neglect, according to Charlotte--while they were away at The Clergy Daughters' School, Cowan Bridge.
Charlotte, no doubt in part because of the history of illness and early death in her family, was, as John Todd writes, "a martyr to migraine, insomnia, dyspepsia and depression" (581). She was also cursed with an over-consciousness of food and digestion, and a strange preoccupation with death. Charlotte wrote to her friend Ellen Nussey on the 24th of January in 1852:

I am to live on the very plainest fare—to take no butter—at present I do not take tea—only milk and water with a little sugar and dry bread—this with an occasional mutton chop is my diet—and I like it better than anything else. (Myer, 89)

Her diet, as she describes it, is sparser than any she would prescribe for her heroines. We must, whatever the joy, passion, and fierce rebellion of her novels, take this self-starvation as an indication of the tone of her day-to-day existence.

In terms of diet, Emily was much worse than Charlotte. In A Chainless Soul: A Life of Emily Bronte, Katherine Frank pieces together, through second-hand accounts, what Emily's life must have been like. Frank gives the following account of Emily's particularly alienating experience at the Misses Wooler's School at Roe Head:

Emily hated the school and did nothing to conceal her antipathy. She spoke to no one other than Charlotte, and even with Charlotte she talked only
when absolutely necessary. In addition to being silent and withdrawn, Emily was barely eating and growing thinner and thinner and more and more languid and unresponsive each day. The acts of speaking and eating were strangely intertwined in Emily's life. She would often substitute one for the other: words for food or food for words. Or she would withhold one for the other: silence for fasting or fasting for speech. At Roe Head, in the late summer and autumn of 1835, she refused, as far as possible, to eat or speak. But her refusal of food, was, in fact, a kind of utterance. By pushing her plate away at breakfast, dinner, and tea, day after day, she was clearly, if silently, speaking her mind: I hate it here. I will not eat. I want to go home. I refuse to grow up, to grow big. I will make myself ill, starve even, unless I am released.

Different accounts of Emily's life and character stress the fact that she dwindled whenever she left Haworth Parsonage and her beloved moors. However, her health is said to have flourished while in Haworth. She even took over much of the cooking after returning from Roe Head (Frank, 100). Nevertheless, Emily caught tuberculosis from her brother Branwell, whom she nursed until his death, and died only
four months after him in 1848.

By all reports, Emily was the most silent and most austere of the Bronte sisters, and this may account for Charlotte's fascination with her younger sister's personality. In *Sex and Subterfuge: Women Writers to 1850*, Eva Figes points out that "the two Rivers sisters, to whom the orphaned Jane Eyre finds herself related, are obviously based on Anne and Emily Bronte" (127). Charlotte, more pointedly, was quite consciously basing the character of Shirley Keeldar, in her novel *Shirley*, upon the character of her sister Emily—deliberately writing her into a narrative that solved the problems of Emily's own life: poverty, ill health, and dependence (Chitham, 3).

The biographical aspects of these works are compelling, and add much to any study of anorexia and depression in these two novels, but I will concentrate on these texts as powerful portrayals of illness in the lives of Victorian women. I hope that this reading will inform the readings of many other Victorian novels by different authors. Therefore, while I acknowledge their biographies, it will be more interesting to focus primarily on these novels as separate portrayals of illness—specifically anorexia nervosa, depression, and consumption (tuberculosis)—as expressions of a complete and debilitating lack of power for the Victorian female.
Wuthering Heights and Shirley fall clearly within the first third of the Victorian Period of Literature. Nevertheless, both works, but most especially Wuthering Heights, have many elements typical of the previous Romantic Period. Robert M. Polhemus in Erotic Faith: Being in Love from Jane Austen to D.H. Lawrence calls Wuthering Heights "as earthy a piece of Victorian fiction as there is, [one which] grounds grand romantic passion in the gross texture of every-day life, "yet he goes on to say that Emily's novel "is a crucial text of mystical erotic vocation, raising and forcing most of the critical issues that swirl about romantic love in the post-Renaissance era" (81). So, while the concentration in my thesis will be on illness as gendered social critique in Victorian fiction, I must also acknowledge the elements of Romanticism which influence the depiction of illness, particularly in Wuthering Heights.

The strong Romantic influence on the Brontes' writing has been widely debated and defined. In The Romantic Novel in England, Robert Kiely discusses Wuthering Heights as the last Romantic novel. This placement clearly indicates the debate over whether Emily's novel is more Romantic or Victorian. That Wuthering Heights, and the novels of Emily's sisters, should be influenced by Romanticism is understandable, since both Wuthering Heights and Shirley were written only ten years after Queen Victoria's ascension
to the throne, and since the juvenilia that the Bronte children wrote together was markedly influenced by Lord Byron (Polhemus, 104).

The Romantic influence on the Brontes' writing can be felt in their discussions of illness. The illnesses they depict in Wuthering Heights and Shirley are expressions and embodiments of powerful emotions—they are extreme physical reactions to extreme mental agitation and conflict. This intensity is typically Romantic. In Illness as Metaphor, Susan Sontag says: "Starting with the Romantics...TB was conceived as a variant of the disease of love...As a character in [Thomas Mann's 20th-century novel] The Magic Mountain explains: 'Symptoms of disease are nothing but disguised manifestations of the power of love; and all disease is only love transformed'" (20). The Brontes play off of this Romantic conception of illness. Often the infirm they depict have just been disappointed in love, but underneath their love problems lurks a more debilitating power issue, and it is here that the specifically Victorian aspect of their use of illness resides. The illnesses of the Bronte heroines and heroes are Victorian in that they symbolize and are deeply linked to societal concerns about gender roles and expectations, specifically, how society's expectations concerning proper behavior for females were repressive and unhealthy. Women were not allowed any personal power even over their own bodies.
Sontag has remarked that in nineteenth-century literature fatal illnesses such as TB were spiritualized, and their horrors sentimentalized (40)—as happens in the American Victorian Louisa May Alcott's Little Women. This is not what is happening in the Brontës: sickness in their novels indicates dissatisfaction, anger, and despair about the lack of power allowed women. Charlotte and Emily create characters who purposefully retreat from the world and the roles society expects them to play by deliberately starving themselves. This anorexia is the way they gain control, if not over their lives, at least over their bodies and their destinies. While society has separated their bodies and souls (their wishes, desires, self-images) by making their bodies fit into roles designed for patriarchal society, self-starvation reunites the body and soul. The soul which has been starved (starved of education, self-expression, liberty) now belongs in a starved body, and women have regained control over their self-expression without resorting to the socially unacceptable option of violent suicide.

With his portrayal of Violet Effingham in Phineas Finn of the Palliser Series, Anthony Trollope critiques the conventional male perspective on visualizing and controlling women's bodies. Violet is a wealthy, active, healthy, single young lady who excelled at many endeavors. Trollope says, "Violet Effingham was certainly no puppet. She was
great at dancing,—as perhaps might be a puppet,—but she was great also at archery, great at skating,—great, too, at hunting" (91). This reference to hunting indicates that Trollope means his readers to hold a deep admiration for Violet; Trollope loved the sport of hunting, as we can see from both his novels and his letters. He writes to William Blackwood in 1878: "Alas--alas--my hunting is over. I have given away my breeches, boots,—and horses" (Hall, 759).

When Trollope says that someone is great at hunting, he generally means that they have a great spirit and a strong will. Yet the language Violet is sometimes described in belittles her "greatness:" "Her feet and hands were delicately fine, and there was a softness about her whole person, an apparent compressibility, which seemed to indicate that she might go into very small compass. Into what compass and how compressed, there were very many men who held very different opinions" (90).

Trollope's discussion of Violet Effingham indicates how men sometimes view women's bodies. In The Madwoman in the Attic, by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, the authors suggest that the debilitating way Victorian women thought about their own bodies. Women have been encouraged to kill themselves into art objects: slim, pale, passive beings whose 'charms' eerily recall the snowy, porcelain immobility of the dead. Tight-lacing, fasting, vinegar-drinking, and similar
cosmetic or dietary excesses were all parts of a physical regimen that helped women either to feign morbid weakness or actually to 'decline' into real illness. (25)

It is easy to imagine how this type of ideal feminine beauty would encourage women into eating disorders.¹ This cultural mind set, combined with the Brontes' own biography, influenced Charlotte and Emily to write novels saturated with imagery associated with food and fasting--explicitly and implicitly criticizing the gender stereotypes of their society.

For the purposes of my discussion, Charlotte's Shirley is a much clearer text than Emily's Wuthering Heights. As the narrator says, somewhat ironically, in the opening paragraphs of Shirley, "Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool, and solid, lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning" (39). This comment is somewhat ironic in that Romantic elements do emerge within the text, however it is also accurate. This text is more consciously a Victorian social problem novel than Wuthering Heights. In Shirley, Charlotte purposefully avoided many of the Romantic elements more common in the earlier Jane Eyre and later Villette to focus upon the problems involved with growing up female in a male-defined world. Because of Charlotte's deliberate focus upon the issues in which I am interested, it will be more useful to
discuss the later novel first; it can serve as something of a blueprint for interpreting the discussion of similar issues in Emily's earlier novel. This unchronological arrangement is especially useful, since Charlotte was attempting to consider and explain the recently deceased Emily's personality through the character of Shirley Keeldar.

Charlotte's concern in *Shirley* is the rights of women. She is immersed in the "Woman Question," that large complex of issues so fervently debated throughout the Victorian period. In *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*, Martha Vicinus says:

By the 1860's the woman question had become one of the most important topics of the day. Job opportunities, marriage laws, female emigration, and education were only some of the issues debated at the time. Women themselves--and particularly middle-class women--were increasingly concerned with what their roles were, and what they should be. (Vicinus, ix)

Elizabeth Helsinger, Robin Sheets, and William Veeder have explained some of the social conditions behind the discussion in *The Woman Question: Social Issues, 1837-1883*: a married woman could not sign a lease, initiate a lawsuit, or make a will. The home may have been her sphere, but the husband had complete control
of the family finances. Her personal property, her earnings, and even her children belonged entirely to her husband. If he mistreated her, separation and divorce were extremely difficult to obtain. Moreover, even when a husband abandoned his wife, he retained control of her property. As far as the law was concerned, the two were still one and that one was the husband.

(Helsinger II, 5)

Single women had more rights than married women. A single woman "could acquire property, assume responsibilities for her debts, enter into a contract, make a will, and be sued." Yet single women, as well as married women, still lacked the right to vote, access to lucrative work, and the right for redress if their chastity was violated. If a single woman was seduced there was no remedy under the law and she had no legal right to complain. According to Caroline Dall, "if her father can prove service rendered, he may sue for loss of service." Her sexuality was viewed as a service or commodity in the marriage market; therefore, the loss of her virginity before her wedding night was a devaluation of her worth: "In the eye of this law, female chastity [was] only valuable for the work it can do" (Helsinger II, 4).

This disrespect for the female body was real, despite the fact that "the census of 1851 showed that there were 2,765,000 single women over the age of fifteen, and by 1871
this figure had increased to 3,228,700" (Foster, 7). There were so many more women than men in the population during the Victorian period that it was impossible for all women to be angels of the hearth and home even if they wanted to be. These figures and the problem of the "redundant" female were widely discussed in the media of the time and led to many schemes, such as the suggestion that all excess women be sent to America to provide wives for the men there. In fact, the truth was that "in 1851 a third of females over twenty were independently supporting themselves and their households" (Foster, 7).

Through the characters of Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar, Charlotte examines an unmarried woman's position in Victorian society. After finding out that Robert Moore, the man Caroline loves, does not intend to marry her, Caroline looks around her society and ponders the options available to spinsters. She examines her possibilities: staying with her uncle, the Reverend Helstone, who is willing to support her in what will amount to a life of chilling stagnation; violently separating herself from friends and family and making her way in the world as a governess. She can either accept her duties as the Reverend's niece—making tea, working on the Jew's Basket, practicing unselfish and uncomplaining Christian charity as she makes small talk with people she despises—or she can seek an even more vulnerable and subservient position as a governess. These alternatives
are always presented in opposition to the one duty of a woman's life—to marry.

Moreover, the chilling portrait and memory of the resonantly named Mary Cave (the Reverend Helstone's long deceased wife) stands as a monument to the questionable security of even that normal avenue. Caroline Helstone is continuously compared to this dead aunt, whose name brings up two separate images. The first image is that of the Virgin Mary, who is gravely sweet, pure, chaste, and mysteriously silent. The surname "Cave" calls up images of female depths and male intrusion. Caves are dark, damp, and slightly dangerous, and can be blocked with stones. Mary fittingly marries the Reverend Matthewson Helstone (hell-stone); the dynamic "hell" opposes her static Madonna imagery and the "stone" intrudes on and blocks up her "cave." Caroline hopes to marry and trade her surname "Helstone" for Robert's name, "Moore." The name "Moore" has Brontean connotations of the heath and the moors; the out-of-doors is, in all of these works, associated with freedom, spontaneity, and, to a degree, femininity. However, at this stage in the story, there is a fear that Caroline will take after her aunt and live trapped in the cave blocked by her maiden name Helstone, or that any marriage she makes will echo that of her aunt, a reiterative history.

Caroline is the character with the fewest empowering options, and she begins starving herself after she sees
those options narrowing. She is, in many ways, the least fertile character. Initially, Caroline looks to marriage as the normal and most rewarding course of action open to her. When she speaks about other attractive young ladies to Mrs. Pryor, Caroline's lost mother and Shirley Keeldar's chaperone, she says: "'They look forward to marriage with some one they love as the brightest--the only bright destiny that can await them. Are they wrong?'" (Shirley, 366). Underlying her question is the hope that Mrs. Pryor will assure her of the bright possible futures available to unmarried women. But what can Mrs. Pryor--the nun, the prioress--say to Caroline about marriage or about singleness? Her life has not been one that has led to enthusiasm. Mrs. Pryor seems to say, as do all the female characters in the novel, that whatever choices a woman makes, she is bound to be disappointed. Mrs. Pryor was abused by an alcoholic husband and then neglected, until she became Shirley Keeldar's governess. Perhaps the only real satisfaction for women is in the society of other women. The relationships between Caroline, Shirley, and Mrs. Pryor would seem to support this suggestion.

For the Brontes, physical health reflects psychic health which, as in real life, is either enhanced or injured by personal relationships. Certainly, throughout the course of Shirley, Caroline's relationship with Robert changes her for the worse rather than the better; while her
relationships with women tend to improve her in one way or another. When Caroline is first described she is healthy: "round" (192), plump, pretty, and enthusiastic. She is being educated by Hortense Moore, her cousin and Robert's sister and housekeeper, in the things thought proper for a young woman to know: French, poetry, sewing, and arithmetic, among other things. Caroline is being indoctrinated, at her own request, into a "normal" life, and is in the process of falling in love with Robert Moore. Robert, it seems, is also in the process of falling in love with Caroline. He calls her "Lina" (110) and "kiss[es] her forehead" (110). However, we are privy to the emotions of each when they part one evening after Robert has walked Caroline home, and we know that Robert will try to stifle his loving feelings:

  Robert sent his cousin in excited and joyously troubled...For himself, he came home grave, almost morose...he exclaimed, abruptly:--'This won't do! There's weakness--there's downright ruin in all this. However,' he added, dropping his voice, 'the frenzy is quite temporary. I know it very well: I have had it before. It will be gone tomorrow.' (120)

While Caroline finds illness and despair in loss of love, Robert finds it in love itself, using the vocabulary of mental illness to describe his tender, vulnerable feelings.
In all of Charlotte's novels the beloved man is a mentor to the heroine and in *Shirley*, Robert is something of a tutor to Caroline, helping her with her sums and her French grammar. However, this student/teacher relationship is much less developed than in Charlotte's other novels—*The Professor* and *Villette* for example. Caroline also teaches Robert and this reversal of the student/teacher relationship is similar to the one depicted between Rochester and Jane in *Jane Eyre*. It is significant that Caroline suggests reading Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* with Robert. Through the example of Coriolanus' bad rule, she attempts to teach him convention and how to benevolently "rule" his employees. She gently lectures him as she tries to teach him to be more kind and more feeling.

Although Caroline may influence Robert, she recognizes this ability as very limited. Even before her disappointments in love, Caroline wants to be a boy: "she would wish nature had made her a boy instead of a girl, that she might ask Robert to let her be his clerk, and sit with him in the counting-house, instead of sitting with Hortense in the parlour" (104). She says as much to Robert, but in a stereotypically feminine way she couches her desire for more independence in a need to help Robert. Caroline tells him she wishes she were a boy because she "know[s] Robert greatly desire[s] to be rich, in order to pay [his] father's debts; perhaps [she] could help [him] to get rich" (99).
Caroline, while quietly and internally rebelling against her powerless and dependent position, is very much a Victorian girl—she will not overtly rebel against the expectations of her society. Her anger and rebellion is covert and internal; she will become depressed and starve herself, but she will not run away and find employment.

Caroline's desire for love is complexly mixed with a desire for independence. Charlotte shows us how one's adolescent first love is often mixed with a desire to leave the parents' home and make a life for oneself. She clearly presents this by showing how Caroline desires to be a companion and work partner to Robert. Her fantasy of being an office clerk replaces what we would expect to find in other novels about marriage and romance—a fantasy about first love and sex. Caroline does not limit her pinings after independence to fantasies about Robert Moore, however. It is significant that Caroline is the one who desires more education for herself, not her guardian uncle, the Reverend Helstone. She can grant her mind more independence, if not her body. Caroline "had a depressing feeling that she was inferior" (103) and it is Hortense Moore who offers to educate Caroline. Hortense says that she will give Caroline "a system, a method of thought" (96). Hortense will educate Caroline to show her how to conform to the feminine life expected of her; Caroline desires her education both for Hortense's reasons and for her own—Caroline desires a quiet
and internal independence.

Hortense is often criticized not only in feminists' interpretations of *Shirley*, but quite openly in the novel itself. Hortense lacks individual purpose because she is a "prejudiced and narrow-minded person" (92). Her character does not seem to reflect Charlotte's concern with roles of increasing freedom and power for women. There is no indication that Hortense is silently rebelling against the role she, as a spinster sister, is expected to play as Robert's efficient, domestic manager. She lacks the intelligence, creativity, fire, and beauty of both Caroline and Shirley.

The critique of Hortense becomes complicated, though, when we see that, however needlessly rigorous and ineffectual her choice of studies often seems, and regardless of how humorously she is usually portrayed, Hortense is a strong believer in the importance of the female community and of the family--values which were very important to both Charlotte and Emily Bronte. She unites the Moore family both in the present and historically. Hortense believes in the ancestral duties of women (107). She takes pride in keeping her brother's house, cooking her Belgian food, and darning hose the way the other women of her family have done. Despite the way she is often jokingly presented, Hortense is a keeper of history and nationality. She is true to her Belgian heritage. While we see that
Caroline will not adopt Hortense's ways, her way of life is another possibility available to women. If Caroline had a brother, she could keep his house and preserve the integrity of their family through her household. However, Caroline is an only child and the traditions of the Helstone family are repressive and belittling for women.

Through a systematic investigation of female role models for Caroline, Charlotte is exploring the possibilities for fulfillment for women within traditional feminine roles. Her portrait of Hortense Moore is interesting because Hortense is the one happy, healthy spinster within the text. Although she is criticized, she possesses a certain power in the Moore household. Although sexually "redundant," she retains her freedom of self through her spinsterhood and she continues a feminine heritage. She is the happy old maid of Shirley.

We learn from Hortense that women aiding other women, not men helping women, is the tacitly recognized mode in this novel. Caroline even pleads with the "Men of England" (378) to educate and liberate the women of England, missing the point of her own experience, which clearly illustrates that all help for women comes from other women. However, even in her plea, she asks not to be educated and liberated for personal reasons, but to aid men, as if she knows that men will not help women to rise for any other reason—even as if she cannot consciously imagine another possibility for
herself. She says, we will become "your gayest companions in health; your tenderest nurses in sickness; your most faithful prop in age" (379).

Much more space in the novel is allotted to what Caroline thinks about her available roles than to Robert and Caroline's courtship. She says, "'I have to live, perhaps, till seventy years...How am I to occupy it? What am I to do to fill the interval of time which spreads between me and the grave?'" (190). Caroline finds that three possibilities present themselves immediately. The first, the obvious, is to marry. The second, to work. Initially, she is most drawn to this option, because it would allow her to leave her uncle's home, and it would be empowering. But she thinks of employment as only for men and then, when she lights upon the idea of being a governess, is firmly discouraged by everyone she consults: Shirley, Rev. Helstone, and Mrs. Pryor. She is left with the negative option of becoming an Old Maid, like the two old ladies, the Misses Ainley and Mann. This alternative promises a life of charity and self-sacrifice. Caroline begins her investigation into the lives of spinsters right away; interestingly, even this hint as to what to do to fill her time is dropped by a woman, her maid Fanny (191), who suggests that she visit the two independent ladies.

In her visits Caroline finds much to admire but little to comfort her, little to draw her to this life they offer.
Miss Mann is a "morose" (195) old woman, ugly, lonely, and bitter, charitable and unappreciated. "She had passed alone through protracted scenes of suffering, exercised rigid self-denial, made large sacrifices of time, money, health, for those who had repaid her only by ingratitude" (194). So, when Caroline finds her, she is "grim" and even "corpse-like." Unlike Hortense Moore, Miss Mann does not enjoy a cheerful psychic health. She "never smile[s]." Her main wish is to "avoid excitement, to gain and retain composure!" (195). As her name suggests, Miss Mann would have been better off being a man.

Caroline's visit to Miss Ainley is even more uncomfortable, for while Miss Mann is bitter, she is human; she is still selfish and cares for her own happiness, while Miss Ainley, as Mr. Hall says, lives a life that "came nearer to the life of Christ, than that of any other human being he had ever met with" (198). While Caroline admires the poor, charitable, saint-like woman (198), she cannot yearn to become like her, for she clearly sees that society tells old maids "'your place is to do good to others, to be helpful whenever help is wanted.'" She sees that this is a "'very convenient doctrine for the people who hold it; but I perceive,'" she says, "'that certain sets of human beings are very apt to maintain that other sets should give up their lives to them and their service!'" (190). She asks, "'Does virtue lie in abnegation of self?'" (190). Her
answer to herself is a clear "No!" Caroline recognizes the futility of a life spent denying her own bodily needs.

Despite Caroline's dissatisfaction with the promise of a future exemplary life as an old maid, she comes to believe that she must make the best of this alternative. Her friends and family are strongly against her plan to become a governess, and as she is financially provided for by her uncle, there is not a pressing need for her to separate herself from her home. To help conquer her depression over Robert's emotional desertion and her narrowing options, Caroline sets herself a firm plan to fill her time: "she allotted a certain portion of her time for her various studies, and a certain portion for doing anything Miss Ainley might direct her to do; the remainder was to be spent in exercise" (199). Caroline devotes herself to silencing the echoing voices of despair and anguish in her mind. The narrator tells us that Caroline had never "been so busy, so studious, and, above all, so active. She took walks in all weathers" (200), and would come home "in the evening, pale and wearied-looking, yet seemingly not fatigued; for still, as soon as she had thrown off her bonnet and shawl she would...begin to pace her apartment" (200), not sitting down until she was faint--all to tire herself out so she could sleep. Yet, "at night, when others slumbered, she was tossing on her pillow...crying in a sort of intolerable despair...reduced to a childlike helplessness" (200).
Despite Caroline's decision against self-denial, she is forced, by a lack of alternatives, into denying her physical needs. Her frenzied activity is a punishment of the flesh. She mortifies herself to conquer both her physical and her mental longings.

Caroline's frenzied activity and wasted flesh (203) are symptoms of anorexia nervosa. Anorexia was not conceived of as "a coherent disease entity distinct from starvation among the insane and unrelated to organic diseases such as tuberculosis, diabetes, or cancer" (Brumberg, 111-112) until 1873 when Sir William Withey Gull reported his investigations at the October 24th meeting of the Clinical Society (Brumberg, 118). Since Shirley was published 24 years before Gull's report to the Clinical Society, it is doubtful whether Charlotte had a fully formed awareness of anorexia nervosa as a disease in and of itself. Nevertheless, her description of the actions of Caroline Helstone closely conforms to the descriptions of anorectics in medical studies. Caroline's "hyperactivity" is a "significant physical marker" of anorexia when accompanied by "lack of appetite and emaciation" (Brumberg, 141), and is one of the first noticeable symptoms of the disease. Charlotte's acute depiction of Caroline's anorexia and depression is powerfully linked to Katherine Frank's account of Emily's refusal to eat and her substitution of "words for food or food for words." Like Emily when she was at Roe
Head, Caroline is silent and uncomplaining. Caroline could not directly confront Robert with her affection and he did not directly offer her his love; yet, the offer was made—through looks and touches—and her response is rebuffed when he decides to deny his own love "frenzy."

It is important to remember that it is not only the denial of Robert's love that causes Caroline's depression—although, certainly, part of what she is combatting is her submerged and frustrated sexuality—but the hopelessness she feels at ever finding mental or emotional fulfillment.

"'Truly,'" she says, "'I ought not to have been born: they should have smothered me at the first cry!'" (240). And later, when she and Shirley witness the attack on the mill and Shirley must stop Caroline from rushing in to help Robert and the wounded, she cries out to her friend, "'Am I always to be curbed and kept down?'" (339). She tells Mrs. Pryor:

it is scarcely living to measure time as I do at the Rectory. The hours pass, and I get them over somehow, but I do not live. I endure existence, but I rarely enjoy it. Since Miss Keeldar and you came, I have been--I was going to say--happier, but that would be untrue. (362-363)

For while Caroline loves Shirley and Mrs Pryor, the friendship of women alone, without some sort of personal fulfillment, is not enough to satisfy her.
So Caroline endures her life, and then stops eating (406). Her illness is presented as similar to TB. As Sontag notes, tuberculosis was a sort of cultural fad: "Consumption was understood as a manner of appearing, and that appearance became a staple of nineteenth-century manners" (28). Caroline conforms to the aristocratic vision of illness, she is pale, wan, and bed-ridden, too weak to bear being out of bed for very long. She sleeps very little and often cries. Her mind even wanders at one point; she fantasizes about a married life with Robert and speaks from out of her vision to her attendant, Mrs. Pryor (405). Many visitors come to see her to illustrate just how near death Caroline is: "Mr. Hall and his sister Margaret arrived; both, after they had been in the sick-room, quitted it in tears" (405). But Mrs. Pryor has the key to Caroline's disease. She says, "'your mind is crushed; your heart is almost broken: you have been so neglected, so repulsed, left so desolate'" (409). When she asks Caroline if she wishes to live, Caroline's answer is "'I have no object in life'" (409). She is starving herself--protesting the fact that she is growing up alone and female.

Just as all seems hopeless, Mrs. Pryor confesses to being Caroline's mother, the widow of the violent alcoholic James Helstone. She claims she left Caroline to the care of her uncle, because since Caroline resembles her father outwardly, her mother was afraid that Caroline resembles him
inwardly. James Helstone, like Arthur Huntingdon in Anne Bronte's novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, was violent and drunken. He was not only cruel to his wife, forcing her to flee him, but neglectful and cruel to the child Caroline as well (126).

The restoration of Caroline's mother and the unanswered questions answered returns Caroline's will to live. Immediately after her mother's confession, Caroline says: "'But if you are my mother, the world is all changed to me. Surely I can live—I should like to recover!'" (410). Soon after Mrs. Pryor's confession Caroline eats a dinner, "a little bit of supper" (416), something from her uncle's plate, and "enjoyed...peaceful rest that night" (417). The Reverend Helstone says, as he fixes her shawl, "'On my word, I understand nursing'" (416), but he really understands nothing of what has happened to Caroline. Her mother is the one who truly understands.

This focus on the maternal is rooted in Bronte biography. Tuberculosis robbed the four youngest Bronte children of, in a sense, two mothers. First their real mother died and then their oldest sister, Maria, who served very much as a mother to Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne. These deaths had a profound impact on Charlotte and Emily; most of the heroines in these novels are orphans. Penny Boumelha comments on this preoccupation with mothers and daughters in her discussion of *Shirley*: 
undoubtedly the chief relationship among women which the novel considers is that of mother and daughter....what Nestor\textsuperscript{5} calls 'mother want' is vividly present throughout. It is partly a search for predecessors that will bestow and confirm identity and worth. It also brings about a love powerful enough to bring Caroline back from the brink of death, from an illness triggered by Robert's apparent failure to love her. (93)

Boumelha's discussion points out again that while Caroline's depression may be ignited by Robert's failure to return her love, it is not the root cause of her troubles. Caroline is ill from an almost complete lack of power over her life and her future, intermingled with the feelings of loneliness and lovelessness associated with orphanhood. If Caroline had a mother perhaps she would be less dependent upon her love for Robert, as is suggested by Caroline's rapid recovery once she discovers her mother in Mrs. Pryor.

Caroline discovers her mother through her friendship with Shirley Keeldar, a young heiress just recently turned 21 who has returned to live on her ancestral estate. Shirley is peculiarly circumstanced as a young, single woman, since she is also an orphan, but completely reliant upon herself, and independently wealthy. Shirley is empowered by her wealth and is therefore happier than Caroline. Reverend Helstone admires her and calls her
"Captain Keeldar" (215) and she refers to herself, in jest, as "Shirley Keeldar, Esq., Lord of the Manor of Briarfield" (218). Fittingly, with her man's name, she appears to be her own master, the captain of her own fate. Unlike other women, Shirley appears to be perfectly capable of, and comfortable with, asserting her own will. She courts Caroline's friendship almost like a lover, the conversations between them have a liveliness and vivacity lacking in almost all the conversations between men and women in the novel (221). Gilbert and Gubar comment upon this curiosity:

When Shirley plays the Captain to Caroline's modest maiden, their coy banter and testing infuses the relationship with a fine, subtle sexuality that is markedly absent from their manipulative heterosexual relationships. Yet, given that Shirley's masculine name was bestowed by parents who had wished for a son, there is something not a little foreboding about the fact that independence is so closely associated with men that it confines Shirley to a kind of male mimicry. (381-382)

Shirley is confined to this "male mimicry" in her every-day circumstances, but her education and wealth have freed her imagination, and given her a command of language that lends her a power beyond her society's definition of the feminine.
Imaginatively, Shirley has rewritten Milton's Eve mythology and translated herself, and the female sex, from Adam's mostly silent helpmate and corrupter to "a woman-Titan" (315). Shirley claims that "Milton tried to see the first woman...[but] it was his cook he saw" (315). She rewrites her vision powerfully:

The first woman's breast heaved with life on this world yielded the daring which could conceive with omnipotence: the strength which could bear a thousand years of bondage,—the vitality which could feed that vulture death through uncounted ages,—the unexhausted life and uncorrupted excellence, sisters to immortality, which, after millenniums of crimes, struggles, and woes, could conceive and bring forth a Messiah. The first woman was heaven-born: vast was the heart whence gushed the well-spring of the blood of nations; and grand the undegenerate head where rested the consort-crown of creation. (315)

Shirley claims the power to redefine her conception of herself as a woman by reinterpreting the traditional, "male" stories about Adam and Eve and their relationship. By appropriating the power of language and story-telling, Shirley makes herself more powerful, more creative, and more free. When Shirley reinvents herself and her sex, she rebels against the traditional patriarchal religion
represented by Reverend Helstone and the other ministers (except compassionate Mr. Hall); she refuses to enter the church where Reverend Helstone is conducting evening prayers after the annual school-feast, but will stay outside with her "mother Eve, in these days called Nature" (316).

This ability to recreate a subversive vision of herself and her sex is Shirley's liberating force and part of what she must contend against once she decides to marry. While her attempts to liberate herself socially seem like "male mimicry," they are based upon a very real attempt to free herself from a masculine ideology. Although much of Shirley's rebellion occurs covertly and privately in her own mind and in mostly symbolic actions, her resistance to a male-created feminine identity is very serious and reflects Charlotte and Emily's attempts to revision the way women were usually portrayed in fiction--and in private life. Shirley's appropriation of the written word and of mythology underlines the power associated with the speaker. The Brontës always connect power with speech, reading, and writing. In the Brontëan definition of health, well-being includes the ability to express yourself in terms of the written word, and to learn through reading. Health is associated with personal power over self-expression, and claiming power means claiming control over language, a control that is historically male, yet necessary for the well-being of both sexes.
One of Shirley's symbolic rebellions occurs when she turns out the minister Donne from her garden tea party with "'Walk through...and pretty quickly, and set foot on this pavement no more'" (287). She turns him out in her signature Cavalier fashion. Shirley's independence is even more clearly imaged when she is nearly always seen indoors by a window or a door. Shirley controls the space around her. She may reject the minister Donne and she will not allow herself to be confined within any domestic space. She first enters the novel "through a glass door from the garden" (210). While Caroline is often confined behind a tea table (139), in the parlor, and in the sickroom, Shirley is always identified with her goddess—Mother Nature. That Shirley is always located on the borderline between indoors and outdoors highlights the extreme indoor life of Caroline once she decides to starve herself. Where Caroline feels trapped, Shirley is always, it seems, on the verge of fleeing. Gilbert and Gubar refer to this as a typical juxtaposition in a female story, which, they say, inevitably considers also the equally uncomfortable spatial options of expulsion into the cold outside or suffocation in the hot indoors, and in addition it often embodies an obsessive anxiety both about starvation to the point of disappearance and about monstrous inhabitation. (86)
Caroline and Shirley thus function as doubles in this tale about the possibilities available to young, single, Victorian women. Charlotte takes special care to contrast Shirley's fiery, independent nature with Caroline's more docile one. These girls, but for circumstances of birth and wealth, are not so different. It is Shirley who has to stop Caroline from rushing into the middle of the fight at the mill. Caroline is not all meekness and docility. Shirley has had more numerous and more attractive options than has Caroline Helstone. Shirley's illness, which mimics Caroline's anorexia, reinforces their status as doubles.

As in *Wuthering Heights*, a female protagonist is bitten by a dog, and as in *Wuthering Heights*, Shirley's dog bite is heavily symbolic. The drawing of first blood is symbolic of an initiation into womanhood. In *Snow White*, for example, the heroine "pricks her finger, bleeds, and is thereby assumed into the cycle of sexuality William Blake called the realm of 'generation'" (Gilbert & Gubar, 37). It calls to mind both menstruation and the loss of virginity. Shirley and Catherine Earnshaw are, in a sense, introduced to the world of experience when they are bitten.

There are, however, interesting differences between the two scenes. While Catherine's scene is public, Shirley's is private and she keeps quite silent and secret about it. Catherine's attacker is very male and he is described in obviously phallic terms, whereas Shirley's attacker is a
female named Phoebe—a name which refers to Artemis and Diana, who are associated with the moon in mythology. This is fitting, since the moon was closely associated with cycles of menstruation; when women slept out-of-doors, their menses came with the new moon, and it was believed that fertility waxed and waned with the moon. Shirley's initiation is gentler, not a kind of symbolic rape like Catherine's. Shirley is initiated into womanhood, while Catherine is dragged forcefully into it. And, although Shirley fears that Phoebe is rabid, it turns out, as she at first thought, that Phoebe has only been ill-used, beaten, by her male owner.

Clearly, from Shirley's reaction to Phoebe's bite, she unconsciously feels the bite is part of a sexual initiation. Shirley is silent about her wound, as if it were something private and perhaps shameful. Also, in direct echo of Caroline's illness, Shirley says "'Small as it is [the bite], it has taken my sleep away, and made me nervous, thin, and foolish; because of that little mark I am obliged to look forward to a possibility that has its terrors'" (476). Are these terrors about hydrophobia or about marriage?

The mark becomes the means of cementing the bond between her and Louis, Robert's brother and her girlhood tutor, and he is the only one she confides in about the bite (477). It is not stretching the point too far to see this
as a kind of sexual moment between them. Shirley is confiding her vulnerability and giving Louis responsibility for her life—as she will when they are married. She begs him, if she should go mad, to "'Lock the chamber-door against the surgeons--turn them out, if they get in...and...if I give trouble, with your own hand administer to me a strong narcotic: such a sure dose of laudanum as shall leave no mistake. Promise to do this!'" (479-480).

Although it turns out that Phoebe is not rabid, but simply abused, Shirley is not over her illness. Phoebe's rage and alarm explain the fate of women unluckily married and remind us not only of Mrs. Pryor's marriage but of Mary Cave's as well. Will Shirley become, like Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre, another madwoman in the attic? Shirley fears a "monstrous inhabitation" on two levels: she fears hydrophobia if Phoebe was rabid; and she fears married life, her love of Louis, and his sexual possession of her. She fears her own sexuality as a woman. She has been Captain Keeldar and now she is contemplating becoming Mrs. Moore and calling Louis "Master."

As the day of her wedding approaches, Shirley is described as "conquered by love, and bound with a vow" (592) as if she were a prisoner of war. But, again, she is also described acting much as she acted after Phoebe's bite and as Caroline acted during her illness. Shirley "sat or wandered alone; spoke little, and ate less" (592). Louis is
described as her "captor;" she is a "chained denizen" and
she has "lost [her] privilege of liberty" (592). Louis
describes her situation the most dramatically and the most
clearly when he calls her "'Pantheress!—beautiful forest-
born!—wily, tameless, peerless nature! She gnaws her
chain: I see the white teeth working at the steel! She has
dreams of her wild woods, and pinings after virgin freedom'"
(584). Louis is conscious of Shirley's loss of power, of
her treachery to her private religion by marrying him.
Unlike Caroline, Shirley very obviously loses liberty by
marrying. Caroline can escape from her uncle's loveless
house. Shirley escapes nothing but her cherished
independence. What Louis's speech also reveals, aside from
Shirley's longings, is his delight in his role of hunter,
captor, tamer. Louis is in control and seems to enjoy it
very much. Charlotte seems to be saying that the most women
can hope for in marriage is to marry a kind and
compassionate master, instead of one like Phoebe's.

Even more ominously, it is revealed that Shirley's
father's name was Charles Cave Keeldar (598). This forms
another tie between Shirley and Caroline and warns us again
of the ambiguous joy of any wedding in this novel. Mary
Cave is "an emblem, a warning that the fate of women
inhabiting a male-controlled society involves suicidal self-
renunciation" (Gilbert & Gubar, 376). This connection
between Shirley and Mary Cave further indicates that
Shirley, like Caroline will have to give up much freedom of self to become the wife of Louis—even if he, like Robert, is kind, gentle, and good and even if there is real love, affection, and respect between them. In this society, women are always expected to sacrifice and men always expect it.

Perhaps because of Charlotte's own intense feelings about the "Woman Question," the ending of Shirley is problematic: Shirley and Caroline do marry Louis and Robert, the men they love, yet their freedom is lessened, and Charlotte further undercuts the comic ending through her religious imagery. At the end of the novel, the Hollow beloved by Shirley and Caroline, "which tradition says was once green, and lone, and wild," is now a picture of the "manufacturer's day-dreams embodied in substantial stone and brick and ashes— the cinder-black highway, the cottages, and the cottage-gardens; there I saw a mighty mill, and a chimney, ambitious as the tower of Babel" (599). The tower of Babel is a symbol of alienation and separation. Before the tower of Babel was built "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." The tower was a symbol "whose top may reach unto heaven," this means that the people of the Old Testament desired to unite under one name, to supplant the power of God with the aspirations of man. When the Lord came down to view the tower, He saw that men were too ambitious and that "now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." So "the Lord
scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11: 1-9).

The Tower of Babel is a male paradigm of industrialization and revolution. It is a symbol of pride and of men ignoring the laws of God in favor of the laws of men. By using this figure, Charlotte indicates that in Robert and Louis's industrial community people are not comprehending each other—there is a lack of "feminine" connection, because speech is misused and used to separate men from each other. This male industrial heaven may be reclaimed eventually by Nature, but the ending of the novel shows the death of Shirley's sacred vision of feminized nature. It cannot be denied that commerce and industry have, in fact, prevailed, albeit tempered by the feminine influence of Shirley and Caroline. Love for Shirley, as Louis's comments clearly show, is something of a trap. Love, in Shirley, denies psychic freedom, and leads to alienation within the community and within the female individual.

If love between men and women reduces individual liberty in Shirley, it is at once liberating and unifying in Wuthering Heights. The ending of Charlotte's novel is
problematic; she leaves unresolved the issues she broaches within the novel perhaps because she feels that the problems involved with female powerlessness within male/female relationships and within patriarchal society are impossible to untangle. Emily's novel solves these problems by making love itself the liberating force. For Charlotte, love involves a loss of integrity; her female characters are diminished when they marry. The individual accounts of the characters end once couples are wed. In *Wuthering Heights*, love does not mean fragmentation of the self but augmentation. In Emily's vision, love creates an androgynous whole; Heathcliff and Catherine literally become one shade haunting the moors after their deaths. Therefore, her representations of illness are quite different while appearing very similar.

*Wuthering Heights* is full of sickness. The most significant portrayals of depression and anorexia are Catherine Earnshaw Linton's "delirium" (*Wuthering Heights*, 127) and the self-starvation that leads to her death in childbirth. Emily's characters are less realistically drawn than Charlotte's: Mary cave is suicidal self-renunciation, while Catherine's cause of death is cloudy. Her frenzy hides her willful starvation; the fact that she dies in childbirth masks the fact that her death must have been brought about by the way she had been mistreating her body. Her powerful emotional outbursts conceal her control of her
own health and life.

Passion is a formidable power in the world of the Heights and the Grange. Emily uses fire and food as major symbols that show the interplay between passionate fulfillment and frustration. When Lockwood, the initial narrator and link to the outside world, first enters the Heights he is struck by the "huge fire-place" (46-47) in the main room. In fact, many of the scenes center around a fire. The other main symbol, besides the heath, seems to be food. The scenes of family dining depict Nelly Dean, the second narrator and housekeeper of both the Heights and Thrushcross Grange, feeding and nurturing the others, while Catherine and Heathcliff go without supper. These two images of fire and food are often used in combination because of the link between passionate will and an unwillingness to eat. There is also a connection between sexuality, passion, and violence—symbolized by fire (which recalls the images of hell-fire, and also domestic cooking fire)—and, as in Shirley, traps for women which result in imprisonment, death of personal liberty, or, in Wuthering Heights, in actual death.

These images of imprisonment and escape are figured by Catherine and Heathcliff running on the moor, like young savages, to escape Catherine's older brother, Hindley Earnshaw. Hindley is the head of the Earnshaw household, since Mr. Earnshaw has passed away just before Catherine and
Heathcliff enter adolescence. Hindley, as a purported supporter of society and culture, despotsically lords it over the chaotic Catherine and Heathcliff; and we find that while Hindley's most usual mode of punishment for Heathcliff is a flogging, Catherine generally earns herself "a fast from dinner or supper" (87).

The next instance of Catherine fasting comes at her own will. She has returned from her first convalescence at Thrushcross Grange quite a lady and is entertaining Edgar and Isabella Linton. When Heathcliff joins the party and embarrasses Catherine with his rude manners and unkempt appearance, Edgar and Heathcliff have an altercation. To punish Heathcliff, Hindley "snatched up the culprit [Heathcliff] directly and conveyed him to his chamber, where doubtless, he administered a rough remedy to cool the fit of passion" (99). Back at the table Catherine pretends to enjoy her company but she cannot eat: "she lifted a mouthful to her lips; then, set it down again: her cheeks flushed, and the tears gushed over them. She slipped her fork to the floor, and hastily dived under the cloth to conceal her emotion" (100). Passion has also robbed Heathcliff of his appetite. Later, when Nelly Dean lets Heathcliff out of his room, he "had never broken his fast since yesterday evening" (101), and yet "he was sick and could not eat" (101). Catherine and Heathcliff have taken to punishing themselves and others by starving. Perhaps
their emotions are so strong that they burn up any appetite, and this would relate to the common Romantic notions about tuberculosis: that it burned one up and had seasons of little appetite and of huge appetite. It was thought to be a disease of the passionate. But we must remember that Catherine and Heathcliff do not have TB. Tuberculosis was part of the Bronte family history as well as a fearful, yet sentimentalized, part of the culture. The vocabulary of consumption was standard and unexceptional both for the Brontes and in other Romantic and Victorian literature.

This preoccupation with food and fasting is all made more resonant by the fact that Catherine is on the verge of puberty; she is twelve (89) and very sexual. She "certainly...had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before" (83), Nelly tells Lockwood. She has just been bitten at Thrushcross Grange and visited there for five weeks while her wound mends (93). As in Shirley, this first letting of blood is symbolic of a sexual initiation into womanhood. As if magically transformed, Catherine returns to the Heights "quite a beauty...like a lady" (93) and she will marry the civilized Edgar Linton, who courts her after her return home.

The bite acts as a rite of passage for Catherine and is described in specifically sexual terms. The dog's name is "Skulker" (91). He has a "huge, purple tongue hanging half a foot out of his mouth, and his pendant lips [are]
streaming with bloody slaver" (90). He is definitely male, threatening, and there can be no mistaking the menacing sexuality of his appearance. Catherine's foot bleeds copiously; however, later she can be seen sitting pampered and fed before the fire, "dividing her food between the little dog and Skulker, whose nose she pinched as she ate" (92). Catherine has made peace with sex here. She will attempt to pacify and "feed" both Edgar Linton and Heathcliff, just as she does the little dog and Skulker. She is placating the two dogs—dissipating passion and taming it.

When Catherine comes home she is a lady and a "beauty," but she does not return to a happy household. Her mother dies almost parenthetically, from unmentioned causes, early on in the tale. It is as if the deaths of women, especially mothers, are so common that they need not be commented upon. At any rate, in this household there is no mother for Catherine, and her only female company has been Nelly Dean (who is Hindley's age), servants possibly, and now Hindley's young bride, Frances, who is diagnosed as being "consumptive" (104)

Frances is afraid of dying and of all the symbols associated with death because of a well-founded, if morbid, fear that she will die young. She is given to "hysterical emotion." She is "thin, but young, and fresh complexioned, and her eyes sparkled as bright as diamonds," but "mounting
the stairs made her breath very quick" and "the least sudden
noise set her all in a quiver, and...she coughed
troublesomely sometimes" (86). This silly young woman has
been Catherine's only role model, whether Catherine openly
accepted her as one or not. Frances gives birth to a son,
Hareton Earnshaw, and dies soon after, following a "fit of
coughing" (105). The doctor tells Hindley after he delivers
Hareton that "it's a blessing your wife has been spared to
leave you this son" (104). How could the young Catherine
help connecting sex and childbirth with death? Later, when
Catherine is pregnant, she will also show these "hysterical
emotions." She too will be thin, but at the order of her
own will. Whether Catherine understood that Frances was
tubercular or not, it would be almost impossible for her, on
the verge of adolescence, not to conflate France's death
with her own pregnancy.

Catherine's "hysteria" and illness begins when she
separates herself from Heathcliff, her other self.
Heathcliff overhears Catherine telling Nelly Dean that she
will marry Edgar Linton and he, in consequence, runs away,
"Catherine would not be persuaded into tranquillity. She
kept wandering to and fro, from the gate to the door, in a
state of agitation which permitted no repose" (124). Right
from the beginning her desire to pacify both Heathcliff and
Edgar Linton has failed. Catherine cannot sit before the
fire feeding both the little dog and the big dog at once.
After Heathcliff runs away, she spends half the night crying in a storm, and sits up the rest of the night in her wet clothes. Her first words to Nelly in the morning are, "'Ellen, shut the window. I'm starving!" (126). Catherine is both "starving" in the sense that she is freezing and starving literally, from hunger, which she seems to have associated with a loss of Heathcliff. When she and Heathcliff are separated, neither one of them can eat. Catherine has denied her soul's needs and therefore, can take no nourishment into her "shattered prison" (196) of a body.

The resulting illness and the doctor's treatment of it set a dangerous pattern in Catherine's life: "It proved the commencement of a delirium; Mr. Kenneth, as soon as he saw her, pronounced her dangerously ill; she had a fever" (127). As treatment, Nelly relates, "he bled her, and told me to let her live on whey, and water gruel; and take care she did not throw herself down stairs, or out of the window" (127-128). Catherine apparently has a brain fever. This is all the explanation that is given and all that is asked for. Her brain fever seems to refer to some inability to control her emotions once they get out of hand in real life, and yet, this brain fever is contagious, and then passes it on to Mr. and Mrs. Linton. Catherine recovers, but the doctor can only predict that she will always be susceptible to recurring bouts. His only advice is that she will "not bear
crossing much, she ought to have her own way" (128).

During Heathcliff's mysterious absence, Catherine marries Edgar. Catherine, like Caroline Helstone, marries in part to escape her home. Hindley, after the death of Frances, escaped his sorrow in alcoholism and neglected and abused Heathcliff and Catherine. Catherine feels that there will be no escape for either Heathcliff or herself if she does not marry Edgar, and that as Edgar's wife she can help Heathcliff to rise in the world.

The separation between Catherine and Heathcliff, however, is only a short hiatus for the union of their passionate wills. Heathcliff returns to find Catherine married and supposedly pregnant, for she dies in childbirth soon after his return. In the first reunion between Catherine and Heathcliff, "she could neither eat nor drink" (136). When Edgar and Heathcliff quarrel, as they were bound to do, Catherine again takes ill. Like Shirley Keeldar, Catherine cannot bear being controlled, and Edgar Linton, despite his angel looks and gentle manner, is a controlling husband; Heathcliff, despite his devil's looks and fierce manner, is a liberator. He is outside of society; his presence alters the conventions. A gypsy brat, informally adopted by Mr. Earnshaw and given the deceased, oldest Earnshaw son's name, Heathcliff inherits nothing from Mr. Earnshaw and has no connections away from the Heights and the Grange, yet he acquires both houses through
his own efforts. Heathcliff is passionately in love with another man's wife, who has no shame in her love for him and cannot understand that her husband must resent the connection. Heathcliff's influence alters the conventional, patriarchal rules.

Heathcliff, again, incites Catherine's "brain-fever" when Edgar turns Heathcliff out of the Grange. Catherine says that she will "break their hearts by breaking [her] own" and that Nelly must remind Edgar of her "passionate temper, verging, when kindled, on frenzy" (155). This is the fourth mention of "frenzy" that we have encountered. Robert Moore calls love a sickness and a frenzy, Caroline Helstone puts herself into a frenzy when Robert rejects her and she finds she can build no other emotionally fulfilling life of her own, and Shirley Keeldar fears falling into a frenzy after she is bitten by Phoebe, when she fears falling in love with Louis Moore. Catherine Earnshaw Linton, too, will put herself into a frenzy if her will is thwarted. There seem to be two different types of frenzies at work: the frenzy of stirred-up emotion in Shirley, which is something to be feared, something that will whirl you into illness, contrasted with the frenzy of thwarted emotion and desire in Wuthering Heights. Here the emotion has been repressed too long, and the repression of true desires leads to sickness.
In the world of these novels, women understand sickness and the passionate causes of sickness better than men. In *Shirley*, "young ladies looked at [Caroline] in a way she understood, and from which she shrank. Their eyes said they knew she had been 'disappointed,' as custom phrases it: by whom, they were not certain" (206). Women are the true doctors and true nurses because they understand the anger and resentment underlying illness. Nelly Dean's relationship with Catherine is the exception. Nelly completely--perhaps willfully because of her jealousy of Catherine's beauty, passion, and fertile sexuality--misunderstands Catherine, thinking that she means that she can "plan the turning of her fits of passion to account, beforehand" (156). Nelly does not realize that what Catherine means is that she only has to ease up her powerful control over her emotions to fall into a frenzy. Catherine, after her prophecy, shuts herself in her room and fasts for three days (158), while Edgar shuts himself in his library, believing Catherine to be having a petulant temper tantrum. She, on the other hand, is sure that she will die.

Like Caroline, Catherine suffers from a psychic debility when she is denied personal fulfillment in the form of union with Heathcliff, her other self—her mind wanders. Only Catherine's wanderings and mad ravings are torrents of emotion, while Caroline's are like gentle poetry, brief, quickly over, and mostly unconvincing. Catherine, Nelly
tells us, "tore the pillow with her teeth, then raising herself up all burning, desired that I would open a window" (160). Here is another connection between *Wuthering Heights* and *Shirley*, for like Shirley, Catherine identifies with the out-of-doors: with the heath and with windows out of which she escapes the confinements of domesticity. When she is bitten by Skulker, she and Heathcliff have been running on the heath. They are seduced by the symbols of affluent society into peeping through the windows at the Grange. They have been outside and now they look inside, this is the reverse of Shirley's window symbolism. When Skulker bites her, Catherine is not only transformed from a young heathen into a young lady, she is also translated from an outdoor life to an indoor one. Heathcliff is associated with freedom and the moors, Edgar with Thrushcross Grange, refinement, confinement, and his library. As Catherine vacillates between Heathcliff and Edgar, she also vacillates between the things they each represent.

As Catherine leans out of her window, letting the "frosty air...cut about her shoulders" (164), she recovers her allegiance to her childhood freedom, Heathcliff, and the moors. Nelly camouflages Catherine's pregnancy during this frenzy, we do not find out that she is pregnant until she dies in childbirth. Catherine is confined, by her pregnancy, her marriage, and Nelly's control over the story. Catherine's only escape is death. She effects her suicide
through starvation and emotional frenzy. The result is a "permanent alienation of intellect" (109), as Dr. Kenneth feared. She has removed herself from society; she has almost escaped. After Catherine sees Heathcliff once more and after she gives birth to "a puny seven months' child" (201), she escapes her "shattered prison"--she dies.

Dr. Kenneth cannot save Catherine, he can only diagnose her ailment. In both *Wuthering Heights* and *Shirley* doctors are treated more as prophets of death than as healers. Dr. Kenneth foretells Frances Earnshaw's death but can do nothing to save her (104). He is equally ineffective when Catherine catches her brain fever after Heathcliff runs away. His only advice is that she ought not to be crossed. Dr. Kenneth attends births and deaths and foretells illness and death, but seems helpless to alleviate any sufferings.

Doctors are similarly drawn in *Shirley*. Mrs. Pryor and the Rev. Helstone send for two doctors to look after Caroline:

One came, but that one was an oracle: he delivered a dark saying of which the future was to solve the mystery, wrote some prescriptions, gave some directions--the whole with an air of crushing authority--pocketed his fee, and went. Probably, he knew well enough he could do no good; but didn't like to say so. (401-402)
These doctors are all but worthless, because what is needed is not a doctor for the body, but a doctor for the emotions, and for society. These male doctors may effectively treat men when they are suffering from actual physical ailments, but they are helpless when dealing with anorexia and "frenzy" because they cannot treat their female patients for frustration and anger. This inadequacy of the medical profession seems to be an accepted truth in the Bronte mind. As I mentioned earlier, when Shirley fears rabies, she makes Louis promise to let no doctors near her. In *Wuthering Heights*, Dr. Kenneth cannot help Catherine or Frances; the nursing is done by Nelly Dean and Cathy Linton.

Nelly nurses both generations of children. When Heathcliff recovers from the measles, "the doctor affirmed that it was in great measure owing to [Nelly Dean], and praises [her] for [her] care" (79). When Nelly nurses Catherine after the fight between Heathcliff and Edgar, we can see how the nurses in these tales often are associated with food and fertility, for Nelly Dean is a matronly woman, and she brings Catherine "tea and dry toast" (158) to break her long fast. Cathy is the sole nurse Linton has when he dies (325). Nelly nurses Lockwood, and Cathy often sits with her father when he is ill.

It is, in part, the way the illnesses of men are treated in these two novels that makes the Bronte portrayal of illness interesting. These portrayals of male sickness
and convalescence mirror and comment upon the illnesses of the female characters. They show clearly, without any masking, the effects of loss or misuse of power. When men enter this female world of illness, it is because they are already in what society would view as a weak position or because they are suddenly weakened by some chaotic "natural" force.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English discuss the historical treatment of female "illness" in For Her Own Good. They point out that nineteenth century doctors "held that woman's normal state was to be sick...Medicine had 'discovered' that female functions were inherently pathological" (110). It is easy to overlook literary portrayals of female illness because readers are accustomed to feminine invalids. We assume that the women are ill simply because, unnaturally, the cycles natural to the female body have historically been defined as shameful illnesses rather than as natural functions. Women have been viewed as the weaker sex, their weakness defined by menstruation and childbirth. Women have been confined when not sick because they were considered weak and dirty. We accept portrayals of female illness because they are a standard romanticization of women, the weak sex. When the strong, powerful, "clean," male sex becomes ill, we do not tend to sentimentalize their incapacities.
Louis Moore's illness is the first case of a man falling ill in Shirley. His short fever clearly mirrors Caroline's, and Shirley's position seems, in part, to echo that of Mrs. Pryor. Shirley's true feelings and position are brought out by Louis' fever. It is said that Louis caught the fever "in one of the poor cottages of the district...At any rate he sickened" (450, emphasis added). While the narrator tells us that Louis caught the fever from a sick cottager, the "at any rate" casts doubt on that statement which we might otherwise unquestioningly accept. The "at any rate" draws attention to the fact that immediately before Louis takes ill, Shirley fights off a barrage of suitors and Louis has just heard from Mr. Yorke that "Robert had views on Miss Keeldar" (449). Louis has to take Robert seriously; he has the independence and power that Louis lacks. Louis is more "feminine" than his older brother both in terms of the symbolism with which he is most strongly associated and his sense of power over his life. Louis moves from activity to passivity, from outdoors to indoors—for he has, prior to this little fever, been associated not only with the school-room, where he is master, but with gardens and long walks, with nature and animals.

Louis' malady confines him to his room. When Shirley comes to visit, he immediately mentions one of Shirley's beaus, Sir Philip Nunnely, an innocuous, but titled suitor.
He says, "'You stood ten minutes with him on the steps. I heard your discourse, every word, and I heard the salute. Henry, give me some water!'" (452). Louis is not feverish from a virus caught from a cottager; he is burning with passion and jealousy. It is apparent that even he is aware of this when he says, "'I scarcely fear (with a sort of smile) you will take it [the infection]; but why should you run even the shadow of a risk? Leave me'" (451). Louis did not catch an infection at a villager's cottage; he is in love. The implication is that Shirley has rejected his love, although, like Caroline, he has been unable clearly to offer it. Like Caroline, he is relatively powerless. Louis is poor and in the employment of Shirley's family. He has been Shirley's tutor and only the power he gains over her as a male and as a teacher allow him to overcome the difference in their social stations. Louis is ill because he lacks power--like Caroline.

Also like Caroline, his illness is presented with all the loaded imagery of tuberculosis. He is constantly thirsty (451). He is burning up and seeking something to quench his thirst. Like Caroline, he is confined to his chamber, and he cannot eat or sleep. When Shirley brings him grapes he says, "'Mrs. Gill supplies me with toast and water. I like it best'" (451). All he needs, he says, is "'a night's peaceful rest'" (452).
Unlike Caroline's, Louis' illness is short-lived and he quickly recovers. He is strong, his "good constitution quickly triumphed over his indisposition" (453). But Louis' illness/love is quickly deciphered, and he has gained sure signs of Shirley's affection because of his temporary fever. The implication is that Louis' powerlessness is less crippling than Caroline's. As a man he is "naturally" stronger both physically and societally. He rebounds quickly, while Caroline needs the miracle of mother love. Louis is also aided in his recovery by Shirley's quick visit to his bedside. Robert misunderstands Caroline's illness, and he does not visit. It is significant that Shirley comes to Louis, although Robert leaves town while Caroline is confined.

When Louis recovers, he speaks of his weakness in love using the language of mental illness, as Robert did in the beginning of the novel. He has recovered his position of strength. He says:

I should sometimes forget common sense and believe in Romance. A strange, secret ecstasy steals through my veins at moments: I'll not encourage--I'll not remember it. I am resolved, as long as may be, to retain the right to say with Paul--'I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.' (473)
Louis has regained control and now he knows that Shirley will not have Sir Philip Nunnely because she "must be bent...she must be curbed" (491). Sir Philip is not man enough for the job, but Louis, empowered by Shirley's money and position, will be.

Robert Moore's illness contradicts many of the conventions set up within these two novels. The most important and obvious difference is that he does not fall ill but is "shot from behind" (521). And, oddly enough, the vengeful shot comes after Robert has been discussing love with Mr. Yorke. Robert has just finished saying:

Something there is to look to, Yorke, beyond a man's personal interest; beyond the advancement of well-laid schemes; beyond even the discharge of dishonouring debts. To respect himself, a man must believe he renders justice to his fellow men. Unless I am more considerate of ignorance, more forebearing to suffering, than I have hitherto been, I shall scorn myself as grossly unjust. (506, emphasis added)

Robert's illness is punishment for the sin of pride. He has learned some of his moral lessons from Caroline and Shirley. He learned benevolent rule from Caroline and her reading of Coriolanus (the echo of the names cannot be entirely accidental), and emotional integrity and honor from Shirley, whom he mistakenly assumed loved him. When he proposes
marriage to "Captain Keeldar"—hoping to discharge those dishonorable debts—she is hurt and offended. Robert comes to feel that he wronged both her and himself with his marriage offer, and he vows that he will never again offer himself to a woman without love.

What Robert has failed to learn is humility. Robert feels that he may "render justice" to his fellow men, not realizing that, according to this text at least, this is the power of God and not of men. Robert has yet to leave his egotism behind him. Immediately after Shirley's refusal, he leaves Yorkshire to find the "four ringleaders" (493) of the attack on his mill. Robert stays away to "attend...their trial, hear...their conviction and sentence, and see...them safely shipped prior to transportation" (493). The language Bronte uses illustrates how Robert views these men as packages or products of his will. Robert is still the businessman, despite what he may have learned about softening his actions in the private sphere. While he has learned to be more lenient to his workers and to respect emotions, he has at least one lesson left to learn, and that is taught him by the "prophet" "Michael Hartley, that mad Calvinist and Jacobin weaver." Robert first meets Michael in "the deepest, shadiest spot in the glen...the moon was full" (242). This Romantic natural iconography indicates that, according to the symbolism of this novel, Robert is learning from the "feminine."
Before Michael Hartley shoots Robert, Mr. Yorke hears the madman muttering, "'When the wicked perisheth, there is shouting...As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more...terrors take hold of him as waters; hell is naked before him. He shall die without knowledge" (506).\(^{10}\) Robert needs one last hard lesson before he is worthy of Caroline, and this is why his illness is an inversion of the others. Robert finds affection when he is ill, but only after a period of suffering or seeming purgatory. The death Michael refers to becomes not a physical death, but a death of Robert's old self. Robert is weakened, humbled, and emasculated, as it were.

Robert's pride is mortified through brute "man-handling" by his female care-takers. Mrs. Yorke takes him in hand and, with the help of Hortense Moore, nearly kills him. Their ineffectiveness may be because unlike Mrs. Pryor and Shirley, who nurse out of love, Mrs. Yorke only "almost loved Moore" (523, emphasis added) and she almost loves him because he is at her mercy. While these two ladies are nursing Robert, "something got wrong: the bandages are displaced, or tampered with; great loss of blood followed" (525). After Robert's doctor, Dr. MacTurk, "wrangle[s] over his exhausted frame" (525) and saves Robert's life, he banishes Mrs. Yorke and Hortense from the sickroom, and replaces them with Mrs. Horsfall, "the best nurse on his staff" (525). Mrs. Horsfall both smokes and takes "gin"
(526) while attending Robert; "she was no woman, but a dragon" (526).

The tender nursings of a loving mother or lover are not for Robert. He is attended first by a power-hungry Mrs. Yorke and then by a "dragon." Robert denied the emotional, the sentimental, and so it is denied him. Robert "renders justice" and so it is rendered unto him. Robert never visited Caroline while she was ill and so Mrs. Yorke will not allow Caroline to visit Robert (524). Perhaps this is why Robert may be aided by doctors while the others could not be: Robert has been shot; he is not fasting. His wound is not spiritual or emotional; it is both the means to the cure of an emotional and spiritual lack in Robert and retribution for sin in word, thought and deed.

We know that Robert has paid for his crimes of the soul when Martin Yorke, the imaginative and rebellious Yorke son, intervenes and brings Caroline to Robert's bedside. The name Martin should immediately bring to mind the Bishop, Martin of Tours. Martin Yorke is the bishop of the Imagination, not of the Church. He rebels against the rules imposed by the stern Yorkes and against the tyranny of his older brother Matthew, who Charlotte calls a "sceptic and scoffer" (535). When Martin and Caroline first meet, Martin has escaped to Nature, "he is, wandering alone, waiting duteously on Nature, while he unfolds a page of stern, of silent, and of solemn poetry" (528). While Martin waits on
Nature, he reads, not his Latin, "but a contraband volume of Fairy tales" (528). When he meets Caroline in the woods, he extends to her, not an actual cape, but an imaginative connection. He is the only Yorke who feels her sorrow and her wish to be near Robert. His imagination (as figured by nature, poetry, and Fairy tales) connects him with Shirley and Caroline and allows him to be the vital link between Caroline and Robert.

Martin's act symbolizes the transformation Robert needs to make to allow himself to honor the love between himself and Caroline. Robert has had to give up, in part, his single-minded reliance upon stern business sense. He has had to soften and learn to allow himself to appreciate more Nature, poetry, and "Fairy tales"—in short, Romance. Robert has had to relax his fear of the imaginative capitulation that characterized both him and Louis in their use of the vocabulary of mental illness when contemplating love. This softness, this romantic thrill, they thought, must be wrong. It must be a sickness. Both men are capable of imaginative leaps and connections, and both men, most especially the sterner, more masculine Robert, have had to learn to see strength in the feminine, fertile imagination. Charlotte employs one of the traditional usages of illness in literature to transform Robert. While Caroline, Shirley, and even Louis, to a great extent, were ill from a lack of power, Robert was made ill by the ill-use of power—by a
belief in the primacy of his power. With this depiction of Robert, Charlotte argues for a compromise between complete feminine imagination and dependency and complete masculine rationality and power.

By contrast, Emily's first depiction of male illness does not depend upon a male lack of power or upon too much power, but upon male fears of the same "feminine" power that Robert Moore has to learn to acknowledge. Lockwood, as the first narrator, is the first character that we meet in _Wuthering Heights_ and his is the first illness. Lockwood (whose name conjures images of impotence, or of confined space, as perhaps in a coffin) falls ill after losing his way in a snow storm between the Heights and the Grange. Lockwood, the city man, is lost in the wild, imaginative world of the Grange and the Heights. He does not know how to deal with the passionate sexual forces at play there. He denies the imaginative, sexual side of himself, and despite his obtuse identification with Heathcliff (47), Lockwood is not, like Heathcliff, a "savage of nature" (Homans, 17). In both _Wuthering Heights_ and _Shirley_, dogs have been used as images of natural, if violent, sexual forces. Phoebe and Skulker initiate Shirley and Catherine into marriage and sexuality. Emily uses another dog to illustrate Lockwood's disrespect for nature and for women. Lockwood indulged in "winking and making faces" (48) at Juno, "a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer" and her "swarm of squealing puppies"
Juno is the second powerful, fertile female Lockwood misunderstands. Lockwood thinks that he is escaping uncontrollable passion by fleeing the city for the country. Before encountering Wuthering Heights, he believes in the benign and friendly nature of the pastoral elegy. He is recuperating from a failed encounter with a woman he thought he might love at the beach. As Beth Newman points out in her article, "'The Situation of the Looker-On': Gender, Narration, and Gaze in Wuthering Heights," this reaction of his to Juno—another female, pagan, Nature goddess—indicates that "Lockwood fears...that his 'real goddess' might have proved a bitch goddess, reciprocating his attentions as the four-footed bitch at the Heights does—with the threat of bodily mutilation" (Newman, 1031).

As Lockwood clearly indicates by his description of his abortive love affair at the "sea-coast" (48), he does not understand women or passion. As Lockwood describes his love affair:

I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature, a real goddess, in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. I 'never told my love' vocally; still, if looks have language, the merest idiot might have guessed I was over head and ears; she understood me, at last, and looked a return—the sweetest of all
imaginable looks—and what did I do? I confess it with shame—shrank icily into myself, like a snail, at every glance retired colder and farther.

(48)

Lockwood "requites the dogs' stares with mocking looks—at which the canine mother attacks, provoking him to fend her off with a poker" (Newman, 1032). Lockwood requites Juno as he requites the goddess at the sea-coast. His look is the look of claiming power; the role of the spectator, the thinker, and definer is "a 'masculine' position" (Newman, 1032), and Lockwood is threatened whenever a woman assumes the slightest control. Juno, the sea-coast goddess, and the younger Cathy usurp his power merely by calmly returning his patronizing gaze. Lockwood is unable to exist in a natural, fertile, feminine world. This is why nature is "almost lethal" (Homans, 9) when he walks in the storm from the Heights to the Grange.

Lockwood would maintain power over life, himself, and his passions. He prefers to remain in the closed spaces of his sick-room at the Grange, meeting Nature only in Nelly's tale of Catherine and Heathcliff. Nelly is matronly, safely and benignly female, rather than threateningly, alluringly sexual like the two Catherines. Nelly could be a character in his safe, pastoral world; therefore, she may serve as translator between these two feminine and masculine worlds. Lockwood, unlike Martin Yorke, is unable to connect
imaginatively. He is unable to free up within himself and respond to a real connecting, passionate force with a respectful, passionate answer; he is unable to respond to reciprocal power. Lockwood makes faces at Juno and retreats before his goddess at the sea-coast.

Lockwood must respond to this same fertile, feminine power in Catherine Earnshaw's girlhood bed chamber. He reads her diary—penetrates her secret soul—and then falls asleep to be awakened by the ghostly wail of young Catherine crying "'Let me in--let me in!'" (67). As the child clutches Lockwood's hand, "terror made [him] cruel" (67) and "finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, [he] pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, 'Let me in!' and maintained its tenacious grip, almost maddening me with fear" (67).

The imagery is overwhelmingly sexual and recalls the scene where young Catherine is bitten by Skulker. This is another sexual initiation, and Lockwood reacts with overwhelming sadism and fear, underlined by the fact that he is dealing with a childish wraith. He is incapacitated by his encounters with passion and imagination at the Heights. When he returns through a snow storm to the safety of Thrushcross Grange he describes himself as

crouch[ing] nearer the fire: my head felt hot, and the rest of me chill: moreover, I was excited,
almost to a pitch of foolishness through my nerves and brain. This caused me to feel, not uncomfortable, but rather fearful, as I am still, of serious effects from the incidents. (76)

Lockwood retreats into illness; he moves from the heath to the safety of his bed chamber. He isolates himself from direct contact with the passionate feminine now embodied in the form of Cathy Heathcliff, and as her imagined suitor, shelters himself inside of Nelly Dean's story-telling. Lockwood, the impotent, is too weak to encounter women and passions directly; he puts the safe, matronly form of Nelly Dean between himself and the fires of feeling.

Edgar Linton's illness is similar to Lockwood's in that it involves a retreat from Nature. His undefined illness is like tuberculosis in that it is in his lungs and involves weakness, yet it is never described. Any connections between his end and his wife's are purposefully unstressed and undeveloped, because there really are no similarities besides their common mortality. Linton catches "a bad cold" one evening while he and his daughter are out walking among the reapers: "the evening happening to be chill and damp...a bad cold....settled obstinately on his lungs, confined him indoors throughout the whole of the winter, nearly without intermission" (262). The outdoors--Nature--kills Edgar Linton as if he and Nature are contrary forces. Edgar Linton has lost all his power through his very
patriarchy and so he may leave the narrative with very little struggle.

Without the formulaic rules of the patriarchy that have made him so strong, Edgar might have left Thrushcross Grange to Cathy, but since he is a son of the patriarchy, he must leave the Grange to his eldest male descendant—Linton Heathcliff. Edgar has no idea that Linton was "failing almost as fast as himself" (291) and desires a union between Cathy and "his heir" (291) so that Cathy can "retain, or, at least, return, in a short time, to, the house of her ancestors" (291). The awkwardness of the syntax mirrors the murkiness of Edgar's thinking. Edgar is entrapped in the very books and laws that have supported him. He does not feel too much anxiety about his daughter's future, since he ignorantly and hopefully believes "that as his nephew resembled him in person, he would resemble him in mind" (297). Edgar, had he been, as Margaret Homans calls Heathcliff, a "savage of nature", could have retained an organic (natural and therefore, in this novel, more feminine) power and worth after his daughter matured; but as he has sequestered himself in his library, fortressed himself in the Grange and denied Nature, he dies as his wife's father died at the same point in Catherine's life. Catherine and her daughter, Cathy, both appear to be able mythically to alter positions of conventional power through their wild, natural, sensuality.
It is clear from the physical resemblance as well as from Linton's name, that Linton Heathcliff and Edgar Linton are foils. By the time Linton has been introduced in the novel, readers have gotten used to calling Edgar Linton by his christian name rather than his surname as he was called before his marriage. In the second half of the novel, Edgar is portrayed as a father and a widower, rather than as a lover and a husband; his loving attention to Cathy and his commitment to Catherine's memory make it easy to validate Edgar's character and see him merely as the benevolent patriarch. Nelly, though, notes another side of Edgar's character before he and Catherine are married. After Nelly tells Lockwood about a fight between Catherine and Edgar that resulted in their engagement, she comments that Edgar should have left then and given Catherine up. The language she uses is particularly violent and very interesting since it is never commented upon. Nelly says that Edgar doesn't have the power to leave "a mouse half-killed, or [Catherine] half eaten" (112). Linton's sadism is openly commented upon, while Edgar's is veiled--yet both are present in the text. Linton is what Edgar Linton would be were he disenfranchised and disrespected. Had Edgar Linton been a tool for his father, as Linton is a tool for Heathcliff, Edgar would have been the same. If Edgar had grown up in the lawlessness of Wuthering Heights instead of the more conventional Thrushcross Grange, the implication is, they
would be no different.

Deborah Denenholz Morse has discussed Linton Heathcliff and what he symbolizes in her unpublished paper, "'Experience Liberated':

The critique of the romantic heroism of Heathcliff is accomplished in part through the characterization of his son, in whom the lawless will of Heathcliff is encased in an exaggeration of the enfeebled bodies of the Lintons. In Linton, Heathcliff is presented shorn of his glamour; the distortion of his sadistic nature is shown without the grandeur of power. (10) The same critique could be made of the relationship between Linton and his uncle. In Linton, Edgar Linton is presented shorn of his socially granted power. Linton is a foil between Edgar and Heathcliff. He is like both men in that he craves power and ascendancy. What makes him, as Nelly says, "a perishing little monkey" (304) and as Heathcliff says, a "little tyrant" (306) is his lack of means for acquiring power. Heathcliff has his "imaginative intensity and strength of commitment...and his obviously potent sexuality" (Morse, 10); Edgar has Thrushcross Grange, his job as the magistrate, and his books. Linton is merely the puppet of Heathcliff.

What Linton does have is the power of the written word and in his small world he competes with Hareton Earnshaw by
pitting his literacy against Hareton's health, strength, and kind nature. Books and what they contain and represent belong to the Lintons and, since Linton Heathcliff lacks his father's physical powers, he will adopt his uncle's methods. Like Shirley Keeldar, Linton realizes that the person who masters speech and writing is in control: "His books are not as nice as [Cathy's], and he want[s] to have them extremely" (257). Linton understands the patriarchal and biblically resonant power of the command of language. God is the father, God is the Word and the Word is God. Linton would support a traditional interpretation of scripture as opposed to Shirley's heretical Eve mythology. Linton's affiliation with Joseph is also seen in Cathy and Linton's contrary ideas of controlled and chaotic heavens; Cathy says that Linton's conception of heaven is only "half-alive" (280), and Linton claims that Cathy's "glorious jubilee" is "drunk" (280). Linton is a pupil of Joseph's biblically-defined patriarchy.

To degrade Hindley Earnshaw's son, Hareton, Heathcliff has denied Hareton an education and encouraged in him a contempt for all book-learning. When Cathy asks Hareton to explain the writing over the lintel at the Heights (in characteristic Brontesque fashion there is an incestuous echo of the name "Linton" in the word "lintel"), Linton takes the opportunity cruelly to tease Hareton. What is written over the lintel is Hareton's own name, Earnshaw;
ironically he is the only person of the name left in the world, and he can only say that it is "some damnable writing" (253). Hareton, who is handsome, bright by nature, and even possessing a certain natural nobility, under the unkempt mind and appearance that Heathcliff has fostered, is emasculated by his illiteracy, and Linton and Cathy tease him mercilessly for it. When Hareton cannot read his own name over the lintel, "Linton giggled--the first appearance of mirth he had exhibited." Linton says, "'He does not know his letters'" (253-254).

What Hareton does have—physical health, vitality, passion, and compassion—is what Linton lacks. It is hard not to remember that Hareton is the child of Hindley and Frances Earnshaw who, despite their petty cruelty to others, passionately loved each other. Linton is the son of Heathcliff and Isabella Linton, Edgar's younger sister. This match was made not of love, but of an adolescent, romance novel infatuation of Isabella's and a vengeful hatred of Heathcliff's. Isabella's infatuation quickly dissipates when she sees that cruelty viewed from afar can seem alluring, but cruelty personally directed is only humiliating and terrifying. As Catherine warned Isabella, Heathcliff is "a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man" (141). Heathcliff marries Isabella, wolfishly, to have revenge upon Edgar and Catherine and to stake a claim to Thrushcross Grange. While Heathcliff lacks legitimacy in Edgar's
patriarchal law, he sees that he may bend the law his way if he can father a son who is Linton's heir. The child of the loving relationship is strong and healthy, the child of the perverted relationship between Isabella and Heathcliff is a perverted, squealing monster.

Of course Linton is sickly from birth and predictably, Linton's diet is focused upon. The first account of Linton to Nelly from the housekeeper of Wuthering Heights concerns Linton's particular eating habits: "he must always have sweets and dainties, and always milk, milk for ever" (245). Linton cannot stomach the hardy, healthy normal diet of the Heights; he eats like a baby. Linton sits "wrapped in his furred cloak in his chair by the fire, and some toast and water, or other slop on the hob to sip at" (245-246). His diet degenerates down to "some water" with "a spoonful of wine" (270), "some tea" (303), and "a stick of sugar-candy" (311). Linton is continuously "thirsty" (303) like Caroline Helstone and Louis Moore, but unlike Caroline and Louis, who were sick from passion induced illness, Linton really has tuberculosis. In a fit of passion after Hareton throws him from the great room, Linton tires himself out pounding on the door and "at last, his cries were choked by a dreadful fit of coughing; blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell on the ground" (283). The only catch in Heathcliff's plan to marry his son to Edgar's daughter and thereby gain Thrushcross Grange is that Linton may actually die before he
can be married to Cathy—which would leave Cathy the sole heir of Thrushcross Grange and the second heir, behind Hareton, to Wuthering Heights.

Linton is not sick from passion; he is sick from lack of power and from the degeneracy of his birth. After his marriage to Cathy, he dies almost immediately with Cathy as the sole attendant and mourner of his life as well as of his death. Once Linton is married to Cathy, "his life is not worth a farthing, and [Heathcliff] won't spend a farthing on him" (323); Linton dies without Dr. Kenneth. Cathy is the only person who ever felt even a slight affection for him since his own mother's death, but all she can say after the horrible, lonely wait for Linton's death is, "'he's safe, and I'm free'" (325).

Cathy unconsciously tries to mimic both the passion between Catherine and Heathcliff and the stability of affection between her mother and her father, yet her care of Linton is only a pale, dead caricature of either relationship. She is his nurse, not his wife or his lover. Linton was too degenerate ever to feel a strong, healthy passion for another, too weak to sustain feeling and emotion. He is powerless, too powerless to live.

Linton's torturer-father, Heathcliff, is also ill, but Heathcliff's disease differs radically from Linton's. Heathcliff's anorexia resembles Caroline's starvation and Catherine's hunger strike. But unlike these two women,
Heathcliff does not desire more "masculine" power, but a union with his imaginative "feminine" side, as represented by the dead Catherine. He, like the women, desires a more androgynous identity. He desires the union of his separate selves. Like Catherine and Caroline, he willfully starves himself; unlike them, his self-starvation involves a curious lack of will. It is almost unconscious—as if his body is giving up his worldly goals of power and uniting with his soul, which hungers after eternal union with Catherine.

Heathcliff never lacked the ability or the will, as Robert Moore did, imaginatively to connect. Heathcliff's self-starvation is the mirror-image of Caroline's. Society has united Heathcliff's body and his will. He is male in a male society, but he is curiously feminine—by which I mean that he lacks a name and a patriarchal connection to support him.

To gain power in the world, the illegitimate Heathcliff must break the rules of normal human conduct. But the life of pure grasping will by which he acquires his fortune, his son, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, as well as all of Hindley Earnshaw's and Edgar Linton's wealth and power, is empty for him once Catherine dies.

Once having had that imaginative connection with Catherine, Heathcliff continually hungers after it. Catherine once said that Heathcliff "is more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" (121). After Catherine's death, Heathcliff becomes
more and more obsessed by the life of the soul and heart over the life of the will and mind. Heathcliff is haunted by Catherine, his other half:

I felt her by me [he says]—I could almost see her, and yet I could not. I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my yearning, from the fervour of my supplications to have but one glimpse! I had not one...I've been the sport of that intolerable torture! Infernal--keeping my nerves at such a stretch, that, if they had not resembled catgut, they would, long ago, have relaxed to the feebleness of Linton's. (321)

Heathcliff's ghost denies him sleep (321) and, finally, food. He has reverted to the childhood episodes when he and Catherine could not eat when separated. Just as Catherine could not nourish her body when denied her true self, Heathcliff cannot even remember his body when denied Catherine.

As the novel draws to a close, Heathcliff becomes not so much a living character as a shade haunting it. He "grew more and more disinclined to society" (342). At dinner, "he spoke to no [one]...[ate] very little, and went out directly afterwards" (351). Heathcliff himself comments on his strange dissociation from life: "Nelly, there is a strange change approaching--I'm in its shadow at present--I take so little interest in my daily life, that I hardly remember to
eat, and drink" (353). His whole world has become an imaginative connection with Catherine. Cathy, and especially Hareton, remind him of her. He asks:

what is not connected with her to me? and what does not recall her? I cannot look down at this floor, but her features are shaped on the flags! In every cloud, in every tree--filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men, and women--my own features mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! (353)

He has "to remind [him]self to breathe--almost to remind [his] heart to beat!" (354). His whole body and soul has "a single wish...it has devoured [his] existence--[he is] swallowed in the anticipation of its fulfillment" (354). His single wish is to reunite with Catherine, his feminine side, and this union can only come through the death of his masculine body.

As with Catherine, he is drawn from the inside to the outside--from the body to the soul. Heathcliff cannot eat: "for some days Mr. Heathcliff shunned meeting us at meals" (356). Later, "he sat down to dinner" (357) but, although he has not eaten in several days, he cannot pay attention to his food. His body and its needs have become meaningless to
him: "he took his knife and fork, and was going to commence eating, when the inclination appeared to become suddenly extinct. He laid them on the table, looked eagerly towards the window, then rose and went out" (357). Within a few days "he was dead and stark" (365) and "Kenneth was perplexed to pronounce of what disorder the master died" (365).

Through the portrayals of starvation and death in Shirley and Wuthering Heights, both Charlotte and Emily Bronte call for an imaginative connection, triumphing over the cultural separation, of the stereotypical and randomly attributed characteristics of maleness and femaleness. Women's need for more power and autonomy is the primary concern of both writers; but men need fertility, creativity, and faith in imagination over cold rationality. The imaginative man is represented by Heathcliff and Martin Yorke. Both authors attempt to create a compromise in the relationships they depict, but their compromises are problematic. Robert and Caroline Moore, and Louis and Shirley Moore are not perfectly free within their relationships. Shirley did have to give up her freedom, and the sacrifices she made were heavy. The fertile hollow is no longer, at the novel's end, green and lush, but a manufacturing community. The "feminine" has been subsumed by the "masculine" in Charlotte's vision.
Wuthering Heights's compromises are more satisfying. Heathcliff and Catherine have found a kind of androgynous after-life where they haunt the moors (366). Their spiritual union is Romantically satisfying and imaginative, but it is distinct from the Victorian concern of community. It is an individual, torturously achieved, other-worldly answer unique to Catherine and Heathcliff. Cathy and Hareton will unite freedom (Catherine's legacy) with civilization as is symbolized by Cathy teaching Hareton to read. Cathy is now the "master," who wields the power of the word. Hareton will move, through Cathy's tutelage, from the realm of the powerless to that of the powerful. Their union seems practical and romantic. They move easily from an indoor life to the outdoors. They "dig and arrange...a little garden" (356) together and after studying, they go outside for a walk together on the heath. They have created a New Eden and have displaced the misogyny of Joseph's patriarchal religion, as surely as their garden has displaced his wild brambles. It is obvious why these two characters are the healthiest of any in either book: they have achieved a balance between the needs of their bodies and the needs of their souls. They are not engulfed or consumed by their passions; they are each whole separately and then happy when together.

Cathy and Hareton represent union between not only the masculine and feminine, but between the Romantic issues of
individual freedom and spontaneity and the Victorian social concerns with laws and mores. Their health is an indication of their power and textual vindication—both are nurturers and healers. Hareton Earnshaw is associated with peace, compromise, and reconciliation. When Heathcliff kidnaps Cathy and Nelly, Hareton does not rebel against Heathcliff, whom he loves, but he brings Nelly "food enough to last [her] all day" (308). Hareton's benevolent and caring action recalls Nelly tending and feeding the banished Heathcliff both when he, as a adolescent, is punished for his wild appearance and manners, and when he is ill as a child.

The upcoming marriage of Hareton Earnshaw and Cathy Linton Heathcliff will unite not only the Earnshaws and the Lintons, but also will connect Heathcliff to this community. Hareton is, as Heathcliff often mourns, more the child of his heart than Linton. Heathcliff both dispossesses and nurtures Hareton, and their love for each other unites Heathcliff, after his death, with the union of the two patriarchal names—Linton and Earnshaw. Heathcliff's extrasocietal strength could not endure, but it will modify the outlooks and values of the upcoming generations that populate the Heights and the Grange. There is a special Brontean vision at work; both Charlotte and Emily Bronte portray the health of the body mirroring the health of the body politic. No longer will patriarchy alone control the
freedom, the language, of Emily Bronte's imaginative landscape. Hareton Earnshaw will not be killed by Nature, as Edgar Linton was; he will tend his gardens and farm his land. Nor will he be subsumed in Nature as Heathcliff comes to be—for Hareton is learning to read. Hareton and Cathy will not be cursed by "brain-fevers" or mysteriously suffer under TB-like symptoms. They have learned to control both their passionate natures and their need for power and dominion. Looking ahead, there is no suggestion that Cathy will die in childbirth. Hareton, we hope, will not die, bereft of his significance as a father, once his daughters reach adolescence as Mr. Earnshaw, Mr. Linton, and Edgar do.

Illness in these two novels is always symptomatic of a power issue. For women, it is always a lack of power that torments, as we saw with Caroline Helstone, Shirley Keeldar, and Catherine Earnshaw; for men, it is the abuse or lack of power. All power issues lead to a separation of the body and the soul, of the "masculine" and the "feminine," of the will or desires and the tools needed to achieve success. Union and compromise are the ideals. Health is found where there is union of energy and control, passion and compassion, the masculine and the feminine.
Notes

1. Unfortunately, this cultural predilection for defining ideal measurements and proportions of the female body prevails. Brumberg discusses this modern phenomenon in *Fasting Girls*, "The cultural explanation of anorexia nervosa is popular and widely promoted. It postulates that anorexia nervosa is generated by a powerful cultural imperative that makes slimness the chief attribute of female beauty...The common wisdom reflects the realities of women's lives in the twentieth century. In this respect the cultural model, more than any other, acknowledges and begins to explain why eating disorders are essentially a female problem" (Brumberg, 31-32).

2. For the equation of female illness with loss of love see Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady*.

3. Remembering the Brontes' own biography, this cry is especially poignant. Perhaps Charlotte and Emily would have taken their tea more often and more heartily if they had had a mother at Haworth Parsonage.

4. It seems to be characteristic of Charlotte to mourn the deaths of her loved ones in writing; just as she cries for Emily in *Shirley*, she eulogizes Maria with her portrait of Helen Burns at Lowood in *Jane Eyre*.


6. The term "monstrous inhabitation" refers to a complex fear attributed to young girls during adolescence and intimately associated with Freudian accounts of anorexia nervosa (Brumberg, 27-28). According to this theory, pubescent girls may fear their swelling bodies, especially swelling abdomens (Brumberg, 223). I will refer to this citation later in my discussion of Shirley Keeldar; it will become especially pertinent in relation to Catherine Earnshaw Linton's death in childbirth.

7. For an anthropological discussion of the connection between the moon and menstruation, see Frederick Lamp's "Heavenly Bodies: Menses, Moon, and Rituals of License among the Temne of Sierra Lerne" in *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*, edited by Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb.

8. This use of the word "mark" is oddly resonant. Shirley seems to feel that she is a marked woman; this is her marriage brand or mark. She is marked-out.

10. The first name, "Michael," signifies the archangel Michael, and the surname "Hartley" a return to matters of the heart over matters of the head and purse.

11. Justo L. Gonzalez, in The Story of Christianity, tells us that Martin of Tours converted to Christianity at an early age and against his parents' wishes. Gonzalez relates the most famous story regarding Martin of Tours:

   Martin and his friends were entering the city of Amiens when an almost naked and shivering beggar asked them for alms. Martin had no money for him, but he took off his cape, cut it in two, and gave half to the beggar. According to the story, later in his dreams Martin saw Jesus coming to him, wrapped in half a soldier's cape, and saying: "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me." (Gonzalez, 148)

   Later, Martin is baptized and becomes Bishop of Tours. According to legend, Martin was considered ill-suited for the bishopric because of his dirty and unkempt appearance. He was elected when the bishops present at the election could reach no agreement and it "was time to read the Bible...one of the present took the book and began reading where it fell open: 'By the mouths of babes and infants, thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes, to still the enemy and the avenger' [Psalm 8:2]" (Gonzalez, 148). Martin was elected bishop. The psalm was interpreted to be a direct message from God.

12. The first name, "Hareton", unites a more pastoral and tamed version of Heathcliff's wild and feral strength—"Hareton" echoes Lockwood's mention of "hare-bells" (367) in the last paragraph of the novel—and the conventional patriarchy with his surname "Earnshaw."
Bibliography


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