ASPECTS OF THE BYRONIC HERO

IN HEATHCLIFF

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ASPECTS OF THE BYRONIC HERO
IN HEATHCLIFF

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When Wuthering Heights first appeared, Victorian readers were appalled by the compulsive, destructive energy in it. Heathcliff seemed "a monster of evil, a devil without any fiery infernal splendour, a mean and sordid devil."\(^1\) Heathcliff is drawn with a type of dusky resplendence that fascinates, but Heathcliff was born in the slums of Liverpool, a dark, dirty creature about whose past nothing was known, he was picked up by Mr. Earnshaw in the streets and brought to the moors. The moors grind his strength of will and steadfastness of purpose into a unique shape. Hardened by his physical surroundings, embittered by Hindley's treatment, and disillusioned by Cathy's actions, he crushes everyone who stands in his way.\(^2\) Emily Brontë develops the story through him. It is he who acts and suffers and causes others to act and suffer; his strength permeates the story; his power for good and for evil shocks; his deeds and his reactions make the coherent whole. Heathcliff is Wuthering Heights.


To relate the villain-hero of Byron to Emily Brontë's Heathcliff, it is necessary to note the literary climate in which she wrote. The era of Romanticism and the status of the superhero had diminished in influence while the simple themes of ordinary life gained new attention. In this atmosphere, Emily Brontë combined her considerable reading and singular experiences with elements of Romanticism to write about life on the moors. In the bleak native setting, the vibrant villain-hero of Byron took on fresh meaning.

That the Brontë sisters were familiar with Byron's life and poetry is clear from Charlotte Brontë's reply to a friend's request for a list of books to read:

Now don't be startled at the names of Shakespeare and Byron. Both these were great men, and their works are like themselves. You will know how to choose the good, and to avoid the evil . . . Omit the comedies of Shakespeare, and the Don Juan, perhaps the Cain, of Byron, though the latter is a magnificent poem . . .

In her list of biographies which follows this, she includes Moore's *Life of Byron*.

The early writing of the four Brontës--Branwell, Charlotte, Emily and Ann--reveals their interest in the Byronic hero. The first hero of Charlotte and Branwell's juvenile work was the Duke of Wellington. Gradually two heroes emerged as their dominant characters: Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Zamorna, and Alexander Percy, Earl of Northangerland. The Percy-Zamorna character epitomized...

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the Byronic hero, disenchanted, brooding and demonic. It is this archetype which provides Charlotte a model for Fairfax Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. In her second novel, *The Tenant of Windfell Hall*, Ann presents two protagonists, Arthur Huntingdon and Gilbert Markham, who are drawn from the villain-hero genesis. Julius, a figure in Emily's stories of *Gondal*, is a defiant, tyrannical prototype of Heathcliff. With Emily's novel *Wuthering Heights*, the metamorphosis of the Byronic hero--from the Brontë juvenilia to Heathcliff--is complete. 4

The interest of the young Brontës in the lives of the great was tremendous, hero worship being no small factor in their early development. Their reading in biography included Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Southey's *Life of Nelson*, Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, Moore's *Life of Sheridan* and his *Life of Byron*. Their penchant for books on natural history led them to the works of Bewick, Audubon and Cuvier, who believed that the earth had been destroyed several times before man was created. Among the novelists they read Scott, Fanny Burney, Richardson, Fielding and Sterne; among the poets, Shakespeare, Milton, Thomson, Goldsmith, Cowper, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Byron, Southey, Burns, Shelley and Coleridge. 5 The family held a membership

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in the Mechanics' Library at Keighley, and subscribed to such magazines as Blackwood's, Frazier's and the Methodist journals.

Still, the parsonage of Haworth was remote and out of the main stream of English life. Literary trends entered the secluded locality long after their full force was felt elsewhere. Byron's romances, popular before he left England in 1816, were the Brontës' reading matter in the 1830's. Their interest in the terror-Romanticist literature came after the height of its popularity. The Castle of Otranto, by Horace Walpole appeared in 1764; The Mysteries of Udolpho, by Mrs. Radcliffe thirty years later. During the intervening years, between these publications and the works of the Brontës, much terror-Romanticist literature was written, so that the materials out of which it was composed became well known. Certain phases of it presented areas for further development, but signs of change in literary taste were clearly visible in England and on the Continent. This literature which found such high favor was gradually being changed. A counter-movement was already in the course of formation in England.

The tyrant-villains created by this school of terror-Romanticism reverted to particular types which were

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6Ibid., p. 94.  
7Ibid., p. 72.  
forerunners of the Byronic hero. The predominant passions in Walpole's Manfred and Mrs. Radcliffe's Montoni are love of power and money; they are men of fierce and morose nature from whom no good can be expected. In the villains' moments of fury and revenge, their imagination is unable to conceive methods of torture to equal their desires. Like them, Heathcliff reveals an utter lack of mercy when he tells Nelly after his marriage to Isabella:

Tell your master, Nelly, that I never, in all my life, met with such an abject thing as she is. She even disgraces the name of Linton; and I've sometimes relented, from pure lack of invention, in my experiments on what she could endure, and still creep shamefully cringing back!

Only a desire for revenge can restrain the tyrant-villain's chicanery and prevent the commission of a serious crime. Heathcliff explains that this is the reason for Isabella's safety: "But tell him also, to set his fraternal and magisterial heart at ease, that I keep strictly within the limits of the law—" (p. 129).

Outwardly the villain-heroes are often handsome, stalwart men. Montoni, the lord of Udolpho, is a man of "an uncommonly handsome person," whose features are expressive and manly. The chief impression he awakens is one of brooding taciturnity bordering on melancholy. The model for Montoni is

10Ibid., p. 29.

11Emily Brontë, Riverside Edition of Wuthering Heights (Boston, 1957), p. 129. All subsequent references to this novel will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

12Bailo, p. 30.
found in Walpole's Manfred, although the latter has a fairly uncomplicated character, while the silent and gloomy Montoni has something enigmatical about his person. These are two of the tyrants of these romances, but at the head of the family tree showing the lineage of Manfred-Montoni is Hamlet, Prince of Denmark:

... later romanticism completed and gave depth to the picture of its hero with details derived from another early line of development, viz., with the defiance and titanic qualities of Milton's Satan, Hamlet and Satan are related souls, night-dark brooders over mysterious thoughts, whose likenesses have hitherto journeyed apart, combine in the Byronic hero.

Individualism, a key characteristic of the Romantic movement, is the reason for its preoccupation with heroes who were to some degree rebels and outsiders. Byronic heroes, from Childe Harold to Cain, have a too-sure sense of their independent egos and their defiant wills to abdicate their own judgments. They seem at times almost proud of their sins, if for no other reason than that they are their very own. "It should be noted that it is never the Byronic hero who excuses himself on this matter; it is always the narrator-person describing the hero." This Nelly does in Wuthering Heights:

I seated myself in a chair, and rocked, to and fro, passing harsh judgment on my many derelictions of

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13Ibid.  
14Ibid., p. 36.  
15Peter L. Thorslev, Jr., The Byronic Hero (Minneapolis, 1962), p. 17.  
16Ibid., p. 162.
duty; from which, it struck me then, all the misfortunes of all my employers sprang. It was not the case, in reality, I am aware; but it was, in my imagination, that dismal night, and I thought Heathcliff himself less guilty than I. (pp. 234-235)

The sins for which the Byronic hero accepts responsibility are not those which society considers most reprehensible. "The Giaour is remorseful not because he has killed Hassan, but because Leila has drowned, indirectly in consequence of their forbidden love." Heathcliff's remorse, too, is for Cathy's death, not for his cruelty to others:

You said I killed you--haunt me then! The murdered do haunt their murderers. I believe--I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always--take any form--drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul! (p. 143)

That the tyrant-villains who represent types of heroes important to the Romantic age did influence Emily Brontë is evident in her writing. She was well-read, especially in the literature contemporary to her time. During her stay in Brussels, Emily became acquainted with the "low" or "black" type of Gothic Romanticism popular in Germany at that time. She may have read the tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann while studying the German language. In one of them, "The Entail," Hoffmann describes scenes quite similar

17Ibid., p. 163.

to those in *Wuthering Heights*. At the beginning of Hoffmann's tale, the gates to the castle are barred and the visitors must shout to gain entrance.\(^{19}\) In much the same fashion, Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights* struggles to get inside Heathcliff's garden gate: "Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over, and, running up the flagged causeway bordered with straggling gooseberry bushes, knocked vainly for admittance, till my knuckles tingled, and the dogs howled" (p. 6).

Next, in "The Entail," the reading of a book at night by one of the castle visitors precedes the appearance of a ghost who makes scratching noises trying to get into the room.\(^{20}\) Lockwood explains his outcry to Heathcliff: "If the little fiend had got in at the window, she probably would have strangled me! ... And that minx, Catherine Linton, or Earnshaw, or however she was called—she must have been a changeling—wicked little soul! She told me she had been walking the earth these twenty years. ..."

Hesitating for a moment, Lockwood then continues: "The truth is, sir, I passed the first part of the night in--" (p. 22) here Lockwood stopped as he was about to reveal his knowledge of the writing in the old volumes belonging to Cathy. He reconsidered and decided not to say anything.


\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 139.
An old faithful servant in the German tale tells the visitors the tragic story of the Rolandsitten family. Lockwood prevails on Nelly to tell him about the residents of Wuthering Heights: "Well, Mrs. Dean, it will be a charitable deed to tell me something of my neighbours--" (p. 28). Waiting no further invitation to her story, Nelly commences: "I was almost always at Wuthering Heights . . . " (p. 29). Despite these similarities, other points separate Emily Bronte from Hoffmann.

The dramatic graveyard scene in *Wuthering Heights* possibly contains overtones of another Gothic tale set in Ireland, "The Bridegroom of Barna," which *Blackwood's Magazine* printed anonymously in 1840. Its protagonist, Hugh Lawlor, shows many of Heathcliff's traits. His brutality, dark past, and passionate love move the story to its dramatic close. After the death of his sweetheart Ellen, Lawlor opens her grave: "By the side of Ellen Nubent's new-made grave sat the murderer Lawlor, enclosing in his arms the form that had once comprised all earth's love and beauty for him, and which, like a miser, with wild and maniac affection, he unburied once more to clasp and contemplate." Shot by the police when he resists arrest at the grave site, Lawlor dies with the girl in his arms. The story then concludes with

21Ibid.

the following words: "Hugh Lawlor was the last of his family, and his corpse was unclaimed by friend or relative; but the strangers who dug his grave did not venture to separate in death the hapless pair who in life could never be united." \(^{23}\)

In a scene with Nelly, Heathcliff describes action similar to those of Hugh Lawlor:

The day she was buried . . . in the evening I went to the churchyard . . . I'll have her in my arms again! If she be cold, I'll think it is the north wind that chills me; and if she be motionless, it is sleep. I got a spade from the toolhouse, and began to delve with all my might . . . I was on the point of attaining my object, when it seemed that I heard a sigh . . . I felt that Cathy was there, not under me, but on the earth. (p. 245)

After the death of his son, Heathcliff reveals to Nelly what he has done at the graveyard:

I'll tell you what I did yesterday! I got the sexton, who was digging Linton's grave, to remove the earth off her coffin lid, and I opened it. I thought once, I would have stayed there, when I saw her face again—it is hers yet—he had hard work to stir me; but he said it would change if the air blew on it, and so I struck one side of the coffin loose—and covered it up—. . . . and I bribed the sexton to pull it away, when I'm laid there, and slide mine out, too, I'll have it made so . . . (p. 244)

One of the sources of *Wuthering Heights* may have been the German stories; Irish sources have been suggested, while portions of the narrative seem to derive from local Yorkshire tales, especially in the speech and action. All the constituent elements were fused together in the fire of genius to form a new, though symbolic and representative world. \(^{24}\)

\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 141.  
\(^{24}\)Bentley, p. 93.
Emily Brontë forged a bond between her background and the literary age in which she lived. The tenets that markedly form *Wuthering Heights* were first stated in her five essays written in Brussels while she was studying at M. Héger's school. The attitudes implicit within her became explicit in these essays. "They represent what are probably her first attempts to formulate her own philosophy, bring her view of life to consciousness."\(^2\) In the essay "King Harold on the Eve of the Battle of Hastings," she proclaims in fervent tones her delight in the concentrated power of the mighty Romantic hero. In another essay, "The Butterfly," she describes the natural order and finds not order but insanity: "Life exists on a principle of destruction; every creature must be the relentless instrument of death to the others, or himself cease to live . . . the universe appeared to me a vast machine constructed only to bring forth evil . . ." Then

like a censuring angel sent from heaven, there fluttered through the trees a butterfly with large wings of gleaming gold and purple . . . here is a symbol of the world to come---just as the ugly caterpillar is the beginning of the splendid butterfly, this globe is the embryo of a new heaven and a new earth whose meagrest beauty infinitely surpasses mortal imagination . . .

In its conclusion she employs a traditional idea: "God is the God of justice and mercy."\(^2\)

\(^2\)Spark and Stanford, p. 62.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 64.
Wuthering Heights is not the typical Victorian novel with its study of normal men and women in the ordinary pursuits of life; nor is it nothing more than a Gothic romance. It is the story of Heathcliff, a psychological study of an elemental man whose soul is torn between love and hate.\(^{27}\) To place the novel in its proper perspective, it is important to understand the background of Heathcliff and the heroic tradition from which he comes. The major representative of the heroic aspect of Romanticism is Byron. The Byronic hero is the natural contact with the great heroic tradition in literature.\(^{28}\) It is through the Byronic hero that Heathcliff can be reached.

This examination involves the consideration of the Byronic hero's relationship to the Gothic villain, the motivation behind the Byronic fatal revenge, and the phenomenon of Byronic supernatural manifestations.


\(^{28}\) Thorslev, p. 185.
CHAPTER II

THE BYRONIC HERO AND THE GOTHIC VILLAIN

The elements of the Byronic hero existed before Byron in the literature of the age. This hero is the powerful fusion of diverse elements into a single commanding figure; he is the product of a Romantic hero tradition which was nearly a half-century old when the poet appeared. Although there are autobiographical ingredients in the Byronic hero--every character to some degree projects his author's personality--this hero is more than an extension of Byron's ego. He is the culminating point in the Romantic hero's development in literature.

Whatever the reasons of temperament or of genius, Byron was able to fashion a hero from the heterogeneous elements of this tradition who was not only to bear his name, but who was to leave so striking an impression on the minds of future readers as to almost efface the memory of such English predecessors as Mrs. Radcliffe, Scott (in his romances), or the Gothic dramatist.

The most clearly defined character of the later eighteenth-century romance is the tyrant of the haunted castle from whom the Byronic hero gradually evolved. In Horace Walpole's Gothic novel, The Castle of Otranto,

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1 Thorslev, p. 12.
2 Ibid., p. 191.
published in 1764, Manfred appears as a dark, gloomy and passionate villain with a high, white forehead shadowed by black curls, a dark piercing glance, striking countenance, manly character and a mysterious past. He is not the rightful heir to Otranto, but a descendant of the usurping family. As a consequence of this knowledge, he is obsessed with the fear that he will not be able to retain the family power if the true heir returns. His agony transforms him into an inhuman and savage being.

The Castle of Otranto is a terror story, but it is also the beginning of a form. Walpole opened possibilities of which he was unaware. Yet, in speaking of this new kind of romance in which the imagination is freed to treat the psychological reactions of men and women in extraordinary circumstances, Walpole says:

If the new route he has struck out shall have paved a road for men of brighter talents, he shall own with pleasure and modesty, that he was sensible the plan was capable of receiving the greater embellishments than his imagination or conduct of the passions would bestow on it. In 1786, three years before the appearance of Mrs. Radcliffe's first book, William Beckford published Vathek, and the Scotch physician John Moore published Zeluco, Various Views of Human Nature, Taken from Life and Manners Foreign and Domestic.

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3 Railo, p. 283.  
4 Ibid., p. 28.  
Moore's chief character Zeluco is coldly selfish and cruel. He lives the life of a rake. Going from one pleasure to another, he has a growing sense of emptiness, a spiritual unrest and a gnawing conscience. Zeluco suffers inner agony, yet perpetrates new crimes. The concept of the power inherent in the human eye is mentioned in Beckford's Vathek: "When he was angry one of his eyes became so terrible that no person could bear to behold it, and the wretch upon whom it was fixed instantly fell backward, and sometimes expired."

Vathek shows the trend of the times toward the genre of the Oriental tale. Set in a distant and alien milieu, it exploits exotic vice and magic diabolism. Beckford occasionally informs the reader that nothing is to be taken seriously and makes inane moral statements against the misconduct in the book. Lowry Nelson in writing about the Gothic novel criticizes Beckford's hypocrisy: "Though the habit of easy moralizing comes back like a tic, the full weight of the book rests on its self-indulgent pornography."

Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's tyrants revert to the same type as Manfred. Men of fierce and morose nature, their predominant passion is love of power and money. They are slaves to anger, full of pride, and eager for revenge. No kind feeling

6Raillio, p. 36.
7Ibid., pp. 37-38.
tempers their acts. Montoni, the "darkly-glancing" lord in The Mysteries of Udolpho (1789), creates a strange and awesome atmosphere around himself as he wanders through the passages of his dilapidated castle. Silent, dark, defiant, brooding, yet noble and attractive in appearance, he establishes a romantic, enigmatic effect. Married to a French noblewoman, he takes her and her niece to the castle of Udolpho in Italy. There he attempts to gain control of her fortune; failing this, he ill-treats her until she dies. Later on, Montoni is imprisoned by the Venetian government for political reasons and dies in his cell, proud and unrepentant. Another of Mrs. Radcliffe's tyrants, the Jesuit Schedoni in the long romance The Italian (1797), has a fanatic glance and a tall, aesthetic appearance. He is coupled with the perpetrators of terror in the Inquisition.

Mrs. Radcliffe distinguishes between the novel of terror and the novel of horror in a posthumous article which was published in 1826 in the New Monthly Magazine:

Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, ... neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one.

9Railo, p. 30. 10Ibid., p. 31.

The saintliest man in Madrid is exposed as the grossest sinner in Matthew G. Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). The monk Ambrosio is not revealed as a monster of vice in the beginning. Elevated to an impossible pinnacle of perfection by his own ambition and the adulation of the faithful, he falls when the devil tempts him. After he sins, he must continue his wickedness to insure his damnation. His good impulses become entirely evil. In him we see a heightened model of the good-bad conflict in human nature. By implication, whoever is capable of great good is also capable of great evil. In ordinary people good and evil seem to dilute each other; in unusual people either extreme continuously dominates the other, or the two alternate violently in ascendancy.

For Gothic novels and for the novels that followed, the representation of good and evil was signally important. Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe maintain a strict distinction between good and evil, though in *Manfred-Montoni* they create a villain-hero type whose aggressiveness gives him a certain fearsome attractiveness even within the moral context. But with the villain-heroes of Gothic horror, Ambrosio and Melmoth, Lewis and Maturin enter the area of the morally ambiguous.

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12 Nelson, p. 240.
13 Ibid., p. 242.
14 Hume, p. 289.
Melmoth the Wanderer, by Charles R. Maturin, is the last and one of the greatest of the Gothic novels of the period. Melmoth is the epitome of the Romantic villain-hero. He wanders, destructive and self-damned, seeking a salvation which his self-will prevents. His sadism repels, but the immensity of his tragic suffering gains stature for him through the series of tales which make up the book. In the end, he is damned like Marlowe's Faustus, not by what he does, but by his despair of forgiveness.15

In the preface which Mary Godwin later appended to Frankenstein, she indicates that Byron, after reading a German ghost story, proposed that the four of them—Byron, Shelley, Mary Godwin and the physician Polidori—should each write a ghost story. From this "contest" sprang Frankenstein in 1817. A skillfully constructed book with psychological insight, Frankenstein uses the device of a narrator to serve as a norm against which the facts of the story are told. The being which Victor Frankenstein creates mirrors his own inward deformity in its outward form. Frankenstein calls himself a murderer for having let loose such a dangerous being, but he soon realizes that the monster is acting out his own inhumanity. This psychological element makes the story. Senseless slaughter by an inhuman monster would frighten, but do nothing more; here it is all too reasonable. Victor Frankenstein tries to become a god, and his ambition destroys him:

15Ibid., p. 286. 16Raino, p. 117.
Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source. ... No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs.17

The early Gothic novels can be viewed as the forerunners of one aspect of Romanticism. Closely related chronologically, Gothic and Romantic writing share some of these characteristics, such as the villain-hero. The Gothic villain easily shades into the Romantic hero. Both have an essential loneliness and feeling of incommunicability; both are scapegoats or guilt-haunted wanderers. In their struggle with society, they do not become victims or conformists; they remain relatively free agents. Another key characteristic of the Gothic novel is its atmosphere. In the course of development of the Gothic villain and his setting, there is an evolution away from dependence for effect upon rigged contrivances toward the use of the irrational or the impulse to evil in the unconscious. In these ways, the Gothic novel offers fertile characterizations and situations which easily go into Romanticism.

In spite of a certain mocking air toward the tale of terror, Byron was influenced by it. He casually acknowledged his debt to this literary form in the lines "Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's art had stamped her image on me"

The atmospherical and natural effects related to terror-Romanticism are well represented in Byron's poetry. Frequently, they are expanded into the predominant elements of his work. His settings use the sublime and tempestuous of nature, savage mountains, tumultuous streams, flashing lightning and ocean storms.

"Lara" in particular exemplifies a powerful combination of these elements. The setting is a Gothic castle on whose walls the owner's portrait "darkens in its fading frame" (L, I, 111, 34) while he is away. At night, the moon shines through the dim windows of the old castle hall over the stone floor and lights up the "high fretted roof" (L, I, xi, 193), seeming to transform the kneeling saints above the Gothic windows into beings from another world. The young Giaour rides forth "on blackest steed" (G, 180) like a "demon of the night" (G, 202). When he reins in his charger on the summit of the cliff, he looks a moment as though the "Winters of Memory" (G, 262) were crowding into his soul and gathering in his life of pain.

18Paul Elmer More, editor, The Complete Poetical Works of Byron (Cambridge, 1933), p. 58. References to specific poems, cantos, and lines are contained in the text immediately following the quoted matter. Poems titles are abbreviated as follows: CH-Childe Harold, G-The Giaour, L-Lara, BA-The Bride of Abydos, Cr-The Corsair, M-Manfred, and C-Cain. Subsequent short footnote references to this work will be indicated by Byron's name, followed by the page number.

19Ibid., p. 366.  
20Ibid., p. 368.  
21Ibid., p. 312.  
22Ibid.
Hollow moaning winds gust through the deep thicket as Selim leads Zuleika to a sheltered grotto. Afterward, the place where Selim dies is marked with a deep-fixed pillar and "lash'd by the tumbling tide" (BA,II,xxvii,723). The "mourning flower" (BA,II,xxvii,729) flourishes pure and pale over Zuleika's grave. In "Manfred," as the hero stands on the edge of the cliff in the Jungfrau Mountains, the Chamois Hunter seizes him and exclaims, "Stain not our pure vale with thy guilty blood!" (M,I,11,372) The "mountains whirl" (M,I,11,375) and the "clouds grow thicker" (M,I,11,378). The sublime and tempestuous elements of nature shown by Byron apply to Heathcliff and the world of Wuthering Heights with an even greater primitive force than those in "Childe Harold" and the Oriental tales. Lord David Cecil observes that the antithesis between man and nature does not exist for Emily Brontë. "Men and nature to her are equally living and in the same way. To her an angry man and an angry sky are not just metaphorically alike, they are actually alike in kind." Gaunt thorns "all stretching their limbs one way" and a few stunted firs grew near the dark grey stone house atop the bleak hilltop.

23Ibid., p. 337.  
24Ibid.  
25Ibid., p. 483.  
26Ibid.  
27Ibid.  
This was Wuthering Heights, "Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed, in stormy weather" (p. 2). During his night spent at Wuthering Heights, Lockwood hears distinctly the "gusty wind" and the "driving of the snow" as well as the "fir-bough repeat its teasing sound" (p. 20). Attempting in his dream to stop its annoying disturbance, he reaches out his hand through the broken glass to seize the branch, but instead his fingers "closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!" (p. 20). During the night, the storm created a beautiful white scene on the moors, "the whole hill-back was one pillowy, white ocean" with the refuse of the quarries blotted from sight. All traces of the road had vanished. The air was clear and still, and "cold as impalpable ice" (p. 25). After his unusual experience at Wuthering Heights, Lockwood learned more about his neighbours from Nelly. Heathcliff and Edgar Linton were as different as "a bleak, hilly coal country" and "a beautiful fertile valley" (p. 59). On the night that Heathcliff left Wuthering Heights, a storm came "rattling over the Heights in full fury"; there was a "violent wind" as well as thunder, and a tree split off at the corner of the house, falling across the roof (p. 72). Perhaps symbolic of a young life lost, the day after Cathy's funeral, the weather broke with rain first, then sleet and snow. "The larks were silent, the young leaves of the early trees smitten and blackened——" (p. 144). Locked out of the
Heights by Hindley and Isabella, Heathcliff forced the window open and stood there: "His hair and clothes were whitened with snow, and his sharp cannibal teeth, revealed by cold and wrath, gleamed through the dark" (p. 150). When Heathcliff took control of Hareton after his father's death, exultation rang out in his voice as he said, "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" (p. 159). Hareton's mind soon became hidden "amid a wilderness of weeds" whose rankness topped its growth, yet, there was evidence of a "wealthy soil" that might yield "luxuriant crops" under other and more favorable circumstances (p. 167).

The Gothic hero of Walpole, Beckford, Lewis, Radcliffe, and Maturin was a commanding figure with his "square-turned joints" and stalwart build. Mature in age, competent in battle, he was a skilled leader or could be one. Usually more than a boy, yet not past middle age, he created a signal impression. Heathcliff and Byron's heroes, like their progenitor the Gothic hero, command the scenes in which they take part. In Conrad, a man in his prime and past his youth, there is "little to admire" (CR, I, ix, 195) in his form, for he has "no giant frame" (CR, I, ix, 198). Yet his pirate group "all obey and few inquire his will" (CR, I, xi, 80). Candlelight reveals the transformation of

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29 Railo, p. 223.
30 Ibid., p. 341.
31 Byron, p. 341.
32 Ibid., p. 339.
Heathcliff from a ragged, urchin boy to "a tall, athletic well-formed man" (p. 81). His upright carriage suggests that he might have been in the army. Cathy tells the love-lorn Isabella, fascinated by Heathcliff's rugged strength and his superiority to other men, that he really is "an unreclaimed creature, an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone" (p. 87). Gentle-spoken Selim seemed less than a man, but circumstances aged and changed him into a daring pirate. Bedecked with pistols and wearing a shawl of red on his head, Selim looked scarcely more than a boy, "But were it not that high command/Spoke in his eye, and tone, and hand" (Ba, II, ix, 147, 148). The deep sorrow within Lara and Manfred lends them maturity. They have both experienced things beyond their years. To Manfred "Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most/Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,/the Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life" (M, I, i, 10, 11, 12). It seemed to those around Lara, who loved or hated him, that "There was in him a vital scorn of all:/As if the worst had fall'n which could befall" (L, I, xvii, 313, 314). It is sorrow which finally changes Heathcliff's sturdy frame, "My soul's bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself" (p. 283).

The power inherent in the human eye became a hallmark of the Gothic villain and later of the Byronic hero.

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33 Ibid., p. 330.  
34 Ibid., p. 478.  
The single glance of the Caliph Vathek, Beckford's Oriental tyrant, caused men to quail. "When he was angry one of his eyes became so terrible that no person could bear to behold it."\(^{36}\) Those in Lara's domain claimed that a glance from him took "thoughts from others by a single look" (\(L, I, v, 71, 72\)).\(^{37}\) A man of loneliness and mystery, with little of the outward appearance of a hero, Conrad's "dark eyebrow shades a glance of fire" (\(C R, I, x, 196\)).\(^{38}\) Though hidden under the cowl of the monastery garb, the Giaour's dark and unearthly scowl glares out from beneath its covers to reveal "the flash of that dilating eye" (\(G, 834\)).\(^{39}\) Those who dare to look will rue their boldness, for in it lurks a nameless spell; and they cannot escape "the glance they scare can brook" (\(G, 845\)).\(^{40}\)

"Son of a slave!" the Pacha rants, there is nothing "that beseems a man in thee" (\(B A, I, v, 84\)).\(^{41}\) After Selim is taunted past all endurance, his "eye return'd him glance for glance" (\(B A, I, v, 128\)),\(^{42}\) and the uneasy Giaffir quailed and shrank back. When Heathcliff first stood before Lockwood, he did not realize how the young man warmed toward him when he "beheld his black eyes withdrawn, so suspiciously under their brows" (p. 1). After three years absence, as Heathcliff looked at Cathy, "A half-civilized ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows, and his eyes full of black fire, but it was

\(^{36}\) Railo, pp. 37-38.  
\(^{37}\) Byron, p. 367.  
\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 341.  
\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 318.  
\(^{40}\) Ibid., p. 324.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 325.
subdued" (p. 81). Following Cathy's death and burial, Isabella relates the change that came over Heathcliff. His face was immovable as stone; "his basilisk eyes were nearly quenched by sleeplessness and weeping, perhaps, for the lashes were wet then. Had it been another, I would have covered my face in the presence of such grief" (p. 153). She then laughed scornfully: "The clouded windows of hell flashed, a moment toward me; the fiend which usually looked out, however, was so dimmed and drowned" (p. 154). Nelly tells Mr. Lockwood how Heathcliff died. On the morning of his death, Nelly pushed back the panels of the bed and looked in, "Mr. Heathcliff was there—laid on his back. His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then he seemed to smile." After this, Nelly closed the window and "tried to close his eyes—to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation, before anyone else beheld it. They would not shut—they seemed to sneer at my attempts. . . ." (p. 284).

Two more of the physical properties of the Byronic hero, the noble brow and pale complexion, developed from the Gothic villain. These features manifested the inner turmoil of the villain; they were an outward sign of his passionate emotions. The Giaour's anger settled in his face: "It rose not with the reddening flush/Of transient anger's hasty blush/But pale as marble o'er the tomb" (B, 236, 237, 238). 43 Conrad, that man of

43Ibid., p. 312.
loneliness and mystery whose name appals the fiercest, has a "forehead high and pale/The sable curls in wild profusion veil" (CR, I, ix, 203, 204).\textsuperscript{44} No one knew where Lara had been when he returned in sudden loneliness to his ancestral home. He was changed; "Whate'er he be, 'twas not what he had been:/That brow in furrow'd lines had fix'd at last" (L, I, v, 66, 67).\textsuperscript{45} In the midst of his strange torment over a recurring vision of Cathy, Heathcliff's appearance became unnatural, with a wild look of joy in his eyes and a strange smile on his face.

The Byronic hero also inherits the sense of power conferred by a noble birth and mysterious past from the Gothic villain. A certain air of mystery shrouds his birth and entire personality.\textsuperscript{46} Despite the efforts of the Giaffir to feminize Selim, his noble birth and inner traits reject this mold. Selim tells Zuleika that "My Father's blood in every vein/Is boiling" (Ba, II, xii, 207, 208).\textsuperscript{47} He then explains to her the restrictions placed on his activities, "For Giaffir's fear/Denied the courser and the spear--" (Ba, II, xviii, 323, 324).\textsuperscript{48} Though his origin is obscure and the Giaour is marked by fiery passions, "The close observer can espy/A noble soul, and a lineage high" (G, 868, 869).\textsuperscript{49} After assisting Manfred from his precarious perch on the mountain's edge, and taking him to his humble home, the

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., p. 341. \textsuperscript{45}Ibid., p. 267. 
\textsuperscript{46}Thorslev, p. 54. \textsuperscript{47}Byron, p. 331. 
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., p. 332. \textsuperscript{49}Ibid., p. 319.
Chamois Hunter tells his guest, "Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high lineage--" (M,II,i,7). Even after his many years away from home, Lara, "Born of high lineage/link'd in high command,/He mingled with the Magnates of his land" (L,I,vii,97,98), after his return. Although he leads a pirate band, the mysterious Conrad has the "solemn aspect, and the high-born eye" (Cr,I,xvi,543) of a man of nobility. His gallantry is such that in the midst of battle, he saves the women trapped in a burning building. "Heaven will not forgive/If at my word the helpless cease to live" (Cr,II,v,207,208). Heathcliff's mysterious past remains so throughout his life and death. Only Nelly attempts to give him an identity during his boyhood. "Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth; and the thoughts of what I was should give me courage and dignity to support the oppressions of a little farmer!" (p. 48). In an exaggerated fashion, she proceeds to fill in his past.

You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together? And you were kidnapped by wicked sailors, and brought to England. (p. 48)

Certain aspects of the Byronic hero derive directly from the Gothic villain, who is depicted by Eino Railo in

The Haunted Castle as a composite figure from the works

50 Ibid., p. 483.  
51 Ibid., p. 367.  
52 Ibid., p. 346.  
53 Ibid., p. 350.
of Walpole, Radcliffe, Beckford, Lewis and Naturin. The physical attributes of noble brow, pale complexion, piercing eye, dark hair and manly figure became romanticized through Sir Walter Scott's lays and are later invested by Byron with his own personality. Within the Gothic villain lie dark passions and bitter defiance which contribute to his tragic fate. He feels strongly the discrepancy between good and evil; both qualities are present in him in an exaggerated form. He possesses some extraordinary virtue which is transformed into an extraordinary vice. When he becomes evil, he pitilessly commits great evil, and pursues his supreme goal singlemindedly.

The Byronic hero and Heathcliff both share a heritage from the Gothic villain, but their complexity is much greater. In their concern for the individual, Byron and Emily Bronte are closer to the Romantic tradition than to the Gothic; in their concentration upon the hero seeking revenge, they return to the passionate emotions of the Gothic villain. Byron and Emily Bronte generated their model of the warring human mind from the Gothic villain's calculated search for his own identity through evil. They write of an existence bent on revenge, and show how supremely ironic it is that the hero is destroyed--physically or morally--at the moment of his self-knowledge. The next aspect of the Byronic hero in Heathcliff to consider is his fatal passion for revenge.
CHAPTER III

THE BYRONIC HERO AND FATAL REVENGE

The pursuit of revenge is characteristic of Byronic heroes. Most of Byron's heroes live out their lives in a state of rage. Their lives are "one long war with self-sought foes."² Vengeance, or the mutual exchange of wrong for wrong, is the focal Satanic element in "The Bride of Abydos," "The Giaour," "The Corsair," and "Lara." Their pursuit of revenge is the worst of crimes because it involves the unwarranted personal assumption of the right to mete out punishment. The Byronic hero's hostility toward society thus takes on the character of a "holy war."

Byron's view maintained throughout his romances is in a sense deeply religious. Human life cuts across two opposing spiritual planes and constantly replays the war fought in heaven between deathless angels and devils. Human lives pass, but not without being swept up into this maelstrom. Man is primarily the victim of himself in the pursuit of revenge; he sustains the deepest wounds and the worst bondage. All Byronic heroes have to bear the consequence of their appropriation of the gift of the gods.²

²Ibid., p. 178.
It is the inability to understand the nature of this god-like force, and then to govern it properly, that brings disaster to the Byronic hero. In the Oriental tales, this characteristic flaw is explored and analyzed. Hatred of tyranny is always allied to the longing for pleasure in Byron's poetry. When Byron's heroes find themselves prohibited from the fulfillment of the Eros-drive, they are irrevocably doomed; for in the quest for vengeance against the perpetrator of their frustration, they acquire some of the negative qualities of this adversary. This pattern is clearly outlined in "The Corsair" and its sequel "Lara." "The Giaour" presents a similar situation where the love ideal is incorporated in Leila. Her death drives the Giaour on to revenge, just as in life she drew him on to love. Leila is Hassan's possession, but she flees this constraint to bestow herself upon the Giaour. Hassan kills the thing he loves; the Giaour, bereft of love, burns for revenge and becomes infected with the disease of the man he hates, and finally kills. Each man must remain forever unsatisfied by his revenge. "The Giaour's remaining life is, like Heathcliff's a convulsion of longing."

"The Bride of Abydos," "The Corsair," "Lara," "The Giaour" and Wuthering Heights all center around an exploration of the nature and consequence of a life that is Eros-directed. Each tells a story of frustrated love and the war or repression carried on within a context

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 158.
where time and contingency are strongly emphasized. The relationship between the Byronic hero and his female counterpart is of importance in understanding Byron's tales and their influence upon *Wuthering Heights*. Zuleika, Leila, Medora and Gulnare correspond to the state of the hero's soul which they inhabit. They objectify the passionate impulses in the man whose imagination made them what they are; their natures correspond to the respective conditions of their heroes' souls. The theme of thwarted love persists throughout Emily Bronte's novel and Byron's poetry. If the hope and longing for the ideal always remain uncompleted in these works, the act of hope and passionate desire for completion never ceases, and on the way to paradise, man gets a glimpse of what he is striving for. Underneath the fiery convert of revenge is a disciple of Eros whose life is directed toward an unreached paradise, and whose love can only be realized beyond the tumult of time.

In Byron's story of the Giaour, he attempts to explain the nature of the mutual exchange of wrong for wrong. It opens with a seascape that seems an earthly paradise, but man "enamour'd of distress" (G-50) violates nature's will by transforming her fair land into a moral wilderness. The lovely Leila had "... flown her master's rage/In likeness of a Georgian page,/And far beyond the Moslem's power/Had

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6 Byron, p. 310.
wronged him with the faithless Giaour" (G-455, 456). The wrath of the Black Hassan fell on the beautiful Leila. He wrapped her as precious freight; carried her to a skiff on the water's edge; wafted the boat to the deepest part of the channel; and slipped his burden over the side, saying, "Our course has been right swiftly run;/Yet 't is the longest voyage I trow" (G-372). Hassan kills the thing he loves because "The heart once left thus desolate/Must fly at last for ease—to hate" (G-943, 944). The Giaour's inward torment results from the thought that Leila is dead because of his love for her. Hassan finds no rest until he weds the "fearful bride" (G-718) of death, while the Giaour lives on as though "death were stamp'd upon his brow" (G-797). Beloved by two men, Leila stands at the center of the action. She is deliberately associated with the natural paradise of the landscape, and represents that perfection which both Hassan and the Giaour are seeking. Leila is the source of both life and death; Hassan and the Giaour live only for her love, but it is their love for her which makes them both murderers and which results in the death of one. Although the Giaour survives, his act of revenge does not satisfy him, and he understands the reason when Leila comes to him in a vision that objectifies his

7 Ibid., p. 314. 8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 319. 10 Ibid., p. 317.
11 Ibid., p. 318.
unquenchable longing for her. He is bound to this frustration and separated from his true love until death.\textsuperscript{12}

Conrad is the first of Byron's heroes to be a genuine misanthrope. "Fear'd, shunn'd, belied, ere youth had lost her force,/He hated man too much to feel remorse" (Cr.I.xi, 261,262).\textsuperscript{13} Though Conrad is a pirate chief of stern and ruthless action, at the core of his personality is a love, a softness for Medora. "Yet, it was love--unchangeable--unchanged,/Felt but for one from whom he never ranged" (Cr.I.xii, 287,288).\textsuperscript{14} No captive girl ever takes his attention from Medora. It is the death of Medora which forces upon Conrad a form of emotional salvation; for in suffering her loss, his obdurate soul dissolves, and he is no longer above the affection and the disparagement of others. His practice of retreating into military engagements in moments of emotional stress, of searching there for the meaning of existence, has been exposed to him as empty and futile. Conrad learns the overwhelming force of emotional attachment in human life; he learns the meaning of love. If Conrad is softened by tenderness for Medora, he is equally chilled by the cold treachery of Gulnare. "From all his feelings in their inmost force--/So thrilled, so shuddered every creeping vein,/As now they froze before that purple stain" (Cr.III.x,423,424,425).\textsuperscript{15} Eventually Conrad recognizes the sacrifice of Gulnare on his behalf and

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{12} McGann, pp. 159-160.
\item\textsuperscript{13} Byron, p. 342.
\item\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 361.
\end{itemize}
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makes a reluctant gesture of gratitude to her. Her steadfastness and her eagerness to risk all for love of him help to prepare Conrad for the staggering blow of Medora’s loss. Conrad blames himself for disregarding his own and her premonitions about his battle with Seyd. His pride is broken and his guilt at last has cause. 16

In "The Corsair's" sequel "Lara," the elements of mystery and guilt in which the hero is clothed transcend those in Byron's earlier works. The long-exiled chieftain Lara returns with the page Kaled to his kingdom, where only his silence and haughty demeanor prevent the serfs from rejoicing wildly. To this man, unwilling to give up the past, the page's presence is a constant reminder of his youth. Lara emancipates his serfs, and beggars and social outcasts find asylum at his gate: "For them, at least, his soul compassion knew./Cold to the great, contemptuous to the high,/The humble passed not his unheeding eye" (L,II,viii,83,84,85). 17 These actions almost seemed benevolent posturing for his own purposes: "What cared he for freedom of the crowd?/He raised the humble but to bend the proud" (L,II,ix,252,253). 18 He acted, not out of compassion, but in retaliation for his wounded pride. Lara attempted to find satisfaction by destroying the semblance of stability others possessed, and

17 Byron, p. 377.
18 Ibid., p. 378.
employed the most devious means to that end. Though his motives were ignoble, there was a gradual lessening of his pride as Lara participated in battle for its own sake, recharging his vitality. In his struggle with Otho, and at the moment of possible triumph, "Himself he spared not--once they seemed to fly/Now was the time, he waved his hand on high" (L,II,xv,378,379). In that instant when revenge against Otho failed, Lara reclaimed with his self-abnegation a portion of his former glory.

At the center of Byron's poetic vision is the recurring theme of a taint in the heart of nature and in the heart of man which turns simple instinct and spontaneous passions into guilt; guilt which must perversely seek expiation by way of retribution. In Byron's tale "The Bride of Abydos" Selim, doomed to begin in blood under the weight of his father's murder, seeks an end in blood-vengeance. His bondage and suffering occur because "brother wrought a brother's fall/But spared, at least, my infancy" (Ba,II,xii,299,300). Now as the leader of a band of pirates, where there is "a soul for every enterprise" (Ba,II,xx,368), Selim's authority is immediate and unquestioned. Reared like

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19 Ibid., p. 380.  
20 Elledge, pp. 26-27.


Byron, p. 331.  
Ibid., p. 332.
"the nephew of Cain" (Ba,II,xii,204). Selim seeks to repay for wrong. Only love and concern for Zuleika delay his plans for ruthless revenge. Mute and motionless after Selim tells her about his past, Zuleika stands as if hardened to stone. Suddenly, fearful lights gleam on their secret grotto and sabres flash. The Giaffir and his men surround them. Gently, the young man holds his loved one and says, "tis come—soon past—/One kiss, Zuleika—'t is my last" (BA,II,xxiii,513,514). Selim loses both his life and Zuleika in his fatal revenge.

The idea that love is more important than life, that love alone makes life possible, is crucial to Wuthering Heights. The love of Cathy and Heathcliff may be described as a life-force relationship, a principle that is not conditioned by anything but itself. The theme of the story emerges from the love of Cathy and Heathcliff; there is no development in the main characters which is not relevant to this gradually emerging theme. Their love is the opposite of love conceived as a social and conventional acceptance; the love Cathy feels for Heathcliff is a powerful undercurrent, while the love she feels for Edgar is only a surface emotion. Cathy tells Nelly, "I love him; and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam

Ibid., p. 331.        Ibid., p. 334.
from lightning, or frost from fire" (p. 68). The affinity existing between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff is a product of natural growth and not amenable to reason. When frustrated, the energy which it has generated is turned into destruction. Emily Bronte shows how conflict arises within the very core of love, which is conceived, not as a matter of simple attraction between two persons, but as complex forces occupying different planes of feeling.

Byron was fascinated by passionate characters, frequently admiring and studying them. The development of the Gothic villain foreshadowed the Byronic interest in the hidden workings of passion, the contradictory impulses, the irrational and gratuitous evil, and the intimacy of love and hate. The allure of the bizarre allowed writers to demonstrate that sadism, indefinite guiltiness, mingled pleasure and pain, and love-hate were deeply rooted in the minds of the supposedly normal, and that evil is within a person's own works and creations. Byron and the Byronians believed that some inner perversity encourages evil impulses and thwart good impulses. The source of that perversity is a desire to be loved alone, a feeling which can command the reader's sympathy. There is a strong fascination with the compulsive pursuit of evil. Since human nature tends toward both good and evil, some sort of compromise must be made between the good and evil.

instincts of human nature in order to survive. Some method of control must be found, possibly through self-knowledge and self-discipline. Mrs. Shelley had the courage to create a chaotic world in her novel *Frankenstein* in which virtue may be rewarded in heaven, but not necessarily on earth, while evil is rampant and inexorable in this life. The Gothic villain and his immediate successors show this conflict within themselves. During the struggle, their problem becomes both cosmic and personal.

(The Byronic hero's sense of loneliness springs from the realization that he has overstepped the moral and emotional laws recognized by society.) The Byronic hero gazes into his own soul as at a deserted and dreary world from which life has fled. He has lost the power to become productive, and his soul is reflected in the graveyard moonlight. This is the solitude of the Giaour, Conrad, and Lara—moral isolation beyond good and evil. (The Byronic hero lives among the ruins of the bitter experiences of the past.) The emotional mood which accompanies suffering and passion may have in it something sublime, and when joined to crime and catastrophe, it leads to what approaches tragedy. The spirit of tragedy hovers in the vicinity of the Byronic hero, ultimately leading to a purification and exaltation of the emotions.

Nelson, p. 249.  
Nailo, p. 284.  
Ibid., p. 250.  
Ibid., p. 327.
A powerful emotional response, rather than a moral or intellectual one, was the prime object of the Gothic novelist. The key characteristic of the Gothic novel was its atmosphere of evil and brooding terror. The setting existed to convey the atmosphere, and the novelist used this for ends which were fundamentally psychological. Compounded of dark aspirations and great force of character, the complex villain is fearsome and profoundly ambiguous. The Gothic villain exhibits a non-Christian or anti-clerical feeling and reflects the confusion of evil and good in the Gothic novel. He cannot find in religion acceptable answers to the fundamentally psychological questions of good and evil. This failure lends a duality to his characters, and external suspense is subordinated to his involvement in moral ambiguity.

The Gothic hero's most successful immediate heirs are the Byronic hero and Heathcliff. To catalogue their similarities: they are set in remote or isolated surroundings; their stories are narrated by ordinary people; the origins of the heroes are relatively obscure; the good impulses in the heroes have been affronted or thwarted and they are bent upon massive and calculating revenge; they are guilt-haunted wanderers whose potentialities for good are diverted to the service of evil. They are unchristian, even daringly so for their time.

Religion is almost savagely parodied in the person of the bigoted Joseph in *Wuthering Heights* while the supernatural power in the novel is quite unsanctioned by conventional Christianity. In a universe without the presence of divine justice or retribution, notions of good and evil soon lose their simple polarity and generate shadowy and unexpected complexities. Heathcliff has little apparent recognition of his moral self anywhere in the novel, with possibly one exception in the dramatic scene between himself and Cathy where they both recognize her moral failure in choosing the polite society of Thrushcross and marriage to a man she does not love; this is the moral failure upon which the action in *Wuthering Heights* rests.

Heathcliff retains some sympathy even in those sections of the novel where he is most obnoxious because there is a rough moral justice in what he has done to his oppressors, and even though he is inhuman, there are reasons for this inhumanity. He is an understandable monster. Utterly crushed, he will crush utterly if he arises; he has the exorbitant will to power.

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Nelson, p. 250.  
Ibid., p. 253.


Heathcliff is credible; he is consistent in act and speech and emotion from the appalling incident where he curses himself for having put out a hand and saved the life of his enemy's son to the imprecation in which he tells the dying Cathy that the kisses and tears she has wrung out of him will "... blight you—they'll damn you" (p. 137).

Savagely angry, Heathcliff blames Hindley Earnshaw for first having made it impossible for him to win Cathy, and Edgar Linton for robbing him of her. His frustrated passion finds relief only in the destruction of everything connected with the two men. The victims of this revenge include their children and also his own child. It even falls on Cathy, who in marrying Edgar betrayed him and caused his torment. He resolves to even scores by crushing everyone who stands in his way, everyone who helped to prevent his happiness. For seventeen long years Heathcliff has worked the accumulated venom out of his soul, and when his happiness seems within reach, he no longer has the will to torture.

The development and nature of human corruption in Wuthering Heights is significant. This corruption, a fatal poison, tends to grow like cancer; it even infects those who try to destroy it. The tragic irony in Wuthering Heights is that Heathcliff re-enacts the evil against which he struggled

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so long. Throughout the story, Heathcliff directs a legal procedure for personal vengeance. He never rationalizes his cruelty with an appeal for social justice; nor does he justify his deeds with a show of compassion.

Heathcliff becomes evil and vindictive when his love for Cathy is cast aside. His monomaniacal interest in pursuing savage revenge is evident as he tells Cathy:

I want you to be aware that I know you have treated me infernally—infernally! Do you hear? And, if you flatter yourself that I don't perceive it you are a fool—and if you think I can be consoled by sweet words you are an idiot—and if you fancy I'll suffer unrevenged, I'll convince you of the contrary, in a very little while! (p. 96).

Emily Brontë's heroes and heroines do not love each other because they find each other's personalities pleasant, or because they admire each other's characters. They may be superficially attracted for such reasons, as Cathy is attracted to Edgar, but their deeper feelings are only aroused by someone with whom they feel a bond inter-woven with their very existence.

In Wuthering Heights, there occurs a final moment of intimate confrontation. The conclusion is a complex tangle of identities and motives of love and hate, of good and bad. At the end of Wuthering Heights, we see through the eyes of Lockwood the final union of Cathy and Heathcliff; on his last visit, Lockwood lingers around their graves and "wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers,

Cecil, p. 165.
for the sleepers in that quiet earth" (p. 287). Knowing the protagonists, Emily Brontë creates a masterful conclusion with its fullest ironic ambiguity. The struggle is inconclusive, and the suggestion that it continues beyond the grave invokes timelessness and implacability. The good and evil in the end become inseparable; there is great good and great evil, but which is really which?

Like the Gothic novels, Wuthering Heights ends in moral ambiguity; there is no message, no moral, no final statement of the right and wrong. They are intertwined until they are inseparable. Motives which might be praised or blamed in the everyday world appear both in the Gothic context and in Emily Brontë's novel as beyond judgment. For the reader, the result of this ambiguity is to see the hurt of Heathcliff, to appreciate his complexity, and to decline to judge the damage he does to himself and to others.

Heathcliff is actuated by two passionate motives, revenge on Hindley and all belonging to him, and the furious hunger for union with Cathy. In his last hours, he feels himself on the verge of attaining this final reunion, and the lesser impulse sinks into indifference. He has ceased to love or hate anything on earth. Vengeance is shown again defeating itself, as Emily Brontë had shown in the baby Hareton's escape when Heathcliff involuntarily saved his life, and also in Hareton's unconquerable affection.

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Nelson, p. 287.  
Ibid., p. 289.
for Heathcliff. Heathcliff himself said that it was a poor conclusion, "An absurd termination to my violent exertions . . . but where is the use? I don't care for striking, I can't take the trouble to raise my hand!" (p. 274).  

It is supremely ironic and instructive that Heathcliff should perish at the moment of self-knowledge. At the very end, Heathcliff seems to pour forth his essence. He tells Nelly, "Last night, I was on the threshold of hell. Today, I am within sight of my heaven--I have my eyes on it--hardly three feet sever me!" (p. 279).  

Another great hero of defiance, beyond good and evil, has challenged the supreme mystery to death. The long-awaited union with Cathy is beyond life. The dark powers, whose real terrors seem always on the verge of triumph, are perpetually foiled by the steadfastness of men. The next facet of the Byronic hero found in Heathcliff is the belief in a life beyond this one, the belief in spirits or ghosts, which are the manifestation of human passion in an afterlife.  

\[ ^{32} \text{Ibid., p. 254.} \]  

\[ ^{34} \text{Bentley, p. 100.} \]
CHAPTER IV

THE BYRONIC HERO AND SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS

The belief in ghosts is a feature of all folklore; even when the development of civilization has suppressed legends, ghost-lore survives tenaciously among both uneducated and cultured classes. This survival stems from the superstitious dread with which death is regarded and from beliefs connected with a life beyond the grave.\(^1\)

Supernatural manifestations fascinate and appall because they have the power to agitate man's apprehension which links the earthly with the spiritual being. Superstitions concerning the appearance of the dead among the living are the most moving, since they excite a shuddering sympathy for these preternatural creatures whom, according to popular belief, everyone will resemble in a few short years. They are mute witnesses of man's fleshy infirmity and of his dependence upon a higher power. It was perhaps through the emotions aroused by ghosts, demons and grotesque apparitions that man first discovered his soul and realized the presence of a Being far greater than himself, one who created and destroyed at will.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Railo, p. 243.

The literature of the Middle Ages was deeply imbued with a sense of the macabre. A widespread belief in witches and spirits prevailed, and there was an intense interest in questions of life, death, and immortality; of angels, demons, and vampires; of the occult and astrology; and of dreams, omens and oracles. The supernatural appealed to some deep-rooted human instinct, becoming a weird and inexplicable but irresistible attraction. Later on Shakespeare's plays provide good examples of this supernatural and weird atmosphere: Hamlet, Macbeth, Julius Caesar and Richard II have ghosts; King Lear has a desolate heath and nature at its wildest; Hamlet has a castle with stark battlements; Macbeth has a variety of apparitions and a midnight murder. Walpole said that Milton and Shakespeare were the only two mortals who ventured beyond the visible diurnal sphere and preserved their intellects.

When confronted by the indestructible world of the supernatural, man's spirit quickens with fear. The spirit, base when stimulated by earthly things, becomes sublime when inspired by the immortal. Gothic novelists, creating a union between spiritual curiosity and earthly terror, mediate between the world within man and the world outside. The Gothic novels help the reader to comprehend the sublimity of the Deity, and elevate man above the evils of this world by making him the concern of powers beyond this earth.

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5Ibid., p. 212.
The spirit world is not the illusion of a dreaming mind; belief in life after death gives energy to virtues and stability to principles. In this concept, Emily Bronte concurred. After a visit to the graveyard, Heathcliff explains his feelings about death to Nelly:

You know, I was wild after she died, and eternally, from dawn to dawn, praying her to return to me—her spirit—I have a strong faith in ghosts; I have a conviction that they can, and do exist, among us! (p. 245)

The Gothic movement toward fantasy and romance gave a fresh lease on life to novelists. The Gothic school became an exotic laboratory for experiments in the darkest mysteries of human and superhuman evil. The part played by ghosts in terror-Romantic literature was limited as the ghost had not proved capable of either development or of unrestricted use. The appearance of the ghost was impressive, and his demon glance, something all apparitions possessed, became an important weapon. A much more effective method than the actual introduction of a ghost was to hint at the possibility of one appearing and to produce an atmosphere of waiting filled with dread of the unknown. To bring the supernatural into a scene necessitated lengthy preparation and skillful manipulation of details which lulled the mind into implicit belief in what was seen. The series of incidents had to make a strong impression. The Gothic novelist used one of two

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6 Ibid., p. 220.  
7 Railo, p. 257.  
8 Ibid., p. 251.
methods: the first produced a realistic semblance of fact through detailed description, or a logical sequence of reasoning; the second created faith in "the willing suspension of disbelief."  

In his search for supernatural effects, M. G. Lewis had recourse to demonic beings, even the chief of all demons, Lucifer. This proved a fertile ground for other Romanticists afterward. In addition to these beings, Lewis employed all kinds of spirits of water, air, and fire, and vampires of popular legend, forest spirits and witches. The part assigned to such beings by Lewis is an important one and challenges the concept of nature in the literature of this period. Lewis's material devil gradually changed into a principle of evil, losing concreteness. The personification of evil had to acquire vagueness of form and feature before it could provide the necessary depth for suggestive artistry in the imagination.

Traces of Lewis's demons and ghosts are discernible in later literature. In Scott's "Marmion," the nun Constance de Beverly is similar to Lewis's nun of Lindenburg. However, Scott keeps his ghosts at a greater distance than Lewis; they are more in the nature of visions. In their method of materializing, Scott's ghosts resemble elemental spirits. Lewis uses a realistic treatment of phantoms; Scott, like Mrs. Radcliffe, uses a ghostly atmosphere.

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9Varma, p. 213.  
10Railo, p. 262.  
11Ibid., p. 258.  
12Ibid., p. 252.
The purpose in the Romanticist's recourse to ghosts was first to create a general atmosphere, and second to achieve a moral purpose unattainable without some *deus ex machina*.\(^3\) That Byron, who ridiculed Lewis's ghosts, actually did not despise such aids is shown in his poem "Oscar of Alva." The poem is based directly on Schiller's "Geisterseher" and on Lewis's tale of "Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogene" in *The Monk*, in which a ghost appears in the midst of a wedding scene. There is an echo of the scene from *The Monk* in Byron's "Lara." While a magnificent festival is in progress at Otho's castle, a stranger stares ceaselessly at Lara, and finally cries out, "'Tis he!" (*L-xxi*, 426).\(^4\) The man then begins to accuse Lara of some mysterious deed, a deed constituting the secret of Lara's life which is purposely never disclosed. Although there is no ghostly apparition, the scene can easily be traced back to its models.\(^5\)

There is a strikingly close relationship between the supernatural and dreams. Mystical presences usually haunt in the nocturnal hours. A guilt-laden individual starting up from sleep imagines himself confronted with the phantoms of those he wronged; or a lover beholds the spirit of his dead beloved. Heathcliff tells Nelly how he tried to find Cathy at Wuthering Heights after her death:

\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 244. \(^{14}\)Byron, p. 372. \(^{15}\)Railo, p. 255.
I slept in her chamber—I was beaten out of that—I couldn't lie there; for the moment I closed my eyes, she was either outside the window, or sliding back the panels, or entering the room, or even resting her darling head on the same pillow as she did when a child. And I must open my lids to see. And so I opened and closed them a hundred times a-night—to be always disappointed! (p. 246)

Sometimes people cannot distinguish between dreams and reality; to them their dreams are actualities of experience. During the night that he spent at Wuthering Heights, Lockwood began to doze and dream. He heard a fir-bough scrape the window with a tickling noise, but when he reached for it, it had changed into an icy-cold hand. The horror of the dream gripped him with such painful reality that he awoke with a scream. In an experience like this one, the repressed contents of the unconscious and the conscious mingle together. Dreams were long recognized as intimately related to the supernatural world and to the emergence of subconscious impulses. Even after she was married, Cathy's desire to be a part of Wuthering Heights is reflected in the dream she tells Nelly: "I dreamt, once, that I was there." When Nelly protests, she laughs, "I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out, into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy" (p. 68). In some instances, Gothic writers were influenced

16Varma, p. 222.
in their choice of material by a dream. By portraying mental states and emotions, they enlarged the scope of their novels. Indirectly, in tracing the progress and effect of one strongly indulged passion, they gave impetus to the science of psychology. They presented subtle shadings in character. After the observant Nelly noticed his change in health, Heathcliff explained to her:

And yet I cannot continue in this condition!—I have to remind myself to breathe—almost remind my heart to beat! And it is like bending back a stiff spring... it is by compulsion, that I do the slightest act, not prompted by one thought, and by compulsion, that I notice anything alive, or dead, which is not associated with one universal idea... (p. 275)

The Gothic villains are a prime example of the psychologically interesting characters who merge with the pervading theme of the supernatural. Three types of Gothic villains can be distinguished: first, the character of Manfred fashioned by Walpole in The Castle of Otranto, a type composed of ambitious tyranny and unbridled passion; second, the early villains of Mrs. Radcliffe culminating in Maturin's Count Montorio, the epitome of the Romantic villain-hero; and third, the terrible superman whose ways lie in darkness and whose strength originates beyond the mortal state. He is a new mintage of Satan portrayed by Milton in Paradise Lost, the immortal outcast, a masterful villain with his spirit unbroken even in defeat. Behind him is the mystery

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17Ibid., p. 38.
of medieval Satanism. This superman appeared for the first time in Elbis in Beckford's novel *Vathek*.  

These three main types developed with increasing complexity. Walpole's Manfred, drawn to evil against his better judgment, is a victim of destiny who sentimentalizes over the past. The superman combines an impressive physique and an overwhelming motivation; the victim of destiny is now the victim of injustice. Like Satan, he has tempted fate, pays an enormous price for the benefits he receives, and now stifles his suffering in haughty gloom. Only after seventeen years does Heathcliff face the price he has paid for his revenge, as he observes to Nelly:

> It is a poor conclusion, is it not, an absurd termination to my violent exertions?... I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready, and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me—now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives—
> I could do it; and none could hinder me—But where is the use? I don't care for striking. I can't take the trouble to raise my hand! (p. 274)

The three types continually interact, though not eliminating distinctions, since the Gothic villain retains certain set characteristics. His gradual evolution from this set form indicates the skill of the Romantic writers. From him emerged the fatal Romantic character—that of an alien soul solacing himself in occult experiences or unscrupulous deeds.  

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The sense of guilt is deeply rooted in man, and when religion loses its hold on him, he must find some other outlet for guilt. The Gothic novelists, by purging their fears and self-questionings in the portrayal of terror and horror, may have experienced a form of catharsis. There is a new, tentative concept of the Divine in Gothic works. They moved away from the glare of rationalism to the shadow of the mystical interpretation of life. The subsequent renaissance of wonder created a world in which the Divine was not a theorem, but a mystery filled with dread. The phantom in the haunted castle would have had little power to awe, if he had not been a token of the realm that is the source of all absolute spiritual values.20

Byron always associated self-realization with guilt: to link oneself to the universe was an act of reverence; to strive toward a full sense of separate identity was apostasy. Manfred was an archetypal figure of this rebellion, as was Cain. Manfred rejected corporal being; Cain orthodoxy. Manfred enacts the pursuit of power and immortality; Cain shows the apostate becoming a criminal. In these heroes, the futility of human will in everyday affairs is presented symbolically and with supernatural accoutrements. The rejection of religious assistance as powerless to ease dark anguish and alter an inevitable course is characteristically Byronic.21

In both Gothic and Romantic creeds, there is a marked tendency to slip imperceptibly from the real into the other world, to demolish the barriers between the physical and the psychic. In *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Bronte fuses dreams into a glowing homogeneous actuality. There is no conscious jolt; there is no readjustment of focus as she passes from the supernatural to the natural.\(^{22}\) One of the aims of Romanticism was to pass beyond the ordinary and seek the unnatural to inspire terror. The Byronic hero in "Lara," "The Giaour," "Cain" and "Manfred" shows that terror was sought after through the use of the supernatural. Even in the question of Romantic fatalism, which bears its victims to previously determined ends, the most effective results were obtained by invoking unearthly forces; the Romantics worked hand in hand with supernatural powers.\(^{23}\)

The mystery in Byron's Oriental poems is closely calculated suggestion which leads to typical states of terror, as in "Lara."\(^ {24}\) Byron makes use of Gothic situations in which terror is not explained away. Attendants rush in and discover Lara stretched "Cold as the marble where his length was laid," (I,-I,xiii,211)\(^ {25}\) in a semi-conscious state with "his half-drawn sabre near" (I,-I,xiii,212)\(^ {26}\)

\(^{22}\)Cecil, p. 35.  
\(^{23}\)Raino, p. 323.  
\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 324.  
\(^{25}\)Byron, p. 369.  
\(^{26}\)Ibid.
What happened is never told. Lara like Heathcliff is tugged by some strange evil power between time and eternity.  
"Manfred" abounds in Gothic machinery: a curse, remorse, Gothic halls, a fiery star, attempted suicide, spots of blood on a goblet, demons, a phantom, a tower with a secret chamber, a warning Abbot, terror-stricken servants, and a mysterious death by blasting. In general, however, the tales revolve on an inner psychic or spiritual conflict. "The Giaour" is typical of this inner torment—a man in hell, yet unbowed, and with a certain obscurity as to the reason for his suffering: "The stalking to thy sullen grave,/Go—and with Gouls and Afrits rave;/Till these in horror shrink away/from spectre more accursed than they!" (G-783,784,785,786). This ends a passage of towering Satanic virulence and compressed explosiveness. The Giaour retires to a monastery where "It soothes him to abide/For some dark deed without name" (G-800,801). He does not look to the priest or the church for relief. The rejection of religious assistance as powerless to ease his anguish and alter his inevitable course recalls Faustus, Heathcliff and Byron's own Manfred.

"Manfred" is connected with Byron's contemplation of mysteries beyond the known and the knowable and with man's

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28Byron, p. 318.  
29Ibid.
30Knight, p. 18.
inability to reach out beyond his clay-cold bonds to compensate with the mind's capacity for his limitation. It establishes the dual thesis, already suggested in *Childe Harold*, of the spirit's slavery to human conditions, and the defiant Promethean invincibility of the mind and will. This interest lifts it above mere Gothic supernatural drama. *Manfred* is the most successful of Byron's works in giving poetic realization to these themes.31

Manfred is the Byronic hero in the process of maturing and taking on a philosophical and psychological depth beyond that of *Childe Harold* and the tales. Like the Gothic villain in his secret sin and remorse, Manfred endures crushing agony that makes him his "own soul's sepulchre" (M-I,ii,288).32 Unrepentant for his seeking after forbidden knowledge or for his pride, Manfred only regrets that his passion caused the death of the one he loves. His sins are of his own judging. Since Manfred is by nature a rebel, his character is defined in part by that which he rebels against. Manfred wants to retain the independence of his own mind, even in death; for "the mind is its own place" and creates its own values, finding satisfaction or remorse of its own free will.33 A Promethean aspiration dominates the poem. The pervading theme is stated clearly in Manfred's haughty reply to the

32Byron, p. 482.  
33Thorslev, p. 168.
spirits in the first scene: "The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,/The lightning of my being, is as bright,/Pervading, and far darting as your own,/And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!" (M-.1,154,155,156,157).34

Manfred conjures up three groups of spirits, each apparently more powerful and awesome than the preceding ones, but he finds that he is equal to them all. They can tell him nothing that he doesn't already know; they are his mind's creation and the tragic limitation of a creature formed of clay. The first group of spirits evoked from the natural elements were the foundation of man's first religion and the personal star under which he was born: "Earth, ocean, air, night, mountain, winds, thy star" (M-I,i,132).35 Of these, he asks only forgetfulness or oblivion. They answer evasively; they are immortal and do not know death. They can only echo his own words. Then he asks them to appear in some visible form, and the spirit of his star appears in the shape of a lovely woman. She is the ideal he hopes to grasp in reality, but the spirit vanishes when he reaches for her, and he falls senseless.36 Heathcliff experienced the same difficulty in reaching Cathy even though he felt her presence with him: "I felt her by me--I could almost see her, and yet I could not! I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my

34Byron, p. 480. 35Ibid. 36Marchand, p. 77.
yearning, from the fervour of my supplications to have but one glimpse! I had not one" (p. 246). An incantation or curse is pronounced on Manfred, ostensibly in the voice of one of the spirits. "There are shades which will not vanish,/There are thoughts thou canst not banish/" (M-I,1,204,205).37 The voice then pronounced the curse: "I call upon thee! and compel/Thyself to be thy proper Hell!" (M,I,1,250,251).38 Upon hearing of Cathy's calm death, Heathcliff cries out in frightful tones a curse upon her eternal rest: "May she wake in torment!" Then stamping his foot in ungovernable rage, he pleads for the same torment. "Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest, as long as I am living! You said I killed you--haunt me then! The murdered do haunt their murderers" (p. 143).

Unable to get superhuman aid from the spirits, Manfred contemplates suicide, but "There is a power upon me which withholds,/And makes it my fatality to live" (M-I,ii,284,285).39 As Manfred cries out, "Earth! take these atoms!" (M-I,ii,370)40 and starts to spring from the cliff, the Chamois Hunter seizes him. Together they climb down the mountain to the Hunter's cabin, where they talk. While Manfred envies the Chamois Hunter, he has gone past the point where common satisfactions can substitute for his

37Byron, p. 481.  
38Ibid.  
39Ibid., p. 482.  
40Ibid., p. 483.
immortal longings. Manfred even hints at the cause of his oppression to the Chamois Hunter: "When we were in our youth, and had one heart,/And loved each other as we should not love" (M,III,1,26,27).  

Later on when he is alone, he calls up the Witch of the Alps. When he looks upon her beauty, her serenity and her understanding, he tells her his heart's grief: "She was like me in lineaments--" (M-II,11,199), and then Manfred describes the loveliness of the dead woman's face, the strength of her mind, and the tenderness of her feelings. He continues: "Her faults were mine--her virtues were her own--/I love her, and destroy'd her!" (M-II,11,210,211). A comparable instance of fatal attraction which goes so far as self-identification is seen in Wuthering Heights, as Cathy expresses the closeness which she feels for Heathcliff:

My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees--my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath--a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff--he's always, always in my mind--not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself--but, as my own being-- (p. 70)

41 Ibid., p. 484.  
42 Ibid., p. 486.  
43 Ibid.
Because of his guilt in his love, Manfred seeks forgetfulness by seeking death. The Witch of the Alps offers her aid on the condition that Manfred will swear obedience to her will. His reply is the same as he gave before: "Obey! and whom? the spirits/Whose presence I command, and be the slave/Of those who served me--Never!" (M-II,ii,252,253,254). Manfred decides to call the dead "And ask them what it is we dread to be" (M-II,ii,272), and he seeks the most powerful of the spirits in their own haunts on the summit of the Jungfrau. Manfred asks Nemesis to call up the phantom of Astarte, the loved one whom he destroyed. When she appears, he asks her to speak, but even Arimanes is unable to make her break her silence. "She is not of our order, but belongs/To the other powers" (M-II,iv,484,485). Manfred pleads again, "... my beloved! speak to me" (M-II,iv,487). Finally she utters his name, prophesies his death on the morrow, and says farewell. He cannot elicit words of forgiveness from her for the reason that she is the figment of his imagination and he cannot forgive himself. As Astarte disappears, Manfred is overcome. In similar vein Heathcliff, torn apart by his guest's unusual tale, wrenched open the lattice on the window and sobbed: "Come in! come in! Cathy, do come, Oh do--once more! Oh! my heart's darling, hear me this

\begin{itemize}
\item[{44}]Ibid., p. 487.\item[{46}]Ibid., p. 490.\item[{45}]Ibid.\item[{47}]Ibid.
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time—Catherine, at last!" There was such anguish in the rush of grief that accompanied this raving that Lockwood turned aside from compassion. (p. 23)

At the end when the demons come to claim his soul, Manfred's reply is the final transcendence of the indomitable mind: "I stand upon my strength--I do defy--deny/Spurn back, and scorn yet!" (M-III,iv,379,380).\textsuperscript{48} Instead of a deathbed repentance, there is Manfred's simple statement to the Abbot before he dies, "Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die." (M-III,iv,411).\textsuperscript{49} Heathcliff's answer to Nelly admits no earthly wrong to those around him: "... as to repenting my injustices, I've done no injustice, and I repent of nothing" (p. 283). But her reminder to him brings up the topic dear to his heart, his resting place next to Cathy. Heathcliff gave Nelly direct orders about what should be done after his death: "No minister need come, nor need anything be said over me--I tell you, I have nearly attained my heaven, and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncoveted by me!" (p. 283).

In \textit{Manfred}, the romantic complaint is that man is half dust and half deity. The assumption is that if a person could escape the dust and become a bodiless spirit, he would find happiness. Cain opens the way to a blacker despair for his journey through the spirit world suggests that even deities may not be happy. All knowledge does not

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 496. \textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 497.
bring happiness, and though Cain has seen things "Beyond all power of my born faculties, they were inferior still to my desires/And my conceptions" (C-II,1,81,82). 50

The supernatural plays a different part in Wuthering Heights than it does in Byron's works. It is an expression of the laws of nature; it is misleading to call it supernatural. The characters may regret dying, but only because death means a temporary separation from those for whom they feel an affinity. It is a gateway to a state in which their natures will flow unhampered and at peace in fulfillment.

Man belongs to the earth in life and in death; and most of his supremely harmonious moments are those in which his personality is suspended by a prolongation of existence beyond the state of temporal impermanence. Emily Brontë does away with the antithesis between life and death. She believes in the immortality of the soul in this world. The spiritual principle of which the soul is a manifestation is active in this life; therefore, the disembodied soul continues to be active in this life. The soul's preoccupation remains the same after death as before. It is Heathcliff, not Linton, who is rewarded by a spiritual union with Cathy. 51

50 Ibid., p. 637.
51 Cecil, pp. 147-148.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Gothic villain and the Romantic hero come from the same lineage. The villains in the novels of Walpole, Mrs. Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin bridge the gap between the Gothic and Romantic ages and point to the Byronic hero; yet they remain villains and never become heroes. The Gothic novel and Romantic poetry work in constant interaction. The Gothic villains, with their general beauty of countenance, manly character and mysterious past, all share a defiance that dwells in the soul and passions that contribute to their tragic destiny. Such characters as Eblis in Vathek, Ambrosio in The Monk, and Zeluco in the work of that same name, testify to the disastrous effect of a rebellious nature and violent passions. Along with these characteristics, the Gothic villain is mature in age, competent in battle, and skilled in leadership. He is a formidable figure.¹

Byron's narrative heroes, cast in the Gothic mold, verge on the metaphysical superman; they are victims of destiny, fired by vengeance and suffering from remorse. The Giaour is shrouded in mystery and aloofness; the

¹Varma, p. 190.
Corsair is a misanthropic figure; Childe Harold is a victim of destiny; Lara belongs to the metaphysical superman group; while Manfred is the culmination of all those who have gone before, representing the climax of Byron's achievement as a creator of gloomy heroes.\(^2\) The Gothic villain was modified and refined by the personality of Byron himself. Montoni and Schedoni have no human empathy and therefore never have any feeling of sorrow or guilt. They are personifications of evil, unsympathetic and unbelievable; they lack a heart or soul. The Byronic hero on the other hand, like his creator, almost invariably is a sympathetic figure in spite of his crimes.\(^3\)

Through the Byronic hero, Heathcliff inherits the outstanding physical traits, mysterious past, and passionate nature of the Gothic villain. The striking physical features of the Byronic hero are evident in Heathcliff. Upon his initial meeting with his landlord, Lockwood observes that Heathcliff is a "dark-skinned gipsy, in aspect; in dress and manner, a gentleman, that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, he has an erect and handsome figure . . ." (p. 3). The transformation of Heathcliff from the ragged, dirty boy into the "tall, athletic well-formed man" (p. 8) that Lockwood saw took place while Heathcliff

\(^2\)Thorslev, p. 8.  \(^3\)Ibid.
was away from Wuthering Heights, a fact which made the contrast with his former condition more impressive. When a lovelorn Isabella admires Heathcliff's rugged good looks, Cathy tells her that beneath this handsome exterior is "an unreclaimed creature, and arid wilderness of furze and whinstone." And yet she states, "I am his friend" (p. 87).

The Gothic villain's powerful eye became one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Byronic hero. Noted for its destructive power, the hero's glance frightened those around him. Heathcliff looked at Cathy, after his three year's absence, with eyes "full of black fire" (p. 81). After Cathy's death and funeral, the glance Heathcliff threw at Isabella came from "the clouded windows of hell" (p. 154). Even in death, Nelly finds Heathcliff's eyes to have a "frightful life-like gaze of exultation" (p. 284).

Byron's heroes inherited the fascination conferred by a noble birth and mysterious past from the Gothic villain as well as from Byron's family history and personal life. Somewhat similarly, Heathcliff's history is unknown, and the possibility of aristocratic origin is at least suggested. Heathcliff's lack of background frustrates and then enrages him. An orphan from the slums of Liverpool, Heathcliff knows nothing about his origins. Nelly reflects
on this fact after Heathcliff locks her in the garret at Wuthering Heights:

'But, where did he come from, the little dark thing, harboured by a good man to his bane?' muttered superstition, as I dozed into unconsciousness. And I began, half dreaming, to weary myself with imaging some fit parentage for him; and repeating my waking meditations, I tracked his existence over again, with my grim variations; at last, picturing his death and funeral; of which, all I can remember is, being exceedingly vexed at having the task of dictating an inscription for his monument, and consulting the sexton about it; and, as he had no surname, and we could not tell his age, we were obliged to content ourselves with the single word, 'Heathcliff'. (p. 280)

All the Byronic heroes are self-tortured, passionate men driven to an eccentric way of life by disillusionment: Childe Harold to aimless wandering; the Giaour to a total retreat from the world; Lara to contemptuous toleration; and Manfred to supernatural sciences. Marked by some haunting sense of melancholy, these exiles from society burn with desire to penetrate occult mysteries; filled with ambition, they sacrifice friend and foe alike to their dark mysterious ends.

Throughout the novel, Heathcliff employs a legal procedure for personal vengeance. This corruption tends to grow like a cancer, even infecting the ones who try to destroy it. In speaking with satisfaction of his efforts to degrade Hareton, Heathcliff tells Nelly:

Don't you think Hindley would be proud of his son, if he could see him? almost as proud as I am of

Varma, pp. 191-192.
mine—But there's this difference, one is gold put to the use of paving stones; and the other is tin polished to ape a service of silver—Mine has nothing valuable about it; yet I shall have the merit, of making it go as far as such poor stuff can go. His had first-rate qualities, and they are lost—rendered worse than unavailing—I have nothing to regret; he would have more than any, but I, are aware of—And the best of it is, Hareton is damnably fond of me!

The tragic irony in Wuthering Heights is that Heathcliff re-enacts the evil against which he struggled for so long and that he dies just as he achieves self-identity.

Heathcliff remains somewhat sympathetic even in those sections of the novel where he is most repugnant because there is a rough moral justice in what he has done to his oppressors; and even though he is inhuman, there are reasons for this inhumanity. He is an understandable monster even in the appalling incident where he curses himself for having put out a hand to save the life of his enemy's son and in the incident in which he heaps imprecations on the dying Cathy, telling her that the tears and kisses she has wrung out of him will damn her.

In their concern for the individual, Lord Byron and Emily Brontë are closer to the Romantic tradition than to the Gothic; in their concentration upon the hero seeking revenge, they return to the passionate emotions of the Gothic villain. Byron and Emily Brontë generate their model of the warring human mind from the Gothic villain's calculated search for his own identity through evil.
They write of an existence bent on revenge and show how supremely ironic it is that the hero is destroyed—physically or morally—at the moment of his attainment of self-knowledge.

In Byron, the Romantic complaint is that man is half dust and half deity:

When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
the Bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

The assumption is that if a person could escape the dust and become a bodiless spirit, he would find happiness. Through his heroes, Byron shows that knowledge does not bring happiness and that there are things beyond man's comprehension. The supernatural plays different roles in Wuthering Heights and in Byron's poems just as Heathcliff plays a different role from that of the Byronic hero. With Emily Brontë's work, the supernatural is an expression of the laws of nature; it is the entry to a condition in which man's nature eventually finds peace in fulfillment. Man belongs to the earth in life and in death; the soul achieves immortality in this world. When all is said, however, the Byronic hero's relationship to the Gothic villain, the Byronic idea of fatal revenge, and the phenomenon of Byron's personality all relate
Emily Brontë's Heathcliff to the Byronic hero. The ties are strong, even though the specific delineation of character is geared to each author's personality. Both authors exemplify the Romantic quest for answers to man's purpose for being.
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