

DOUBLE VISION IN EMILY BRONTE'S POETIC IMAGERY AND THEMES

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*To my friend KRITYUNJAY KUMAR DOUBEY to whom
I owe a debt of gratitude that neither private
nor public thanks could ever repay.*



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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled **DOUBLE VISION IN EMILY BRONTE'S POETIC IMAGERY AND THEMES**, submitted by Satyendra Kumar Singh, Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Languages, New Delhi, in fulfilment of eight credits out of the total requirement of twenty four credits, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is his original work according to the best of my knowledge and has not been submitted so far, in part or full, for any other degree or diploma of any university. This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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CHAPTER - I

EMILY BRONTE'S POETRY, OUR OBJECTIVES

Emily Bronte's vision is marked by a certain ambivalence. For her every thing is double - edged. No experience, no object of reality, no emotion, is either wholly good or wholly bad, wholly beneficial or wholly destructive. Whether it is birth or death, sunrise or sunset, love or hate, Emily Bronte is in a way uneasy about each one of these. Thus air is both life and obliteration, water is both regeneration and dissolution, dreams represent both happiness and fear and doors represent to her both openness and imprisonment. This "double vision", a reflex perhaps of a highly sensitive nature, unable and too insecure to make up its mind, marks all her themes and images.

Emily Bronte (1818 - 1848) is one of those few writers who have attained fame on account of a single work. Her novel, Wuthering Heights (1847) is widely read, variously interpreted and extensively commented upon. So much so that there is little scope to offer something new to the already existing works. Thus, the present study does not presume to mark any new dimension in this area. Moreover, this is not the aim of this study which attempts at evaluating and analysing Emily Bronte's poetry, which, as will be seen from a critique of some of the recent works, few critics have taken pains to discuss at length.

Emily's poems are characterized by strength and freshness. With their imaginative power, their instinctive music, their sweeping impressiveness, their effects of landscape, their concentrated force of expression, their serene intensity, the poems are often powerful and almost always beautiful and original. They have an arresting individuality. Charlotte found them 'startling'. When she read them 'alone and in secret' she heard the 'notes' of 'genuine poetry;' they stirred her heart 'like the sound of a trumpet'. She tried to analyse their power, and found 'concentrated energy, clearness, finish - strong, strange pathos'¹. The Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell (1850) narrates the discovery of Emily's verse and provides the first critical evaluation of Emily as a poet :

.... Something more than surprise seized me... a deep conviction that these were not common effusion, nor at all like the poetry women generally write. I thought them condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine. To my ear they had a peculiar music - wild, melancholy and elevating.²

Charlotte's letter to W.S. Williams expresses the same impression of Emily's superiority to other women poets

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1. Clement Shorter, The Brontes : Their Lives, Friendships and Correspondences (Oxford : Basil Blackwell 1932) vol. II, p.256.
 2. Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights ed., William M. Sale, Jr. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company INC. 1963) p. 4.

which had already been testified to by Dublin University Magazine³, Anthenaeum⁴ and The Critic⁵:

With very few exceptions the poems of Ellis Bell deal with abstract ideas rather than with actual events.⁶ He is the most metaphysical of the all⁶.

Emily's reputation as a poet, thus, was already established and later critics like Peter Bayne and Swinburne could not but add weight to the already existing views about Emily's poetic talent. Swinburne writing in his 1877 note detected in the 'plain song of Emily's clear stern verse' her poetic gift. His review of Mary Robinson's biography of Emily Bronte played a decisive part in the history of Bronte criticism. Swinburne insists that Robinson has done for Emily Bronte what Mrs. Gaskell had done for Charlotte Bronte: She 'has been interested and attracted where Mrs. Gaskell was scared and perplexed'.⁷ Emily's genius, says Swinburne, 'is essentially tragic;' he finds

3. Dublin University Magazine, Vol. 28, no. 166, October 1846, p.392-3
4. Anthenaeum, 4 July 1846, p. 682
5. The Critic, vol. 4, 4 July 1846 p. 7.
6. Ibid, vol. 7, 15 December 1848, p. 486.
7. Anthenaeum, 16 July 1883 (reprinted in Miscellanies, 1886) p. 263-64.

interesting parallels between Shakespeare and Emily Bronte. Among those who continued Swinburne's heritage is Angus Mackay who compared her verse with Coleridge and Blake, a view which was supported later on by May Sinclair :

It is doubtful if she ever read a line of Blake; yet it is Blake that her poems perpetually recall, and it is Blake's vision that she has reached there...

Sinclair's study contains the germ for many later developments of Bronte criticism. Her analysis of the metaphysics and the themes is illuminating. It shows Emily Bronte as a 'lover of the Absolute' and foreshadows the assessment of Emily's mysticism which was discussed subsequently by Rudolph Kuhlmann, Charles Simpson and Charles Morgan. But it is her awareness of the Gondal that makes her the immediate predecessor of that pioneer of Gondal scholarship, Madeline Hope Dodds.

I believe ... that it is in the cycle of these poems and not elsewhere, that we should look for ⁹ the first germs of Wuthering Heights.

8. May Sinclair, The Three Brontes (London : Hutchinson and Company 1912) p. 172.

9. Ibid. p. 173.

Truly, in talking at all about Emily Bronte's poems, we at once face the Gondal question, almost as vexed as the Homeric one¹⁰; it is wise, therefore, to declare our standpoint. The question is about the degree of subjectivity, what we might call the personal versus the dramatic, in the poems. For our guidance we have at one extreme Ratchford, who in her attempt at reconstructing the Gondal saga, Gondal's Queen, claims that all Emily's verse falls within the Gondal context¹¹. But Gondal's Queen as Mary Visick suggests, have done more harm than good to our conception of Emily Bronte as a poet, inevitably it suggests that her poetry is a part of the world as freakish and overheated as that of the "Atys and Cybele" poems which Pierrot is writing in Mauriac's Les Chemins de la mer¹². At the other extreme, we have Edwin Morgan who thinks that 'Gondal and its characters are only marked projections of a personality trying to materialise its inward wars and loves' and that the verse is indeed the

10. Inga-Stina Ewbank, Their Proper Sphere (London. Edward Arnold (Publishers) Limited 1966) p. 95.

11. Fannie E. Ratchford, Gondal's Queen (New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company 1955) p. 27.

12. Mary Visick The Genesis of Wuthering Heights (HonKong: Honkong University Press 1958) p. 74.

most personal ever written.¹³ This view is also expressed by Jacques Blondel and Derek Stanford who say that Emily Bronte is first and foremost a personal poet. An intermediary position is taken up by C.D. Lewis who sees Gondal as a 'scaffolding which acted as a fuse to her imagination and as an objective correlative',¹⁴. Most critics and commentators seem to have felt that some poems are more Gondal than others but this division does not necessarily coincide with the division between established Gondal and non-Gondal verse; most would say that in "Cold in the earth ..." and "silent is the House---", both Gondal poems, Emily Bronte is dealing with deep personal feelings. The theory that some are exclusively personal derives support from the discovery that, in February 1844, Emily started to copy out her finished poems into two separate notebooks, one of which was headed with the inscription "Gondal Poems". The other came to contain such poetry as the homesickness poems from the autumn and winter of 1838, the poems on nature from 1841 and 1844, and meditative poems on hope, despair, life,

13. Edwin Morgan, "Women and Poetry," The Cambridge Journal, vol.4, August 1950, p. 643-73.

14. C. D. Lewis, "The Poetry of Emily Jane Bronte," Bronte Society Transaction, 1957, p. 85.

death and the transitoriness of things. Now what this division seems to suggest is Emily Bronte's awareness that Gondal could as C.D. Lewis suggests - straightjacket her imagination, that it limited the field of human experience she could explore.¹⁵ It does not necessarily mean that the non-Gondal poems are more 'personal' with the autobiographical implications which that word carries. There are, for example, in the non-Gondal notebooks four poems of unhappy love, written in the spring of 1840. The first "Far, far away is mirth withdrawn", a lament for a dead lover with a 'blighted name', is both in situation and sentiment very close to many Gondal poems; it seems to assume a background story without knowledge of which the feelings in the poem are extravagant. The second, "It is too late to call thee now", is tauter and more restrained in its meditation on a lost love; the third "I'll not weep that thou art going to leave me", is freer of Gondal echoes but still somewhat overweighted with sentiment. But in the fourth, she has arrived at a self-contained love lyric where the mood establishes within the poem, and where the haunting effect of simple words looks forward to a poem like "Cold in the earth":

If grief for grief can touch thee,
If answering woe for woe,

15. Ibid, p.88.

If any ruth can melt thee,
Come to me now!

I cannot be more lonely
More drear I cannot be !
My worn heart throbs so wildly
'Twill break for thee¹⁶.

What is interesting about these poems, seen together, is the way they show us Emily Bronte working on an experience and a mood, whether personal or not, and whittling their expression down to its most perfect form. What matters is not whether Emily Bronte herself felt, or not, what is felt in the poems; what matters are poems as explorations of moods and discriminations of emotions. As with Shakespeare's sonnets, which suffer under a similar autobiographical strain, Emily Bronte's poems matter, not as experience, but as something made out of human experience. If we can agree on this, then we need not go from her poems to her novel via a reconstruction of the persons and events of the Gondal saga as has been done by Visick and Laura Hinkley, we can instead concentrate on how the accretions of thought and feeling which the poems are, anticipate thought and feeling, and their expression in the novel.

16. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p.144-45.

Let us return once again to a few more studies of Emily. In 1910 appeared Clement Shorter's edition of the poems with an introductory essay by W. Robertson Nicoll. Reviewing the book Robert Bridges remarked upon its numerous imperfections. He himself had no doubt as to Emily's 'transcendent genius'; what he questioned was her ear and her technical proficiency. But he insisted that in Emily's speech 'the common words have regained their essential and primal significance and provide 'direct verbal touch with felt realities',¹⁷.

In the post - war phase we came across the first authentic edition of Emily's poems since 1848. C.W. Hatfield who published The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte in 1941 included a list of the poems 'arranged as an epic of Gondal' by Fannie E. Ratchford, who in the same year, published The Bronte's Web of Childhood. Ratchford's incessant research culminated in Gondal's Queen (1955), an attempt to see Emily's poems as the life story of Augusta Geraldine Almeda - a heroine with three names - 'from dramatic birth, through tempestuous life, to tragic death',¹⁸, a view which was

17. The Times Literary Supplement, 12 January, 1919.

18. Fannie E. Ratchford, Gondal's Queen (New York : Mc Graw- Hill Book Company 1955) p. 27.

challenged by Laura Hinkley and W.D. Paden who favoured other constructions and objected to the reducing of three heroines to one and to see Emily's poems falling into the epic of Gondal which we have already discussed.

Another book which deserves mention is Mrs. Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Bronte. Though it deals essentially with Charlotte, it reveals to us the already growing myth about Emily's stoical reserve, her intractability and her fatal disease. E. S. Dallas, prompted by Mrs. Gaskell, comments upon Emily's fatalism and foreshadows two opposite trends of later criticism: the biographical interpretation of Emily's work which was attempted later on by Winifred Gerin in Emily Bronte : A Biography (1971) and Edward Chitham in A Life of Emily Bronte (1987) and the comparison of Wuthering Heights with a tragedy. Like Swinburne, Dallas, too, feels that Emily's genius was essentially tragic and says :

She - this simple lass in a lowly parsonage in the wilds of Yorkshire laid her head upon her pillow and died¹⁹ like the heroine of a Grecian tragedy.

19. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, July 1857, p.90-91.

Clearly, the above presentation provides some understanding of Emily's work, her mind and her personality, but her verse is the work of a more interesting personality than Charlotte's or others presentation allows. What we encounter in her verse is a mind whose best strength lies in resistance, self-checking, self-combat - a sensibility that yearns for ideal freedom, yet finds in that intensity of yearning a strength to bear the weight and limitation of reality.²⁰ Thus, Emily is not a poet in the Victorian mould. Rather, she is a poet in the tradition of the great Romantics- she follows closely in the footsteps of Blake, Byron and Wordsworth and it is this poet in whom our centre of interest lies.

Emily's finest and best-known poems come from her last phase of life. However, the first lyric in Hatfield's Collection, "Cold, clear and blue...." is as good as most of her writing ten or twelve years later, while her last extant pieces "why ask to know the date - the clime ?" and "Why ask to know what date, what clime ?" handle its revenge theme - all 'taunts' and 'noble gore' as if she had never read, let alone written Wuthering Heights. What we seem to have

20. Anne Smith, ed., The Art of Emily Bronte
(London : Vison Press 1976) p. 40.

is an author who gained access to her talents rarely : from time to time, and apparently at random, wrote poems of real worth; suddenly, in the winter of 1845 - 46, created a masterpiece; then lapsed into melodramatics again. This is because she went through phases of greater or lesser interest in the different forms in which she worked. When she was in what we might call a fictional phase, her poetry frequently suffered. When her interest in writing novel weaned after completing Wuthering Heights her poetry gained in intensity as though all her creative energy had flowed into this another channel.

Emily's poetry which is basically lyrical in thought and content is represented by such poems as "Aye There It is!," "The Night Wind," "Cold in the Earth...", "Death that struck when I was most confiding," "Silent is the House...", "No coward soul is mine" and a few more. They deal with all the great intolerables of life - pain, loss, cruelty ; love, death and after life - the questions which always disturbed her and found expression in her poems. Yet, it is best to begin the study from the standpoint of those external objects which had the firmest hold on her inner life ; in other words, from the point of view of Nature. This passion for external Nature awoke in

her mind an intense spiritual yearning. She escaped from herself into the glimmering visions of the imagination, but had to return again to her own identity, with the inner struggle. Finally, she stayed herself upon the expectation of Death with its ultimate solace - the expectation of Death as the strong liberator of the soul:

Its wings are almost free, its home, its harbour found,²¹
Measuring the gulf it stoops and dares the final bound

So much is Emily's fascination for death- a typical romantic fascination - that she appears to be a poet representing the dark side of life and proves to be a poet of not 'life in light' but 'life in darkness'.

Emily Bronte is a poet of nature's less benign aspects. Few writers have so consistently celebrated, or at least incorporated the action of relentless rain, dreary winds, storms, mist, and the sunless hours of a 'heaven lorn'. In places, of course, there is considerable degree of reliance upon the standard 'props' of nature - snow, frost, summer, sun, and so on, occasionally conveyed in archaic and self-conscious terminology: 'Cynthia's silver morning', for

21. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press 1941) p. 239.

example. But this type of pseudo-pastoral effect was to give way to the truly - felt and simply moving " How clear she shines ! How quietly, I lie beneath her silver light."

This in fact summarises the constant style of Emily's nature references. The details are observed in their place, but they are particularized, or presented with the startling immediacy of the freshness of first observation.

Emily displayed a continuous response to the ebb and flow of the seasons, to the action and interaction of the elements of wind, sun, night and stars, and the very sounds of nature's working which we associate with Wordsworthian mysticism. Yet, at other times, she shows an infinitely calm and objective recording of nature rather than a response to it: ' The deer are gathered to their rest , /The wild sheep seek the fold' - in a mood which recalls Sappho's immortal evening song, " O Hesper, you bring home - ward...the sheep to the fold, the goat to the stall, the child to the mother."²²

22. Anne Smith, ed., The Art of Emily Bronte (London: Vision Press, 1976) p.86.

This was because, like so much else, Emily's mystical appreciation grew and developed during the course of her life. And we have to trace its maturing from stage to stage as she realised and concentrated her powers. The mystical experience is described as occurring in two stages: first comes the cessation of physical life, and especially the irritability of expectancy. Then, the inner self ('essence') leaps to commune with a being which can only be described in terms of negatives - the Invincible, the Unseen. The freedom for which she longs for in so many poems as an essential of her life is more totally hers in only such types of mystical possession than in any other mode of her life. Nothing can make her lose her faith in this; her vision may be 'robed in fires of Hell, or bright with heavenly shine'; but she remains insistent upon its divine origin.

On the strength of the lyrics and the lyrical ballads, Emily, thus, ranks high among English writers of short poems. Her poetry possesses remarkable density. The deeper, and the more deeply felt her thought, the more sparing she was of words in which to express them. Her language, as Charlotte says, is terse, but forcible and emotive. She frequently uses abstractions - doom, bliss, shame, hope, despair - but

there is nothing vague about them and their use is balanced by her vigorous use of the concrete; her material terms have substance and breath of meaning. With what appears to be a limited but, is rather a consciously selective lexis, she suggests both the universal and the particular. She never multiplies epithets, but she does introduce at interval the unexpected word that is as startling in its aptness as in its originality. She does not fear to be repetitive, where the choice of adjectives corresponds to her deepest preoccupations. 'Drear', 'love' and 'wild' are of frequent occurrence, but so is 'glorious' -they reflect the two poles of her private world. She is sparing in her use of metaphor and simile, for she identifies too closely with her inner life and her surroundings to have much need of such intermediaries. When she does use them, they tend to be taken from some process of nature. But in her greatest poems she uses symbols and images to express what could not be possibly said in any other way.

In exploring Emily's poetry, it is wise, therefore, to read the poems with an emphasis on image and meaning. Any work of art analysed in its totality reveals an internal and consistent relation between

image and meaning which are born *uno actu*. The origin of the symbolic content of the imaginative field lies hidden in the unconscious psyche of the author. It is natural, therefore, that there is always a strong relation between the author's thoughts, feelings and general experience of life on the one hand, and the pattern of images produced by his creative mind on the other. By a careful analysis of the language and structure of images it may be possible to detect the world which represents an interface between the external reality and the inner highly private world of the author.

Yet, any study of imagery of a particular poet would not be complete in itself without a discussion of imagery in poetry. The study, therefore, begins with a statement of imagery in poetry.

CHAPTER - II

IMAGERY IN POETRY

Imagery is a topic which belongs both to psychology and to literary study. In psychology it means a mental reproduction, a memory of a sensational or perceptual experience 'which may be visual, may be auditory' or 'may be wholly psychological.'¹ In literary study, it refers to pictures produced in the mind by language, whose words and statements may refer either to experiences which could produce physical perceptions were the readers actually to have those experiences, or to the sense-impressions themselves. In other words, it is used, in literary study, to refer variously to the meaning of a statement involving images, to the images themselves, or to the combination of images and meaning. Thus Longinus says, '--- image is used of any mental conception, from whatever source it presents itself which gives rise to speech---'². Or Spurgeon says, 'I use the term image here as the only available word to cover every kind of simile, as well

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1. John Middleton Murray, "Metaphor", Twentieth Century Poetry : Critical Essays and Documents, ed., G. Martin and P.M. Furbank (Walton Hall, Milton Keynes : The Open University Press 1975) p. 7-17.
 2. Longinus, "On the Sublime", Classical Literary Criticism, tr., T.S. Dorsch (London : Penguin Books, 1965) p.121.

as every kind of what is really compressed simile - metaphor'³. Or C.D. Lewis refers to it as 'a picture made out of words' for 'exploring reality.'⁴

For the purpose of our present discussion of imagery in poetry we can reduce the various definitions essentially to three: (1) 'mental imagery', (ii) 'imagery as figures of speech,' and (iii) 'imagery and image patterns as the embodiment of symbolic vision or of nondiscursive truth. Interest in the first focusses on what happens in the reader's mind (effect), while in the second and third it is focussed on the imagery-bearing language itself and its significations (cause).

Our first definition emphasizes the relation of the statement on the page to the sensation it produces in the mind. Interest in this field was apparently first aroused by the early experiments in the psychology of perception of Sir Francis Galton, in 1880, who sought to discover that people differ in their image-making habits and capacities.

3. C.F.E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells us (Cambridge : At the University Press 1935) p. 35.

4. C.D. Lewis, The Poetic Image (London : Penguin Books 1958) p. 58.

Our second definition concentrates on the nature of the relationship between a subject and analogue, that is, on metaphor. Although, it is the analogue which is, strictly speaking, the image, the term is often used to refer to the entire subject-analogue relationship. Beginning with the work of Max Muller, whose "Lectures on the Sciences of Language"⁵ were delivered at the Royal Institute in 1861-64, the nature of metaphor became an open question. Max Muller's answer, although its assumptions have been questioned, is still influential today: man, as he develops his conceptions of immaterial things, must perforce express them in terms of material things because his language lags behind his needs - the literal mode becomes ineffective, inexact, or incomplete. In other words, figurative imagery often makes for greater precision of expression; thus language, as it seeks exactitude, grows with metaphor.

Our third definition is concerned precisely with the function of image patterns whether literal or figurative or both, as symbols by virtue of

5. Max Muller, "On the Sciences of Languages 1861-64", Three Lectures on the Sciences of Language and its place in general education, delivered at the Oxford University extension Meeting 1889 (Varanasi : Indological Book House, 1961).

psychological association. The problems here are to ascertain how the poet's choice of imagery reveals not merely the sensory capacities of his mind but also his interests, tastes, temperament, values, and vision; to determine the function of recurring images in the poem in which they occur as tone-setters, structural devices and symbols; and to examine the relations between the poet's over-all image patterns and those of myths and rituals.



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While discussing the patterns of imagery - whether literal, figurative or both - we are faced with the essential question of how does this pattern of imagery in a work reveal things about the author and/or his poem. The basic assumption is that repetition and recurrences are in themselves significant. Hence the method involves an application of some elementary statistical principles. These patterns may either be within the work itself, or among literary works and myths in general.

If we assume for the moment that repetitions are indeed significant, the nature of the significance must be examined. What exactly, will counting image clusters tell the critic ?

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There are at least five distinguishable answers :
(1) texts of doubtful authorship can be authenticated;⁶
(2) inferences can be made about the poet's
experiences, tastes, temperament, and so on;⁷ (3) the
causes of tone, atmosphere, and mood in a poem or play
can be analysed and defined;⁸ (4) some of the ways in
which the structure of conflict in a play is supported
can be examined;⁹ and (5) symbols can be traced out,
either in terms of how they relate to archetypes, or
some combination.¹⁰

The first two approaches relate to problems
extrinsic to the work itself, although they seek
internal evidence. The procedure involves counting all
the images in a given work or in all the works of a

6. M.B. Smith, Marlowe's Imagery and the Marlow Cannon (Edinburgh : Cadell, 1940), p.80-94.
7. T.H. Banks, Milton's Imagery (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950) p. 50-59.
8. C.F.E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells us (Cambridge : At the University Press 1935) p. 43-56.
9. K. Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1941, 1973)p. 90-114.
10. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism : Four Essays (Princeton : Princenton University Press, 1957) p. 40-53.

given poet and then classifying them according to the areas of experience from which they derive: Nature - Animate and Inanimate, Daily life, learning, Commerce, and so on.¹¹ Since these categories and their proportions represent aspects of the poet's imagination and perception, we can draw two inferences on the basis of the resultant charts and figures : first, that these patterns are caused by the poet's personal experiences with life and that, therefore, they give a clue to the poet's personality and background;¹² and second, that since they are unique, they offer a means of determining the authorship of the doubtful texts.

The third and fourth approaches relate to problems intrinsic to the artistic organization of the work itself : 'One cannot long discuss imagery', says Burke, 'without sliding into symbolism. The poet's images are organized with relation to one another by reason of their symbolic kinships. We shift from the image of an object to its symbolism as soon as we consider it, not in itself alone, but as a function in a texture of

11. C.F.E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells us (Cambridge : At the University Press 1935) p. 394-408.

12. Ibid. p. 12.

relationship."¹³

The next and fifth approach was to reason once again from inside to outside work, but this time ostensibly for the sake of returning to it with greater insight. A poem is a dramatic revelation in disguised and symbolic form of the poet's emotional tensions and conflicts, and if therefore, some idea of these tensions and conflicts can be formed, the reader will then be driven to their symbolic meaning.

Having discussed imagery at three different levels, we may now be tempted to ask what is involved in each definition, how each is related to the others, what the values of each are. Cognitive psychologists have defined a number of different kinds of mental imagery: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, organic and kinesthetic. Obviously, these categories, although, perhaps somewhat overelaborate for the purposes of literary criticism, are preliminary to the other approaches to imagery, for they define the very nature of the materials. And several valuable results have emerged from the application of these distinctions to literature. Firstly, the concept of

13. K. Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1941) p. 68-69.

mental imagery has encouraged catholicity of taste, for once it has been realized that not all poets have the same sorts of sensory capacities, it is easier to appreciate different kinds of poetry. In writers as different as Emily, Shakespeare and Poe, we can see that the setting (a system of 'properties'), is often a metaphor or symbol: the raging sea, the storm, the wild moor, the decaying castle by the dank, dark tarn¹⁴. The frequently voiced complaint that Shelley's poetry is less concrete than Keats's suffers from a basic misconception of the nature of imagery, for Shelley's poetry contains just as much imagery as Keats's, although it is of a somewhat different kind¹⁵. Secondly, the concept of mental imagery provides a valuable index to the type of imagination with which any given poet is gifted. To know that Keats's poetry is characterized by a predominance of tactile and organic imagery, for example, or that Shelley's is characterized by a predominance of the imagery, of motion, is valuable knowledge and provides important descriptive terms with which to define the achievement of each poet. Thirdly, the concept of mental imagery

14. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (London : Jonathan Cape, 1942) p. 188.

15. R.H. Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley : A comparative Study (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina, 1949) p. 84-102.

is pedagogically useful in encouraging better reading habits by stressing these aspects of poetry. Thus, because the reader is encouraged to make specific images in his mind as he reads, aesthetic appreciation can be improved in a very literal sense.

As has already been discussed, imagery, whatever its sensory qualities may be, may function either literally, figuratively, symbolically or in some combination. Thus, an investigation of figurative imagery involves such problems as that of rhetorical types, that of the kinds of relationship which may obtain between subject and analogue, that of the nature of the symbolic expression and that of the use of figures in poetry, which the study of mental imagery has either confused or ignored.

Rhetoricians like Quintilian developed elaborate systems of classification for figures of speech. The common types distinguished now, however, have been reduced to about six: metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, simile, personification, allegory, and - a related but different device - symbol. While talking of metaphor Quintilian distinguishes between metaphor which animates the inanimate, and that which inanimates the animate. With Pongs it becomes a grandiose contrast between

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polar attitudes - that of the mythic imagination, which projects personality upon the outer world of things, which animizes and animates nature, and the contrary type of imagination, which feels its way into the alien, which de-animizes or unsubjectivizes itself. All the possibilities of figurative expression are exhausted by these two, the subjective and objective poles.¹⁶

The first form was called by Ruskin the 'pathetic fallacy' if we think of it as being applied upward to God as well as downward to the tree and the stone, we may call it the anthropomorphic imagination.¹⁷ In mystical symbolism there are three general types of earthly union available for the symbolic expression of the highest mystical experience: (1) union between inanimate objects (physical mixtures and chemical unions: the soul in the fire of god as spark, wood, wax, iron; god as water to the soil of the soul, or as the ocean into which flows the river of the soul); (2) unions figured according to the ways in which the body appropriates to the essential elements of life:

16. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (London : Jonathan Cape, 1942) p. 204.

17. J. Ruskin, Complete Works, ed., A.D.O. Wedderburn (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1903-12) p. 84-112.

In the Scriptures God is represented by those particular things from which we cannot completely withdraw ourselves - light and air, which enter at every crack, and water, which in one form or other we all receive daily¹⁸.

so, to mystics all over the world, God is the food and drink of the soul, its Bread, Fish, water, Milk, Wine; (3) human relationships - that son to father, wife to husband.

The first of these two would be assigned by Pongs to the second ultimate type of metaphoric intuition, that of Einfühlung,¹⁹ itself subdivided into the 'mystic' and the 'magic'. The mystical metaphor and the magic are both de-animizing : they run counter to man's projection of himself into the non-human world; they summon up the 'other' - the impersonal world of things, monumental art, physical law. Blake's "Tiger" is a mystical metaphor; God, or an aspect of God, is a Tiger (less than man, more than man), the Tiger in turn (and through the Tiger its Maker) is read in terms of metal forged in great heat. The Tiger is no animal from the

18. M.A. Ewer, Survey of Mystical Symbolism (London : Chatto and Windus, 1933) p. 164-6.

19. Pongs calls the first of his types the Beseeltypus and the second the Erfuhltypus. The first animizes or anthropomorphizes; the second empathizes. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (London : Jonathan Cape, 1942) 204-06.

natural world, but a visionary creature, symbol as well as thing.

In English poetry, Emily Bronte, Emily Dickinson and W.B. Yeats, among others, reach for this de-animizing, this anti-mystic metaphor: Emily Bronte when she wants to render the sense of death she likes to invoke the experience of dying:

O for the time when I shall sleep
Without identity,
And never care how rain may steep
Or snow may cover me!²⁰

Yeats reaches his ultimate of Poetry as Magic in "Byzantium" (1930). In the 1927 "Sailing to Byzantium," he has already set the opposition between the world of biological life: 'The young in one another's arms---the mackerel- crowded seas' and the world of Byzantine art, where all is fixed, rigid, unnatural, the world of 'gold mosaic' and 'gold inamelling'. Biologically man is a 'dying animal' his hope for survival is through being 'gathered into the artifice of eternity,' not again to take 'bodyily form from any natural thing', but to be a work of art, a golden bird on a golden bough. "Byzantium" from one point of view a tightly

20. C.W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 220.

written illustration of Yeats's system, a doctrinal poem, is from another, specifically literary point of view a structure of closely inter-respondent non-natural images, the whole ^ocomposing something like a prescribed ritual or liturgy.²¹

We have seen how the common types of figures of speech have been reduced to about six : synecdoche, metonymy, simile, metaphor, personification, allegory, and - a related but different device symbol. Each of these figures is a device of language by means of which one thing is said (analogue) while something else is meant (subject), and either the subject or the analogue, or both, may involve imagery. Although merely identifying and analysing types of figures is no gurantee of understanding their function in a particular poem, identification and analysis involves issues which are germane to that end. Classification rests upon the kinds of relationships which may obtain between what is said and what is meant. Thus, in synecdoche and metonymy the relationship between thing said and the thing meant is based largely upon some sort of contiguity regarding class and species, cause and effect, and so on, while in the remaining figures,

21. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (London : Jonathan Cape, 1942) p. 206.

on the other hand, the relationship is based largely upon similarity in difference. It was because of this that Aristotle could say of the power of making metaphor that

It is the thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perceptin of the similarity in dissimilars.²²

The placing, then, of two different kinds of things in significant ratio is the central characteristic of these two figures. Subject and analogue or 'tenor and vehicle'²³ as I. A. Richards have designated them - may be related with respect to physical resemblance - as when Homer compares the charge of a warrior in battle to that of a lion on the sheepfold - in which case the study of mental imagery - provides useful distinctions. But many figurers relate two different things in other ways:

My love is like a red, red rose---
My love is like a melody
That's sweetly played in tune.²⁴

22. S.H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art (Ludhiana : Kalyani Publishers, 1972) p. 112.

23. I. A. Richards, "Metaphor" and "The command of metaphor", The Philosophy of Rhetoric (London : Oxford University Press, 1939) p. 105.

24. Robert Burns, "My Luve's like a red, red rose", The Golden Treasury ed., Francis Turner Palgrave. (London : Oxford University Press, 1964) p. 150.

A lady's blush, her delicate skin, or her fragrance may find physical analogues in the colour, texture, or odor of rose, but her freshness, and beauty are qualities suggestively evoked by the rose rather than images tangibly displayed by it. What Burns speaker is saying after all, is that his lady is to him as June is to the world in the sense of bringing joy. Furthermore, the two things related may each be images, or each may be feelings or concepts, or the subject may be an image and the analogue a feeling or concept and the analogue an image. Some critics have even claimed that the subject or tenor of a figure is in reality the relationship itself, and that therefore the analogy or vehicle includes the two things related. Thus, although the term imagery is commonly used to refer to all figures of speech, it would be wiser to make further distinctions.

The kinds of things related and the nature and the function of their relationships offer suitable grounds upon which these distinctions can be made. It was once common to claim that proper practice precluded mixing one's analogues in only one figure, while critics today argue that no such rule is, universally valid, especially in poetry. Or it was once considered good form to teach to visualize all figures, but it has been

repeatedly pointed out that not only are metaphors constructed on other bases than mental imagery, but also that much mental imagery is other than visual- in fact, persistent visualizing will break down the relationship entirely between subject and analogue in many figures. Again much attention has recently been focused upon the kind of figure in which the difference between subject and analogue is especially great, and which, since it is believed that such a figure was used mainly by Donne, Herbert, Marvell, Vaughan, Trelhorne, and so on, has often been termed the 'metaphysical image'.²⁵ Again, much has been made of the function of the 'central' or 'unifying image' in a poem, according to which the poet develops a sustained analogy, which serves as the core of the poem.

When these distinctions serve as the basis for various speculations regarding the nature and development of poetic language, or the quality of the poetic imagination, imagery becomes one of the key terms of criticism.

25. Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery : Renaissance Poetic and Twentieth Century Poetics (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1947) p. 80-94.

Modern criticism has developed what it views as a radically 'functional' theory of imagery. It is based on the assumption that figures are the differentia of poetic language and poetic language is the differentia of the poetic art. Its favourable terms are 'rich', 'complex', 'concreté', 'ambiguous', 'ironic', 'symbolic', 'mystic', 'sensuous', 'unified', 'wholeness', and so on, while its pejoratives are 'sentimental', 'prosaic', 'didactic', 'disassociated', and so on. This assumption, derived largely from Richard's reconstruction of Coleridge's theory of the imagination and from Eliot's reinterpretation of the Metaphysical Poets, has been placed against what the New Critics²⁶ take to be the 'decorative fallacy' of the traditional rhetoricians (who were supposed to have claimed that figures are pleasant but unnecessary adornments to plain sense) and the 'heresy' of modern positive semantics²⁷ (which is supposed to claim that logic and the experimental method are the only avenues to truth and that poetry is either a harmless pastime or an actual waste of effort). Although certain other

26. Cleanth Brooks, "Metaphor and The Tradition," Modern Poetry and the Tradition (New York : Harcourt Brace, Javanovich 1939) p. 39-54.

27. Alex Preminger ed., Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (London : Macmillan 1965) p. 363-70.

critics ²⁸ have questioned their emphases as well as their assumptions, the New Critics have defined an important problem and their views have achieved a wide currency.

Having discussed the nature of imagery it may now be asked what is the function of imagery. Though imagery has come to be regarded as an important poetic device, it is not the only important device. Neither its presence nor the use of one kind of imagery or another, however makes a good poem; the poet needs more than a unified sensibility in order to compose poems - he needs, in addition, certain constructive power. Imagery, if used, must be a part of a larger whole ; and must be studied not in isolation from the other strata but as an element in the totality, the integrity, of the literary work. It is, then, either material, or technique - what is being represented and how - rather than form.

Imagery may be, in the first place, the speaker's subject, what he is talking about, whether present before him or recalled to mind afterwards. This

28. R.S. Crane, Critics and Criticism : Ancient and Modern (Chicago : At the University Press, 1952; 1968) p. 74-89.

includes roughly speaking people, places, objects and events. In Emily Bronte's, "Aye, There It is ! It wakes to - night ", for example, the speaker is talking about the natural cause, the blast of the storm wind, which precipitates the transition from his imprisoning situation to spiritual freedom - 'tempest's roaring,' 'tempest's fall', 'the glorious wind', comprise the literal imagery of the subject matter.

Since economy is a fundamental artistic principle, it may be said that usually literal imagery is converted into a pseudo - subject, becoming the symbol of something else as a result of the speaker's reflective and meditative activity. Mere scenery, that is, is rarely enough in itself except in descriptive poems, to justify its presence in a poem. Thus Emily Bronte converts the scene into a symbol: the wind is invoked as the natural force of action, the Aeolian lyre, the 'correspondent breeze', life itself as motion and spirit. Spirit is universal, wind is the form it takes and the form of the poem is the process by which, from first word to last, every objective image is transformed into spirit:

Aye, there it is ! It wakes to-night
Sweet thoughts that will not die
And feeling's fires flash all as bright
As in the years gone by!

And I can tell by thine altered cheek
And by thine kindled gaze
And by the word thou scarce dost speak,
How wildly fancy plays.²⁹

This interchange of state is the motive of the poem. The wind, waking sweet thoughts and feelings in the recipient, begins the process of changing him into its own terms. The first signs of change are the 'altered cheek', the 'kindled gaze' of the second stanza. In the second stage of transformation the terms of earth and time are dissolved, 'the world' and its memory. The change is complete when the recipient is seen entirely as spirit. At that stage wind and recipient are one, alike in function and power: 'And thou art now a spirit pouring / Thy presence into all'; like the original wind itself. Appropriately, existence is purified to essence, while essence retains, like the wind, its proper terminology of action; 'The essence of the Tempest's roaring/And of the Tempest's Fall'. In the next stanza the terms are moral rather than philosophical. Just as the recipient's existence was purified, transformed into its proper essence, so now his 'influence' is transformed into that 'universal.

29. C.W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 165.

influence' which is spirit in its moral idiom, 'From thine own influence free ; free, as prefiguring the freedom from morality invoked in the next lines. 'A principle of life intense'; intense, since principles and absolutes do not obliterate the manifestations of force and power. The last stanza:

Thus truly when that breast is cold
Thy prisoned soul shall rise,
The dungeon mingle with³⁰ the mould-
The captive with skies.

-is a vision of the future, the transformation complete, soul released to the skies. This is more than freedom, commonly understood, since it enforces the victory of a subjective terminology over alien power. Thus does Emily's wind imagery function at once as subject and symbol.

Thirdly and lastly, images may function as analogies brought into the poem from outside the world of the speaker, apart from his literal subject to function in a purely figurative fashion. In "Aye There It is ! It wakes To-night", in addition to the imagery already discussed there are several figurative images : the 'sweet thoughts' 'that wakes to-night' will not

30. Ibid. p. 165.

die; the 'glorious wind' which has 'swept the world aside,/Has dashed its memory from mind/ Likes foam bells from the tide'. The 'sweet thoughts ', the 'foam bells' donot derive from the speaker's literal imagery at all.

It may be asked, finally, what the poet gains by the use of such devices. Imagery, especially of the figurative or symbolic sort, may, in the first place, serve as a device for explaining, clarifying and making vivid what the speaker, is talking about. Emily was not content with merely locating her speaker geographically, but had him register his awareness of the precise physical details of the scene before him so that the reader would not only know but feel what he (the speaker) is responding to. Secondly, and correspondingly, the terms in which he is making that response serve to reveal implicitly the mood of sadness in which we find the speaker. Thirdly and consequently, since this scene serves to call up to the speaker's consciousness - and thereby becomes the vehicle of - a problem which has been troubling him, it stimulates and externalizes his mental activity. Fourthly, the poet's handling of imagery, through his selection of detail and choice of comparisons, serves to dispose the reader either favourably or unfavourably toward various

elements in the poetic situation. Fifthly, imagery may serve as a way of arousing and guiding the reader's expectations.

Imagery, thus, may derive from the speaker's subject, if that happens to involve a person, place, object, action or event; from a symbolic combination of subject and meaning, if his thought happens to find his expressive vehicle in his physical experience; or from exterior analogies, if he happens to use figures of speech. It may be interpreted in terms of whether it functions to vivify the subject, reveal the speaker's mood, externalize the speaker's thought, direct the reader's attitudes, or guide his expectations. Although these categories are merely suggestive, a study of a poet's imagery will reveal the poet's basic intuitions concerning reality. To get a hold on Emily Bronte's imaginative vision of life let us turn to her poetry.

CHAPTER - III

THEMES IN EMILY BRONTE'S POETRY

Poets have their ruling passions-themes to which their poetry is constantly returning. The themes of Emily Bronte's poetry are abiding human themes-nature, solitude, isolation, exile, freedom, love, death, childhood and so on. But it is death which rings through all her poetry as the most dominant theme - a theme which preoccupied among others-other women poets as well: Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath and Christiana Rossetti. So much so was Emily Bronte fascinated by the theme of death that it would not be an exaggeration to call her a death-oriented poet. Naturally, she emerged in the process not as a poet of 'life in light' but 'life in darkness.'

Most of Emily's earliest poems deal with Gondal¹ - an imaginary country which she created with her sister Anne. The poetry of Gondal like Scott's Border Ballads before it, was an essentially outdoor creation, depending on landscape for its major effects². The more closely Emily grew to know the changing aspects of

1. F.E Ratchford, Gondal's Queen (New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, 1964) p.11-42.
2. Winifred Gerin, Emily Bronte: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1971) p. 26.

the moors in all seasons, the swift changes of clouds and winds, the more she identified herself with the reckless actions of her outlaws and rebels fleeing from justice, or from pursuing armies and sheltering in the hollows of rocks or down in the glens which were their secret haunts-the more Gondal grew. It was because she made Gondal such an integral part of her own life, that it remained with her into adult life. It might also be deduced that it was because the poetry of Gondal was so close a reflection of her way of life and her most personal aspirations towards liberty that the plots remained so essentially feminine.

Besides Scott, the influence of Byron on the young Brontes was an instant contagion that spread through everything they did and wrote during their formative years.³ It affected Charlotte and Branwell morally and went to such an extent that they lost contact with realities, and suffered acutely from the restrictions of their lives. On Emily Bronte Byron's imprint may have been less immediate, but it was also more lasting. The poetry of Gondal was often indebted to him; the familiar figures of outlaws, bandits, exiles, and prisoners derive in part from her reading of Byron. So

3. Ibid. p. 44.

too the romantic settings of mountainous country, rocky shores by lake and sea, exotic islands. The courage and desperation of Gondal characters in defying the rule of God and Man, was also a legacy from the author of "Cain;" "Manfred;" "Lara;" "Conrad". In Byron, Emily found the champion of unsociable man. His ill fated lovers attracted her equally because of their contempt for conventional society and their boldness in defying their unpropitious stars. The mystery of their origins was another source of romantic inspiration to her; there was Lara whose origin, like Heathcliff's after him, no man knew; there was the defiance of Cain; the fatal love of Manfred; all these Byronic attributes were bestowed in time on the emerging Gondal heroes, and were finally justified in the protagonist of **Wuthering Heights**.

Emily's response to Byron was the more vivid because her reading of him coincided with her growth from girlhood to adolescence. She, too, was becoming disinterested in the outward society. This aversion from ordinary social ways did not spring from misanthropy, but from her intense inner life, into which she allowed none to penetrate, from her growing awareness of the difference between her interests and other people's, and a dread of their intrusion into her privacy. Such

intrusions could break the charm and snap the thread of narrative; and at this stage she was intensely preoccupied with the thought of poetry.

Emily's earliest known poems have one point in common: they begin with a statement of some aspect of nature. With Emily the mood of a poem was everything, and the mood was dictated by nature. Descriptions in the Gondal poems are never prolonged, sometimes even curt in their brevity, but they succeed in conveying a very definite impression. The landscape is a microcosm of the territory in its twin aspects of moorland and valley. The earliest poem in date of the Gondal inscriptions, "There shines the moon at noon of night," combines both within the scope of a single poem. The background is the moor, which stretches into the distance, 'Till it seems strange that ought can lie/Beyond its zone of silver sky'. Moonlight, reflected in the waters of a lake, provides the only brightness in the initial stanza. The next introduces the contrast between upland and valley, which becomes also that between moon and sun, winter and summer. The narrator recalls how, a year before, she had sat at the same lakeside by her dying lover, mortally wounded in the battle, at the close of a summer day when the setting

sun was glowing on the heather. The contrast becomes complete when the dying man recalls how his own home in Gaaldine is surrounded by woodlands bathed in sunshine. Both these aspects of landscape were essential to Emily Bronte, but it was the one country and one climate that she painted-her own.

The descriptive background carries conviction, but the main emphasis is on the figures in the foreground, and their role is not easy to evaluate. They are characters who had originally evolved in the course of the Gondal play and belong to a society whose values are still largely those of the saga or the ballad. Yet it is possible as Mary Visick has shown, to trace a correlation between the Gondal people and its characters of Wuthering Heights. They cannot be denied a certain reality, though in her own words, 'their blurred story' is revealed only 'in a series of lyric moments'⁴. All we know of these figures is their passionately expressed emotions. Sometimes the emotions ring hollow, and the result is minor verse. When they ring true, they can inspire poems which rise to such heights as the great lament of Rosina for her dead

4. Mary Visick, The Genesis of Wuthering Heights (Honkong: At the University Press, 1958) p.32.

lover. Whether Rosina is synonymous with Augusta, as Ratchford suggests, is an altogether different issue⁵. What matters is not whether they are same or not, what really matters is the intensity of her feeling, the effect of which would be lost without the spontaneous evocation of place:

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no
longer hover
Over the mountains on Angora's shore;
Resting their wings where heath and
fern leaves cover
That noble heart for ever, ever more?⁶

No conscious thought is given here, as it is frequently in the non-Gondal poems, to the relationship between the speaker and the landscape or, more generally, between the speaker and nature. Yet there is a relationship and it is possible, to some extent, to define it. Most obviously nature represents a principle of stability in the flux of life.⁷ The return of the seasons is the means of measuring the passage of the years. But nature itself does not change with time, as

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5. F. E. Ratchford, Gondal's Queen (London: McGraw - Hill Book Company, 1964) p. 11 - 38.
 6. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 222.
 7. E. L. Duthie, The Brontes and Nature (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986) p.201-205.

man does. It is the 'sweet, sweet world,' to which he clings with passionate regret when faded by premature or violent death. Nature is the silent witness: changing emotions, all intense, characterise the protagonists in the human drama. Sometimes there is harmony between setting and action: there are natural correspondences between childhood and spring, between happy love and summer. In Gondal, however, as in life itself, childhood may be darkened by calamity, love may encounter obstacle or disaster. In such cases the contrast between setting and action reinforces the tragedy of situation. In "A farewell to Alexandria" a mother abandons her infant in the same moorland dell where she had loved to linger on summer days, but where now the heather is fast being covered by snowdrifts, harbingers of speedy death for the forsaken child. In "The Death of A.G.A", the assassination of the Gondal queen is preceded by that of two young lovers, her loyal friends, who were her only guard as she wandered on a mountain side surrounded by sea with lark singing overhead and bee sweetly humming that they meet their death. Nowhere, however, is the contrast between nature and the vicissitudes of human life more acutely experienced than by those in captivity. The Gondal poems contain abundant references to prison bars and

dungeon floors which form one of the major themes of Emily's poetry. The captives immured in such surroundings see no more of winter than the snow whirling through the grating, or of summer than the 'green luster' reflected on the wall, that tells of 'fields of lovelier green'. In such circumstances life is bitter indeed: 'What bird can soar with broken wings'? For Emily, as for all Romantics, the theme of nature is closely associated with the theme of freedom which finds its fullest expression in the Gondal poems.⁸ But the cherished freedom of the Romantics is seen with a difference in the poetry of Emily, for Emily had no interest in the political aspects of freedom which Shelley and Byron had.

It has already been pointed out that it was basically her native landscape which Emily used in Gondal poems. In the personal poems its intrinsic importance is greater, and its regional character more strongly felt. For the Gondal figures it was a necessary background. For her it was the ideal one; nature was not only a source of visual delight, it was the starting point of her thought. Emily wrote no nature poems as an objective observer, she wrote poems through which runs, sometimes as an under current,

8. Ibid. p.202.

sometimes as clearly defined as the two parts in a piece of music, a dialogue between the physical universe and the human soul. But there is a happy time in most lives, and it was so for Emily Bronte, when the dialogue briefly dissolves into complete harmony. The golden age remembered by Wordsworth was also a cherished memory for her. In childhood and early youth, before 'shades of the prison-house' began to close upon her, she had enjoyed the freedom of moors. The world was then truly an Eden, accepted unconsciously and adored conscioulsy. By the time she wrote her earliest recorded verses, however, Eden was no longer inviolate. She could still be, when on the moors, as Ellen Nussey rememberd, 'a child in spirit for glee and enjoyment'⁹, but she was already acutely conscious of the disharmony between joy and nature and the problems of her own life and of human life in general. It is not surprising, therefore, that the poems of this period show a series of fluctuations between happiness, which still comes from nature, and a profound pessimism. It was during this time that Emily's preoccupation with the theme of guilt and failure, found in her early Gondal verse, and ultimately to become one of the

9. C. K. Shorter, Charlotte Bronte and Her Circle (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896) p.179.

themes central to her thought, began to take root¹⁰.

The experience of this time, the heavy demands on her physical energies which left her little leisure for the writing that was becoming an imperative need, brought about a fresh-withdrawl into herself, a deepening of the division between the life of domestic conformity and of spiritual daring and escape. The recognition of the warring elements within herself, of her intense dissatisfaction not with her personal lot but with life itself, was at the origin of the recurring escape theme that found its way into her poetry. The escape which she found in childhood and in her love of the radiant presences of the night, the moon, stars, seemed to breed in her a growing dread of day, not only for the barren tasks it imposed, but for its destruction of her dreams. Thus, Emily Bronte was already evolving as a poet of darkness rather than of light. Her awareness of the dark side of nature, for instance, of the underworld of human affairs, and her reliance upon the Gothic element as its objective correlative which had found its early expression in such poems as "Light up thy halls! Its closing day", and "A sudden chasm of ghastly light", reached its

10. W. Gerin, Emily Bronte: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press) p.59.

climax in Wuthering Heights becoming ultimately the focal point of her entire work.

Emily's experience at Law Hill of which we have been talking was to be recurrent: her poetry shows that, depending chiefly on her material surroundings and on conditions of almost total solitude, it took possession of her with increasing frequency. There appears to be no indication that these visitations appeared in childhood and left her permanently disolate by their cessation, as Charles Morgan suggested.¹¹ Her experiences were in fact different from those of other known mystics like Traherne, Vaughan and Wordsworth, in this very respect: childhood had for them been the period of greatest revelation. With Emily Bronte, the contrary appears to be true: she was nineteen when at Law Hill. It was only from then on that such manifestations became the purpose and fulfilment of her life. They were the inspiration of her poetry; without them she was only half alive, and when they ceased altogether she died.

The character of these experiences does not seem to have varied greatly, except perhaps by becoming

11. Charles Morgan, Reflections in a Mirror (London: Oxford University Press, 1944) p.132.

increasingly overpowering. Her vision almost always ambivalent, very often resembled Blake's. Like Blake, she had on certain occasions in her life known moments of vision-far away the most profound of her experiences in which her eyes seemed opened to behold a transcendental reality usually hidden from mortal sight. And it is in the light of these moments of vision that she envisaged the world of mortal things; they endowed with a new significance; they were the foundation of the philosophy on which her picture of life rested. She saw human beings not in the relation of other human beings, or to human civilizations and societies and codes of conduct, but only in relation to the cosmic scheme of which they formed a part; she saw them in relation to time and eternity, to death and fate and nature of things.¹²

Yet its fullest effect was to annihilate her personality in a rapture that at times almost released her from physical life. That the rapture was not necessarily pleasurable is apparent from the poem, "Silent is the house", in which she speaks of the visitant's 'stern power', of its appearance at the 'awful hour' of dusk. At times she personified her

12. L. D. Cecil; Victorian Novelists: Essays in Revaluation (Chicago: At the University Press, 1958) p.148-149.

visitant as in, "The Night Wind", where it speaks with the wind's voice to tell her that 'Heaven was glorious/ And sleeping Earth was fair'. At times the visitant speaks on nature's behalf as in the poem "Shall earth no more inspire thee." At other times, the vision is powerful enough to 'sweep the world aside' and to merge her being with 'the Invincible', 'the Unseen'¹³. The need to be alone, to communicate with the unseen was increasingly becoming a condition of her life - the only way in which she could find fulfilment. She was already not far from recognising that what she sought was 'life-in-death':

And could we lift the veil and give
One brief glimpse to thine eye
Thou wouldst't rejoice for those
that live,
Because they live to die.¹⁴

- the philosophy or mood which informs all her later poems.

The symbol of the 'veil' used here by Emily and her whole concept of death as not the destroyer of life, rather the fulfilment of it, reminds us of

13. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 239.

14. Ibid. p.200.

Shelley¹⁵. Though Shelley wrote on a range of subjects, social, scientific, and political which remained beyond Emily's compass, in spiritual experience they were equals. A common vision informed their work even if Shelley's platonism derived from a long study of the Greek philosophers whilst Emily's was purely intuitive and personal; in character, too, they were alike - both were 'tameless and swift and proud'. Both placed personal freedom above material good; both were oppressed by humanity's plight, both sought comfort not here, but in eternity, both believed in the concept of redemption only by love.

In view of the prevalence of death in Emily Bronte's poems it is tempting to compare her with Emily Dickinson, Sylvia Plath and Christiana Rossetti. Emily Dickinson seems to have thought of death constantly. She died all her life, she perched death daily. "That bareheaded life under grass worries one like a wasp," she wrote and yet she longed for it:

-----Give me back to Death
The Death I never feared
Except that it deprived of thee
And now, by life deprived,
In my own Grave I breathe

15. P. B. Shelley, "Prometheus Unbound," Poetical Works ed., T. Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 248.

And estimate its size
Its size is all that Hell can guess
And all that Heaven was¹⁶.

Ultimately, the obsession became morbid, and her eagerness for details, became almost vulture like. This obsession and fascination for death gave us Dickinson's sharpest works. The theme was inexhaustible for her. While death of close friends and relatives caused Emily Dickinson grievous shock and shattered her physical sensibility (of which the poems are authentic documentations), her poetic sensibility could see beyond the desolation of death and sorrow a halcyon vision of the immortality of soul. And it is this belief in the immortality of soul which brings Dickinson closer to Bronte; both believed in the purification of soul achieved by death. This purification achieved by death is also the subject of Sylvia Plath and Christiana Rossetti. In "Fever 103⁰", Plath described her theme in this way:

This poem is about two kinds of fire-the fires of Hell, which merely agonize, and the fires of Heaven, which purify. During the poem, the first sort of fire suffers into the second.¹⁷

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16. T. H. Johnson, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson (Delhi: Kalyani Publishers, 1960) p.670.
17. A. Alvarez, "Sylvia Plath", Twentieth Century Poetry: Critical Essays and Documents ed., G. Martin and P. N. Furbank (Walton Hall, Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1975) p.435.

First time through it sounds as though it were just free association on a theme: the theme that illness and pain are cumbersome and intolerable, but that if they go on long enough they cancel themselves out and the purity of death takes over. But the progress is not in fact haphazard. Death is there from the start: 'dull, fat cerberus - wheezes at the gate' right from the beginning. What the poem does is to work away at this idea of a heavy, mundane death until it is purified of all extraneous matter and only the essential bodilessness remains. At the same time this moment is also that of a personal catharsis. She is clarifying not only an abstract death but also her feelings about it, from the cluttered and insufferable to the pure and acceptable. "Lady Lazarus" is a stage further on from "Fever 103⁰⁴"; its subject is total purification achieved by death. It is also far more intimately concerned with the drift of Sylvia Plath's life. The deaths of Lady Lazarus correspond to her own: the first just after her father died, the second when she had her nervous breakdown, the third perhaps a presentiment of the death that was shortly to come. Perhaps this closeness of the subject helped make the poem so direct. Like Bronte, Dickinson and Plath, Christiana, too, was obsessed with the theme of death: the earth lying

heavily on the eyes, the body laid out on the bier, the face revealed or veiled but always on object of regard. The vulnerability and self-pity generating her poems are obvious: imagining herself dead, Rossetti can postulate two kinds of gratification. Then at last, she will be the focus of all eyes, admired and pitied-no one will attempt a critical reading of her face. Also, as she reiterated in numerous religious poems, a lifetime of self denial will be vindicated in a spectacular inversion: the last will become first, the meek sister now the star of the apocalypse.

These concerns with gratification underlie the "death" poems but do not account for their force or explain their structure. Similarly, it is clear that Rossetti frequently longed, like Emily, for release from the painfulness of living; death is rest from both striving and self-control; 'Asleep from risk, asleep from pain, "A Pause" ends with an apotheosis, a moment of bodily transfiguration and heightened consciousness:

At length there came the step upon the stair,
Upon the lock the old familiar hand:
Then first my spirit seemed to scent the air
Of Paradise; then first the tardy sand
Of time ran golden; and I felt my hair
Put on a glory, and my soul expand.¹⁸

18. C. G. Rossetti, The Poetical Works, ed., W. M. Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1904) p. 3,8.

As has already been pointed out Emily's stay at Law Hill was not a happy one, it was marked with failure; it was during this period that the themes of guilt, treachery, loneliness, disillusionment and revenge had begun taking roots in her poetry. Yet it was this period during which 'love poems' within the framework of Gondal could also find their expression. In judging Emily's 'love poems' we have to keep it in mind that her theme is tragic love. Her capacity for feeling was acute, her mood inclined to be sombre; while her sources of joy were more numerous than those of ordinary woman, they were also incommunicable except in poetry. All experiences with her, demanded a heightened language, whether the subject were joy or sorrow. The vehemence of passion voiced in the poem, "Light up thy halls" is not only its striking feature. It shows a new technical skill that comes to be the hallmark of all Bronte's writing, be it prose or verse: the terseness of style, the intense economy.

Emily's 'love poems' particularize certain concepts or common places of romantic love: elective affinity; deathless passion, love's torment, overwhelming feeling, constancy, the inaccessible or impossible love. The poem, "Cold in the earth, and the deep snow piled above thee" with its memorable image

'fifteen wild Decembers ---' explains the nature of a survival of love. Love has to forgive the necessary process of forgetting. The explanation makes a melancholy and rational account of a feeling which, though subject to change, remains a feeling of personal love. The speaker, Rosina Alocna, joins passionate lament with an obsessed remembrance, eroded and distracted. Bliss has gone, but life has continued. Dreams have gone too, and passion has to live on, qualified by dreamlessness:

But when the days of golden dreams had perished
And even Despair was powerless to destroy,
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
strengthened and fed without the aid of joy;¹⁹

It is not simply a life and love-in-memory which is expressed. The memory has regenerated feeling, as imaginative memory can, and the poem moves out of its rational explanation to the point where reason is in danger of losing control. The individual words are flat, but what is being said is spiritedly conveyed. The poem ends at this point, because energy of remembrance is the force which it resists:

19. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p.223.

And even yet, I dare not let languish,
Dare not indulge in Memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again? ²⁰

The poem is imaginative in the fullest and most exact sense of the word. It recognises the limits and the indulgences of 'imagination' and controls its own passion by that act of recognition. Its dynamism and order show her lyricism once more melting abstraction into particulars. The growth of feeling seems to rely on the syntax which checks, permits, drives and shapes sharp feeling.

If Emily's 'love poems' within the framework of Gondal are to be literally interpreted as relating to her own sentiments and experiences then the analogy is that they tell us about Emily's deep division in her mind; of the incompatibility between the mundane facts of her life and her aspirations. This is a common enough condition among romantic characters, which places her indisputably among the children of her age - not the Victorian age of her maturity, but the romantic age of her adolescence; the era of Byron, Beethoven and Blake. The influences of that era were lasting, and made her the rebel and visionary she remained to the end.

20. Ibid. p.223.

We have already discussed how the theme of nature remains interwoven with that of human destiny. It might have been expected that what is essentially a deeply disillusioned view of human existence would ultimately have coloured Emily's attitude to nature itself. But this is never the case. Behind the individual landscapes she sees the physical universe, which is not modified by the human situation but follows its own course in accordance with its own laws. In this she finds matter not for resentment or resignation but for profound satisfaction: '---over the plain physical fact of the bare life of the earth she had always exalted.'²¹ She glories in manifestations of the strength of natural forces, seeing them not as agent of chaos or destruction but as expression of the dynamic energy which is as essential to the functioning of nature as its softer manifestations. She did not hesitate to express herself symbolically what she herself felt as a close relationship in imagined dialogue.

"The Night Wind" is a full narrative argument, with a tense and developing dialogue establishing the relationship between the speaker and the wind. The poem

21. M. Spark and D. Stanford, Emily Bronte: Her Life and Work (London: Peter Owen, 1953) p.181.

belongs to a set of images of wind, darkness, moonlight and starlight, which often represent an imaginative force which both bind and are bound by the human speaker. At each stage in the action there is an illusiory sense of progress. What the wind first does and says is gentle, like the scene established in the poem's opening lines where the speaker, 'in summer's mellow midnight,' 'sat in silent musing / The soft wind waved my hair' and told him 'Heaven was glorious and sleeping Earth was fair'. The speaker's first rejection of the wind is simply made on the grounds that its thoughts are not necessary 'I needed not its breathing / To bring such thoughts to me', but this argument is immediately followed by a different suggestion:

But still it wishpered lowly
How dark the woods will be!

The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myraid voices²²
Instinct with spirit seem ?

This seductive whisper seems distinct from the first, with the stress placed on darkness - echoed in Robert Frost's "Stopping by woods on a snowy Evening". The

22. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p.146.

darkness is qualified by a larger dream-like lure, and the plea seems to be made for spirit rather than humanity. The human actor now rejects the voice on the new grounds that its music has not 'power to reach' the mind and recommending that it 'play with the scented flower---And leave my human feelings/ In their own course to flow'. We then reach the last stage in the seductive appeal to old acquaintance, 'Have we not been from childhood friends' ?, strengthened and made sinister by the suggestion, however sweetly sighed, that it can overpower the will. There is a seductive deepening of friendship to love. It is love on both sides, but what the wind has loved is the human being, while her love is not just for the wind, but also for 'the night/ whose silence wakes my song' The invocation of beloved darkness introduces something new to the argument:

And when thy heart is laid at rest
Beneath the Church -Yard stone
I shall have time enough to mourn
And thou to be alone.²⁹

All the lures and arguments are joined in this last stanza: the use of 'I' becomes the mouth piece: death includes the darkness of the woods, the voices

23. Ibid. p.147.

instinct with spirit, and the silent night. The conclusion implicitly explains the several rejections, the human being's sense of Heaven and earth, her desire for her human feelings to flow in their own course, the implication that this course is distinct from the world of vegetable nature, and her old affection for darkness, night and the wind itself.

Only when we reach the conclusion do the various rebuttals and appeals become clear. This final darkness, silence, solitude and lamentation is what the wind has always been uttering, as it speaks both for surviving nature and for natural morality. It can outlast the individual, like Keats's nightingale, but what this sweetness sings is less a solace than a threat. The attempts to distinguish what is human from what is natural meet the inevitable frustration. Similarly, in "Shall earth no more inspire thee" the relationship between the speaker and the earth is developed in imagined dialogue. The poem is a recognition of the power nature has to charm the poet. It is at the same time a recognition that there are limitations to that power. Earth admits its capacity wholly to satisfy the 'lonely dreamer': it wants the wind to caress him, it wants to become his comrade and says to him to 'Return and dwell with me' 'since nought

beside can bless thee. What nature cannot offer to him is a lasting solution to the ills inherent in the human condition. At an early stage Emily Bronte seems to have less faith in the desires and hopes common to most in youth, and she reaffirmed her indifference to them in her mature years:

Riches I hold in light esteem
And love I laugh to scorn
And lust of fame was but a dream
That vanished with the morn.²⁴

Such detachment can breed misanthropy, but Emily, who could be stoical for herself, remained intensely conscious of the ills and tribulations of human society, perpetually torn by the internecine strife of warring egoisms. Here, too, nature seemed to offer no lasting solution. At most she could find a temporary oblivion in the place of nightfall:

The world is going-Dark world, adieu!
Grim world, go hide thee till day;²⁵

Not all Romantics shared Emily's pessimism as to nature's incapacity to repair the harm done by society to mankind in general. Wordsworth, with whom she otherwise shared a deep affinity, held a different

24. Ibid. p. 163.

25. Ibid. p. 184.

view.²⁶ After his disillusionment with the aftermath of the French Revolution and with Godwinian intellectualism, it was to nature that he turned for healing not only for himself but for humanity. In early poems like "Guilt and Sorrow" he showed lives ruined by the callousness of society, nor did he ever attempt to conceal its baleful effects. Michael, the Grasmere shepherd, is obliged, in old age, to face hardships he has done nothing to deserve. But his unfinished sheepfold does not stand for failure; it is rather a memorial to the power of the natural affections and the stability of the man whose life is rooted in his native soul. The portrait of the leechgatherer in "Resolution and Independence" is an equally impressive tribute to the power of uncomplaining endurance that can be fostered by a stern and natural environment. The old man sees himself a part of nature, but proves to be at the same time a human being whose courage and dignity make the poet's pity for his harsh fate unnecessary and almost insulting:

I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
 In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.

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26. E. L. Duthie, The Brontes and Nature (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986) p. 211.
27. William Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence," Poetical Works ed., Thomas Hutchinson (London : Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 157.

Clearly, One does not look for such characters in the world of Gondal, but in the non Gondal poems they are equally lacking. The poet is most often alone with nature, and with her own thoughts. If she speaks of others, it is usually to mourn former companions now absent or those whose youthful promise has never been fulfilled, and whose lives have foundered in disaster.

But of even more concern to Emily Bronte than the ills and tribulations of human society are the spiritual limitations inherent in the human condition. Even if, as Wordsworth at least believed possible, men like Michael and the leechgatherer²⁸ are strong enough to avoid becoming warped or embittered by what they have to endure, they still have, as individuals, to face the question posed by Catherine Earnshaw: 'What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here?'²⁹

Nature unaided cannot provide a solution but may, if interpreted in a metaphysical sense, point the way towards doing so.²⁹ Emily Bronte wanted freedom to penetrate beyond the bounds of self and communicate with a wider life. This is what Wordsworth achieved

28. Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights ed., William M. Sale, Jr., (New York: W.W.Norton and Company, INC 1963) p. 74.

29. Emid L. Duthie, The Brontes and Nature (New York: St. Martin's Press 1986) p.211.

through spiritual communion with nature, as he describes in "Tintern Abbey". That Emily, in her greatest poems, evoked similar moments of spiritual illumination cannot be questioned. But that she owed as much to nature in the process seems doubtful. For him the spirit which permeates all created things is at the same time a moral force. He describes himself in "Tintern Abbey" as

---well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse
The guide, the guardian₃₀ of my heart, and soul
Of all my mortal being.

Nature in itself rarely presents for Emily the same possibilities of spiritual elevation. It is a source of unmixed joy for the child, and affords precious consolation and refreshment to those oppressed by the trials of life, but it cannot offer lasting protection from personal sorrow or the ills of this world. Above all, it cannot change the fact of death. It is her very love of nature which gives the sharpest sting to the intimations of mortality which beset her during the swift passage of time. In her acute anguish at the separation from the physical world which menaces

30. William Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey", Poetical Works ed., Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 165.

her, she can affirm, in, "I see around me tombstones grey", that she desires no after life unless it is a 'mutual immortality' to be shared with the maternal earth.

Yet the dream of a sensual infinite could not give lasting satisfaction to one who had reared in Christian belief in immortality and who, with all the force of her indomitable spirit, aspire to a higher state of being. For Emily, as to Wordsworth, nature led to vision. But it did not merge into vision; it was temporarily transcended, at privileged moments, by a higher reality with which it could not co-exist. It is with this transcendence of the natural that the most intimate of her poems are concerned.

As has already been discussed Emily's mysticism found its earliest expression during her stay at Law Hill. In these years: there becomes apparent a growing pre-occupation with the darker side of human destiny and a more sombre questioning of the self. She seems to become aware of her growing sensitivity to those quieter aspects of the visible world that are most favourable to meditation; she is able, therefore, to express more

31. Emid L. Duthie, The Brontes and Nature (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986) p. 213.

fully those moments of liberation through mystic ecstasy. In "Aye, there it is! it wakes to night", the poet is speaking to herself and becomes her own interpreter. What we have in the poem is the suspension of the poet's self and of her disparate consciousness in a sense of new found unity:

A Universal influence
From Thine own influence free;
A principle of life³² intense
Lost to mortality.

This state of transcended self-identity has been arrived at by a natural agent - by 'that glorious wind' which seems to have 'swept the world aside', and along with the world all personal memory with its cribbed and confining effects.

But in addition to these two statements concerning the condition of self-suspension, we observe that the state of transcended consciousness is spoken of in natural terms:

And thou art now a spirit pouring
Thy presence into all-
The essence of the Tempest's³³ roaring
And of the Tempest's fall³³

32. C.W.Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 165.

33. Ibid. p.165.

The state of self-transcendence is the same as the state of transcended nature. When, by an inward levitation of the mind, the daily sense of self is transcended, we perceive and live by the essence of our being. And this essence is the same as the one we share with nature when we obtain an intense vision of its workings.

The poem is, then, a ritual, designed to break the chains of time, place and body. Most of the work, so far as the language goes, is done by the verbs; assertively in the third stanza, where the glorious wind / Has swept the world aside,/ Has dashed its memory from thy mind'. All the verbs are verbs of transformation, changing every state into its spiritual equivalent: wakes, flash, plays, swept aside, dashed, rise, mingle. The verbs testify to a formative principle of change and are themselves, pre-eminently, the vehicles of that change. The nouns are, for the most part, the great subjective terms - feeling, fancy, memory, mind, spirit presence, influence, soul, principle, essence - with their descriptive forms - fire, wind, cheek, gaze, breast, thought. The adjectives are those of human and natural relations, with a supporting air of extremity and change: sweet, bright, glorious, wild, kindled, intense. But in saying

that the main work is done by the verbs we should also remark that the essential movement of feeling is a stanzaic movement, where each stanza is a lyric moment, sustained and effected by the action of the verbs, for the most part, up to that point. Within each stanza there is little change; rather a change is registered, defined in the stanza. The plot of the poem is a sequence of lyric moments, each stanza making a certain stage in the large cadence of feeling. The process is subjective, but only because the relevant transformation is personal, an act of will. Nature does not, in this case, enforce itself: it is invoked in that character. The movement of feeling arises from within the soul of the speaker: the transformation is effected by calling upon a natural force already hospitable to such changes. This explains the typical grammar of the poem.³⁴ Emily Bronte begins with the indicative, Aye, there it is; but gradually she uses indicatives as if they were imperatives: or rather a poet with less confidence in the transforming power of will and the subjective idiom generally would be obliged to use imperatives where Emily Bronte uses indicatives. 'And thou art now a spirit' means Be thou

34. D. Donoghue, "Emily Bronte", Emily Bronte: A Critical Anthology, ed., E. D. Petit (London: Penguin Books, 1973) p. 312.

now a 'spirit' but it is unnecessary to change to the imperative mood, since the indicative already has the air of an assumption. 'Already with thee'! is Keats's equivalent in the "Nightingale Ode". The point is that Emily Bronte's poem is doing the traditional work of metaphor, but in slow motion, and by degrees. The process of metaphor is the process of transformation, metamorphosis. Metaphor acts suddenly in a flash; the poem achieves a metaphorical object, but slowly earning the right to do so as it moves along, stanza by stanza.

Emily's mysticism which had found its early expression in poems like "Aye there it is^s! It wakes to-night"!, which we have just discussed reached its supreme expression in "Silent is the house----" and "No coward soul is mine", written during her last phase of poetic career. "Silent is the house---" centres round Rochelle who finding herself completely cut off from nature and life in her grim dungeon, reacts by aspiring to liberation of the spirit through death and anticipates this in period of mystic ecstasy. We see how both the life - wish and death-wish in Emily were working together to assert the reality of a mystical experience.³⁵ At the same time, she seems to recognise

35. M. Spark and D. Standard, Emily Bronte: Her Life and Work (London: Peter Owen, 1960) p. 224.

that such experience must take its toll of her, must exhaust the resources of her spirit by consuming them too rapidly:

A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.³⁶

The messenger of hope' of which she speaks, produces within her a sense of timeless freedom. His approach is marked by certain symptoms, 'western winds', 'evening's wandering airs', in which the life of the elements take on a greater vividness. It would be wrong to describe these symptoms as just so many pantheistic stirrings. There is no symbolism or personification, nor any hidden metaphysics, which would justify us in making such a statement. None the less the natural activities of wind, and sky, and light, often produced the initial working of some mystical train of thought within her. Then, too, we have seen how night itself was a time that seemed specially propitious for Emily's transcendental moods.

What it is that comes to her can only be described in terms of what is not - 'Desire for nothing known in my maturer years'. This corresponds to what the mystics

36. C.W.Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 238.

of the school of St. John of the Cross referred to as the via -negative, the negative way to the absolute truth.³⁷

The following stanzas, 20 and 21 of the poem, are concerned with that making void of the contents of the spirit, so that it may receive that substance of the mystical visitation. Then, when 'earth is lost', the mind receives the body of the experience. This is hinted at by the use of such terms as 'the invincible' and 'the unseen', and the idea of a purely spiritual faculty which perceives the otherwise imperc^{ible}ible.

Stanza 22 speaks of the return to a state of normal consciousness, and how this consciousness strikes the late communicant almost as a kind of death. The next one confesses that however bitter may be the average awareness of existence after such exalted perception, it is amply compensated by the vision granted. And perhaps', it suggests, 'this disappointment may hasten death.'³⁸ The emotional core of Emily's religion suddenly becomes clear to us - hers is a mysticism of the death wish: 'If it but herald

37. M. Spark and D. Stanford, Emily Bronte: Her Life and Work, (London: Peter Owen, 1960) p. 226.

38. Ibid. p. 226.

Death, the vision is divine'.³⁹

"No coward soul is mine" is Emily's crowning poetic peak. Just as "Silent is the house ----" was concerned with eternity apprehended through death, so "No coward soul is mine" apprehends eternity in terms of a positive immortal life. In "Silent is the house". Emily's apprehension of her theme was mystical, and therefore not capable of direct formulation. In "No coward soul is mine", it is intellectual: her language is fervid, succinct. But besides the development of general ideas the poem resorts to abstracts and to concepts, to words like 'Faith', 'Undying Life', 'Existence', 'Being', 'Immortality'. Indeed "No coward soul is mine" is the consummation of Emily's thought - her highest and clearest expression of it. Emily, in her mystic experience, had an attitude of 'awe before the numinous' and habitually spoke of the power whose presence she apprehended in symbolic terms. Here she addresses herself directly to God, and he is seen to be both imminent and transcendent.

O God within my breast
Almighty ever-present Deity
Life, that in me hast rest

39. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 239.

As I Undying Life, have power in thee⁴⁰

Such a belief is neither that of the pantheist nor of the agonistic.⁴¹ The 'Heaven' whose glories shine suggests the Christian cosmos. She omits any reference to the cost at which 'Heaven's glories' became accessible to fallen man. This is certainly not because she was unaware of the element of corruption in human nature so often emphasized in her poems. As we have already seen, she was deeply aware of the conflict between good and evil, of guilt and remorse, of life and death, and after life, and solitude - the questions with which she was permanently concerned, and to which she alluded so often in her verse.

40. Ibid. p. 243.

41. Emid L. Duthie, The Brontes and Nature (New York: ST. Martin's Press, 1986) p. 216-18.

CHAPTER - IV

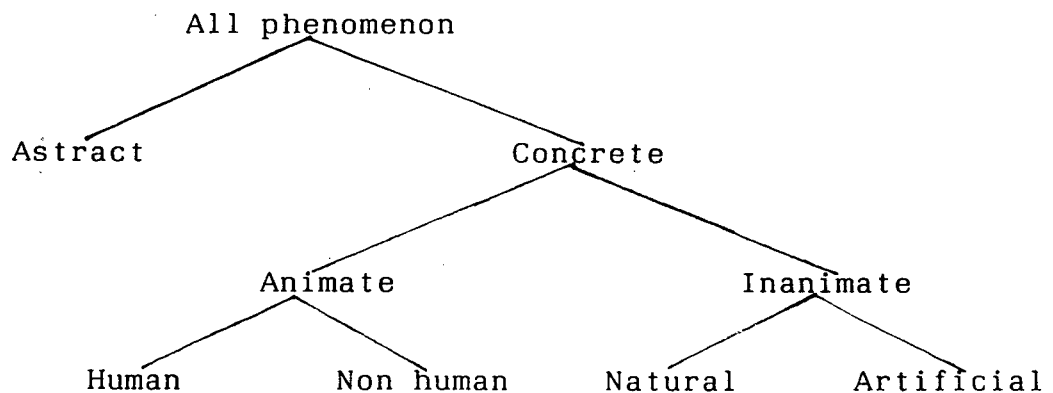
THE RANGE AND SOURCE OF EMILY BRONTE'S IMAGERY

The Poetry of Emily Bronte, as we have seen, in the preceding chapter, shows a variety of themes: solitude, life, death, imprisonment, freedom, exile, love, guilt and remorse. But death is the overriding awareness that underlies all experience, her images reflect this-they come from a variety of sources and cluster around a wide range of objects, both natural and human. But each object has a duality - it exists at the level of apparent structure, but its essence is dissolution or destruction, a kind of loss or death. Everything is infused with twin aspects, life and its counterpart death informs everything. The purpose of the present chapter is to study the range and source of Emily's images, or to put it more precisely, the subject matter of Emily's images and to see how image and meaning come to cohere in her poetry.

The main body of Emily's images fall practically into two groups - abstract and concrete ¹. The category of 'abstract' includes images from life, death, light,

1. The concept of 'abstract' and 'concrete' type of classification is taken from Derek Deckerton, "Prolegomena to a linguistic theory of metaphor", Linguistic Perspectives on Literature, ed. M.K. Ching (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) p. 43-61.

darkness, day, night, colour, dreams, visions, emotions etc. which occupy Emily and remain in her mind. The 'concrete' is divided into animate and inanimate which are further subdivided into human and non-human and natural and artificial respectively. Between animate and inanimate we have a vast body of images, for example, images from adult life and childhood, images from animal and vegetable life, images from nature of which the elemental images are perhaps the dominant one and images from house, door, window, etc. Thus the main division of Emily's images, that is, the grouping of images under abstract and concrete and then, further, the subdivision of concrete into human and non human and then again into natural and artificial can well be illustrated by the following diagram².



2. The figure is slightly modified from the one given in Derek Dickerton, "Prolegomena to a linguistic theory of metaphor", Linguistic Perspectives on Literature, ed., M.K. Ching (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) p. 53.

Many of Emily Bronte's images are built upon the ancient principle of contrasts; not in her case, the gradations of tone or subtle shades of meaning, but that of stark opposition. Extremes lent themselves readily to the presentation of her own intense and strongly varied apprehension; extremes were her natural mode. Thus we have Emily's remarkable use of colour; remarkable for its evocation of all the brilliant effects of nature and art without much overt employment of the epithets of colour in themselves. That is to say, while she does use for example, 'blue', usually

Cold, clear and blue, the morning heaven
 Expands its arch on high;
 Cold, clear and blue, Lake Werna's water
 Reflects that Winter's sky³.

⊗ in conjunction with clear as in or green, red, brown and so on, her colour effects are most frequently accomplished by the introduction of phenomena of nature which suggests ideas of colour without actually declaring them; dawn, sunset, frost, mist, the robin, blood, snow. Colour is defined in Emily Bronte's work as much by the absence as by its presence. Indeed, any colour pattern of her world as a whole must present

3. C.W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 29.

itself to our imagination as a blackness shot through here and there with brilliant or vivid contrasts.

Midnight and moonlight and bright shining stars;
Darkness and glory rejoicingly blending.⁴

As we see from this, one word is particularly fresh or powerful in itself: but as with Keat's "Ode to Autumn", the effect is cumulative. "There shines the moon" is an example of this method. In this poem we notice even another characteristic feature of Emily's use of colour, and one which was to increase in importance; that is, the way in which adjectives are supplimented by verbs of colour in such a way as to add weight and vigour, and to make her poems, as in her own verbs, 'gleam', 'glow' and 'flame':

And bursting through the leafy shade
A gush of golden sunshine played,
Bathing the walls in amber light
And sparkling in water clear
That stretched below-reflected bright⁵
The whole wide world of cloudless air.

With maturity Emily Bronte perfected even more striking and sophisticated colour effects. Even as early as "Will the day be bright or cloudy", her 'golden flowers' are partly literal but mainly they suggest an other

4. Ibid, p.31.

5. Ibid. p. 34.

worldly vision of the promised glorious future. Later we have the fascinating and complex pattern of contrasts between the 'golden suns', the blackness of night and death, the prophetic 'rose red smile' of dawn, and the shining brightness of morning achieved in " The busy day has hurried by"

They are gone! Not for a while
As golden suns at night decline
And even in death our grief beguile
Foretelling, with a rose - red smile,
How bright the morn will shine⁶

Equally exciting is the colour pattern in "On the fall of Zalona"; the Gondal adventurers, naturally perhaps, stimulated the formation of gaudy scenes, painted in arresting primary colours- blue, bright, light, white, gold and emerald assault our visual sense in the first two stanzas alone.

Emily's interest in human face - smiles and tears, the eye - its colour and character, sparkling, sunbright, quick, merry, dim, sunken or scornful, the beauty as well as the betrayal of the gnawing of a nether lip and above all the way in which she continually makes us see the emotions by the chasing changes of colour in cheeks are well reflected in her remarkable use of colour contrast and its change.

6. Ibid. 111.

These Emily conveys through every kind of metaphor, which in each case carries with it the particular atmosphere of emotion which gives rise to the change, making it quite unnecessary, at times, to mention any specific colour at all. Thus we have cheek which burned 'to give such scornful friends the lie' and 'faded eye' and pallid face' wooing 'the soft awaking wind'. If we look at the opening lines of a poem:

She dried her tears, and they did smile
To see her cheeks returning glow,
Nor did discern how all the while
That full heart throbbed to overflow ⁷

We notice how life and feeling are conveyed by these touches of the colour coming and going on the face. This interest in the shifting colour of the face and emotion it implies is one of the marked features of Emily's poetry.

Images of imprisonment and liberation are also quite obvious and comprehensive in Emily's poetry. Throughout her verse we find her constantly and almost obsessively speaking of all the physical images associated with being free and with its opposite; birds, animals, adventurers male and female, are set against tyrants, their victims, and their paraphernalia

7. Ibid. p. 113

of dungeons, prisons, tombs, exiledom, captivity, fetters and coercion, their reluctant prey. Thus, earth itself is a 'dungeon tomb'⁸ a place of 'prisoned dust',⁹ which man seeks to escape: 'Man's spirit away from its drear dungeon sending/ Bursting the fetters and breaking the bars'.¹⁰ Or to use Emily's favourite metaphor, the world is like a tomb,¹¹ i.e. like a prison. The most intimate form of imprisonment is the body which is the soul's version of the containing body of the world. Thus to Emily, creation is a shrouding and obscuring act; the initially free soul is not just housed but buried in the body. Such constriction evidently stifles not only life but also art: 'In dungeon dark I cannot sing/ In sorrow's thrall 'tis hard to smile'¹². In the face of such unremitting containment, it is not surprising that Emily Bronte yearns for a 'chainless soul/with courage to endure'.¹³ Failing that, she yerns for the release of death.

8. Ibid. p. 186.

9. Ibid. p. 37

10. Ibid. p. 31

11. Ibid. p.200

12. Ibid. p. 81

13. Ibid. p. 163.

Thus Emily Bronte is a poet of loss or to put it more comprehensively and as we observed in ch III she is a death-oriented poet. She constantly employs a series of metaphorical equivalents for death: thus, imprisonment is characteristically associated with winter, night and hell, and freedom with spring, day and heaven.

Death imagery is numerous in Emily's poetry; it is the 'Despot of whole',¹⁴ is 'stony hearted'¹⁵ which never yields back his victims again'¹⁶. Hence, for instance, the importance of one of her favourite death images, that of grave,¹⁷ which in itself catches of what she wishes to say about living and dying. It implies the same opposition between the stillness of death and the busynessⁱ of life which is the stuff of much of Emily Bronte's imagery; the grave in her work stands for the paradox of life in death among the mourners behind it, for the strength of the spirit after death, for the walking ghost, the memory that is ghost, so strong that lives on, and for the dead, who

14. Ibid. p.185.

15. Ibid, p. 104.

16. Ibid. p. 44.

17. Ibid. p. 33, 65, 71, 172, 177, 184, 186, 210, 235.

Banquo like, refuse to keep their graves or take their eternal rest - as against the living death of being confined, constrained, tormented¹⁸. Besides grave, other images which symbolise death are 'sleeping earth', weary earth', calm 'haggard brow', 'sweet eyes closed for ever', cold 'dreary eye' 'flowerless moors', 'withered grass', 'barren hills', 'barren moorland' 'tree with riven branches', gnarled and ancient tree'. Tree, however, also symbolises life when it sways and moves. In tree process of regeneration works and its movement symbolises the cradle of life.

Day and night which go side by side with light and darkness are recurring images in Emily Bronte's poetry¹⁹. We find many poems opening with either of them. 'Darkness and glory' are everywhere contrasted through the use of such terms as 'sparkling', cloudless', 'dazzling', 'bright', cloudy grey', 'dim', 'gloomy', etc. As we see from the large number of images of night and darkness²⁰, Emily Bronte seems to

 18. Anne Smith. ed., The Art of Emily Bronte (London: Vision Press, 1876) p. 79.

19. C.W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 29, 32, 35, 37, 38, 48, 50, 56, 63, 66, 68, 76.

20. Ibid. p. 77, 81, 82, 85, 86, 87, 99, 112, 116, 131, 135, 137, 168, 184, 209.

have a fascination for night, and is rightly represented all through her poetry as a 'watcher of the skies' in all their phases and moods, 'the night is darkening round me' 'I'll come when thou are saddest/Laid alone in the darkening room! 'I used to love on winter nights', 'the sun is near meridian height / And my sun sinks in endless night, 'I have suffered on through night and day; / I have trod a dark and frightful way'; we find her even pleading to 'Gentle Night and stars' to return and hide me from the hostile light/ That does not warm, but burn'.²¹

The images of darkness are also expressed in the change of mood, that is when fear and frustration predominate. Everything becomes dark inside and outside. The sun (symbolically connected with day and illumination of the spirit) is sinking; the moon (symbolically connected with night and uncertain light of the imagination and sometimes terror) is rising.

Thus we find Emily very conscious of shades of light and darkness. Many of her observations are effected by noticing the presence or absence of light. She draws conclusions from the changes in illumination. She has a tendency to connect darkness and moonlight

21. Ibid. p. 226.

with things of the imagination, and the harsher light of day with matter-of-fact statements. Day is the appropriate time for action, night for speculation.

Dream imagery is also quite frequent in Emily's poetry. From the very start her poems are full of references to dreams and visions²². In "Tell me, tell me" for instance, 'the smiling child' sees in a brilliant evocation both the 'green and flowery spary' with the bird poised for flight, and also the sea of glorious infinity.²³ In "The Night of storms has passed"²⁴ the poet presents her mystical experieces through a dream: physical paralysis, the sense of time and space being different in the 'dream' from that of real life, the ideas of eternity and of bridging the unbridgeable void. All these strands are bound up in a sensation of horror, as if in this early poem Emily Bronte had to offer it in a conventionlised Gothic treatment.

Of all human images the most important one is perhaps the child²⁵. Emily's interest in and

22. Ibid. p. 40,49,50,51,64,66,69,74,87.

23. Ibid. p. 30.

24. Ibid. p. 37.

25. Ibid. p. 30, 32, 39, 40.

observation of children and child nature from babyhood are remarkable, and the many pictures she draws of them, such as 'smiling child', 'glorious child', 'sweet child', 'poor child', 'child of dust', 'unloved child' in just a line or two are amply sufficient to show how intense are her understanding of child and child nature. We have already seen how body is a kind of imprisonment in which soul is contained. But there is a period of life when the soul is least thwarted and it is infancy and childhood. At this early stage the body is an avenue not an obstacle to the soul, the soul thus can fully respond to the eternal spring of Eden shadowed in Nature's season of newness. The later gap between childhood and adulthood reproduces the initial gap between the soul of heaven and the soul on earth. Indeed, this distances between the two experiences are alike in that they measure the same magnitude of loss.

But since growth and loss of Eden are inevitable, it would seem that once childhood is lost the remaining life is largely hellish. And in many ways Emily's poetry demonstrates that such is the case. But there is another ^pexperience - that of love - which, like that of childhood, is other - worldly in its nature and which promises an antidote and even release from the existence of imprisonment.

The child's experience of bliss and its loss becomes the emblem of all earthly experience and even determines the ethos and defiance of adult love. As a result, childhood is not only the key to Emily's metaphysical world, but also a conceptual bridge between her poetry and fiction. And it is here that Emily the poet and Emily the novelist turn out to be one and the same.²⁶ Both share a vision which has a common mortal and immutable strain. The mortal sees in the child's loss of heaven the rehearsal for the lover's loss of paradise. The immutable looks toward a point of total and permanent recovery. In her poetry Emily speaks of this when she says that 'sometime the loved and the loving/ shall meet on the mountain again.'²⁷ In the novel the same vision is expressed towards the end when the shepherd boy believes that he sees Heathcliff and Catherine reunited on the top of the moors²⁸.

26. Irving H. Buchen, "Emily Bronte and the Metaphysics of Childhood and Love", Emily Bronte : A Critical Anthology, ed., E.D. Petit (London : Penguin Books, 1973) p. 225.

27. C.W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 92.

28. Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights (New York : W.W. Norton and Company. INC, 1963) p. 265.

Emily's description and pictures of the child show how completely she knew and sympathised with various aspects of child nature as when she says in one of the poems, 'Long neglect has worn away/ Half the sweet enchanting smile'²⁹ or still in another poem when she says:

I saw thee child, one summer's day
Suddenly leave thy cheerful play,
And in the green grass, lowly lying³⁰
I listened to thy mournful sighing.

As Leicester Bardner has pointed out, Emily Bronte seems to have been obsessed with the vision of a young, lovely happy child growing up a life of misery. Death for the child would clearly be better than life.³¹ Poem after poem expresses the sense of an experience having the force of absolute possession, known in childhood, and recoverable only in death. Thus death and childhood are firmly linked in Emily Bronte's chain of associations.

29. C.W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 47.

30. Ibid. p. 39.

31. Leicester Bradner, "The Growth of Wuthering Heights", PMLA, Vol. 48, 1933, p. 129-46.

Animal imagery is outstanding for the number drawn from birds.³² Emily is not interested primarily in their song, or their shape, or their colour, or their habits; but she is interested in their flight and their swift easy movements when they are free: 'And the wild bird has flown from that old grey stone, / In some warm nook a couch to find'³³ or their fluttering, struggling movements when imprisoned, 'what bird can soar with broken wings.'³⁴ The animals concerned are horses and dogs, of the kind symbolically connected with the earth, as opposed e.g to birds, symbolically connected with the element of air.

Emily's interest in growth and decay is reflected in her images drawn from vegetable life - in trees and flowers. Her keen observation of the vegetable life suggests that Emily was very familiar with plants, flowers and trees, everything that lived or grew on the moors. Her poetry is interspersed with metaphors of animal and vegetable life and time is often indicated by mentioning the flowers that are in bloom. Thus in

32. C.W. Hatfield, ed. The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 30, 32, 46, 48, 70, 77, 90.

33. Ibid. p. 46.

34. Ibid. p. 44.

one of the poems the child is seen as 'childhood's flower' in another, a lady has 'dove like eyes'. Her interest in growth and decay is represented through swaying of the trees and moving of the leaves and tree with withered leaves and riven branches.

Emily, it has already been pointed out, is a poet of nature's less benign aspects and a large number of images are derived from the weather and its changes, the look and the portent of the sky, the varying seasons, nipping frosts, clouds, springtime, showers, sunshine, moonlight, wind and storm and moor, all attesting Emily's practical knowledge and observation as well as the particular aspects of nature which delight Emily Bronte. She notes with loving accuracy 'the wild breeze' roving 'in the dawning day', 'with thee and me',³⁵ the sweet moon which 'gleams and lights your room like day',³⁶ the stars and Dreams and Gentle Night' which hide me from the hostile light/ That does not warm but burn'.³⁷ She revels in delicate changes of light, especially at dusk 'when clouds of tempest and of night' wrap 'the parent orb away',³⁸ the 'stars and

35. Ibid. p. 177.

36. Ibid. p. 215.

37 Ibid. p. 226.

38. Ibid. p. 80

moolight become 'the tokens of the night', she delights in the changing effects of spring weather, 'sunshine and rain at once' and she loves the swift play of moon and shadow that when she seeks a comparison for the most exquisite of human experience, young love, she can find nothing more beautiful in nature than 'the glorious gladsome rise of June's rejoicing morn'³⁹.

Of all nature images, the imagery of elements is perhaps the most dominant one. Right from the beginning earth, water, air and fire remain strikingly present in Emily's poetry. As E. M. W Tillyard's⁴⁰ summary shows the Elizabethan placed the four elements in a hierarchical order, beginning at the bottom with earth (cold and dry), followed by water (cold and moist) air (hot and moist), and finally fire (hot and dry), 'the noblest element of all --- which blow the sphere of the moon enclosed the globe of air that girded earth and water. As Shakespeare's Cleopatra says;

I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life.⁴¹

39. Ibid. p. 144.

40. E.M.W Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (London : Chatto and Windus, 1969) p. 136.

41. William Shakespeare, "Antony and Cleopatra", Act v, Sc. II, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (New York : Avrnel Books, 1975) p. 877.

This scheme corresponds roughly with the way the elements are used in Emily's poetry. The opening of many poems show how these elements come to the fore at once. Earth imagery⁴² falls into two groups- the first expresses the poet's longing for the earth and the second her dread of it, resulting in numerous passages, therefore, for the release of her spirit from the world and to seek immortality with the unseen, the invincible. This dualism in the poet's personality is expressed in terms of the element (earth) and of its movement (ascent or descent). All the images move between two poles of elation, of liberation on the one hand, and of anxiety, of destruction on the other.

The imagery of water⁴³ takes many forms snow, bog or swamp, lake, sea, ocean, rain etc. Rain is an agent of purification or of fertility as well as destructiveness. Since rain is primarily a fertilizing agent, it is related therefore to the general symbolism of life; but water is of all the elements the most ambiguous and is associated simultaneously with death, dissolution and life. The tranquility of water is symbolised by brook and lake.

42. C.W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York : Columbia University Press, 1941) p.33, 54, 65, 67.

43 Ibid. p. 29,31,41,50,58,42,48,60,64.

Air ⁴⁴ is perhaps the central image of the imagery of elements. The poet often escapes into an air which is at once open, free, clear, still and cold. The wind, especially the violent wind, is the most conscious element in the imagery of air. The air is also the starting point for dreams, and is most commonly associated with happy or ecstatic states of being.

Fire ⁴⁵ symbolises, creative, physical or spiritual energy. It stands for destructiveness; it also symbolises the intensity of passion. It is a symbol of transformation and regeneration as well. It is related to the concept of light or enlightenment, purification or sublimation.

Of artificial images, the window is an important one; it expresses symbolically the idea of penetration into an otherwise enclosed space.

It may be interesting to give a detailed analysis of the subject-matter of a few poems of Emily. For this purpose we take five of her representative poems. "There let thy breeding branch atone", "Cold in the

44. Ibid. 12, 37, 40, 51, 73, 86

45. Ibid. 43, 50, 54, 75.

earth", "Death that struck---", "The Night Wind" and "I am the only being whose doom", which deal respectively with a sense of loss and guilt, love, death, nature, loneliness and self - pity which form in a sense the dominant themes of Emily Bronte's poetry.

The substance of "There let thy breeding branch atone " is indeed dark. The poem appears to be about memory, guilt, sacrifice or self-denial, 'thy breeding branch' makes one think of the Crucifixion, but there is no capital letter to 'thy', so that the sacrifice suggested would seem to be not God's but that of some human person. But the sacrifice, whoever it is by, appears to be intended to purchase relief from tears of remorse and memory. At the same time, there is the hint, in the last two stanzas of the poem, that this persistence of memory will remain.

The poem is important for its meaning, for the sensibility, inherent in its images. Of these, the first is the image of 'thy breeding branch'⁴⁶, with its strong evocation of a sense of mutilation, of self-amputation or sacrifice. It is difficult to say which of these three notions the image most powerfully seems to convey. We may think, as we register the physical

46. Ibid. p. 150.

impact of these horrific and potent figures, of the rough blood-stained cross of Crucifixion, or of the Wood of Suicides in Dante's Inferno, where bough that bleed when they are broken are inhabited by those who took their own lives. 47

But whether we interpret the image as one of self-sacrifice or self-mutilation, the sense of loss remains the same, and it is this sense of loss, combined with a sense of self-pity and guilt, expressed through images of 'torturing tear' and 'young sins' which fire the first stanza of the poem. The other two stanzas with its images of 'a pledge for memory' and 'all the wildering maze of mad hours left behind' express Emily's utterances upon the nature of earthly memory and passion.

If we paraphrase "Cold in th earth"⁴⁸ we find how the statement of emotion develops by means of the image of 'Cold in the dreary grave'. The poet then recalls her early love - her 'only love' as she styles it - and questions herself upon her remembrance of this intense

47. M. Spark and D. Stanford, Emily Bronte: Her Life and Work (London: Peter Owen, 1975) p. 217.

48. C. W. Hatfield, ed., The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941) p. 222.

passion which death terminated. 'Have I forgotten to love you?' she asks, adding that no longer her thoughts hover resting their wings 'Over the mountains on Angora's shore where heath and fern-leaves cover/that noble heart for ever', adding further that after fifteen wild Decembers'-the image of 'fifteen wild Decembers' suggesting fifteen years - only the most faithful would still remember. And yet she asserts that 'no Sun has lighted up my heaven; / No other Star has ever shone for me', her life's bliss lies in the grave with her lover. But the poet had to put her lover out of mind; since after her lover's death she had somehow to learn how it was possible to live without joy. This in some measure she has achieved; but she could not have done it had she remembered him; and still, even now, she does not remember. To dwell upon her lover, would make her unfit to face a world in which she has no joy.

"Death that struck" moves between two poles - of negation and assertion. That which is negated is earthly life, with its prospects of joy and hope; and that which is asserted is 'Eternity' - the state beyond time and human existence. In the image 'Time's withered branch' time is envisaged as a tree on which 'leaves'

were growing brightly and 'Birds, beneath its shelter, gathered nightly' and 'round its flowers, the wild bees flew'; sorrow and guilt work their havoc on this tree. Even after guilt has despoiled the plentitude provided by the foliage, the poet is consoled by thinking that, unseen but present, within the trunk- 'Flowed forever Life's restoring tide'. And so the sense of the fullness and fruition returns. The poet does not mourn' for the parted gladness, / For the vacant nest and silent song', 'Winter will not linger long' rather 'spring would adorn the beauty - burdened spray' and 'wind and rain and fervent heat' would caress 'Lavished glory on its second May'. Now comes the final knock of destiny, the image of 'Heartless Death'⁴⁹ - now 'morning sunshine' mocks the poet's anguish, now 'Time for me must never blossom more!'

But the poet is not afraid of 'Heartless Death'. Rather she rejoices at its appearance as eternity's herald. Since the perished sapling' of time can never blossom gloriously again, she is glad to think that it will be felled, and that eternity will be richer for its decaying wood.

49. Ibid. p. 224.

"The Night Wind"⁵⁰ develops through a kind of dialogue between the poet and the wind. The poem belongs to a set of images of wind, darkness, moonlight, and starlight. It opens with the image of 'summer's mellow midnight in which a cloudless moon is shining 'through' our open parlour window'; The poet is sitting in 'silent musing' and the wind is caressing her hair. But the poet wants to be alone in her thoughts, 'Go, gentle singer---Play with the scented flower./ The young tree's supple bough /And leave my human feelings / In their course to flow'. But the wind, 'the wanderer', would not leave the poet and it asks if ~~were~~ they were not friends from childhood ~~friends~~ and did it not love her 'As long as thou hast loved the night'. The death image is suggested by 'the church yard stone' beneath which the poet's hearts would be laid at rest'. But even then the wind would not leave the poet alone, rather it would hover around the poet mourning her death.

In "I am the only being whose doom" the poet's loneliness and self pity are revealed to us. The poet is the only being 'whose doom no tongue would ask, no eye would mourn'. The changeful life has slipped away in 'secret tears', she is friendless even after

50. Ibid. p. 146.

eighteen years, and has been 'As lone as on my natal day'. The poet's loneliness is expressed in the use of such images as 'sad soul' and 'fancy's rainbow'. The poet's 'sad soul' longed for someone to love her, 'But those were in the early glow of feelings ---and they died --- long ago'. The 'hope of youth' has melted off and 'fancy's rainbow' is withdrawn; experience has told the poet that 'in mortal bosoms truth never grow'.

This analysis of imagery reveals to us certain observations concerning the image structure as used in Emily's poems.

Nature poems are mostly in pictures. As we saw in "The Night- Wind" Emily likes to create pictures in words. The picture of the night wind as 'gentle singer' and 'the wanderer' kissing and caressing the poet testify to this argument.

In poems of self and reflexive \neq -emotion as "I am the only being whose doom", Emily uses very few images to express herself or to communicate her ideas. 'Sad soul' and 'fancy's rainbow' are the only images which Emily has used in the poem.

We can also see two kinds of image structure in Emily's poems, one in which an integrated image like a

canvass is used - an image in which several small pictures are used to contribute to the total effect- thus Emily uses images within images. This is seen in such image as 'Time's withered branch'⁵¹ which includes leaves, flowers etc. And second in which an isolated image is used as object. The function of the image is then to shed light on individual objects and single emotion as in men's are hearts as 'withered weeds'⁵²

The images as we have seen at the very beginning of this chapter are abstract and concrete. In abstract images abstract objects are personified- hope is a phantom of the soul; soul is sad.⁵³

The images are derived from wide ranging sources- from plants as in 'Time's withered branch', leaves, flowers etc, animals, birds, etc., heavenly bodies, stars, moon, sun, etc.

The sources are also in human feelings, sorrow, guilt, such as winged grief, torturing tear etc.

51. Ibid. p. 185.

52. Ibid. p. 243, 223.

53. Ibid. p. 224.

It may be pointed out that much of Emily's images are evaluative; they are not sensory or tactile-she does not describe objects as they appear, rather she likes to visualise whatever she reflects on. Thus Emily is a poet who sees in images or to put it in other words, she is an imagist poet in the sense that we notice extensive personification or absolute particularisation.

It is tempting to compare Emily's poetic imagery with that she employs in her novel. A study of the imagery of Wuthering Heights shows that most of the images which we have found in her poetry are extensively used in her novel. Thus we have elemental imagery, nature imagery, animal imagery and so on. It would be worthwhile to discuss a few images in detail.

To exalt the power of human feeling Emily Bronte roots her analogies in the fierce life of animals and in the relentless life of the elements - earth, water, air, fire. Most of the animals are wild. Hareton's 'whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks',⁵⁴ and Heathcliff denies the paternity of 'that bear'⁵⁵.

54. Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights (New York : W.W. Norton and Company, INC, 1963, p. 19.

55. Ibid. p. 21.

Hereon had been cast out like an unfledged dunnocke', and Heathcliff is a fierce pitiless, wolfish man.⁵⁶ He is also 'a bird of bad omen'⁵⁷ and 'an evil beast' prowling between a 'stray sheep' and 'the fold, waiting his time to spring and destroy'⁵⁸. He has a 'ferocious gaze' and a savage utterance; he growls and howls⁵⁹ 'like a beast', and is many times named 'a brute', 'a beast' 'a brute beast'⁶⁰. He struggles like a bear, he has sharp cannibal teeth which gleam 'through the dark,' and 'basilisk eyes quenched by sleeplessness. He gnaws his teeth and foams like a mad dog. He is like a bull' to Linton's lamb,⁶¹ and only at the very end, the exhausted end, 'he breathed as fast as a cat'.

The passions of animals have meaning in them, Heatcliff's passion destroys others, himself, and at last, itself. The tumult of the elements alternates with periods of peace, and the seasons are not only autumn and winter. The fact of alteration enables

56. Ibid. p. 90.

57. Ibid. p. 90.

58. Ibid. p. 94.

59. Ibid. p. 139.

60. Ibid. p. 62.

61. Ibid. p. 99.

nature to endure. The singleness of Heathcliff's tempestuous and wintry emotional life dooms it. Thus there is a curious and ironic contrast between the condition and destiny of Heathcliff, and the full facts of those areas of metaphor. When at the end of the novel, Nelly remarks that 'the same moon shone through the window; and the same autumn landscape lay outside' as eighteen years before she is speaking with metaphorical accuracy; but Heathcliff is not the same. He has not indeed come into a 'sober, disenchanted maturity - that will be the privilege of Hareton and the second Cathy; but he has completely changed in the fashion that Joseph described much earlier - 'so by as fire'--- there is a strange change approaching - I'm in its shadow at present'⁶² he declares when he has found that nothing is worth the feeling of it. At last, after all the windy tumult and the tempests, he says, 'I have to remind myself to breathe---!'⁶³

The imagery of elements predominates in the novel. Twice Heathcliff is likened to an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone';⁶⁴ and once he speaks scornfully

62. Ibid. p. 255.

63. Ibid. p. 256.

64. Ibid. p. 100, 37. 89.

of 'the soil of ' Linton's 'shallow cares.' Earth and vegetation sometimes result in a happy juxtaposition of the vast or the violent and the little or the homely, as when Heathcliff says of Linton that 'He might as well plant an oak in a flowerpot', or when he threatens to 'crush his ribs in like a rotten hazelnut,'⁶⁵ which is like his saying that Catherine's passion could be as readily encompassed by Linton as 'the sea could be --- contained in that horse-trough'.

The climax in the imagery of water is reached together with the crucial point in the story of Heathcliff's disappearance. In a desperate attempt to be with him in the world to which they both belong, Catherine goes out on to the moor and her paroxysm of weeping coincides with the atmospheric uproar⁶⁶. Both her tears and her refusal to take shelter from the rain constitute an act of repentance and participation in the purifying power of the element of air.⁶⁷

Images of air⁶⁸ and especially of wind are quite frequent. Its essence is airy delight; liberty and

65. Ibid. p. 100.

66. Ibid. p. 76-77.

67. Ibid. p. 78.

68. Ibid. p. 107-108.

movemnt. All the images are related and contributed to these two ideas; the tree, the wind, the cloud, the birds, the undulating moors, the long waving grass.

Quite as important as the imagery of earth, water and air is the imagery of fire. In every interior, the fire on the hearth is the centre of pictorial interest, and the characters sit 'burning their eyes out before the fire'. Eyes burn with anguish but do not melt, they always flash and sparkle. Furry kindles, temper kindles, a 'spark of spirit kindles'. Catherine has a fiery disposition,⁶⁹ but so do objects and states: woods brand, shame is burning, merriment expires quickly, fevers consume life; hot coffee and basins smoke, they do not steam; and Isabella shrieks 'as if witches were running red.- hot needles into her'. Sometime fire is identified with other elements, as when a servant urges 'flakes of fame up the chimney', or when Isabella complains that the fire causes the wound on her neck, first stopped by the icy cold, to stream and smart.

Landscape is an important image in the novel. 'Wuthering Heights', we are told, is 'a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric

69. Ibid. p. 106

tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather', and, immediately after, that 'one may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun!'⁷⁰ The application of this landscape to the characters is made explicit in the second half of the novel, when Heathcliff says, 'Now, my bonny lad, you are mine! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it!'⁷¹ This analogy provides at least half of the metaphorical base of the novel.

Human conditions are like the activities of the landscape, where rains flood, blasts wail, and the snow and wind whirl wildly and blow out lights. Faces, too, are like landscapes: 'a cloud of meditation' hangs over Nelly's 'ruddy countenance'; Catherine had a 'suddenly clouded brow; her humour was a mere vane for constantly varying caprices'; 'the surface of' the boy's Heathcliff's 'face and hands was dismally beclouded' with dirt; later, his face 'brightened for a moment; then it was overcast afresh'. The older

70. Ibid. p. 14.

71. Ibid. p. 154.

Catherine experienced whole seasons of gloom; and the younger Catherine's heart was clouded in double darkness'. Her 'face was just like the landscape - shadows rested longer, and the sunshine was more transient.' Sometimes 'her eyes are radiant with cloudless pleasure; and at the end, Hareton shakes off 'the clouds of ignorance and degradation; and his 'brightening mind brightened his features'.

'Book' is another important image in the novel. Lockwood's attitude to books is quite conventional. When he cannot sleep, he picks up the books he finds on the ledge, and idly turns the leaves.⁷² When Cathy's prospects of happiness are at their bleakest she pretends to study Black Art, and to be able to bring death to her enemies⁷³. Her thoughts are bent on the destruction, not on the preservation of life. Reading constitutes the only congenial occupation she finds at Wuthering Heights,⁷⁴ much to the annoyance of Heathcliff; to whom books are 'trash' and reading an 'idle trick'.⁷⁵

72. Ibid. p. 25,26.

73. Ibid. p. 22.

74. Ibid . p. 34.

75. Ibid. p, 34.

The other important images in the novel are those of dream and vision, window etc. but it is not possible to deal with all of them because our study is confined chiefly to Emily Bronte's poetry.

From this striking similarity of imagery it can be inferred that the roots of Emily's novel were already there in her poetry. And the vision which dictated the one must have equally inspired the other. The poems and the novel are, indeed, twins of a unique imagination, they are the products not only of one mind but of one time.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapter we have described the various images which Emily Bronte has used; we have traced the range and source of Emily's poetic imagery and have seen how, to a great extent, the same images have frequently been used in Wuthering Heights also. We notice how the different images - abstract, concrete and their components have found expression in Emily's poetic language. We also notice that there is a consistency in their use which helps ultimately in the creation of a transcendent world, a world usually hidden from mortal sight as has been observed already, a world in which Emily saw human beings not in relation to other human beings, or to human civilizations and societies and codes of conduct but only in a relation to the cosmic scheme of which they formed part; she saw them in relation to time and eternity, to death and fate and nature of things. This consistency is apparent not only in the positive aspects of the imagery used but also in the negative aspects. In this context it is worth quoting Cirlot:

This language of images and emotion is based ... upon a precise and crystal means of expression, revealing transcendent truths, external to Man (cosmic order) as well as within him (thought, the moral order of things,

psychic evolution, the destiny of the soul); furthermore, it possesses a quality which ... increases its dynamism and gives it a truly dramatic character. This quality, the essence of the symbol, is its ability to express simultaneously the various aspects (thesis and antithesis) of the idea it represents.¹

Summing up briefly it is possible to make the following points about Emily's major images.²

Life and death in their positive aspects are symbolically related to light and darkness respectively. Life in its positive sense is full of pleasures and happiness, it is beautiful and is worth living, in its negative aspects it is full of sorrow, pain and unhappiness and is brutal and cruel reminding always of the futality of life. Death in its positive sense is the liberator of the soul; it frees the spirit from the heard melodies of time, since the divine malice resides in melody itself : 'O for the time when I shall sleep/without Identity'; in its negative aspects it is always brutal and cruel.

Light and darkness are counterpart of day and night; they are symbolically related to the respective

1. J.E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, tr., Jack Sage (London : Chatto and Windus, 1962), p. xxx
2. Elisabeth Th. M. Van De Laar, The Inner Structure of Wuthering Heights (The Hague, Paris : Mouton Books, 1969) p. 235-253.

ideas of illumination of the spirit, and life, and to obliteration of the spirit, and death; but here it is necessary to distinguish between primordial darkness, with its principle of potential generation, or life, and regressive darkness, with its principle of evil or destruction.

Colour in its positive aspects is related to the bright aspects of life - to the lively spirit of human as well as animal nature; it represents nature in its various forms and manifestations. In its negative aspects colour represents the dark side of human as well as animal life and presents nature in its worn out phase.

The element of air in its positive aspects is symbolically related to the ideas of spiritual illumination and life; in its negative aspects to death and obliteration.

The element of water in its positive aspects is symbolically related to the ideas of fertility and regeneration; in its negative aspects to death and dissolution.

The element of earth in its positive aspects is symbolically related to the ideas of fertility and

security; in its negative aspects to barrenness and decay.

The element of fire in its positive aspects is symbolically related to the ideas of creation or regeneration; in its negative aspects to sacrifice, punishment, destruction.

The weather in its positive aspects is symbolically related to the ideas of happiness, elation; in its negative aspects to unhappiness, dejection.

Dreams, visions etc. in their positive aspect are symbolically related to the ideas of security and happiness; in their negative aspects to insecurity and fear.

Windows, doors etc. in their positive aspects are symbolically related to the ideas of openness, power, freedom and life; in their negative aspects to closeness, inferiority, imprisonment and death.

Animal and vegetable life in its positive aspects is symbolically related to the ideas of love, growth and life; in its negative aspects to cruelty, destruction and death.

Books in their positive aspects are symbolically related to the ideas of communication, flexibility and illumination of the spirit; in their negative aspects to obstinacy, ⁱenertia and indifference.

These images form the imaginative field of Emily's poetry and this structure holds even in Wuthering Heights. This structural relationship is evident from the fact that they derive their dynamism from one common source - the dual ideas or to put it more precisely the "double vision" of life and death, good and evil, spiritual illumination and annihilation. The remarkable thing is that the positive aspects of imagery of air and water conflict with the negative aspects of the imagery of light and darkness : in spite of the positive aspect of the dynamism of light there is no identification of life with light, but with darkness. Emily's poetry, therefore, culminates in the negation of light : she creates 'life in darkness'.

'Life in darkness' which might perhaps be considered as just one aid to the understanding of Emily Bronte's mind and personality - has been revealed to be the epitome of Emily Bronte's poetry. The study of the imagery carried out in the preceding pages has brought to light the existence of a striking similarity

between her work as a whole, an inner structure, an imaginative field of great consistency.

The imaginative resources of Emily are not necessarily exhausted with this particular imaginative field. Rather her genius has found in its potential of imagery the ideal linguistic embodiment of her ideas. The ideas give unity to the structure of the imaginative field.

Emily Bronte may not have been aware of her own private motives in constructing this ideal system; still it is obvious that life and death, good and evil, spiritual illumination and annihilation are the ideas that preoccupied her mind to the point of obsession and formed the crux of her entire work.

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