

BRONTE'S JOURNEY TO THE EAST:
THE ROMANTIC QUEST IN HER FICTION

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Sadiq, Ebtisam Ali

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FICTION**

Wayne State University

Ph.D. 1982

**University
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BRONTE'S JOURNEY TO THE EAST: THE ROMANTIC
QUEST IN HER FICTION

by

EBTISAM ALI SADIQ

Submitted to the Graduate School
of Wayne State University,
Detroit, Michigan,

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1982

MAJOR: ENGLISH

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the University of King Saud for the award of a scholarship that enabled me to pursue my graduate studies. I owe a great deal to Professor John Reed who helped with characteristic kindness, at a crucial stage of the dissertation. To Professor Clifford Siskin who guided my wandering steps in the field of Romantic poetry I am particularly grateful. I am also thankful for Professor Aleya Rouchdi who cross-verified the Eastern allusions in the dissertation. It is difficult to indicate the extent of my indebtedness to Professor Nancy Armstrong in a brief formula. Her good advice, patient guidance and moral support have been invaluable to me.

My dearest debt is to my parents, but for whose continued encouragement and prayer this thesis could never have been completed. To my husband for support and understanding over the years I owe more than I can say.

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CHAPTER I

THE JUVENILIA

Although the Eastern element enjoys a conspicuous presence in Charlotte Bronte's fiction; literary critics have never dealt with this element in any satisfactory fashion. On the other hand, editors have acknowledged the Arabic debt in the juvenilia, as well as noting the Eastern allusions in her mature work. Such scholarship deserves further exploration and analysis.¹

Among the few critics who detect and remark upon Bronte's fascination with the Orient is Margaret Blom. She feels that the genii's function in the juvenilia enables Bronte

to dismiss the laws of causality and to explore with unrestrained relish incidents which, without supernatural intervention, would result in an early termination of the saga. . . . Magic also permitted a tentative, safe exploration of subjects too advanced, complex, or even distasteful for realistic treatment by a young,

¹See: T. J. Burnett's introduction to Bronte's Search After Happiness (London: Harvill Press, 1969), where he translates several Arabic names in Bronte's work. See also: Charlotte Bronte, The Twelve Adventurers and Other Stories (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable LTD, 1925), p. 4 where C. W. Hatfield contributes to Bronte's scholarship.

ambitious author.²

But, in reducing the Eastern element to a mere literary device, Blom dampens further speculation on Bronte's relationship with the East.

Another critic, Robert Keefe promises a more adequate explanation of the special nature of this relationship. He writes that

Angria had been a magic land, but in her adulthood, creativity is the only effective form of necromancy left. There are no genii. . . But the creative imagination can perform their duties.³

While he does associate the East with the creative imagination, Keefe does not develop this idea. He does not recognize the Eastern origin of these supernatural beings, or their relationship to a host of other Eastern allusions in the juvenilia.

The Eastern element in Bronte's fictional world is rich and varied. Not only is the juvenilia filled with supernatural beings, the later novels also abound with Eastern allusions, metaphors, and innumerable Arabic names of persons and places, both fictional and non-fictional. Most significant, however, are the parallels with episodes in Oriental tales in general, and with The Arabian Nights in particular. My purpose, however, is not to pursue a study of sources. Rather, I will describe the relationship

²Margaret Blom, Charlotte Bronte (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 41

³Robert Keefe, Charlotte Bronte's World of Death (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 78.

between Bronte and the East as an essential component of her artistic consciousness. The manifestation of that relationship in textual signs and patterns will be my guide.

I am indebted to the structuralist's attention to the internal patterning of the literary work, although my methodology extends beyond the work as a cultural and linguistic object. Rather, like the formalist, I treat literature as an "end in itself," though my reading is not interpretive. My objective is that of the critics of consciousness who attempt to "coexist with a creative consciousness at the moment when experience (of literature) ceases to be mute and takes on the appearance of words."⁴ Theirs is "a criticism of the author's experience conveyed in a text and of his active consciousness at the moment of creation." To "coexist" and to "convey" is to describe, rather than interpret the text. These critics treat the literary work as a poetic "existent," valuable because it exists, not because it means. Unlike the deconstructuralists, however, I do not reject the possibility of "meaning" and "value" in the literary work. Instead, I seek both to discover internal "structures" (patterning in the text) and to demonstrate that such patterning reveals the creative consciousness of the author.

There is, however, a crucial point where my own viewpoint diverges from the critics of consciousness. They

⁴Sarah Lawall, Critics of Consciousness (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 7. Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

claim the the "subject" revealed in the text is pure "mind," independent of any associations with the author as an individual being. Such a claim presupposes that the different works produced by the same author are literary creations by different "minds." Instead, I see the author as a single creative consciousness released into her various literary creations. The departure will allow me to use Bronte's own remarks on literature and art and I will also be able to define the author's relationship to the Romantic literary tradition. This will then enrich our understanding of creative consciousness.

By treating Bronte's fictional works as concrete manifestations of her creative consciousness, I will attempt to discover the position the Eastern element occupies in her imagination. I will begin by investigating Bronte's choice of words, phrases, and sentences to determine the pattern of images they constitute, the nature of experience they portray, and, in general, the consistent pattern which the total number of events forms. Especially important to establish are those patterns which emerge from the thoughts and behavioral modes of the characters inhabiting Bronte's textual landscape.

After having established the various patterns, it should then be possible to define Bronte's artistic consciousness in relation to the Romantic tradition by two means. The first depends on Bronte's conception of Romanticism in the juvenilia. The second entails

investigating the views of several authoritative literary critics on how the major Romantic poets defined Romanticism. Establishing Bronte's artistic consciousness in the Romantic tradition will enrich our understanding of Orientalism as it colored and shaped Bronte's mind during the act of creation.

Since The Arabian Nights formed an essential part of Charlotte Bronte's childhood's reading material, we can safely assume that Bronte was aware of the Eastern world at an early stage in her life. Therefore, it is only logical for a study that aims at investigating the Eastern element in her fiction to start with her earliest work for it is here that the East begins to demonstrate its influence on her creative consciousness. Indeed, the abundance of Eastern references in Bronte's juvenilia verifies this assumption.

In her juvenilia, Bronte has both an intimate and intricate relationship with the East. For instance, she constantly aspires to identify with that world in order to liberate her imagination from her immediate surroundings, yet she simultaneously resists the form of transcendence which such identification involves. She expresses her own longing for freedom by setting her fictional characters on physical or mental journeys to the East, then reveals her reluctance to identify with that world by denying her travellers their Eastern goal, setting it beyond their reach. In this way, she resists ultimate identification with the East. With the tension between these two urges she

struggles throughout her juvenilia. It is only in the last of her novelettes, "Caroline Vernon," that she allows her imagination to indulge in Eastern fantasies, freeing it completely from previous constrictions.

Bronte's quest of the imaginative possibilities opened up by the East begins with her first tale, "The Twelve Adventures," in which she has the twelve toy soldiers invade and occupy part of the African continent. The result of this act of the imagination is the creation of the Angrian realm. Although critical references to Angrian chronicles identify the element of childhood fantasy behind the mature literary narratives, such source identifications do not delve further into their cause.³ Except for noting what Angria had meant to the other three Brontes, no one has yet pointed out what Angria, its geographical location, and its origin in the children's game of toy soldiers had signified for Charlotte.

In Charlotte's creative consciousness, Angria is an Eastern kingdom, for it is not only set in Africa, but its major geographical locations are also given Arabic names. Indeed, several text editors recognize the Arabic origin of those names and provide English translations of their meaning. Burnett, for example, translates the Angrian name,

³See "The History of Angria" by Fannie Ratchord in Legends of Angria by Charlotte Bronte (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), See also Winifred Gerin's "General Introduction" to Five Novelettes by Charlotte Bronte (London: The Folio Press, 1971), for examples of scholarly emphasis on childhood fantasy.

"Gibbel Kumri," as "The Mountain of the Moon." But no one has volunteered to translate the name, "Guadima River," as "The Old River." Nor has anyone translated the "Dahomey Plain" as the land usually located between the mountains and the sea. This last reference is an actual plain in Africa. In light of this, then, we see that Bronte not only conceives of her Angrian realm as an Eastern kingdom, but also locates that kingdom in a remote Eastern setting.'

Furthermore, the distant setting of the Angrian realm implies that Bronte associates the initial act of the imagination with a movement away from one's immediate surroundings. The few instances where Bronte provides a definition of the term "imagination" supports this idea. More often than not, the imagination in Bronte's juvenilia is described in terms of a mental journey. For example, the passage of time in the narrative, "The Green Dwarf," is indicated by an appeal to the reader's imagination. The narrator covers span of six uneventful weeks by coaxing the reader to move in time from the past to the present moment of narration: "I must beg the reader to imagine that a space

'Burnett, p. 6.

'Dahomey Plain is located in Africa between Togland and Nigeria. Europeans learned of it in the 17th Century and consequently the land was affected by slave trade. Bronte may have learned of its existence from one of the local magazines, for the French attempt to penetrate the country was well-known throughout the 19th Century. See: The Encyclopaedia of Islam (London: Luzac and Co., 1965).

of six weeks has elapsed before he again beholds my hero." And, when the imagination is metaphorically presented, it appears as a moving object, particularly a flying steed:

His passions were naturally strong and his imagination was warm to fever, the two together made wild work, especially when Drunken Delerium lashed them to a gallop.'

This portrayal of passion and imagination as galloping horses connects such faculties with movement.

The Eastward journey of several characters in the juvenilia reinforces the link between imagination and movement. In a different tale, another character, Elizabeth Hastings, learns that the man she loves, Percy, intends to join a military campaign in the East, whereupon the news of his forthcoming journey sets her imagination afire:

There was one (paragraph in a newspaper) which mentioned that he was numbered amongst the list of officers designed for the expected campaign in the East and thereupon her excitable imagination kindled with anticipation of his perils and glories and wanderings. (FN. p. 244)

Although Elizabeth's excitement owes much to the war, she is equally thrilled by the idea of Percy's wanderings in the mysterious East. Hence, the focus in this passage is the movement towards the East as well as the issue of war. The imagination is bonded to movement and to the East.

*Charlotte Bronte Legends of Angria (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), p. 85.

*Charlotte Bronte, Five Novelettes (London: The Folio Press, 1971), p. 213. Citations will be in the text in the following form (FN, p. __).

The East of The Arabian Nights, which had shaped Bronte's creative consciousness, provides the next link between movement, imagination, and the East in the juvenilia. Caroline Vernon day-dreams of becoming an Eastern princess, and of living in Alhambra palace with its:

gardens of roses and the Halls of Marble
and the diamonds and fine pearls and the
rubies--it would be vanity to attempt a
description of such heavenly sights--the
reader must task his imagination and try
if he can conceive them. (FN, p. 313)

Here, Caroline's inner journey to the East inspires a second act of the imagination, for the narrative voice halts and appeals to the reader to use his powers to complete the vision.¹⁰

Bronte's keen awareness of her own identity pervades and balances her vision of the East as a distant and hauntingly lovely entity. Her need to preserve her own identity from complete submergence into the East is evident in the frequent play between the opposition of East and West. If the Angrian armies often move Eastward in their campaigns, many individual characters also travel Westward.¹¹ And, if Bronte's narrator invokes the beauty of the Eastern maidens before undertaking the art of writing,

¹⁰This appeal points out a Romantic conception of art for it recalls Wordsworth's attitude in his narrative poem, "Simon Lee."

¹¹For an example of such campaigns, see FN, p. 244, and for a demonstration of the other phenomenon, see the same source, page 260.

he also pays homage to Western girls.¹² The tension between the two concepts is often reflected in their capitalization.

Despite the tension between East and West and between freedom of the imagination and self-preservation, Bronte's fascination with movement to the East does not fade. In the earliest of her tales, she creates dark, willful, and rebellious characters who actually travel to the East where they encounter Eastern genii. Though she retains the basic physical and spiritual traits of the earlier traveller, Bronte changes the gender from male to female in the later tales of her apprenticeship. The spiritual yearning of her heroines to live in fantastic Eastern palaces and to be mated with Eastern men now replaces the literal journey to the East. For such heroines, Bronte creates dark heroes to represent the men of the East, so that the previous encounters with the genii now become confrontations with metaphorically Eastern men.

Charles Burkhardt's response to Bronte's juvenilia denies the existence of any significant pattern. "Bad habits can congeal. There was no firm and shapely patterning of action in the juvenilia."¹³ Burkhardt's inability to discern such patterns does not necessarily negate their existence. By shaping her Eastern quest into two kinds of journeys, a literal and a spiritual one, Bronte

¹²FN, p. 178.

¹³Charles Burkhardt, Charlotte Bronte (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1973), p. 40.

marks the first sign of patterning.¹⁴

The travellers' actions while underway are especially significant since these actions constitute the pattern that emerges in the text. The Brontean traveller begins his move with an act of self-assertion against established conventions, triggering his departure from a socialized setting and his entrance into a physically-enclosed location. There, the traveller encounters a physical object from the East that gives the journey its climax. This pattern retains its structure in both types of journeys, the literal move to the East and the psychological or inner one. The only change lies in the nature of the climax. The earlier traveller enters an enchanted palace with a brilliantly lit dome of gold and a group of singing genii. For him, such sensory pleasures form the climax of the journey. However, in the later female traveller's confrontation with Eastern man, the fantastic becomes a mysterious passion of the heart, and an inexplicable human infatuation. Sensual feelings replace former sensory pleasures. Psychological expansion, sexual and emotional fulfillment characterize the climactic point of the female traveller's journey.

Although Bronte's sphere is the novel, one may view her Eastern quest as a kind of poetic journey in prose. For instance, it is useful to examine the recurrent pattern in

¹⁴Robert Keefe discovered a recurrent pattern of self-assertion, death and remorse in Bronte's juvenilia.

Bronte's Eastern quest in light of a dominant pattern in Romantic poetry. Frequently, the Romantic poet portrays a poet-protagonist who seeks to liberate his imagination from all constrictions, social, moral, and psychological. This quest for transcendental freedom also begins with self-assertion; followed by the poet's move into social isolation; and culminates in a confrontation with his own mature powers of the imagination. It is in this confrontation that he realizes his ultimate freedom.

Several critics, in particular, Harold Bloom, recognize the quest pattern in the poetry of the English Romantic writers. In his essay, "The Internalization of Quest-Romance," Bloom writes that "self-assertive romanticism" is "only the first stage of the Romantic quest" of absolute freedom.¹⁵ He calls this early stage, "The Prometheus stage," and feels that during this stage "the quest is allied to the libido's struggle against repressiveness" (Bloom, p. 11).

While such a stage in the Romantic quest recalls Bronte's emphasis on the individualistic and strong-willed nature of her traveller, yet another analogy may be drawn between her Eastern quest and the quest in Romantic poetry. Bloom describes the stage immediately following the self-assertive Prometheanism as one in which "Nature is an ally,

¹⁵Harold Bloom, "The Internalization of Quest - Romance" in Romanticism and Consciousness (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1970), p. 15. Other quotes from this essay will be cited in the text.

though always a wounded and sometimes a withdrawn one" (Bloom, p. 11). The move into nature signifies a move away from the constrictive social setting. In this sense, Bronte's secluded Eastern setting is akin to the deserted nooks of nature in Romantic poetry.

At the same time her travellers indulge in sensory or sensual pleasures, Bronte experiences and enjoys the release of her own imagination, freed, for the time being, from the constraints and commitments of the immediate world. In her Eastern quest she shares the objective of the Romantic poet in nature. As Bloom aptly observes, "The Romantic movement is from nature to the imagination's freedom" (Bloom, p.6). For Bronte, too, the ultimate goal is absolute imaginative freedom.

The first element of the pattern in Bronte's Romantic quest of the East is the individualistic traveller, dark in physiognomy, willful in nature, and rebellious in disposition. Highly conscious of his individualism, he defies the established order and departs in search of personal freedom. The most striking of these travellers is Henry O'Donell, the protagonist of Search After Happiness: "In figure he was tall, of a dark complexion and searching black eye. His mind was strong and unbending, his disposition unsociable."¹⁴ His physical and spiritual

¹⁴Charlotte Bronte The Twelve Adventurers and Other Stories, ed. Clement Shorter (London: Publisher, 1925), p. 29. Quotations from this book will be cited in the text in the following form: (Shorter, p. __).

peculiarities assert themselves when he quarrels with an opponent:

At this, the military king started up and commanded O'Donell to apologize. This he immediately did, but from that hour of dissent a spell seemed to have been cast over him and he resolved to quit the city. (Shorter, p. 29)

O'Donell's decision to depart is a silent sign of rebellion. As a good soldier he must obey the military command, yet, as a rebel against social control, he must depart to a secluded part of the world where he can exercise his own will. Thus, he undertakes his journey to the East.

In the person of Caroline Vernon, the reader encounters another dark, strong-willed, and passionate protagonist.

She also possesses an unconventional beauty:

(She was) well-made of her age--not thin or delicate--her face was smiling, she had fine dark eyelashes and very handsome eyes--her hair was almost black--it curled as Nature let it, though it was now long and thick enough to be trained according to the established rules of art. (FN, p. 305)

As to her personal traits, she is described as "a daring character" (FN, p. 36). The willfulness of her nature is also apparent in her constant day-dreaming of the East: "I wish a fairy would bring me a ring or a magician would appear and give me a talisman like Aladdin's lamp that I could get everything I want" (FN, p. 309). It is only through Eastern magic that Caroline can assert her individual will and fulfill her peculiar desires. Bronte, therefore, creates a dark and passionate man, a

metaphorically Eastern man, to match the individual nature of Caroline. Her spiritual longing for the East transforms into a literal journey as she travels to a physically-enclosed location in quest of the Eastern man, Zamorna. In describing Caroline's journey to the metaphoric East, Bronte again emphasizes Caroline's willfulness by calling the journey: "A voluntary elopement without a companion--alone entirely of her own free will . . . her will urged it--her will was her predominant quality and must be obeyed" (FN, p. 341). Caroline rebels against the repressive environment, Eden Cottage, where her father placed her in order to protect her from Zamorna's amorous advances. This rebellious act sets her journey in motion.

Once underway, the traveller in the early narratives enters the aforementioned physically-enclosed location. Moral isolation soon follows. While such a move shares a similarity with the course pursued by the Romantic poet, it also suggests that Bronte's traveller seeks a state in which the self is the center of the world, morally, socially, and physically. This is evident in O'Donell's journey:

They discovered a subterraneous passage which they could not see the end of . . . the two immediately stepped into the opening. Immediately a great stone was rolled to the mouth of the passage . . . which shut out all but a single ray of daylight After travelling for a long time--as near as they could reckon about two days . . . they entered a new world. (Shorter, p. 32, 3)

Supernatural powers seal the opening of the tunnel and insure the travellers' isolation from the world of common

experience. Furthermore, the country proves to be completely uninhabited. Therefore, when O'Donell's only companion disappears, the protagonist is isolated, morally as well as physically. Significantly, this occurs before the journey's climax, O'Donell's encounter with the genii of the solitary Eastern land.

This move from the ordinary world into physical seclusion and then into moral isolation reappears in Bronte's tale, "The Twelve Adventurers." Like Robinson Crusoe, a group of travellers is shipwrecked on a remote island: "(A)fter many storms in which we were driven quite off course and knew not in what part of the world we were, we at last discovered land" (Shorter, p. 6). Although this island is inhabited by a savage race, these natives are only one of several unfamiliar elements in the strange country which the travellers enter. Moreover, the ship's ruin also creates a sense of isolation since the travellers are left without means to return to their own land. Their physical isolation thus becomes absolute, in the same way that the rock at the entrance of the subterranean passage seals off O'Donell's isolation from the world of ordinary experience. Interestingly enough, because the travellers settle in the remote country, build a city in it, and make it another homeland, another trip becomes necessary to achieve the moral isolation so crucial to Bronte's art. This second journey leaves them in a desert, surrounded by sand on all sides, so that they even lose all sense of direction. When

their isolation is absolute, the confrontation with the singing genii of the East takes place.

Caroline Vernon's move to Eden Cottage isolates her from the world (Eden Cottage is a solitary spot), yet this journey is not parallel to either Search After Happiness or "The Twelve Adventurers." Instead it is a compulsory journey, lacking the force of self-assertion and willfulness that characterizes all physical journeys in Bronte's work. Caroline's true journey is her willful seeking of the Eastern man, Zamorna, and this particular quest manifests a different pattern. For example, she is morally isolated from the start:

Miss Vernon did not reflect, did not repent did not fear - Through the whole day and night her journey lasted, she had no moment of misgiving - some would have trembled from the novelty of their situation, some would have quailed under the reproaches of prudence - she had only one thought, one wish, one aim, one object. (FN, p. 341)

The strength of her own will isolates Caroline from objective reality. From this state of psychological isolation, she moves into the physical seclusion which a friend's house provides. Here, her journey reaches its climax as she encounters the East in Zamorna.

Elizabeth Hastings possesses Caroline Vernon's dark beauty and rebellious disposition, however, Elizabeth is less willfully inclined. She is merely described as "odd - abrupt," and "warm-hearted." Her metaphoric journey to the East, therefore, is slightly altered. Rather than breaking

with social order and leaving in search of an Eastern man, Elizabeth only rambles about in solitary fields, ungoverned by any passion, save an idle inclination for reflection. Elizabeth couples her journey with an inner trip to the East, for she dreams of William Percy and his military campaign in that realm. This state of physical and psychological isolation culminates in an unexpected confrontation with Percy.

Although the third feature of Bronte's quest pattern varies between sensory and sensual indulgence, several basic characteristics common to both types of confrontations remain. Whether the confronted object is a genii of the East, or a man who embodies Eastern traits, the nature of the confrontation is essentially the same. Both are presented as mysterious and wondrous experiences, deliberately removed from the everyday world, inexplicable by human reason and uncontrollable by human will. Since such characteristics are often emphasized by literary critics as signs of nineteenth-century British Romanticism it is necessary to emphasize their presence in Bronte's fictionalized Eastern quest as a sign of the Romantic nature of the Eastern confrontation in her fiction.¹⁷

The sight of the Eastern genii shapes the mysterious and fantastic nature of the Eastern confrontation in the

¹⁷Richard Harter Fogle in The Permanent Pleasure (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974), for example, writes: "The romantic permits no explanation. It is beyond logic, beyond judgment and reason," p. 32.

early tales. In "The Twelve Adventurers," for example, the travellers experience ecstasy in the midst of total isolation:

[O]ut of the barren desert arose a palace of diamonds, the pillars of which were ruby and emerald illuminated with lamps too bright to look upon. The Genius led us into a hall of sapphire in which [there were] thrones of gold. On the thrones sat the Princes of the Genii. In the midst of the hall hung a lamp like the sun. Around it stood genii and fairies whose robes were of beaten gold sparkling with diamonds. . . . Then all the fairies and genii joined in one grand chorus which rose rolling to the mighty dome and pillars of the genii palace.
(Shorter, p. 13)

This scene is a brief moment of ecstasy since soon after the music vanishes, the palace slowly fades, and the travellers find themselves alone again in the midst of the desert.

As Bronte moves from presenting literal Eastern journeys to portraying the spiritual desires of her heroines, the nature of the ecstasy shifts from an objective plane to a subjective one. As sexuality enters the picture, the externally valid becomes psychologically true, and the mystery confronted is that of love, infatuation and uncontrollable passion. The elevation of the confrontation above everyday reality now becomes clear through the female's confrontation with her self-hood.

In Bronte's juvenilia, the emotional intensity that begins to build during the female traveller's encounter with the Eastern man signals the moment of ecstasy and inner revelation. As Elizabeth Hastings rambles about in solitary

fields, day-dreaming of Percy, the man she loves and has no hope of marrying because of the difference in their social standing, she unexpectedly meets the very man who has been occupying her thoughts. Although this meeting is in itself a climactic confrontation with the East (through Percy's Eastern associations), the gradual build-up in emotional intensity, nonetheless, takes place. From that moment of confrontation until the profound, inevitable psychological illumination takes place, Elizabeth begins to respond affectionately to Percy: "Sir William's voice brought back again like a charm the feeling of confidence . . . it brought back, too, a throbbing of the heart and pulse and a kindling of the veins (FN, p. 247). Percy then leads her further into physical isolation, a graveyard, where a mysterious tombstone adds to the emotional intensity:

'Tell me what you know then' said Miss Hastings - raising her eyes to Sir William with a look that told him how magical was the effect - how profound was the interest of all this sweet confidential interchange of feeling . . . she had no need to blush and tremble - she had only to listen when he spoke to feel that he trusted her. (FN, p. 252)

Percy trusts her with the tombstone's history of incest, passion, and suicide. He then takes advantage of the bewitching effect the story has on Elizabeth by asking her to become his mistress. His attempt at seduction brings the moment to a climax because it confronts Elizabeth with the reality of her feelings and passions. Although she rejects an illicit relationship, her answer reveals how deep her

self-recognition and inner turmoil is: "If I stay another moment God knows what I shall say or do - I implore you not to follow me - I am afraid of nothing but myself" (FN, p. 257). The encounter with the Eastern man thus amounts to a sudden, overwhelming encounter with self-hood. However, Elizabeth's ability to resist the temptation concludes the climax.

In Caroline Vernon's case, the gradual increase in emotional intensity is underway before the actual journey begins. Caroline's career so far has been a continuous mental journey, an endless day-dream. Moments before her journey begins, she receives a letter from Zamorna:

that letter had so crowded her brain with thoughts, with hopes, with recollections and anticipations - had so fired her heart with an unconquerable desire to reach and see an absent writer - that she could not have lived through another day of passive captivity. (FN, p. 341)

Her excitement mounts, for when she first met Zamorna, he ignored her, pretending that he had not recognized her:

her heart was so bitter that she could have laid her head on her hand and fairly cried like a child . . . (the) hours passed slowly to her, and she, still in spite of herself, kept looking at the window and listening to every movement in the hall - as evening and darkness drew on, she waxed restless and impatient. (FN, p. 348-9)

Therefore, when the climactic moment of seduction arrives, the excitement and the suspense lend a great deal of psychological intensity to Caroline's self-confrontation. Her response to Zamorna's seductive overtures betrays what

she is experiencing. For his part, Zamorna tells her of his pleasure:

'I like to look at your dark eyes and pretty face' . . . Miss Vernon sat speechless - she darkly saw or rather felt the end to which all this tended, but all was fever and delirium round her. (FN, p. 352)

and moments later:

Caroline began to feel a new impression. She no longer wished to leave him, she clung to his side - infatuation was stealing over her . . . in a mind like Miss Vernon's, conscience was feeble opposed to passion . . . and when Zamorna kissed her and said . . . 'Will you go with me tomorrow, Caroline?' she looked up in his face with a kind of wild devoted enthusiasm and answered 'Yes.' (FN, p. 354)

Self-recognition spills over Caroline with remarkably forceful intensity that allows no return to common-sense reality and permits no let down in passion. Thus, it is inevitable that self-confrontation will lead to physical consummation.

Given that Bronte exhibits a fundamental similarity with the early stage of the Romantic quest, she also shares a second stage: a potential for an internalization of her own Romantic quest of the East. She shapes her characters' Eastern confrontations into objective and subjective spiritual revelations, and in doing so, she shares the Romantic poet's internalization process of the earlier

quest-romance.^{1*} Harold Bloom recognizes and outlines the Romantic movement towards internalization, suggesting that

The movement of quest-romance, before its internalization by the High-Romantics was from nature to redeemed nature, the sanction of redemption being the gift of some spiritual authority, sometimes magical. (Bloom, p.5)

Bloom also observes that

The internalization of quest-romance made of the poet-hero a seeker not after nature but after his own mature powers, and so the Romantic poet turned away, not from society to nature, but from nature to what was more integral than nature, within himself. (Bloom, p. 15)

The immediate result of such a process of internalization is "to widen consciousness as well as intensify it" (Bloom, p. 6).

Bronte's Eastern quest in prose is analogous to the Romantic poet's movement to achieve the mature powers of his imagination. Like the Romantic's poet-hero, the Brontean traveller moves from a pre-Romantic stage to a High-Romantic one (internalization), from an objective to a subjective encounter with objects representative of the East. In this way, the East becomes a psychological process, and when this process is complete, Bronte begins to associate the word

^{1*}For a clear definition of what a quest - romance is see: Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p.186, where he writes "The complete form of the romance is clearly the successful quest and such a completed form has three main stages: the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both must die; and the exaltation of the hero."

"romantic" with the female traveller's confrontation and journey.

This uncanny parallel with the Romantics emerges in Bronte's description of the willful and rebellious traveller as "romantic." For example, when Caroline Vernon rebels against her father's authority and as she meditates on her escape to join Zamorna, Bronte's narrator comments: "Miss Vernon was sufficiently romantic, willful and infatuated to have attempted to put it into execution" (FN, p. 338). Therefore, not only does the Brontean female traveller display a strong similarity with the Romantic poet's rebellion against convention (moral code), she also shares the term, "romantic." In this sense the journey to the East is a Romantic experience.

Zamorna's illicit relationship with a woman named Mina Laury also hints at the Romantic overtones of Caroline's inner experience of freedom. Caroline, for instance, describes Mina Laury as "romantic and mysterious." The connection of these two terms recalls the Romantic and mysterious confrontation of the Brontean traveller, yet it also has another implication. In further describing Mina, Caroline says:

She's a romantic look in her eyes - I should not wonder if she has had adventures . . . I should like to have some adventures . . . I don't want a dull, droning life. (FN, p. 362)

Because Mina's relationship with Zamorna is illicit (a stance against convention and the moral code of the time),

Bronte's narrator associates their relationship with a romantic experience. The scene also creates a dramatic irony at the expense of Caroline who is unaware that Mina is involved with Zamorna and that Caroline's own Eastern quest will make her another Mina Laury. This irony indirectly presents Caroline's encounter with Zamorna in a Romantic context, for Caroline's relationship with him will also be illicit and her quest of him will isolate her from society as well as force her to confront her self-hood and her passions.

In this way, Bronte's quest of Eastern possibilities displays an amazing likeness to a Romantic experience. The basic psychological pattern is similar in both, and Bronte's use of the term "romantic" reinforces the similarity. Bronte's quest in prose is thus ultimately a Romantic quest, a search for the psychologically mature powers of the imagination.¹

Bronte's Romantic quest of the East, like the Romantic poet's quest of the imagination's freedom, is inhibited before its final fulfillment. However, since both quests face an internal enemy, Harold Bloom's description of the

¹ 'Romanticism with a capital 'R' is used in this dissertation in a conventional literary sense for it refers to nineteenth century Romantic writers as well as to the similarities that Bronte has with his group. Therefore, any feature of her pattern of the Eastern quest, that corresponds to what Bloom has identified in Romantic poetry is usually capitalized. However, whenever I used romantic in Bronte's own sense of the term which does not always correspond to her similarities with the Romantic writers I usually retain the small 'r'.

Romantic poet's inner strife is useful in Bronte's case as well. Bloom feels that

The final enemy to be overcome is a recalcitrance in the self . . . Only the selfhood . . . burns in hell. The selfhood is not the erotic principle, but precisely that part of the erotic that cannot be released in the dialectic of love. (Bloom, P. 11, 12)

Similarly, the inhibitions antagonistic to Bronte's Romantic quest of the East in the early tales are her own instincts of self-preservation, a fear of submergence in the transcendental form of freedom opened up by the East. As the Eastern element takes on the form of sexual fantasy in the later tales of the juvenilia, these instincts develop into chastity. In Bronte's mature works, the defense against the East, the equivalent of what Bloom calls "recalcitrance in the self," is her psychological response to the demands posed by her external surroundings. Her concern with Western values inhibits her Eastern quest; the disappearance of the juvenilia's perfect quest pattern is evidence of this inhibition.

In the earliest of her tales, Bronte's fear of the absolute imaginative freedom which the East has to offer, and which she had eagerly sought as a means of liberation from social constriction, surfaces in her constant attempt to remove the pleasurable moment of confrontation with the East from her protagonist's immediate experience. Although she does not always succeed, there are always textual signs of the process of resistance that is going on in her

consciousness. For instance, the East's appearance in "The Twelve Adventurers" is governed by layers of defense. The first defense is the geographical remoteness of the country; the ship sails for months before reaching it. Moreover, the country is called "country of the genii," and is governed by an Arabian supernatural being called "Maimoune," the good omen.²⁰ These two defenses remove the country of pleasurable freedom from the world of ordinary experience, thereby allowing Bronte to indulge in the fantastic without direct involvement. More important, however, is Bronte's third layer of defense against Eastern enchantment, the involuntary quality of the travellers' journey:

After we had travelled a long time . . .
we were dreadfully fatigued and begged
the Genius to allow us to stop a little,
but he immediately ordered us to
proceed. (Shorter, p. 11)

The Genius ignore their remonstrances, and finally the travellers find themselves in the pleasure palace with its singing genii, a situation the travellers little sought or desired. The Eastern pleasures are even forced on them at the cost of great suffering; the genii denies them food and drink until the moment of ecstasy is over:

As the music went off the palace slowly
disappeared, and we found ourselves
alone in the midst of the desert . . .
We knew not which way to go, and we were
ready to faint with hunger; but once
more looking round we say lying on the
sands some dates and palm-wine. Of this

²⁰The translation of the name is mine. However, Shorter's text has a footnote that recognizes the source of this supernatural being as The Arabian Nights.

we made our breakfast. (Shorter, p. 11)

The involuntary nature of the travellers' experience thus allows Bronte the freedom to enjoy the assimilation of Eastern fantasies into her fiction without impinging on her instincts of self-preservation.

Similar defenses against Eastern enchantment are evident in Search After Happiness. O'Donell, like the twelve adventurers, travels to a remote country. While this geographical distance again removes the danger of the Eastern world from the author's immediate surroundings, Bronte now employs an even stronger means of defense and distance. Unlike the earlier tale, "the Twelve Adventurers," Search After Happiness denies the protagonist indulgence in Eastern pleasures. Instead, Bronte creates a double, an old man, who resembles O'Donell in many personal traits and life experiences. Bronte then attributes the most fantastic encounters with the East to this old man. The striking similarities between the two characters are clear when the old man relates his life story to O'Donell, a life story which reflects an identical attitude towards his background as does O'Donell towards his:

I was the son of a respectable merchant in Moussoul. My father intended to bring me up to his own trade, but I was idle and did not like it. One day, as I was playing in the street, a very old man came up to me and asked me if I would go with him . . . I consented. (Shorter, p. 37, 38)

Just as O'Donell rebels against social order, the old man in his youth rejects the vocation chosen for him by his father.

It is important to note, however, that while O'Donell's initial move is intended for a search after happiness, the old man presents himself as an idle pleasure seeker in his earlier years.

If Bronte presents the two men as essentially similar, she is careful to place the fantastic and pleasurable experience of the old man beyond O'Donell's immediate grasp. The old man is from the city of Moussoul and a citizen of an Eastern country (something that O'Donell could never become), and it is the old man who enters the pleasure palace:

I found myself in a palace, the glory of which far exceeds any description which I can give. The tall, stately pillars, reaching from heaven to earth, were formed of the finest, purest diamonds. The pavement sparkling with gold and precious stones; and the mighty dome, made solemn and awful by its stupendous magnitude, was of single emerald . . . In this palace were thousands and tens of thousands of fairies and genii, some of whom flitted lightly among the blazing lamps to the sound of unearthly music. (Shorter, p. 38)

Having tasted of these sensory pleasures, the old man suffers their penalty; he becomes enslaved to the genii who has helped him into the wondrous dome:

[T]he place began slowly and gradually to vanish . . . I found myself in the glen surrounded by high mountains . . . and standing close by was the old man who had conducted me to this enchanted place . . . his countenance had an expression of strange severity . . . The old man suddenly seized me and dragged me to an altar . . . forcing me down on my knees, he made me swear that I would be his servant forever.

(Shorter, p; 40)

After this enslavement to the genii the man never returns to Moussoul. O'Donell, on the other hand, not having tasted the tempting pleasures of the East, is able to return to his homeland with the help of the genii of the enchanted land. In contrast to the old man's journey, O'Donell's journey is not absolute. He merely samples Eastern pleasures through the old man's narrative, and can, therefore, avoid its dangers. Similarly, for Bronte, the creation of fiction opens up the possibility of indulging her Eastern fantasies without putting her own identity at risk.

As the Eastern element takes the form of a sexual fantasy, the defense becomes moral chastity. In "Henry Hastings," the story of Elizabeth exemplifies this type of resistance on Bronte's part. Percy, the Eastern man in this tale, attempts to seduce Elizabeth into becoming his mistress. Despite her deep infatuation with him, Elizabeth, out of moral righteousness, rejects his offer:

'I'll never be your mistress--I could not without incurring the miseries of self-hatred . . . the scorn of the world is a horrible thing . . . I have never committed an action or narrated a word that would bring my character for a moment under the breath of suspicion.'
(FN, p. 256)

Thus, Elizabeth's Eastern journey is abortive. Her confrontation with the Eastern man is transient, and she returns to the world of common reality unfulfilled. Reason and social control are her guides back to this world. Elizabeth's lack of fulfillment points out the inhibition of

Bronte's quest of absolute freedom, for the author falls short of allowing her heroine an identification with the Eastern man. Rather, Bronte allows herself momentary indulgence in Eastern fantasies, thus not fully embracing the implications and consequences of the freedom such indulgence imparts.

Although she overcomes such inhibitions in "Caroline Vernon," Bronte begins with her previous defenses. The defense she now employs is irony, which both detaches her from her character's Eastern fantasies and indicates her reluctance to approve them. For example, Caroline, the heroine, day-dreams of marrying a man brave enough

to conquer the world and build himself a city like Babylon--only it was to be in the moorish style--and there was to be a palace called Alhambra--where Mr. Harold Aurelius was to live, taking upon himself the title of Caliph, and she Miss C. Vernon . . . was to be his chief Lady and to be called the Sultana Zara-Esmerelda--with at least a hundred slaves to do her bidding. (FN, p. 31)

One critic, Margaret Blom, recognizes and considers the ironic tone in this passage as a sign of the growing sophistication of Bronte's technique.²¹ Yet, also noteworthy is the distance such irony creates between Bronte and the East.

Towards the end of the tale, however, this ironic tone disappears. Bronte now repeats the Eastern sexual fantasy, and curiously enough, she treats the repetition seriously,

²¹Blom, p. 45.

deeply, and sympathetically:

The Duke reseated himself at Miss Vernon's side--'Caroline' said he, desiring by that word to recall her attention which was wandering wide in the distressful paroxysm of shame that overwhelmed her--he knew how to give a tone, an accent to that single sound which should produce ample affect--it expresses a kind of pity--there was something protecting and sheltering about it as though he were calling her home . . . The Duke spoke again--in a single blunt and almost coarse sentence compressing what yet remained to be said. 'If I were a bearded Turk, Caroline, I would take you to my harem.'
(FN, p. 352, 353)

Zamorna echoes Caroline's fantasies to what is obviously a dangerous extreme, for while Caroline fantasizes about becoming an Eastern Sultana married to an Eastern king, Zamorna proposes a dishonorable fulfillment for her day-dreams. Caroline is not to become a Sultana, a queen, if we use the English word, but rather she is to become a mere concubine in the Eastern Sultan's harem.²² However startling Bronte's new treatment of the fantasy is, it is important to note that the ironic tone has indeed vanished, and that the author seems to be as much attracted to Zamorna's seductive overtures as Caroline is. Bronte's portrayal of the sexual seduction is serious and sensitive. In this scene, Zamorna desperately strives to place his and Caroline's passionate love for each other in any acceptable context, even if that context proves to be culturally

²²Sultana is queen in Arabic. See: Edward Lane, Arabic English Lexicon (New York: Flengar Pub. Co., 1955).

alien. In Eastern culture, as represented in The Arabian Nights, the keeping of a Harem with numerous concubines in it by a Sultan is an indisputably acceptable tradition, and it is to this Eastern tradition that Zamorna tries to belong. By making Caroline Zamorna's mistress, Bronte allows the Eastern sexual fantasy complete fulfillment; at the same time, this fulfillment is an indication on Bronte's part as to how much Zamorna's utterance is her conviction. Thus, the realization of the Sultan's Harem fantasy is a sign that Bronte gives rein to her imagination, liberating that faculty from the inhibiting forces of self-recalcitrance. By allowing her characters to meet in a reality re-ordered into a transcendental unity in an Eastern world, Bronte achieves her "imagination's freedom."

The next indication of Bronte's abandonment of her previous reluctance to totally liberate her imagination is her characters' assimilation into the Eastern world moment before the ultimate seduction scene occurs. Through successive associations, Caroline and Zamorna become two Eastern figures. Such identification places a special emphasis on the union realized through physical consummation, for the two characters now become two identical parts of one complete Eastern whole.

We have already discussed Caroline's identification with the East by virtue of her dark beauty, her day-dreams, and her desire to be an Eastern queen. However, Zamorna's identification with the Eastern man takes place during the

actual seduction scene where he is described as having a "high-featured face, and dark large eye, beaming bright with a spark from the depths of Gehenna" (FN, p. 353). Bronte's use of the Biblical term, "Gehenna," to describe the seductive power of Zamorna's eyes indicates that he has become associated with the East in her creative consciousness.²³ In fact, his identification with the East is further reinforced when he acquires the common jargon of the Eastern people; he tells Caroline that he will not let go of her, "Not for a Diadem, not for a Kroomad's head--not every inch of land [transformed into] the Joliba waters" (FN, p. 363).²⁴ By speaking of Eastern properties and events as Eastern people do, Zamorna becomes an Eastern man. In the author's creative consciousness, then, Zamorna is the release of Bronte's powerful vision from earlier inhibitions. The reservations so evident in Search After Happiness disappear in "Caroline Vernon."

²³In her mature years, Bronte uses Biblical allusions whenever she wishes to control her Eastern quest without completely losing touch with the East. However, at this stage of her career there is no sign of such control, for the scene is one of successful sexual seduction. Because "Gehenna" corresponds to the Arabic name of the pit of eternal damnation (Bronte may have encountered it in her reading of The Arabian Nights), the term suggests a less controlled image of the Eastern man than other Biblical allusions in Bronte.

²⁴Joliba waters is rose water highly valued by the Arabs in the old times as a sign of luxury and hospitality. Hence the addition I inserted into the quote. Bronte's manuscript, it seems, is not readable at this point for the quote is introduced in Gerin's edition of the text with a question mark. For the meaning of joliba waters see Lane's dictionary.

Although their physical consummation reinforces their identification with the East and creates a transcendental union between Caroline and Zamorna, this form of transcendence is not a self-abnegating experience. Caroline's response to Zamorna's seduction is, after all, a conscious act of the will. When Zamorna asks: "'Will you go with me tomorrow, Caroline?' She looked up in his face with a kind of wild devoted enthusiasm and answered, 'Yes'" (FN, p. 354). In this scene, Zamorna's tone is irresistible, yet, it is important to observe that Caroline's seduction is a self-induced act of the will. It is no less important that she gives her consent to the illicit relationship in a single term that implies conscious choice, if not determination as well.

The creation of an Eastern union in which self-transcendence does not demand self-abnegation indicates that Bronte's quest of the East is finally fulfilled. Bronte has created a situation identical to the triumphant moment of the Romantic poet's quest. Harold Blom describes such a moment in the Romantic's struggle as an

inward overcoming of the selfhood's
temptation and the. . . . outward
turning of the triumphant Imagination
free of further internalization
. . . . which must complete a dialectic
of love by uniting the Imagination with
its bride who is a transformed ongoing
creation of the Imagination. (Blom,
p. 17)

Despite his overcoming of self-recalcitrance, the Romantic poet fulfills his quest only by uniting himself with the

vision he created. Such unity implies a turning back on the powers of his mind, a return to selfhood. Similarly, Bronte's Romantic quest of the East is finally fulfilled because, in liberating herself from her fear of submergence into the East, she unrestrainedly embraces Eastern transcendental possibilities, without allowing this form of transcendence to amount to self-annihilation. Self-assertion and self-transcendence are coupled in Bronte's and in the Romantic's quest of imaginative freedom.

It is also at this point that I would like to point out how my view of Caroline's experience differs from another critic, Helene Moglen. In her reading of the text, Moglen essentially conceives of Caroline's response to Zamorna's seduction as terribly passive. She relies on drawing a comparison between Caroline's destiny and that of the other mistresses in Zamorna's life, stating that

In the novelettes, Zamorna distributes his wife and mistresses about the countryside, placing them in castles where they sit like so many enchanted princesses before their mirrors, carefully preserving their lover's images of them, until he chooses to return and bring them back to life.²³

When Moglen says that Zamorna "describes Caroline Vernon's feelings about her incarceration ('I had placed her where she is safe and happy') with the same painful accuracy that he uses to describe his wife's devotion,"²⁴ Moglen is indeed

²³Helene Moglen, Charlotte Bronte: The Self Conceived (New York: Norton and Company, Inc., 1976), p. 52.

²⁴Moglen, p. 31.

associating Caroline with this passive group of women. However, Moglen's equation of Caroline's character with the traditional personality of Zamorna's wife, the Duchess, does not take into account the rebellious, impulsive, and self-assertive aspects of Caroline's personality. Moglen's feminist approach pre-supposes that the distortion of the romantic myth of love into sado-masochism is absolute in Bronte. Moglen also does not take into account that, while exposed to the psychosexual forces in a patriarchal society, Bronte has also been exposed to several other forms of interaction between men and women in other cultures, namely through The Arabian Nights. Having read that work, Bronte prevents a sado-masochistic relationship between man and woman from becoming absolute in her fiction.

The dominant fantasy in The Arabian Nights is that of women asserting their subjective and individualistic desires against a society governed by tribal laws. Judith Grossman, in an article named, "Infidelity and Fiction: The Discovery of Women's Subjectivity in The Arabian Nights," recognizes this self-assertive side of the women in that work:

The activating force in The Thousand and One Nights is the shattering revelation of their wives' adultery experienced by King Sharyar and his brother. What they saw can be redefined as women demonstrating their capacity for autonomous life by making passionate love with their black slaves.²⁷

²⁷Judith Grossman, "Infidelity and Fiction: The Discovery of Women's Subjectivity in The Arabian Nights" in The Georgia Review, Spring 1980, p. 113.

An inevitable sense of alienation accompanies the autonomous self-assertion:

The detribalized individual must bear the loss of the old certainties, of fixed behavioral structures of attachment to family and tribe--in general, the ills of alienation . . . the push for individual autonomy may come to be stigmatized by social authorities old or new as morally wicked; and it is worth noting that this is particularly the case whenever the emergence of such drives in women is acknowledged.²⁸

Exposed to the contrary current, Bronte's imagination must have been freed from the common cultural view of her patriarchal society. Signs of this influence appear in her portrayal of the willful female traveller who consciously and deliberately seeks the man of her desires. The influence also manifests itself in the inevitable sense of alienation that such an expression of desire entails; Caroline spends the rest of her life in an obscure spot of the Angrian realm after her seduction, while Elizabeth's moral integrity enables her to return to the world of everyday experience. Above all, the physical adultery of the women in The Arabian Nights must have occasioned the constant adultery in Bronte's imagination. For throughout her career, Bronte's female characters fall in love with actual or metaphorical foreign men, just as the women in The Arabian Nights choose to alienate themselves from their kindred by entertaining passionate love for their black

²⁸Grossman, p. 115.

slaves. Thus, the fantasy of autonomy, no matter what its price, must have appealed to Bronte's aspirations for absolute freedom, a freedom that could only be attained within the context of self-assertion and alienation.

CHAPTER II

THE PROFESSOR

In the sphere of literary criticism there is some kind of universal agreement that The Professor is a conscious attempt on Bronte's part to exclude Romanticism from her fictional world. In the preface to that novel, Bronte contrasts her own material of "the plain and the homely" with the publisher's preference for "the imaginative and poetical." The book's critics have closely followed Bronte's steps. For example, Robert Keefe calls the work "an unconscious and unsuccessful attempt to escape from the theme of death and remorse which had obsessed the author's imagination for so many years."¹ Another critic, Helene Moglen comments: "The novel intentionally represses, and obscures the free play of the imagination" by taking on a "conventional form and subject."² Charles Burkhart, for his part, places Bronte in the line of the 1840s novelists

¹Robert Keefe, Charlotte Bronte's World of Death (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 77. Keefe's concept of the romantic imagination of Bronte decides his choice of terminology in defining it.

²Helene Moglen, Charlotte Bronte: The Self Conceived (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1976), p. 83.

who attempt a new realism.' And finally, Margaret Blom regards the book as an outcome of Bronte "having suffered great guilt over having submitted to the control of passionate imagination."⁴

There is, however, an advantage that critics enjoy over Bronte, namely, their ability to discover below the realistic surface of the novel an unconscious manifestation of Romanticism, something that Bronte could not control even though she had "rejected the mythic dimensions of the romantic world" of Angria.⁵ Robert Keefe, who associates Romanticism in Bronte with the death motif, can discern this Romantic element in Crimsworth's hypochondria: "Like his creator, he tries hard to concentrate on the "plain and homely" aspects of existence, to ignore the imaginative drift of his psyche. Yet even William can hear death's song."⁶ Moglen in her psychoanalytic study of Bronte's works, directly connects the Romantic quest of the characters with their sexuality. For example, she observes an "extraordinary tension . . . unconsciously created between the surface reality and the sexuality which underlies" the Jane poem in The Professor. She considers

³Charles Burkhardt, Charlotte Bronte: A Psychosexual Study of Her Novels (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1973), p. 46.

⁴Margaret Blom, Charlotte Bronte (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 79.

⁵Moglen, P.85.

⁶Keefe, P. 78.

this poem the essence of the fantasy behind all Bronte's novels, and she argues that "In The Professor, the fantasy provides the novel's motivating impulses, but not its substance."⁷ Implied in this statement is the disparity between surface manifestation and latent content. Burkhart also considers both the failure and the fascination of The Professor as a result of Bronte's realism becoming "alloyed in the execution, owing to other less conscious intentions."⁸ Blom discovers that "passages within the novel reveal that this struggle to subdue her imaginative vision was not wholly successful,"⁹ while Lawrence Dessner considers the book as testing "on an intellectual plane, the relationship between Sense and Reason, while its material are emotional and sexual."¹⁰ Finally, Robert Martin defines Bronte's concept of the imagination as an "undisciplined wallowing in emotion and sentiment." He feels that what Bronte was doing in The Professor "is, in part, a repudiation of its preface, for Miss Bronte was unable to avoid showing the necessity of the emotions."¹¹ One can extend the list even further. However, it is clear,

⁷Moglen, P. 83.

⁸Burkhart, P. 46.

⁹Blom, P. 79.

¹⁰Lawrence J. Dessner, The Homely Web of Truth: A Study of Charlotte Bronte's Novels (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. 61.

¹¹R. B. Martin, Charlotte Bronte's Novels: The Accents of Persuasion (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 25.

according to these critics, that some act of repression has disrupted the natural flow of Bronte's language of the imagination. Not surprisingly, we find that the journey to the East which structured the early works now undergoes a process of deliberate repression and unconscious eruption.

Although the attempt to draw a clear cut line between the conscious and the unconscious workings of an author's mind is difficult, signs indicating changes in consciousness do remain. For instance, the text of The Professor bears indications that Bronte is deliberately negating her earlier conceptions of Orientalism. This negation implies that to some extent she is denying her imagination the free indulgence in Eastern fantasies that dominated the earlier works. At the same time, Bronte also exhibits a certain lack of awareness as to the extent her creative consciousness depends upon the very element she tries to suppress. The stronger the reaction against the East, the stronger the indication of its dominance. My discussion of the novel, then, will deal primarily with this problem: the deliberate negation of the East, the unconscious indications of that negation, and, finally, Bronte's failure to exclude the Eastern quest completely from her consciousness.

Bronte's attempt to control her earlier conception of Orientalism is obvious through the characters she now creates. Unlike their predecessors in the juvenilia, these new characters deny identification with the Eastern people, their way of life, and thought. Early in the book,

Crimsworth denies any identification with the Oriental man. However, Bronte cannot define her protagonist except by way of reference to the oriental:

I am no oriental; white necks Carmine
lips and cheeks, clusters of bright
curls, do not suffice for me without
that Promethean spark which will live
after the roses and lilies are faded,
the burnished hair grown grey.¹²

According to this monologue, Crimsworth condemns the Oriental man as being an admirer of superficial beauty since the "Promethean spark" is presumably absent from the Oriental concept of ideal beauty. This notion contradicts Bronte's earlier attitude in the juvenilia where the traveller is both Oriental in physiognomy and Promethean in spirit. We have seen the identification of O'Donell, Caroline Vernon, and Zamorna with Oriental people, by virtue of their dark features, yet, most importantly, by means of a succession of other references. We have also seen that the most prominent characteristic of Bronte's Eastern traveller is his willful, capricious, rebellious, and impulsive nature. These characteristics are, of course, Promethean. In Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, for example, Prometheus rebelliously cries to the Fury: "Submission, thou dost know, I cannot try" (Act I, L. 395). Defiantly and no less willfully he says: "I laugh your power and his who sent you/Here (Act I, L. 430). Unmistakably, then, Bronte's

¹²Charlotte Bronte, The Professor, in The Brontes, Introduced by Phyllis Bentley (London: Allan Wingate, 1949), p. 108. Quotations will be given in the text refer to this edition under the abbreviated form Prof, p. ____.

traveller on the juvenile landscape is deliberately Promethean in his willful rebellion, while also being Eastern in physiognomy. Orientalism and Prometheanism were not opposed in the early fiction of Bronte. Indeed, they were not even separate concepts.

"Caroline Vernon" provides yet more evidence that Eastern characters are Promethean in spirit. The Promethean spark, the fire which Prometheus usurped from heaven has become a symbol of his rebellion as well as his power over Jupiter. Jupiter asks his son "To redescend and trample out the Spark" (Act III, SCI: 24). Zamorna possesses this spark in "Caroline Vernon." During the seduction scene he becomes completely identified with the Eastern man, possessing a spark from an unearthly source, if we are to invoke Bronte's terminology in The Professor: "His deep voice . . . his high-featured face and dark large eyes beaming bright with a spark from the depths of Gehenna, struck Caroline with a thrill of nameless dread" (FN P. 353). In other words, he is an Eastern Prometheus who liberates Caroline from social constriction and brings about her confrontation with selfhood, her sexual awareness, and her fulfillment. At this point, I disagree with the critics, Margaret Blom and Helene Moglen, who consider Caroline and all Bronte's women in the juvenilia to be passive victims of sexual submission to Zamorna. Instead, their experience opens up a new level of awareness, and is, therefore, a confrontation with

selfhood.¹³ Caroline, as the dark woman who dreams of becoming an Eastern queen, liberates herself from her father's tyrannic imprisonment of her in Eden cottage. This move confronts her with her selfhood and leaves her free, loved and fulfilled, very much in the same way that Shelley's Prometheus intended to leave humanity.

Evidently, Bronte is denying herself this source of imaginative freedom by disavowing her earlier fascination with the East. Yet, because the denial takes this explicit form instead of the earlier geographical and psychological displacement, it signals the introduction of some new influence upon Bronte's consciousness. By taking a different form, the denial cannot be merely the early conflict between the desire for transcendence and the impulse for self-preservation. In fact, the author has broken with the earlier submergence in subjective Angrian fantasies. Therefore the quest of the East and the sense of freedom and liberation it provides to the traveller become inevitably colored by the author's new psychological awareness. The expansion can only take place within the limits of the new awareness of the objective world outside that of subjective fantasies. Consequently, the traveller's initial move towards isolation is to be abolished, and with it, inevitably, the final encounter with the East. Bronte's deliberate efforts point in this direction. Whether she

¹³Blom, for example, writes: "Mina Laury, Caroline Vernon . . . Mary Percy . . . all are willing victims of the brutal male lover - Zamorna" (p. 53).

succeeds or not is another question.

The new influence on Bronte's imaginative processes is evident in yet another significant negation. This time, the negation is a denial of the romantic nature of the East. Previously, the East constituted the climax of the traveller's profound spiritual encounter. Curiously enough, Bronte now is undercutting the romantic aspect of the East by presenting it as a very unromantic world. In a dialogue between Crimsworth and Hunsden, the latter compares the aristocratic women in their culture with "the Oriental odalisques" who: "Cultivate beauty from childhood upwards, and may by care and training attain a certain degree of excellence in that point . . . Yet even this superiority is doubtful" (Prof, P. 120). Certainly Caroline Vernon's impulsive nature and Eastern beauty disappear from sight in this context. The beauty of the Oriental concubines is cultivated, acquired, and artificial. It lacks the romantic spontaneity which had enormous appeal for Bronte. For example, she once wrote to G. H. Lewes:

I had not seen "Pride and Prejudice" till I read that sentence of yours, and then I got the book. And what did I find? An accurate daguerreotyped portrait of a common place face; a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers, but no place of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen in their elegant but confined houses.¹⁴

¹⁴Quoted in Martin, P. 26.

Her letter comments on the basic contrast between romantic spontaneity in imagination and cultivated art, and her response is a clear example of her disdain for unnatural art. The East, unlike in the juvenilia, now also has an unnatural quality; the concubines illustrate this point. Their beauty is as unnatural as Jane Austen's art. However, the negative qualities which Bronte attributes to the East are also the qualities of the aristocratic Western woman. The middle class stands in opposition to the aristocracy, and Bronte seems increasingly aware of middle-class values whenever she writes.

During the 19th century, the Romantic association with the aristocratic value system stood in opposition to the growing middle class. A modern critic, Patrick Brantlinger, writes the following about Carlyle:

Despite the religious and romantic caste of his thought that leads him to attack Mammonism and 'devil take the hindmost' free enterprise as well as parliamentary democracy, many of Carlyle's values fall squarely within what Harold Perkin has called 'the entrepreneurial ideal.'¹³

This ideal, of course, is nothing other than the belief in "self-help on the individual level and in progress through middle-class industry." The Romantic acts as a contrast to the "Mammonian" middle-class values, and is, therefore, implicitly aristocratic in ideology.

Bronte takes these middle-class values into

¹³Patrick Brantlinger, The Spirit of Reform (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), P. 109.

consideration in her treatment of the Romantic quest in The Professor. By creating similarities in the personal traits of Crimsworth and Hunsden, she is able to radically contrast their different destinies. For example, both characters are romantic in nature and aristocratic in taste. Crimsworth presumably seeks a Western woman, making his quest an extension of his denied identification with the Oriental man. Hunsden seeks an Oriental woman, and unlike Crimsworth, his quest is a failure. The similarities between these two figures and the contrast between their quests emphasize Bronte's new awareness of middle-class values. These two quests also signal the direction her reconciliatory efforts will take in Jane Eyre, where East and West, imagination and reality, converge and meet in an ideal fictive world.

Bronte's critics have recognized the similarities between Hunsden and Crimsworth, linking this to the author's inability to detach herself from her characters. Burkhart, for instance, considers Hunsden, Crimsworth, and Frances similar to Bronte in being "energetic, independent, high-minded, argumentative, priggish and frank."¹⁶ Moglen picks up the issue where Burkhart has left it, noting that the case is an "odd, blurring of identity boundaries where communication between the three characters becomes impossible."¹⁷ The traits that Burkhart has granted them

¹⁶Burkhart, p. 56.

¹⁷Moglen, p. 88.

and Moglen quoted in approval are not what I intend to emphasize. More to the point is the fact that in Bronte's consciousness, Crimsworth and Hunsden were actually one character. By fragmenting the quest of the traveller and assigning different aspects to each character, Bronte is, in fact, consciously reacting against her earlier fascination with the East. That these two figures, conceptually speaking, are essentially one character becomes obvious in the striking similarities in their natures. Although both characters are romantic aristocrats by nature, Crimsworth has to abandon these features. This splitting of the protagonist, in turn, demonstrates Bronte's growing awareness of the West as a force opposed to the romantic nature of the East. Hunsden, on the other hand, retains his romantic and aristocratic taste till the end, even though, in his case, the journey to the East is unfulfilled.

Throughout the novel, Crimsworth's Romantic, aristocratic personality is a dramatic force. In his letter to Charles in the opening chapter, Crimsworth writes about an aspect of his personality that his friend does not appreciate. He speaks of the recurrence of "some sentiment of affection, some vague love of an excellent or beautiful object whether in animate or inanimate nature" (Prof, P. 101). We discover this Romantic desire frustrated when he views the town factories where he is to work as a tradesman: "It stirred in me," he claims, "none of the hopes a man ought to feel when he sees laid before him the

scene of his life's career" (Prof, P. 110). This distinctively Romantic sensibility is also discernible at his first meeting with his brother, whose nature Crimsworth describes in the following terms: "his cold, avaricious eye, his stern, forbidding manner told me he would not spare" (Prof, P. 111). In contrasting his own personality with his brother's rigid, business-like manner, he writes: "my nature was not his nature, and its signs were to him like the words of an unknown tongue" (Prof, P. 115). While working with his brother, Crimsworth cherishes "Imagination" in the privacy of his room. He reflects:

I should have set up the image of Duty, the fetish of Perseverence, in my small bedroom at Mrs. King's lodgings and they too should have been my cherished-in-secret, Imagination, the tender and the mighty, should never, either by softness or strength, have severed me. (Prof, P. 123).

Thus, he indulges his imagination in private, and despite Crimsworth's determination to reconcile the work ethic with his imaginative nature, it is obvious that the two are in conflict at this stage of Bronte's artistic development. The fragmentation of the quest implies that Bronte cannot yet find reconciliatory grounds in her imagination, and the conflict between the Eastern quest and Western values remains unresolved, so much so that she has to assign different endings for Crimsworth and Hunsden.

The first signs of Crimsworth's peculiar nature appear soon after he breaks away from his brother:

I felt light and liberated . . . life

was again open to me; no longer was its horizon limited by the high black wall surrounding Crimsworth's mill . . . straight before me lay Grovetown, a village of villas about five miles out of X___. The short winter day, as I perceived from the far-declined sun, was already approaching its close . . . There was a great stillness near and far; the time of the day favoured tranquility, as the people were all employed within doors . . . a sound of full-flowing water alone pervaded the air, for the river was deep and abundant . . . I stood awhile, leaning over a wall; and looking down at the current I watched the rapid rush of its waves. I desired memory to take a clear and permanent impression of the scene and treasure it for future years. (Prof, P. 137)

The attitude is peculiarly Wordsworthian because of the individualistic nature of the response, recalling, as it does, Wordsworth's "Spots of Time." However, unlike the poet, Crimsworth never seems to draw in moments of tranquility, on impressions collected at the time of deep response to life and people. Nonetheless, Crimsworth's non-reflective state indicates Bronte's creative consciousness at work, weighting the options in order to decide which fragmented quest the book will choose. Crimsworth will abandon his Romantic sensibility, while Hunsden remains a Romantic rebel to the very end.

Hunsden, for his part, recognized the Romantic side of Crimsworth's personality, and Hunsden is the first to associate these Romantic features with the aristocracy. For instance, when he gives his opinion on the picture of Crimsworth's mother, Hunsden responds: . . . "there is too

much of the sen-si-tive in that mouth; besides there is Aristocrat written on the brow and defined in the figure; I hate your aristocrats" (Prof, P. 114). Taking into consideration that Crimsworth not only strongly identifies with his mother throughout, but also physically resembles her, we can easily apply Hunsden's description to Crimsworth himself. In fact, the rest of the discussion leaves no doubt that Hunsden recognized Crimsworth's aristocratic cast by telling him: "who doubts that your lordlings may have their distinctive "cast of form and features" as much as we - shire tradesmen have ours?" (Prof, P. 114). After Crimsworth's dismissal from his brother's service, Hunsden comments on the other's unexpected practicality:

I must say I am rather agreeably surprised to hear you make so practical an observation as that lad. I had imagined now, from my previous observation of your character, that the sentimental delight you would have taken in your newly regained liberty would, for a while at least, have effaced all ideas of forethought and prudence.
(Prof, P. 141)

For Hunsden, Crimsworth's sensitivity and impracticality runs through his aristocratic blood. He is anything but the embodiment of the middle-class work ethic, even when Bronte forces him to continue working for his brother for the sake of "Duty" and "Perseverence." His reliance on empty values in order to tolerate his brother's insults seems inappropriate for his nature. It is only at the end of his quest that Crimsworth manifests this "Entrepreneurial Ideal."

Despite the ironic tone that he employs in discussing Crimsworth's character, Hunsden demonstrates similar characteristics. Crimsworth's analytic remarks on Hunsden betray the latter's aristocratic nature:¹

in fact, republican lord-hater as he was, Hunsden was proud of his old -- shire blood, of his descent and family standing, respectable and respected through long generations back as any peer in the realm of his Norman race and conquest - dated title. Hunsden would as little have thought to taking a wife from a caste inferior to his own, as a Stanely would think of mating with a Gobden. (Prof, P. 313)

But what appears on a surface level to be a contradiction in Hunsden's character is not actually so. His politics are a mixture of the two lines of Romantic politics.¹ He is a liberal because he is a lord - hater, a republican rebel against the conservatism of aristocracy. On the other hand, the conservative Romantic exists in Hunsden to some extent; his pride in family heritage is a manifestation of this.

The latter attitude elevates Hunsden, as well as his class, above middle-class values. In this context, Hunsden's conservatism endorses his radically individualistic response to life and people. Crimsworth describes Hunsden's odd response to Frances when she breaks with conventions thus:

Hunsden deigned to bestow one slight

¹Helene Moglen, like many other critics considers Crimsworth, Hunsden and Frances as forces that define each other. I find this particularly true in the case of Hunsden and Crimsworth.

¹Marilyn Butler, Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

glance of admiration. He liked something strong, whether in man or woman; he liked whatever dared to clear conventional limits. He had never before heard a lady say "hell" with that uncompromising sort of accent. (Prof, P. 318)

In his contempt for such conventions, Hunsden is, doubtlessly, a Romantic revolutionary. His nature is such. His pride in family heritage is a sign of the aristocrat in the common republican, a version of the noble savage.

In the author's consciousness, then, Crimsworth and Hunsden are similar in their Romantic responses to both culture and nature. Yet, Bronte assigns a different quest to each, and thus she contrasts their final destinies. Crimsworth's quest presumably purges him of his Romanticism and Orientalism. He emerges from it not an idle aristocrat, but rather, a thriving middle-class man mated to a woman of similar taste, aspirations, and social standing. As a result of his desire for an exotic Oriental woman, Hunsden ends up as an outsider, alienated from middle-class values, befriended only by a group of Bohemian artists. The contrast between his destiny and that of Crimsworth can only be the consequence of the author's entering some new level of awareness, her consequent inability to discover a mediating ground.

Bronte's handling of Hunsden's quest in The Professor is deliberately reductive. Within the world of the novel, Hunsden's quest cannot fully manifest itself, and the effort at suppression is clear. Helene Moglen considers Hunsden

himself as "less completely defined, more mysterious" than Crimsworth and Frances, and she attributes this to "Bronte's own psychological probing moving beneath the story's surface, disturbing its calm but never affecting its form."²⁰ I agree with Moglen's statement that Hunsden suffers from a lack of definition, however I feel that his is an attempt on Bronte's part to reduce the significance of his quest against Crimsworth's quest. The realm of Bronte's psyche is not my interest, nor can I agree with Moglen's claim that the portrayal of Hunsden's character disturbs the content of the novel without affecting its form. Form and content are inseparable. I find this particularly true in Hunsden's case. The form that his quest takes betrays Bronte's desire to suppress it. The first hint at the quest occurs in a seemingly insignificant scene that occupies a small space in the novel. Furthermore, the scene concentrates on Crimsworth, who is rambling through the country, as though he were the traveller and protagonist. At the same instant, however, Hunsden is daydreaming of an Oriental woman, and it is his fantasies instead that are the main focus of the scene. Hunsden betrays his secret desire in the following musing:

You see I am meditating in the field at eventide. God knows it's cool work especially as instead of Rebecca on a camel's hump, with bracelets on her arms and a ring in her nose, Fate sends me only a counting house clerk, in a grey tweed wrapper. (Prof, P. 125)

²⁰Moglen, p. 99.

Hunsden's pursuit of the Oriental woman surfaces again near the end of the novel as Crimsworth taunts him about his "ideal bride" and asks "when she would come and graft her beauty on the old Hunsden oak" (Prof, P. 340), Hunsden responds, "You call her ideal; but see, here is her shadow and there cannot be a shadow without substance."

The passage evokes the Platonic concept of ideal beauty, but this beauty gains its particular substance when Hunsden produces the beloved miniature:

I thought it represented a very handsome and very individual - looking female face, with, as he had once said, 'straight and harmonious features'. It was dark; the hair, raven-black, swept not only from the brow, but from the temples - seemed thrust away carelessly. . . The Italian eye looked straight into you, and an independent, determined eye it was . . . on the back of the miniature was gilded 'Lucia.'
(Prof, P. 340)

The classical beauty and the Italian origin of Lucia do not pose a contradiction to Hunsden's quest of Rebecca. Rather, we should view Lucia as the closest possible realization to the exotic Oriental woman, given Bronte's concern for psychological and historical realism. Lucia retains the dark beauty of the Eastern woman, and her independence recalls the act of adultery in The Arabian Nights, in which the women break with convention, attempting to assert the autonomy of their existence. However, even though the dream image materializes in a more acceptable cultural form, Hunsden still cannot fulfill his quest. To use his words, "I should certainly have liked to marry her, and that I have

not done so is a proof that I could not" (Prof, P.340).

In addition to the previously discussed causes for the thwarting of Hunsden's quest, Frances suggests yet another significant explanation. She says: "You worshipped her beauty, which was of the sort after your own heart: but I am sure she filled a sphere from whence you would never have thought of taking a wife" (Prof, P. 341). Clearly then, the author must consider the immediate social and cultural realities when the imagination rambles Eastward in its quest of Romantic freedom. This becomes obvious in the central action of The Professor, Crimsworth's journey, thus revealing Bronte's conscious reaction against the East.

From its inception, Crimsworth's journey displays marked changes from the traveller in Bronte's juvenilia. For instance, Crimsworth is remarkably softened traveller compared to the willful one of earlier landscapes. He is, in short, a passive character, who, despite his Romantic sensibility, lacks the driving Promethean spark. His liberation from tyranny is not a self-willed act, but rather an event fueled through Hunsden's interference. This curious passivity shows itself in Crimsworth's description of his dismissal from the world of business and commerce: "I had not forced circumstances; circumstances had freed me" (Prof, P. 137). Nor is the move that sets him on his quest a self-induced one. Hunsden, again, instigates his activity by convincing him that economic thriving for a man with his peculiar nature is impossible in a country like England:

"You're a mighty difficult customer to suit. You won't be a tradesman or a parson, you can't be a lawyer or a doctor, or a gentleman, because you've no money. I'd recommend you to travel" (Prof, P. 143). He even provides him with a letter of introduction to a friend in Belgium²¹, thus adding practical dimension to a strong psychological influence, and simultaneously, completing our impression of Crimsworth's journey as a passive act in every respect.

Unlike Hunsden's pursuit of a mate, Crimsworth's quest has been the subject of some critical concern. Dessner sees this journey as a quest for "psychological health," while Burkhart considers the quest fulfilled when Crimsworth encounters the lost Frances at the cemetery. In Crimsworth's journey, Burkhart traces a parallel to the old quest-romance where, he suggests, the cemetery has been "the intimidating geography where knights often attain their goals."²¹ Moglen charges that Bronte had not "fully grasped the nature of her hero nor the purpose of his quest."²² The fact that Crimsworth's quest bears similarities to the medieval knight's quest, and that he might be seeking "psychological health" only underlines my own position. It is Moglen's charge that needs to be challenged. Indeed, Bronte juxtaposes Crimsworth's quest with that of Hunsden and the earlier travellers. Crimsworth's quest is in fragments, and, instead of a single overwhelming

²¹Burkhart, p. 56.

²²Moglen, P. 87.

experience, he has two rather commonplace encounters. The first experience with the Belgian school mistress reenacts the earlier Angrian sexual fantasies only to repudiate them. The second fragment of experience, which also contrasts with Hunsden's quest, emerges during Crimsworth's encounter with Frances.

Bronte's most explicit denial of the East surfaces in Crimsworth's confrontation with Zoraide. As such, this denial constitutes a reaction against her earlier fascination with the East, as most fully realized in "Caroline Vernon." This reaction begins with the protagonist's previous refusal to identify with the Oriental man, and the relationship with Zoraide utterly negates the sexual fantasy in "Caroline Vernon." First of all, Bronte attributes negative qualities to the Eastern sexual fantasy. Then, she concludes that such a relationship is not Crimsworth's ultimate quest. Zoraide does not possess Caroline's dark beauty, nor does she share her willful, Romantic and impulsive nature. In other words, she lacks the potential for a perfect Romantic encounter. Consequently, her confrontations with Crimsworth are humiliating self-abnegations. Her persistent attempts to gain Crimsworth's affections inspire contempt and rejections. There is no reciprocation as in Caroline's encounter with Zamorna. Therefore, in the association of Crimsworth with the Eastern man, Bronte assigns a negative meaning and function to the East since Zoraide's desire for

an Eastern man is psychologically unrewarding. Despite temporary pleasure, the relationship brings out the worst in Crimsworth's character; it generates his identification with the worst types of Eastern men, the sensual pasha and the barbarous Mogul. The following exchanges between Crimsworth and Zoraide exemplify this: "'Go on', said I; and I could hardly help smiling, the flattery was so piquent, so finely seasoned . . . she made room for me to sit beside her. I shook my head though temptation penetrated to my senses at the moment" (Prof, P. 241). Crimsworth is being flattered. He enjoys the sensation, yet is quite reluctant to reveal his feelings. Moments later, he admits to identification with the Oriental man: "She looked up again, she had compounded her glance well this time - much archness more deference, a spicy dash of coquetry, an unveiled consciousness of capacity. I nodded; she treated me like the great Mogul, so I become the great Mogul as far as she was concerned" (Prof, P. 241). Once again, the East inspires a dangerous form of desire:

I had ever hated a tyrant; and behold, the possession of a slave, self-given, went near to transform me into what I abhorred. There was at once a sort of low gratification in receiving this luscious incense from an attractive and still young worshipper; and an irritating sense of degradation in the very experience of the pleasure. When she stole about me with the soft step of a slave, I felt at once barbarous and sensual as a pasha. (Prof, P. 263)

The Pasha and the great Mogul are Eastern men of some social power and sexual freedom. The Moguls, for instance, are

barbarous invaders who violate the women of captive countries. This counters the naive fascination that Bronte had held, and she now establishes this negative meaning and function. It is not surprising, therefore, that resistance and denial accompany the pleasure of feeling like an Oriental man. Crimsworth resists the enslavement to sensuality which the identification with the Eastern man imparts. He rejects the barbarous, uncivilized reversal of relationship between man and woman which Zoraide's worship of him creates. Above all, he rejects the concept of unchristian homage which parallels the relationship between the Oriental man of power and his slave girls in which pure sensuality forbids the development of spiritual reciprocation.

Crimsworth's second encounter with Frances Henri supposedly purges him of all that is Oriental in his character. As already stated, he has denied identification with the Eastern man's sensuality and superficiality. He has also resisted that identification when Zoraide's slave-like attitude inspired it. At this point, all Eastern associations disappear. In their place, Bronte invokes a whole new set of references to define and describe Crimsworth's second quest. These references are Biblical in nature and endow the characters with spiritual significance. Crimsworth and Frances become Israelites in search of their

homeland.²² By placing their relationship in a religious context, Bronte purges Crimsworth of the sensual implications of the Oriental references. The new associations, nonetheless, fail to Westernize Bronte's fictional characters completely. The exorcism of the East, however, fails even though Bronte submerges the associated sexual fantasies when she introduces the religious quest. Rather than using her immediate Western surroundings, Bronte adopts the Western analogue of the quest - the journey of the Israelite - which would again take her Eastward. Initially, the rejection of the East implies control of the elements of her fantasy on Bronte's part. But, ultimately, we find that it demonstrates not only Bronte's failure to make that rejection, but also her lack of awareness concerning how much control the East has over her creative consciousness.

Crimsworth's pursuit of Frances remains essentially a quest for an Oriental woman. Several times in the novel - significantly, before she reaches England - Frances is associated with an Israelite longing for her homeland. In response to her life wish, "I will go and live in England; I will teach French there," Crimsworth always responds: "The words were pronounced emphatically. She said "England" as you might suppose an Israelite of Moses days would have said

²²Although the reference to Rebecca is also Biblical it is important that the description Bronte attaches to Rebecca is very exotic which presents a contrast with the two Israelites in the novel.

Canaan" (Prof, P. 228). In this description, Frances' desire moves back in time to the Biblical past where the quest for a "Promised Land" was a religious objective. It is significant that the movement of the author's consciousness back in time corresponds with a geographical movement in space. The irony is that in her search for a more convenient Western metaphor, Bronte still moves moves Eastward to the land of Canaan.

Frances's metaphysical quest for a "Promised Land" occurs several times in the book. In linking Frances with Crimsworth's quest, the second occasion where the reference appears is yet more revealing. Zoraide, prompted by jealousy, dismisses Frances from her service. Crimsworth seeks Frances everywhere in vain, and thinks, therefore, that she is lost to him forever. However, while rambling in solitary fields (in the same way, Bronte's travellers did in the juvenilia), Crimsworth enters a cemetery, an enclosed physical location. This enclosed physical location is significant in Bronte's work. As he enters the cemetery, Crimsworth moves into absolute physical isolation. In other words, this is the traveller's stage of Romantic solipsism in which one has a confrontation with the self. His encounter with Frances at this point is not a contradiction since the presence of the "other" generates self-awareness. It was in earlier imagined landscapes that Elizabeth encountered Percy, and Caroline met Zamorna. Each of their lovers had been on the female's mind at the moment of his

appearance. Thus, each appearance seems to be an extension of the female fantasy world, a confrontation of her own desiring self. Crimsworth's confrontation of Frances may, therefore, be viewed as a similar encounter with his own desire. Dessner's comment on this movement confirms this view: "there is nothing in the novel to eliminate the suspicion that his love for Frances is largely a result of another this time unobstructed projection of his own imagination."²⁴

Frequently, critics regard the two loves as fragmented sides of Bronte's own character introduced into the book. Robert Keefe for instance, writes that, "At bottom, William and Frances are best seen as masks of the same character, facets of Charlotte's attempt to come to terms with her own painful experiences."²⁵ There is, in fact, little doubt that the two figures are more or less one character. Like Frances, Crimsworth resembles an Israelite. Before their encounter in the cemetery takes place, and while Crimsworth was still working for his brother, this parallel takes form: "'I may work, it will do no good,' I growled; but nevertheless I drew out a packet of letters and commenced my task - task thankless and bitter as that of the Israelite crawling over the sun-baked fields of Egypt in search of straw and stubble wherewith to accomplish his tale of bricks" (Prof, P. 133). Therefore, when the encounter of

²⁴Dessner, P. 58.

²⁵Keefe, p. 85.

the two Israelites, Frances and Crimsworth, takes place, it ironically points out Bronte's difficulty in conceiving the confrontation between two lovers as other than that of Eastern people in an Oriental sphere. The idea of Frances's "Biblical Orientalism" becomes obvious again soon after the encounter at the cemetery. Crimsworth raises the question, "What are your ultimate views?", to which Frances answers, "to save enough to cross the channel; I always look to England as my Canaan" (Prof, P. 263). This second reference to England as Frances's "Promised Land" is richer in significance than the first one. Structurally it occurs immediately after the crucial encounter at the cemetery, leaving no doubt that Crimsworth was able to accomplish his quest through the author's keen awareness of the East's liberating powers. However, a crucial scene, reviving the earlier Angrian juxtaposition of East and West, follows. As Crimsworth leaves Frances's lodging, he comments on the natural setting in the following manner:

Already the pavement was drying; a balmy and fresh breeze stirred the air, purified by lightning, I felt the West behind me, where spread a sky like opal, azure immingled with Crimson: the enlarged sun, glorious in Tyrian tints, dipped his rim already, stepping, as I was Eastward, I faced a vast bank of clouds but also I had before me the arch of an evening rainbow. (Prof, P. 263)

Crimsworth is literally facing the East and leaving the West behind him as he emerges from Frances's abode. Bronte, at this crucial point in the action, when Crimsworth's quest has just reached fulfillment in the cemetery, is highly

aware of the meaning she has just invested in geography. Her imaginative dependence on the East is further suggested when Crimsworth observes a "Tyrian Tint" in the Western horizon.²⁴ The West is tinged with an Eastern glow. This mixture of East and West characterizes Crimsworth's life journey in which a Biblical Orientalism colors the pursuit of Western values. Bronte is highly conscious of both concepts, and her attempt to control the East in her creative consciousness ultimately results in an intensification of that element.

Despite the momentary embracing of the East and by the author's imagination, her reluctance to yield to the freedom and pleasure it imparts continues. The final stage in the novel illustrates this point. Crimsworth's encounter with the East, as represented by the Israelite Frances, is not the ultimate goal of the quest. Unlike Caroline Vernon, for whom Zamorna represented the confrontation with the East, Crimsworth must return, like O'Donnell, to the world of common experience. While Caroline's journey is absolute, Crimsworth must come to terms with contemporary middle-class values. He, therefore, must return to the world that best embodies these values, his English homeland.

Paradoxically, allusions to the "Promised Land" accompany the return to England. Immediately after the completion of Crimsworth's quest for the Oriental Frances in

²⁴According to the Encyclopedia Americana the Tyrian is an ancient nation of people who resided in Lebanon and were famous for their purple dye.

the cemetery, he receives a letter from Hunsden, who writes:

I have no doubt in the world that you are doing well in that greasy Flanders; living probably on the fat of unctuous land; sitting like a black-haired, tawny-skinned, long-nosed Israelite by the the flesh-pots of Egypt. (Prof, P. 275)

Despite his confrontation with selfhood, the letter, positioned as it is after that confrontation, suggests that a return to England is necessary to Crimsworth's quest. According to the letter, he is still an exile, an Israelite in Egypt. It appears that only a return journey will balance East and West in the author's consciousness. Significantly, another association of England with the Promised Land coincides with the move toward that country and its middle-class values. According to Frances,

If we only had good health and tolerable success, we might, she was sure, in time realize an independency; and that, perhaps, before we were too old to enjoy it, then both she and I would rest; and what was to hinder us from going to live in England? England was still her Promised Land. (Prof, P. 328)

In fact, the statement indicates that Bronte has come close to achieving some kind of balance between the two conflicting objects, East and West, in her creative consciousness. The return to England and its "Entrepreneurial Ideal" is metaphorically a journey to the Promised Land of the East. And it is crucial that the realization of the Promised Land is through economic success. Bronte's journey in her consciousness to the land of the East is ultimately brought under the control of

Western values. It is very much in keeping with the middle-class work ethic as Frances describes it, "I have taken notice, Monsieur, that people who are only in each other's company for amusement, never really like each other so highly, as those who work together, and perhaps suffer together" (Prof, P. 308). As a thriving middle-class couple, Frances and Crimsworth provide a sharp contrast with the outsider Hunsden. Although their return remains to some extent, Romantic because they live in a country retreat (Daisy Lane) as opposed to the busy town, this retreat does not contradict the middle-class ideal. The final word in this respect should be Burkhart's: "Though the middle-class Victorians has their doctrine of work, their aim finally was leisure, to leave behind the marketplace and achieve land."²⁷

Crimsworth and Frances's retreat is not to be construed as a move towards isolation, but as an extension of their reconciliation to middle-class values. The journey back home, despite Bronte's attraction to the East, is a return to the West and all it represents. But such conformity cannot finally be regarded as a sign that Bronte has found a satisfactory balance between the conflicting forces of East and West. Every attempt to decide in favor of one set of needs results in an intensification of the other. Even the apparent conformity and its seeming contrast with Hunsden's alienation is not the final representation of Bronte's

²⁷Burkhart, P. 56.

attitude towards East and West. Hunsden's case indicates that Bronte, far from deciding on either, is more interested in opening new possibilities in her imaginative journey. Although her next work, Jane Eyre does successfully reconcile East with West, the different options exposed in The Professor again assert themselves once the synthesis of Jane Eyre dissolves. Therefore, we must, examine the options which open up at the end of the novel.

Although Hunsden's case represents a clear contrast to Crimsworth's, it is important that Hunsden is still a wanderer:

I say he abides here, but I do not think he is resident above five months out of the twelve; he wanders from land to land, he frequently brings visitors with him . . . and these visitors are often foreigners; sometimes he has a German metaphysician, sometimes a French savant; he had once a dissatisfied and savage looking Italian who neither sang nor played. (Prof, P. 338)

This suggests that Bronte's imagination is still in search of the potential avenue to freedom. Crimsworth's fulfilled quest is Bronte's resolution in the domestic sphere. Hunsden considers success is a larger political sphere. The novel closes with his ideal aspirations still unrealized, indicating that he is receptive to different possibilities in human thoughts, yet incapable of choice. His openness to different human possibilities emerges in:

What English quests Hunsden invites are all either men of Birmingham or Manchester . . . whose talk is of free trade. The foreign visitors, too, are politicians; they take a wider theme -

European progress - the spread of
liberal sentiments over the continents.
(Prof, P. 338)

The majority of Hunsden's circle are foreigners. The few English merchants talk of a liberal policy in trade, something which liberates them from servitude to middle-class values and brings them closer to the foreigners in Hunsden's circle. Hunsden's quest of freedom seeks realization in foreign elements. He discerns only limitations in his immediate cultural surroundings and so

he has given up trade, after having made
by it sufficient to pay off some
encumbrances by which the family
heritage was burdened. (Prof, P. 338)

Although Crimsworth's Romantic and aristocratic features disappear, they intensify in Hunsden. This intensity implies that Romanticism still offers the promise of freedom to the author. It is crucial that the potential for liberation remains basically foreign. England is nothing but the land of reality. We see hints of this awareness during the courtship of Frances and Crimsworth. During the betrothal scene, Crimsworth suffers Frances to speak French when expressing her surging emotions for him. However, when he proposes to her, he demands that she should give her consent in English, the language of reality: "Will my pupil consent to pass her life with me? Speak English now, Frances" (Prof, P. 306). We know that English is the language of reality and reason from another exchange: "'Monsieur est raisonnable, ne'est ce pas?' 'Yes; especially when I am requested to be so in English:'" (Prof, P. 306).

Hence, they return to the land and language of reason and reality. Yet, their return does not preclude the possibilities that Bronte discerns in the foreign element. She will explore these possibilities in her final work, Villette.

CHAPTER III

JANE EYRE

Many critics unanimously consider the novel, Jane Eyre to be the triumph of Charlotte Brontë's imaginative vision, heretofore never fully realized, and impossible to achieve again hereafter. One critic, Burkhart especially emphasizes this triumph, going as far as to say that "she not only found herself and her true imagination, but one new direction for the novel, a passionate subjectivity."¹

Another critic, Robert Martin attributes Brontë's success to the unifying power of the imagination: "Charlotte Brontë has the imaginative comprehensive grasp of her material that manages to fuse its disparate parts into a real unity."²

In equally universal terms, Margaret Blom says that "In Jane Eyre, Charlotte found a means of universalizing the imaginative vision of Angria. . . Jane encounters the dangers of our nightmares; in her success, she realizes our

¹Charles Burkhart, Charlotte Brontë: A Psychosexual Study of Her Novels (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1973), p. 64.

²R. B. Martin, Charlotte Brontë's Novels: The Accents of Persuasion (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 58.

dreams."³

Several other critics also agree that Jane Eyre stands as a triumph of vision, however, they note that in her later works, Bronte was unable to recreate that vision with such forceful intensity. Dessner, for example, associates the moral element in Jane Eyre with a hidden structural pattern. He claims that the novel's success lies in the strong faith in divine justice and conventional morality, and yet he notes, "For reasons too complex to describe with assurance, after Jane Eyre, that form and faith behind it were no longer available."⁴ Gilbert and Gubar's concluding discussion of the novel also upholds this view: "Certainly Charlotte Bronte was never again to indulge in quite such an optimistic imagining."⁵

In exploring the thrust of Bronte's vision, other critics have discovered several influences on the author's imaginative powers. Moglen commends Bronte for her optimistic creation of a feminist myth since "From this vantage point Bronte could question and pose alternatives to a romantic mythology which exaggerated sex roles defined and

³Margaret Blom, Charlotte Bronte (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 104.

⁴Lawrence J. Dessner, The Homely Web of Truth: A Study of Charlotte Bronte's Novels (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. 79.

⁵ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Mad Woman in the Attic (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 371.

supported by social structure."⁶ Robert Keefe, in his discussion, associates the creative urge in Bronte with the death motif, stating that "for the first time in her art the nature of death undergoes a change. No longer as in *Angria*, the result of a crime, it becomes a source of innocent opportunity for the survivor."⁷ Thus, each critic recognizes the novel as a release of Bronte's imagination from earlier conflicts. This view holds whether examined from traditional, revolutionary, psychological, or universal perspective. Even though Keefe also observes a morbid, layer beneath the surface optimism, he admits that the morbidity is hardly discernible, "For the underlying gloom of the novel's psychological cast is balanced and partially veiled by a narrative which moves toward the light."⁸

The Eastern element and Bronte's treatment of it play an integral part in the release of the imagination in Jane Eyre. In the novel, Bronte triumphs over the conflicts that had inhibited her Eastern quest in The Professor. Now she successfully creates a Romantic quest of the East in which the union of Jane and Rochester recalls that of Caroline and Zarmorna. Furthermore, Bronte solves the previous tension between East and West, without disrupting the fulfillment of

⁶Helen Moglen, Charlotte Bronte: The Self Conceived (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1976), p. 106.

⁷Robert Keefe, Charlotte Bronte's World of Death (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 125.

⁸Keefe, p. 107

the Eastern quest. By creating this quest, and by delaying its fulfillment until a full confrontation with the West has taken place, Bronte succeeds where she previously failed. Therefore, the discussion of Bronte's artistic achievement amounts to two quests, an Eastern as well as a Western one.

In Jane Eyre, the East retains essentially the same associations of freedom and self-indulgence as in The Professor, yet the West changes slightly. In her first novel, Bronte connects the concept of the West with economic thriving and a desirable financial goal. In Jane Eyre, her concern lies with the moral and religious values which govern her world, and the concept of the West is inexonerably tied to these values. Although the heroine realizes ultimate self-fulfillment through a union with the East (realized in the relationship with Rochester), this final union is only possible after a clear recognition of the values inherent in a Western Quest. The relationship that Jane has with St. John exemplifies this Western quest.

In The Professor, Bronte resisted the urge to create an Eastern quest, in Jane Eyre, she overcomes that resistance and creates instead several metaphoric journeys to the East. These journeys repeat the pattern of the Romantic quest exploited in Bronte's juvenilia. That quest begins in a moment of self-assertion, whereupon the traveller enters a physically isolated location, and the quest culminates in an Eastern confrontation where a sense of absolute freedom there prevails. The repetition of this pattern indicates

that Bronte has conquered the creative inhibitions evident in The Professor.

However, Bronte's repetition of this earlier Romantic pattern does not imply that the issues developed in The Professor are being ignored in Jane Eyre. Rather, Bronte expands the pattern, suggesting that the second novel is, in some ways, an extension of the first. The new feature in this basic pattern is the termination of Jane's journey to the East immediately after she realizes her freedom.

It is clear from the textual signs that follow Jane's separation from the East that the author is concerned with the survival of her heroine in a socialized setting. Previously, in Vernon's story, the freedom which Caroline realized through her Eastern quest also alienated her from the world. Her relationship with Zamorna displayed a disregard for traditional laws, and in the end, she is isolated in an unknown spot of the Angrian realm. Bronte, in the juvenilia, created subjective fantasies and was not in the least concerned the objective world. Social, moral, and religious ethics did not exercise their power of control over her creative consciousness.

However, the repetition of such fantasies is impossible since Bronte is beginning to develop an awareness of the objective world and its values. She designates these values as Western. In Jane Eyre, Bronte takes the West into consideration, not only by creating a Western quest, but also by modifying the old pattern of the Eastern quest.

When Jane's Eastern journey threatens to isolate her morally, religiously or socially, Bronte terminates the encounter with the East. In this way the meaning of the East becomes richer and more complex than in the juvenilia.

Jane's first encounter with the East takes place at Gateshead, repeating the confrontation pattern dominant in the juvenilia. It is important to emphasize this pattern as a sign of Bronte's triumph since in The Professor this pattern is blurred by Bronte's attempt to control the Eastern quest. Jane's journey to the East, like that of the earlier traveller, begins in a self-asserting moment: "I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged like a Turk; and having drawn the red-moreen curtain nearly close I was shrined in double retirement." Immediately following this self-assertive act of crossing her legs and sitting like a throned Turk in the window, Jane draws the curtain as a sign of physical isolation. So although Jane is but a child who lacks the earlier traveller's ability to move away from hostile surroundings into a remote, isolated Eastern location, she does indeed undertake the act. Although she physically shuts herself off from the world, mentally she makes a journey to the East. Prior to this scene, the movement of Jane's consciousness through time and space, like the earlier traveller, confronts her with a profound object, a throned

¹Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1971), p. 5. Citations will be given in the text under the form (JE, p. ____).

Turk, in the East. Presumably, she identifies with that object and what we see is the consequences of the identification. Initially, it brings about self-assertion, symbolized in the crossing of her legs. Next, it generates a sense of absolute freedom in Jane. It liberates her psychologically from the constricting surrounding of Gateshead. The psychological freedom leads to a series of physical and verbal acts of aggression that literally liberate Jane from Gateshead, thus completing the re-enactment of the Romantic pattern of the Eastern quest in the juvenilia. Bronte does, indeed, create a successful Eastern quest for absolute freedom.

Bronte, however, introduces the modification on the old pattern for the first time in Jane Eyre. Jane's relationship with the East brings about self-awareness and utter freedom, yet the relationship must be temporarily suspended least it becomes the cause of complete alienation from the world.¹⁰ Jane, according to the author's enriched conception of the Eastern quest's meaning and function must not become another Caroline Vernon. Therefore, Bronte has Jane feel a sense of limitation in the East, allowing her to separate herself from it. This separation occurs when Jane, facing Mrs. Reed with the charge of cruelty, feels expanded

¹⁰This return to reality recalls Keats's attitude in the "Nightingale Ode" which suggests that a basic Romantic pattern is being repeated here despite the modification introduced in Bronte's Romantic quest of the East. The concern with objective reality is a source of tension in the poetry of the Romantics especially the second generation, Keats, Shelley, and Byron.

and exulted:

'People think you a good woman but you are bad; hard-hearted,' . . . Ere I finished this reply my soul began, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph I ever felt. (JE, p. 31)

Although Jane's Eastern journey has made this expansion possible unlike Caroline Vernon's union with an Eastern man, Jane's relationship with the East ends at this point:

I would fain exercise some better faculty than that of fierce speaking . . . I took a book--some Arabian tales; I sat down and endeavored to read. I could make no sense of the subject; my own thoughts swam always between me and the page I had usually found fascinating. (JE, p.32)

Paradoxically, Bronte excludes the threatening aspect of the East, its self-absorbing power, by making Jane feel expanded far beyond the possibilities opened up by the East.¹¹ Had she allowed Jane a pleasurable indulgence in the Eastern volume, Bronte would have sealed her isolation from the world. Such indulgence would have been an escape from the consequences of her verbal and physical aggression. In accordance, with Bronte's new complex conception, Jane must enjoy the fruits of her identification with the Turk by entering the world instead of becoming separated from it.

Jane's second journey to the East takes place at

¹¹As I pointed out in the first chapter, the East occupies the same position in Bronte's fiction that Nature has in Romantic poetry. This relationship again reappears in Jane's spiritual journey to the East. Just as the poet falls back on the power of his mind after the transcendental union with Nature, Jane does likewise at this point in the novel.

Lowood. This charity school is managed by a hypocritically strict master who starves the girls in order to lavish luxuries on his daughters. Thus, the general atmosphere of the school becomes very repressive. Jane transcends the physical deprivation of Lowood by preparing nightly in her imagination the feast which Barmecide offers to a beggar in the The Arabian Nights.¹² These nightly trips to the East provide a temporary satisfaction, indulgence, and freedom from constriction. However, because the indulgence of Eastern fantasies involves a withdrawal into a subjective world, the denial that accompanies the revelation becomes important:

Miss Temple . . . was most happy to pronounce (me) completely cleared from every imputation. . . . Thus relieved of a grievous load, I from that hour set to work afresh . . . in few weeks I was promoted to a higher class That night, on going to bed, I forgot to prepare in imagination the Barmecide supper of hot roast potatoes, or white bread with new milk, with which I was wont to amuse my inward craving. (JE, p. 65)

Bronte couples the revelation of Jane's spiritual encounter with the East with two other revelations. For instance, Jane declares that her nightly indulgence in Eastern fantasies has ceased. She turns her attention to practical involvement in the school work. Thus, Jane breaks with the subjective world of Eastern fantasies and begins to establish a social identity. It is clear through this that

¹²The Norton edition of Jane Eyre recognizes The Arabian Nights as the source of this reference.

Bronte is concerned with the kind of gratification that can occur in the social world without eliminating the earlier meanings of the East. For the second time in Jane Eyre, Bronte allows the East to exercise its liberating Romantic powers without becoming socially isolating. Yet there is no doubt that in this novel, the East is still primarily associated with the relaxation of social control. This becomes obvious when the typhus fever breaks out at Lowood and the teachers are engaged in nursing the sick girls:

But I, and the rest who continued well, enjoyed fully the beauties of the scene and season; they let us ramble in the wood, like gypsies, from morning till night; We did what we liked, went where we liked, we lived better too. (JE, p.67)

Jane's identification with the gypsies of the East, her enjoyment of the sense of freedom and self-indulgence it imparts are possible through the relaxation of school rules. The lack of control associated with Easternism is recognized by many critics who speculate on the Oriental element in British culture and literature. For example, John Reed argues that "the gypsies are wild and free, ordinarily enjoying greater physical, though corrupt moral life."¹³ Such a meaning asserts itself in Jane's next metaphoric journey to the East, her move to Thornfield.

Though the journey, as usual, begins as a quest for freedom on Jane's part, there is evidence that Bronte aims

¹³John Reed, Victorian Conventions (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1975), p. 373.

at an intersection of Eastern and Western goals. While recalling Caroline's encounter with Zamorna, in several respects, Jane's move to Thornfield and her subsequent involvement with Rochester do not exclude the issues developed in The Professor. Like Caroline's quest of Zamorna, Jane's Eastern journey beings in a moment of self-assertion. After Miss Temple's marriage, Jane begins to feel the repressive nature of the school rules. In an assertion of will she exclaims:

I desired liberty, for liberty I gasped;
for liberty I uttered a prayer; it
seemed scattered on the wind then
faintly blowing. I abandoned it and
framed a humbler supplication . . .
'grant me at least a new servitude.'
(JE, p. 74)

The initial awareness of her personal desires, the self-willed insistence on leaving Lowood, and her practical self-assertion all recall Caroline's behavior in the juvenilia when she sets about liberating herself from Eden Cottage in quest of Zamorna. Jane's attitude also contrasts with Crimsworth's inability to decide or act for himself in The Professor.

Jane's introduction to Thornfield recollects the old Romantic pattern in the juvenilia where the traveller's necessary move into a physically enclosed location brings about self-confrontation. Jane's description of Thornfield suggests this physical isolation:

Farther off were hills; not so lofty as
those round Lowood, nor as craggy nor so
like barriers of separation from the
living world, but yet quiet and lonely

hills enough, and seeming to embrace Thornfield with a seclusion I had not expected to find existent so near the stirring locality of Milcote. (JE, p. 87)

Despite its physically enclosed position, Thornfield significantly exists near the social world. The paradox of isolation within an active world implies the author's maturing conception of the Eastern quest. In her creative consciousness, the real world now exists side by side with the private world of the imagination. The East must not become an absolute end in itself. Jane must return to the ordinary world accept its values and establish a social identity before joining Rochester in absolute union.

Bronte's new concern with social control appears in her re-creation of the Eastern pleasure dome in Jane Eyre. In the earliest of her tales, we have seen the travellers enter Eastern palaces crowned with magnificent domes and inhabited by singing genii. The pleasurable indulgence in unearthly music has been the climax of the Eastern quest. Though she conceives of Thornfield as an Eastern dome of pleasure, Bronte rather than returning to the fantastic element dominant in the juvenilia, searches for a more accepted and controlled form of that dome in the literature of the period. It is very likely that she embraces Coleridge's dome of pleasure in "Kubla Khan" and re-introduces its basic features into her conception of Thornfield since many of the elements of Coleridge's dome reappear in Bronte's description of Thornfield. His dome of pleasure is

described as a "stately" dome, surrounded by "five miles of fertile ground," which "with walls and towers were girdled round." Similarly, Thornfield's outward appearance is

very stately and imposing . . .
battlements round the top gave it a
picturesque look. It's grey front stood
out well from the background of a
rookery . . . they flew over the lawn
and grounds to alight in a great meadow.
(JE, p. 86)

The isolated stateliness, the grey battlements, and the surrounding meadows all recollect Coleridge's description of the palace of the Eastern King, Kubla Khan. The striking similarities also re-occur in the description of Thornfield's interior. Just as Coleridge's dome is a "savage place," the Rochesters of Thornfield are described as having "been rather a violent than a quiet race in their time" (JE, p. 93). Besides the element of savagery that exists in both constructions, there is also an element of mysteriousness; while Coleridge's dome is haunted by a "woman wailing for her demon lover," Thornfield is haunted by Rochester's mad wife, Bertha. The complex nature of Thornfield's interior also corresponds to a similar complexity in Kubla's palace. Just as a reference is made in Coleridge's poem to the "sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice," so the drawing room in Thornfield is furnished with white carpets and crimson couches, and, still more suggestively, "large mirrors repeated the general blending of snow and fire" (JE, p. 91). The paradoxical combination of savagery and the highly sophisticated imagery of

Coleridge's Eastern palace thus re-surfaces in Bronte's conception of Thornfield.¹⁴ The correspondence of one to the other suggests that, in Bronte's creative consciousness, Thornfield represents an Eastern palace, albeit a less wildly conceived one than the palaces in the juvenilia.

The guest apartment's Eastern qualities directly link Thornfield with the East. The dining room is furnished with "Turkey carpets," the drawing room has its window covered with a "Tyrian dyed curtain,"¹⁵ and the boudoir has a "Parian mantelpiece" (JE, p. 91). And still more suggestively, Rochester appears in this Eastern apartment as the very model of an Eastern prince: "Mr. Rochester," Jane writes, "costumed in Shawls, with a turban on his head . . . his dark eyes and swarth skin and Paynim features . . . looked the very model of an Eastern emir" (JE, p. 161). And even more significantly, it is in this apartment that Jane realizes the true nature of her feelings for him. Certainly Thornfield is an Eastern pleasure dome where a profound spiritual encounter takes place away from social reality, Jane experiences self-indulgence, self awareness, and a strong sense of freedom.

The image of Rochester as an Arabian Prince throned in

¹⁴Fannie Ratchford, The Brontes' Web of Childhood (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), identifies the reading material on which Charlotte Bronte was raised.

¹⁵According to the Encyclopedia Americana, Tyre is an ancient nation in Lebanon known for its purple dye. The Parian marble is related, by the same sources, to the island of Paros in Greece.

the Eastern realm of Thornfield is only one sign of many that he is the object of an Eastern quest. Moments before his appearance, Jane, like Elizabeth Hastings before her, rambles along a solitary road day-dreaming. While Elizabeth thinks of William Percy and his military campaign in the East, Jane, in fact, does not know Rochester yet. Whereas Elizabeth's thoughts turn to the East, Jane turns Eastward: "the grey battlemented hall was the principle object in the vale below me; its woods and dark rookery rose against the West. I lingered till the sun went down amongst the trees, and sank crimson and clear behind them. I then turned eastward" (JE, p. 97). Turning Eastward, she encounters none other than Rochester, the genius of the East. Furthermore, on his first appearance, Rochester links himself with the East: "I see the mountain will never be brought to Mahomet so all you can do is aid Mahomet to go to the mountain" (JE, p. 101). Coupled with this reference is the description of his features: "He had a dark face, with stern features and a heavy brow" (JE, p. 99). This dark Eastern man is also seated on the back of his Arabian horse Mesrour thus completing the image of an Eastern prince.¹⁴

The conception of the Eastern quest in the juvenilia entails a Romantic encounter with the "other", hence a full confrontation with the self. In fact, the first meeting between Jane and Rochester suggests that Rochester is Jane's

¹⁴The name Mesrour is Arabic and it means happy. The name occurs on page 166 and not during the first meeting.

"other", and in encountering him, she is fully confronting her selfhood. For example, Jane falls into an utter solipsism, the state in which the self becomes the center of the universe:

my road was lonely, . . . I walked slowly to enjoy and analyze the species of pleasure brooding for me in the hour and situation . . . in the absolute hush I could hear plainly (Hay's) thin murmurs of life. My ear too felt the flow of currents; in what dales, and depths I could not tell. (JE, p. 97)

In such Romantic moments of deep solitude and undisturbed calm, the subject-object distinction blurs; external sounds fuse into the self, and the self becomes the center of the universe. Jane's perception of the external world begins on an objective level where the murmurs of the city of Hay can be heard from far away. Gradually, the source of the noise is felt in the ear. Finally, that source loses all objective boundaries and becomes part of the self's inner world, and Jane reaches a stage where she can no longer locate the sound's origin. Therefore, when Rochester appears, his appearance makes him an extension of Jane's private fantasies, and her encounter with him becomes a confrontation with selfhood.¹⁷

Literary scholars have mostly emphasized the fairy tale

¹⁷Moglen expresses a similar opinion though she interprets Jane's attitude as a withdrawal rather than a willful confrontation with selfhood. To this effect she writes: "(Jane) withdraws again into the world of the imagination in which fears, aspirations, and conflict finds form. From the moment of his appearance, Rochester seems part of this interior world" (p. 117,8).

element in the passage, making this element the base for establishing the romantic nature of the first meeting. Gilbert and Gubar, for example, write that "Jane's first meeting with Rochester is a fairytale meeting . . . an icy twilight setting out of Coleridge . . . a rising moon . . . a tall steed, and on its back a rider."¹¹ The two critics call these images "Romanticized images." In similar fashion, yet more revealing, Moglen writes that "(Rochester) is linked to the childhood world of 'fancies bright and dark,' to distant memories of nursing stories. . . (he), in turn, associates Jane immediately with an imaginative world."¹² Moglen's statement is significant in that she recognized the Romantic implication of the first meeting and she notes the similarities in the characters' responses to each other. Robert Martin presents this parallelism even more emphatically: "Rochester's introduction . . . is in terms of Jane's memories of nursery stories," and, "Rochester, too, thinks 'unaccountably of fairy tales' when he first sees her."¹³ One may infer that each character beholds the other as an extension of the private world of self. It also suggests that the two become identical through their response to each other.

However, despite the spiritual affinity between Jane and Rochester, critics have ignored the fact that Bronte is

¹¹Gilbert and Gubar, p. 35.

¹²Moglen, p. 118.

¹³Martin, p. 77 and 78.

also suggesting a sense of separateness between the two characters through the Eastern element. Although Bronte points an image of Rochester as an Eastern prince, she carefully excludes Jane from this metaphor. Unlike Caroline Vernon, whose dark physiognomy and imaginative identification with Eastern queens identifies her with the East, Jane remains emphatically un-Eastern. There is no hint during the first meeting to link Jane with the Eastern woman. The identification is simply not there. Furthermore, during the Thornfield section of the novel Jane displays many un-Eastern characteristics. She remains as a separate Western identity in union, despite the fairy tale identification with Rochester. Such an absolute union and identification with Rochester would isolate Jane from the world, just as Caroline's union with Zamorna has isolated her both morally and socially. In Bronte's more mature vision, Jane's isolation would become a problem. Therefore, Jane remains separate from Rochester until she recognizes the values of the social world, and she remains un-Eastern until she undergoes a Western quest.

Jane's physiognomy is distinctly un-Eastern and deliberately so. The contrast between her personality and that of the dark women in the novel favorably brings out Jane's native integrity. Rochester admiringly refers to Jane's un-Eastern features when he praises her "satin smooth hazel hair, and the radiant hazel eyes." Jane's private response to Rochester's endearment further emphasizes her

Western features. Sharing that response with the reader, Jane says: "I had green eyes, reader, but you must excuse the mistake: for him they were new-dyed, I suppose" (JE, p. 227). The contrast between Jane's un-Eastern features and the earlier dark beauty of Caroline Vernon is significant. Unlike Caroline, Jane remains un-identified with the East.

Though she retains Caroline's passionate and impulsive nature, Jane still remains Western. In contrast, the Oriental women in the novel are cold, proud hypocrites. Jane's passionate receptivity surfaces when she protests to Rochester on his asking her to leave him:

'Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong--I have as much soul as you,--and full as much heart.' (JE, p. 222)

The relationship with St. John also arouses her passionate nature. She refuses his loveless offer of marriage because, as she puts it:

If forced to be his wife, I can imagine the possibility of conceiving an inevitable, strange, torturing kind of love for him: because he is so talented. (JE, p. 366)

Her capacity for love thus demonstrates itself in this refusal.

Blanche Ingram and Bertha Mason stand, then, in direct contrast to Jane. While associating them with the East, Bronte also portrays them as dispassionate temptresses and mere commodities. Beginning with a physical contrast,

Bronte describes Blanche, not Jane, as "dark as a Spaniard" (JE, p. 151). Blanche is also the one to be linked with the Oriental woman:

She, too, was attired in Oriental fashion: a crimson scarf tied sash-like round the waist; and embroidered handkerchief knotted about the temples, her beautifully-moulded arms bare, one of them up-raised in the act of supporting a pitcher, poised gracefully on her head. Both her cast of form and features, her complexion and her general air, suggested the idea of some Israelitish princess of the patriarchal days. (JE, p. 161)

Bronte attaches a multiplicity of moral and spiritual deficiencies to this Oriental woman: "the dark eyes and black ringlets were all there . . . she laughed continually; her laugh was satirical, and so was the habitual expression of her arched and haughty lip" (JE, p. 151). During the period of courtship between her and Rochester, Blanche emerges as an image of pride and hypocrisy:

She cannot truly like him, or not like him with true affection. If she did, she need not coin her smiles so lavishly, flash her glances so unremittingly, manufacture airs so elaborate. (JE, p. 164)

Her unsponaneous attitude and her attempt to seduce Rochester into marrying her contrast strongly with Jane's passionate and impulsive response to Rochester and St. John.

The other dark woman in the novel, Bertha Mason, is also akin to the Oriental woman, Blanche. Relating the story of his first marriage to Jane, Rochester says, "I found her a fine woman in the style of Blanche Ingram, tall,

dark and majestic" (JE, p. 268). The resemblance is not merely physical but also spiritual: "I had marked," Rochester says, "neither modesty, nor benevolence, nor candour, nor refinement in her mind or manner" (JE, p. 269). This description recalls Blanche's rudeness towards Rochester's ward and footmen. Most significantly, Bertha's lack of intellectual refinement contrasts with Jane's aspiring mind. Describing Bertha, Rochester says: "Her cast of mind . . . singularly incapable of being led to anything higher" (JE, p. 269). This feature contrasts with Jane's response to Rochester's personality: "I have not been buried with inferior minds . . . I have talked . . . with an original, a vigorous and expanded mind" (JE, p. 222). All the positive moral and spiritual qualities in the novel are preserved for Jane. This attitude makes the preservation of Jane's native integrity seem a moral necessity. By separating her integrity from the East, Bronte implies that Jane is to remain emotionally unfulfilled, physically unconsummated at Thornfield. She must first undergo a Western quest before she can fulfill the Eastern one and transform herself into an Eastern woman.

The treatment of the eastern quest at Thornfield also emphasizes Bronte's new concern with Western values in another way. Apart from her reluctance to make Jane an Eastern woman, Bronte even displaces the image of Rochester as a charming Arabian prince. This positive image transforms into an undesirable picture of him as a sensual,

domineering Oriental despot. Significantly, the change of Rochester's image in Bronte's creative consciousness takes place immediately after Jane becomes engaged to marry him. As an absolute union through physical consummation becomes inevitable, Jane's perception of Rochester changes: "He smiled, and I thought his smile was such as a Sultan might, in a blissful and fond moment, bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched" (JE, p. 236). And she expresses the transformation when she calls him: "you three-tailed bashaw as you are sir." The Eastern prince on the back of an Arabian horse is replaced by an Oriental Sultan and a grand Turk in possession of a harem with slave girls.

Not only does Jane perceive the change in Rochester's image, but Rochester also echoes her new perception, thereby giving credence to it. Rochester sees himself as an Oriental despot when he tells Jane, "I would not exchange this little English girl for the grand Turk's whole seraglio; gazelle-eyes, houri forms and all!" As a Sultan dominating a harem, Rochester also becomes a purchaser of slave girls: "And what will you do, Janet, when I am bargaining for so many tons of flesh and such an assortment of black eyes?"

Bronte's new image of Rochester implies her revision of several aspects of the Eastern quest. For example, in The Professor, Zoraide humbly courted the Oriental despot in Crimsworth's character. However, when Rochester threatens to turn into such a despot, Jane rejects this same fantasy:

'I'll not stand you an inch in the stead of a seraglio . . . so don't consider me as equivalent for one, if you have a fancy for anything in that line, away with you, sir, to the bazaars of stambool . . . lay out in extensive slave-purchases some of that spare cash you seem at loss to spend satisfactorily here.'¹¹

As for Rochester's playful proposal to bargain for slave girls, Jane responds:

'I'll be preparing myself to go out as a missionary to preach liberty to them that are enslaved--your harem inmates amongst the rest. . . . nor will I, for one, consent to cut your bonds till you have signed a charter, the most liberal that despot ever yet conferred.' (JE, p. 237)¹²

The difference between Jane's response and that of Zoraide suggests that Bronte has overcome her ambivalence governing the Eastern element in The Professor. Jane's temptations are greater because she and Rochester are connected by strong emotional ties, yet Bronte does not allow, not even momentarily, the fantasy of female submission to the Oriental despot. The fulfillment of the Eastern quest must be suspended because the quest verges on becoming socially and morally isolating; Rochester tries to marry Jane while he is legally bound to another woman. Jane's quest for

¹¹This view can be supported by a whole body of criticism that interprets Jane's disavowal from Rochester as a necessary step for strengthening her social and economic position.

¹²Moglen's discovery of a feminist myth can be verified by examining this manipulation and inversion of the Eastern fantasy of love. Jane's rejection of the Sultan--slave-girl fantasy is strongly feminist.

gratification of this sort cannot continue until she confronts St. John and embraces the values that he embodies.

There is evidence in the novel to suggest that Bronte is setting her heroine on a Western quest as Jane goes to Marsh End, where St. John is the center of the world. This attempt to bring Jane into contact with Western values balances the Eastern quest of freedom and self-indulgence as well as being the means through which the fulfillment of the Romantic quest of the East will become possible.

Jane's move to Marsh End is a quest journey because it displays a pattern similar to the one that governs all Eastern journeys in Bronte. However, because the quest this time is one of Western values rather than of selfhood, a crucial variation enters the old pattern. On the one hand, the earlier signs of self-assertion, the next act of rambling in an isolated setting and the ultimate confrontation with a profound object that generates self-knowledge all reappear in Jane's Western journey. However, the change in the pattern emerges when Jane begins her journey not only in self-assertion but also in conformity to objective authority: "I will keep the law given by God, sanctioned by man" (JE, p. 279). Also the physical and psychological isolation that Jane faces, unlike the isolation that immediately precedes the traveller's self-confrontation, actually confronts her with God's presence in

the natural elements.²³ Furthermore, during her three days of rambling in an unsocialized setting, the center of the universe shifts from the self to nature, or, on a more general scale, the focus moves from the inside to the outside: "We know that God is everywhere: but certainly we feel his presence most when his works are on the grandest scale spread before us" (JE, p. 285). Whereas the Eastern quest leads to a confrontation with a profound Eastern object (the "other") that generates self-knowledge, Jane's journey to Marsh End generates social, moral, and religious awareness. Thus Marsh End becomes the profound object of the confrontation, and its appearance on the horizon answers Jane's prayer: "Oh Providence: sustain me a little longer. Aid--direct me" (JE, p. 200). It is at Marsh End that Jane's Western orientation will take place.²⁴

The special emphasis placed on St. John and the complexity given to Jane's relationship with him betray his central position in the new world. Jane's frequent meetings with him seem to indicate that he is an embodiment of Bronte's concern with Western values which, in turn, makes him the goal of Jane's Western quest. This fact becomes obvious when geographical references to the West always

²³As she exploited Coleridge's dome of pleasure to modify the fantastic in her fiction, Bronte uses the conventional attitude towards nature in Romantic poetry to control the Eastern quest.

²⁴Most of Bronte's critics elaborate on the social implications of Jane's move. I, however, will emphasize the symbolic significance of St. John as the center of the new world that Jane moves into.

accompany his appearance before Jane. Such references suggest that in the creative consciousness of the author, the values of the West usually intensify with St. John's presence. Since Jane's confrontations with him are initially enveloped in a religious context, these geographical references to the West are usually coupled with an emphasis on St. John's religious vocation. The West, St. John, and Christian ethics are closely related, just as are the East, Rochester, and self-hood.

The first link between St. John and the West occurs when he appears on Jane's threshold at the end of her first day of work in a local school. St. John's appearance coincides with the setting of the sun that day:

Having brought my even tide musings to this point, I rose, went to my door, and looked at the sunset of the harvest day . . . but soon a slight noise near the wicket made me look up. A dog . . . was pushing the gate . . . and St. John himself leant upon it with folded arms. (JE, p. 137)

While St. John's appearance at sunset links him with the West, the conversation that ensues refers to St. John's plans concerning a Christian mission in India. Describing the scene, Jane records what he says:

'I have vowed that I will overcome (human weakness) and I leave Europe for the East,' . . . speaking, not at me but at the setting sun at which I looked too. (JE, p. 319)

Speaking of his intended mission to the East, St. John directs his looks, not to the geographic East where his vocation will take him, but to the opposite direction. In

having him face the setting sun Bronte indicates that he and his Christian mission are connected with the concept of West. The idea that he is the object of Jane's Western quest becomes even more obvious when on another occasion he proposes to marry her. Preceding this proposal is a geographical allusion to the West, as well as a reference to St. John's religious vocation:

The breeze was from the West; it came over the hill, sweet with scents of heath and rush . . . he removed his hat; let the breeze stir his hair and kiss his brow. He seemed in communion with the genius of the haunt: (JE, p. 352)

The marriage proposal immediately follows this identification of St. John with the Western breeze: "A missionary's wife you must--shall be. You shall be mine: I claim you--not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service" (JE, p. 354). Here, Jane fully confronts the spiritual revelation of her Western quest. Though the quest is not physically fulfilled when Jane refuses to marry St. John, the association of St. John with the West, continues:

The night before he left home, happening to see him walking in the garden about sunset, and remembering, as I looked at him that this man . . . had once saved my life . . . I was moved to make a last attempt to regain his friendship. (JE, p. 362)

The reconciliation of Jane and St. John is crucial since Jane must embrace St. John (i.e. Western ethics) before she can attain the ultimate union with her Eastern self.

The common critical response to St. John's character

and to the role he plays in Jane's life is very negative. Robert Keefe, for example, calls him "a spiritual vampire." Moglen says of Jane, "In rejecting St. John's repressive sexuality, she rejects the perverse sadomasochism it implies."²³ Gilbert and Gubar seem to hold a similar view: "She escaped from his fetters more easily than she had escaped from either Brocklhurst or Rochester."²⁴ The truth of the matter is that, despite her rejection of marriage with St. John, Jane's fulfillment of her Eastern quest depends on her recognition and acceptance of the Christian ethics embodied in him. Moments before she joins Rochester in a transcendental form of communion, Jane confronts St. John, and he, once again, presses his suit:

He pressed his hand firmer on my head,
as if he claimed me; he surrounded me
with his arm, almost as if he loved me
(I say almost--I know the
difference--. . . but like him, I had
now put love out of the question, and
thought only of duty) . . . 'Show me,
show me, the path!' I entreated of
Heaven. (JE, p. 369)

In that literal embracing of St. John, Jane also spiritually takes on his religious principles of self-renunciation, moral duty, and personal communion with Heaven. The force with which Jane embraces the Christian ethics of the West paradoxically releases her into a telepathic communion with her Eastern self, Rochester. His summons comes as an answer to Jane's prayer to heaven. East and West meet in her

²³Moglen, p. 140.

²⁴Gilbert and Gubar, p. 366.

consciousness at that moment.

The consummation of opposites in Jane's consciousness, however, is momentary and transcendental. Jane's spiritual communion with Rochester transcends the physical forms of communication in the phenomenal world. Her adoption of the self-renunciatory principles embodied in St. John, though deep and sincere, is fleeting; it brings about her transcendental union with Rochester without becoming absolute. After this climatic reconciliation of East with West, Jane joins Rochester in physical union which entails an abandoning of self-renunciation. This implied rejection of St. John, however, does not undercut the symbolism of the transcendental meeting of opposites. Bronte's capacity to create such a climatic consummation, no matter how transient, is the true triumphant release of her imaginative vision.

The telepathic communion with Rochester is a climax in yet another important respect. While reconciling East with West thus making the novel both an extension of the juvenilia and The Professor, it also recreates some purely Angrian moments. Jane's description of her own feelings during the telepathic experience recalls Bronte's description of Caroline's response to Zamorna's seduction.¹⁷ Just as Caroline's decision to become Zamorna's mistress has

¹⁷Dessner recognizes in the telepathic communion a semblance of a sexual orgasm. This implies that Bronte is recreating Angrian sexual transcendence in a morally controlled framework.

a great deal of conscious willingness and self-assertion in it, so Jane's transcendental union with Rochester is characterized by an intense awareness of self, as well:

My heart beat fast and thick: I heard its throb. Suddenly it stood still to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and pressed at once to my head and extremities . . . it acted on my senses . . . they were now summoned, and forced to wake. They rose expectant: eye and ear awaited while the flesh quivered on my bones. (JE, p. 369)

Jane's heightened awareness of her physical and spiritual existence is instantly followed by the telepathic communion with Rochester. While Jane transcends her physical existence, the freedom realized is not self-abnegating. Self-assertion and utter freedom characterize Jane's union with Rochester. A perfect Angrian moment is recreated within a Western and moral framework and the Romantic quest is fulfilled.

In discussing the last section of the novel Charles Burkhart remarks that "Ferndean is the bourne towards which Jane had steered from the beginning. It is a culmination, not an anti-climax."² Despite the climax reached in Jane's transcendental union with her Eastern self, the statement also remains valid when applied to Bronte's treatment of the Eastern element in the last section of the novel. In the Ferndean section a significant transformation takes place which is, in several ways, an extension of the climax

² Burkhart, p. 39.

reached earlier. Jane is transformed into an Eastern queen, a Scherezade, and Rochester is transformed into a reformed Eastern man, a Samson. Jane's transformation into an Eastern queen extends the climax reached at Marsh End since it implies further identification with the East. The initial identification takes place during the telepathic communion with Rochester. The transcendental form of communion implies a spiritual consummation of their souls. Jane, like Caroline Vernon, has finally become an Eastern woman. Secondly, Jane's metaphoric transformation into a Scherezade later on implies further identification with the Eastern man, Rochester. Jane and Rochester finally become two identical parts of one complete whole. Like Caroline and Zamorna, they become two Eastern figures joined in absolute union.

Jane betrays her identification with the Eastern queen, Scherezade when Rochester asks her to account for the period of her absence from the time she ran away from Thornfield till she joined him at Ferndean. Jane then responds:

'You shall not get it out of me tonight, sir; you must wait till tomorrow; to leave my tale half told will, you know, be a sort of security that I shall appear at your breakfast table to finish it.' (JE), p. 386)

The half-told tale, if anything, recalls Scherezade's maneuver in The Arabian Nights where her half-told tale secured King Scherayar's interest and guaranteed her own survival, day after day for one thousand and one nights. Rejecting the Oriental temptress in Blanche, Bronte,

identifies her heroine with the clever, intelligent, and highly imaginative queen. Other sources in the novel also emphasize this identification. For example, Scherezade survives through her creation of fictions, and Jane, presumably, transforms the story of her life into a narrative. The Eastern queen, furthermore, gives birth to several children during the time of her imaginative productivity. Similarly, Jane gives birth to a child while recording her life story. By creating such an identification, Bronte implies that Jane's Romantic quest of her Eastern self is at an end since she has become completely Eastern.

While Jane's transformation into a Scherezade takes her a step further into her union with Rochester, Rochester's transformation into Samson is a modification of that union. By becoming a Biblical figure, namely a Samson, Rochester is purged of the negative side of his Easternism, freed of his identification with the Oriental despot. The moral implication of Rochester's transformation acts as an extension of the symbolic significance of St. John's presence during the spiritual consummation of Jane and Rochester. St. John's presence had lent a Western balance to this Eastern union. Similarly, Rochester's Biblical Orientalism creates a modification of Jane's physical consummation with the Eastern man. Biblical Orientalism has been Bronte's refuge from her Eastern fantasies since The Professor. In Jane Eyre, Bronte uses that refuge to

indicate her awareness of Western ethics and her willingness to conform to them.

Implicitly, the novel also stands as a triumph of the Eastern element in one important respect. In her novel, Bronte re-enacts the dominant fantasy in the The Arabian Nights by creating a heroine who refuses to marry her cousin and seeks, instead, a union with a dark stranger. The framing story in The Arabian Nights is based on the betrayal of the wives of King Scherayar and his brother. These women reject their cousins and entertain passionate love for their black slaves. The implicit re-creation of that fantasy by Bronte reveals how much influence The Arabian Nights has had in coloring her imagination. Yet, most significantly, it proves that Bronte's Romantic quest of the East does actually exist on more than one level.

CHAPTER IV

SHIRLEY

The technical flaws in Shirley have led critics to underestimate its crucial position in Bronte's literary career. Rather than considering the novel a turning point in her artistic development, they regard its use of a third person narrative as a falling away from the more effective point of view in her earlier and later works. Robert Martin, for example, stresses that Bronte "was no Jane Austen, capable of detachment, nor was she a George Eliot, able to give full emotional validity to several points Fortunately, in her last completed novel she returned to the single point of view that had worked so well in Jane Eyre."¹ Similarly, another critic, Dessner, focuses on the novel's form, without considering that the content in Shirley represents a necessary step between the writing of Jane Eyre and the conception of Villette. He merely notes that "there is an intensity in Shirley that relates it to Bronte's other works," ascribing this intensity to "the emergence of a moral ambiguity for which Shirley's chosen

¹R. B. Martin, Charlotte Bronte's Novels: The Accents of Persuasion (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 141.

form is not only inadequate but restrictive."²

Other critics, while less concerned with the novel's technical flaws, also do not consider the novel in any positive light. For example, one can detect a disappointed note in Charles Burkhardt's assessment of Shirley: "(T)he best moments in Shirley are her usual best moments--where feeling reigns, where the passions are intensely presented."³ And despite their methodological commitment to a thematic exploration of the novel, Gilbert and Gubar also do not view Shirley as a sign of growth in Bronte's artistic vision: "Charlotte Bronte seems, with Shirley, to have retreated to the heavier disguises and more intricate evasions of The Professor."⁴ For these two critics, the retreat is inappropriate since it creates a disparity between a feminist theme and a masculine point of view.⁵

In their respective discussions, Robert Keefe and Helene Moglen provide the reader with several insights into the technique of Shirley. For instance, Keefe points out

²Lawrence J. Dessner, The Homely Web of Truth: A Study of Charlotte Bronte's Novels (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. 91.

³Charles Burkhardt, Charlotte Bronte: A Psychosexual Study of Her Novels (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1973), p. 79.

⁴Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Mad Woman in the Attic (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 372.

⁵ To this effect they write: "in trying to create the calm objectivity . . . Bronte becomes enmeshed in essentially the same male dominated structures that imprison the characters in all her books . . . this generic incongruity results in loss of artistic fusion."

that "The construction of Angria had demanded the scope, if not the maturity, of a Walter Scott. Jane Eyre represented the conscious restriction of a vision capable of wider focus."⁶ For her part, Moglen unearths "a fundamental unity of concept"⁷ which underlies the novel's problematic structure. Thus, having resolved some of the technical difficulty, they are able to view the work favorably.

Both critics, then, offer a refreshing variation on the prevailing critical critical response, for they consider the novel a growth of the Jane Eyre vision of life. As such, Shirley made the creation of Villette possible. According to Keefe, Jane Eyre "was a stunning achievement, but it was also a work which she had to outgrow,"⁸ while Moglen, in a sensitive discussion of it, feels that "in the creation of Shirley . . . (Bronte) had journeyed a long distance to return once again to herself. Intellectual exploration confirmed the knowledge long since gleaned from experience."⁹

Similarly Bronte's treatment of the Eastern element in Shirley undergoes a noticeable change from that in Jane Eyre. The former trust she held in the imaginative

⁶Robert Keefe, Charlotte Bronte's World of Death (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 130.

⁷Helene Moglen, Charlotte Bronte: The Self Conceived (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1976), p. 156.

⁸Keefe, p. 130.

⁹Moglen, p. 190.

possibilities of the East now crumbles. Furthermore, Bronte never really regains that faith for Villette is a step further in the direction of disillusionment with the imagination. Rather than returning to Jane Eyre's triumphant mode, Villette continues Shirley's Eastern themes and motifs. In other words, while Shirley marks a change in Bronte's conception of the East, Villette dramatizes the outcome of that change.

Although the shift from optimistic to a pessimistic view of the East and its liberating powers has its roots in Bronte's growing concern with the West, a certain degree of unpredictability in the sudden dissolution of the Jane Eyre synthesis remains. In Shirley, Bronte divorces the East from her earlier version of Romantic aesthetics. Although such aesthetics dominate the juvenilia and re-appear in Jane Eyre, Bronte now associates them with Western values. The shift in her notion of Romanticism not only indicates a disillusionment with the East, but also an intensification of the West in the creative consciousness.

With Shirley, Bronte decides to write a novel that portrays the lives of a group of people set against a background of an immense social conflict created by the industrial revolution. The workers revolt against the sweeping changes and the stern, unbending response of the mill owners forces the struggle for survival into a crisis. The backdrop of the Napoleonic wars reinforces the materialistic struggle. The immediate world takes on an

inescapable form that penetrates Bronte's creative consciousness. The West, thus takes precedence over the subjective world of private fantasies, and throws the East off balance.

Another crucial choice also decides the nature of the interaction between East and West in this novel. In remodeling social and economic questions into a fictional work Bronte chooses to portray a conflict that has taken place earlier in the nineteenth century. This conscious adoption of a historic perspective from her material affects Bronte's relationship with the East. It generates a process of historic exploration that extends to that world. Thus Bronte changes into considering the East as a historic entity, not the charming romantic world of earlier fiction. As an historic entity the East becomes fixed in time and space as opposed to transcendental. Thus Bronte's use of the historical perspective becomes the mechanism through which the East loses its grip on her imagination.

Although this new conception of the East places it on the same metaphysical plane with the West (for both can be rationally compared), the West weighs in the balance. The author must respond to the immediate crisis of the West. Furthermore, the geographical distance, from the East, despite its former fascination, now becomes a means of alienation between Bronte and that world. Through her response to the immediate world, the object of Bronte's quest inevitably changes. Leaving behind her escapist

tendency, Bronte directly confronts the West, and its complex moral, religious, economic, and historical reality. The pattern of the Romantic quest, the backbone of Bronte's Romantic aesthetics, is inextricably connected with the complex and demanding nature of the West. Survival in the immediate world becomes the object of Bronte's quest in Shirley.

We sense the emotional distance between Bronte and the Eastern world in the radical change in Eastern allusions in the novel. A whole new set of references now emerges. Significantly, these new allusions refer to actual places in the East or places that must have existed in the course of its history. Among these are Bronte's frequent allusions to a pagan temple in Jerusalem called Tophet, where the false idol Moloch supposedly demanded the sacrifice of children.¹⁰ The significance of this and similar allusions becomes clear in the comparison with Bronte's earlier references to the East. The past allusions usually fall within a pattern that explores the relationship between man and woman, such as when her heroines fantasized about becoming Eastern women mated with Eastern princes. The author, while withholding her approval of such pleasurable indulgences, emphasized the sensual, unreciprocal nature of the Oriental despot.

¹⁰The editor of the penguin edition of Villette gives an insufficient definition of Tophet as a place of confusion. However, The Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G.S.C. Merriam Company, 1972) gives a more detailed definition. According to this later source Tophet is a pagan temple in the East. Moloch is a false idol worshipped there.

Because it alludes to a definite object in Eastern history rather than evoking fantastic palaces and charming princes, the Tophet reference suggests that Bronte has become concerned with the East, not for its sensual connotations, but for its religious history.

While this shift in concern suggests the author's increasing commitment to historical exploration, Bronte also uses such allusions to indicate disbelief in the possibilities for Romantic transcendence once offered by the East in her fiction. First, Bronte uses the allusion to Tophet and Moloch to criticize the unromantic aspects of the world presented in Shirley, its sensuality and excessive materialism. The allusion appears during a discussion between Shirley and Caroline on the question of love in their social circle. The two women decide that it is a common mistake to call any sensual passion by the name of love. No reference, however, is made to the Oriental despot when the Tophet metaphor occurs: "They confound it (love) with sparks mounting from Tophet."¹¹ That is, sensual passion is as false as the flames in a pagan temple of the East. Secondly, this same temple is connected with another false love in the novel, that for materialistic gain. For example, when Robert Moore proposes to marry Shirley for the sole purpose of making her fortune useful during his

¹¹Charlotte Bronte, Shirley (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 317. All subsequent citations to Shirley are to this edition and have been included within the text.

financial crisis, she responds angrily: "You want to make a speculation of me! You would immolate me to that mill--your Moloch!" (S, p. 530). Robert's denial of the validity of emotions for the sake of materialistic gain is to worship a false idol, significantly, the Eastern deity, Moloch, who resides in the Temple of Tophet. Not only does Bronte draw upon historical features of the Eastern world, but she also divorces the East from her earlier concept of the Romantic by associating it with negative features of her own world. It is clear that she is sufficiently disillusioned with the East's romantic charms to reverse the function of that element in her fiction.

If allusions to the Tophet temple suggest her exploration of the historic East, various references to specific places in the East suggest Bronte's view of it as a geographical location. In either case, the East becomes as real and unromantic as the West. For example, when the memory of her father brings tears to Caroline's eyes, Shirley responds: "Weep, your tears have the virtue which the rivers of Damascus lacked: Like Jordan, they can cleanse a leprous memory" (S p. 446). While the failings of one of these Eastern rivers are emphasized, a positive function is assigned to the other. Her ability to manipulate Eastern imagery in this way indicates that Bronte has sufficient emotional distance from the East to be able to use it in different, sometimes contradictory ways. In other words, geographical knowledge and intellectual detachment replace

romantic involvement in Bronte's treatment of the East.

Bronte's capacity to create Romantic characters who, unlike their predecessors, no longer hold the East in awe also reflects her new attitude toward the East. Hiram Yorke is such a character since he is capable of examining the East from a culturally detached perspective and of evaluating its traditional beliefs without romantic involvement. This detachment is evident when Yorke entertains his political foe, the conservative Matthewson Helstone. The liberal Yorke addresses his opponent:

I reckon you're thinking of Eastern customs, Mr. Helstone, and you'll not eat nor drink under my roof, feared we could be forced to be friends; but I am not so particular or superstitious. You might sup the contents of that decanter, and you might give me a bottle of the best in your cellar, and I'd hold myself free to oppose you at every turn till-- in every vestry meeting and justice meeting when we encounter one another.
(S, p. 21)

Although the speaker is not particularly critical, it is important that he is sufficiently detached to recognize a difference between the customs of the East and whatever is held acceptable in his own world. It is also important to note that Yorke is not attracted to the Eastern manner of hospitality. This intellectual and cultural distance from what once was an object of romantic allure betrays the change in the author's conception. Indeed, Bronte has also come a long way from having Crimsworth deny any sort of identification with the Oriental despot, when in fact his denial fails to disguise that affinity. Yorke's attitude,

however, is one of utter disengagement. Her ambivalence in The Professor indicates Bronte's inability to control the urge to identify with the East, whereas her creation of an attitude like Yorke's implies an overcoming of this ambivalence.

The character of Shirley Keeldar embodies the divorce of the East from Bronte's earlier Romantic aesthetics as well as exemplifying the emergence of Western Romanticism. Shirley as a Romantic, resembles Caroline Vernon in her dark beauty, impulsive nature, and unconventional character. However, unlike Caroline Vernon, Shirley is a practical and intellectual woman who is capable of surviving in a world governed, not by the principle of love, but by the opposite values of materialism. Like Vernon, Shirley is also willful and self-assertive. For example, when she plans to take Caroline Helstone and her mother on a summer excursion to the northern islands, her assertive qualities surface:

It is my misfortune and habit, I know, to think of myself paramount to anybody else; but who is not like me in that respect? However, when Captain Keeldar is made comfortable, accommodated with all he wants, including a sensible genial comrade, it gives him a thorough pleasure to devote his spare efforts to making that comrade happy. (S, p. 240)

Typically, Bronte's Romantic traveller begins his quest of freedom in a moment of rebellion against established conventions soon followed by a move into a remote and isolated realm. Shirley's sign of rebellion is this passage is her identification with the other gender. It is however,

important to note that her self-assertion will take her on a fun excursion to some remote land. The move, unlike that of the earlier traveller, is not a crucial decision in her life. It will only provide a temporary release from the practical world. The quest of freedom is no longer a matter of life or death. Survival in the West entails practical involvement in the world. Shirley's true vocation is her manor house, her mill, and people residing in her province.

Shirley's Romantic and non-traditional character nonetheless, remains conspicuous. During the discussion of the planned excursion she says:

I was determined to make something of it
(her fortune) better than deference from
acquaintance, and homage from the poor.
Here is to begin . . . We will see seals
in Suderoe, and, doubtless, mermaids in
Stromac. (S, p. 241)

According to this passage, the wealthy in a traditional society spend their money to gain homage and praise within their own social circle. Contrary to traditional expectations, Shirley, the Romantic rebel intends to please herself by spending her money on an excursion to some remote land. The emphasis on the individual will and desire at the expense of traditional expectations is typical of Bronte's Romanticism in the juvenilia. It is important to note that the imagined goal of the excursion is too visionary to originate in any other individuals among Shirley's acquaintances. Certainly, Shirley is Bronte's recreation

of the earlier Romantic heroine.¹²

In *Shirley*, however, Brontë dispenses with Caroline Vernon's strong attraction to the East. While Caroline daydreams of becoming an Eastern queen, a sultana Zara-Esmeralda, *Shirley* is capable of questioning and denying the East its privilege as the cradle of civilization. While speculating on the myth of creation, *Shirley* muses:

We usually think of the East when we refer to transactions of that date, but who shall declare that there was no life in the West, the South, the North? What is to disprove that this tribe instead of camping under palm-groves in Asia, wandered beneath island oak-woods rooted in our own seas of Europe? (*S*, p. 480)

Even though the human race originated in the East, *Shirley* does not become infatuated with that part of the world. On the contrary, intellectual detachment replaces Romantic identification. Brontë not only separates the East from the Romantic aesthetic, but she also endows the Romantic heroine with an intellectual capacity, necessity for survival in the West.

Brontë reinforces the distance between the East and her concept of Romanticism as well as the emphasis on Western values when she denies *Shirley* any identification with the

¹²It is important to note that Caroline Vernon's dark beauty is given to *Shirley*, although modified. *Shirley*'s features are dark compared to the fair heroine in the same novel, *Caroline Helstone*. It is perhaps such ambivalence that makes Gilbert and Gubar misread this fact in the novel for they consider Caroline the dark one and *Shirley* as fair. These critics even infer that Brontë is breaking with literary tradition by making the romantic heroine in the novel a fair one.

East. Rather than setting her dark Romantic heroine on an Eastern quest, Bronte associates Shirley's mansion, Fieldhead, with the West.

If Fieldhead had few merits as a building, it might at best be termed picturesque: its irregular architecture, and gray and mossy colouring communicated by the time, gave it just a claim to this epithet. The old latticed window, the stone porch--were rich in crayon touches . . . The trees behind were fine, bold, and spreading; the cedar on the lawn in front was grand, and the granite urns on the garden wall, the fretted arch of the gateway, were, for an artist, as the very desire of the eye . . . : It was a still night, calm, dewy, cloudless; the gables, turned to the West, reflected the clear amber of the horizon they faced. (S, p. 188)

Obviously, there is a special concern in the passage with locating the Romantic heroine in the West, for Bronte's narrator is highly aware of an amber color still lingering on the Western horizon and reflected on the gables of the house even though the description of the house occurs at nightfall. This tendency to link Shirley with the West continues throughout the novel. For example, during the discussion of Shirley's proposed excursion to the north, Bronte's narrator, again, places a particular emphasis on the West, not only to dissociate Shirley's vision of the land of the mermaids from any connection with the East, but also to incorporate her Romantic aspirations into the West:

Miss Keeldar, placed directly opposite, was seen without effort . . . and, as what remained of daylight--the gliding of the west--was upon her, her shape rose in relief from the dark panelling

behind. (S, p. 245)

The passage, indeed, does more than merely link Shirley with the West geographically. It identifies the heroine with the West by having the sun cast its last rays on her figure. This link is reinforced several times and in several ways. Once, when Caroline and Shirley discuss the affinity of their literary perceptions, a tranquil mood prevails and each woman withdraws into her own private world. Significantly, Shirley's withdrawal is not described in Eastern terms, as Jane's moments of solipsism are. Instead, such moments identify Shirley with all that is Western in nature:

It was now on the edge of dark; candles were not yet brought in; both, as twilight deepened, grew meditative and silent. A Western wind roared high round the hall, driving wild clouds and stormy rain up from the far-remote ocean . . . Shirley sat at the window, watching the sack in heaven, the mist on earth, listening to certain notes of the gale that plained like restless spirits . . . they but subdued vivacity to pensiveness. . . . Caroline, withdrawn to the farthest and darkest end of the room, her figure just discernible by the ruby shine of the flameless fire. (S, p. 222)

In creating such moments of reciprocation between self and world, Bronte recalls Coleridge's vision of unrestrained communion between subject and object as symbolized by the response of the "Eolian Harp" to the breeze. Yet it is significant that while Coleridge's vision of such perfect moments treats nature as a united whole by leaving the source of the breeze undefined, Bronte sees a division in

nature. Her vision of a harmonious relationship between self and world is restricted to the Western in the universe. Certainly, she abandons the East as an object of perfect Romantic unity.

Even when Bronte's Romantic characters do aspire for absolute freedom through Romantic transcendence, they turn away from the East. Shirley's quest, for example, turns to the West to seek identification with the cultural primitivism of the American Indians:

Oh, for rest under my own fig-tree!
Happy is the slave wife of the Indian
Chief, in that she has no drawing-room
duty to perform, but can sit at ease
weaving mats, and stringing beads, and
peacefully flattening her picaninny's
head in an unmolested corner of her
wigwam. I'll emigrate to the western
woods. (S, p. 463)

Certainly the East has become too real an entity to encourage the fulfillment of Romantic transcendence. Yet Bronte still suggests a quest in a Westward direction. This is crucial because it indicates that the author is conforming to a more conventional vision of escapism. Like many other British novelists from Defoe to Lawrence, she directs her characters to the New World in search of liberating possibilities. This conformity emphasizes her increasing concern with her immediate world. The West is no longer exclusively identified with the middle-class values of The Professor, nor is it restricted to the moral and religious ethics of Jane Eyre. For Bronte, the West represents a complex combination of materialistic and moral

values as well as a strong sense of literature and history.

Furthermore, her increasing commitment to the practical kind of Western Romanticism surfaces in another Romantic figure in this novel, Louis Moore. Like Jane Eyre, the governess, Louis's profession as a private tutor restricts him socially and arouses his desire for mobility. Noticeably unlike Jane, his desire takes the form of a quest to the West:

A tutor I will never be again . . . not again will I sit habitually at another man's table . . . I have such a thirst for freedom--such a deep passion to know her and call her mine . . . I will not refuse to cross the Atlantic for her sake; . . . I am certain Liberty will await me, sitting under a pine; when I call her she will come to my loghouse, and she shall fill my arms. (S, p. 610)

This Romantic dreamer asserts his practical involvement in the material world when he says:

'I cannot live with abstractions. You, Miss Keeldar, have sometimes . . . called me a material philosopher, and implied that I live sufficiently for the substantial. Certainly I feel material from head to foot; and glorious as Nature is . . . I would rather behold her through the soft human eyes of a loved and lovely wife.' (S, p. 612)

His practical Romanticism resembles that of Shirley Keeldar. For this reason, it is not surprising that the two marry at the end of the novel. Nor is it surprising that the novel bears the name of the heroine who embodies Bronte's new commitment to Western Romanticism.

In Shirley the Eastern quest loses its Romantic features, wounded by the process of historic exploration and

the contradictions in the author's growing commitment to the intellectual and materialistic values governing the Western world. For instance the Eastern man is usually linked to Biblical figures. Bronte's attempt to recreate a charming Eastern prince and an earlier Romantic hero in Robert Moore fails. Caroline's attachment to him has nothing in common with the earlier confrontations of Bronte's heroines with the East. Far from being a perfect Romantic union with self, the love relationship becomes a self-destructive experience.

Robert Moore and his Biblical associations are the product of Bronte's increasing commitment to Western ethics. He represents a more rational type of Oriental man. For example, Mrs. Yorke tells him: "I make little account of the wisdom of a Solomon of your age" (S, p. 154). On another occasion, Shirley describes Robert: "He looks, amidst the set that surrounds him, like Eliab amongst humbler shepherds - like Saul in a war-council" (S, p. 312), and a war-council it turns out to be for the gathering is concerned with defending Roberts' mill against the rebelling workers. Such Biblical allusions recall Bronte's previous attempt to control the Eastern quest in the Professor, and also her attempt modify the Eastern prince in Rochester. In conjunction with the signs in Shirley that expose the East as a historic entity, the re-exploitation of Biblical Orientalism reveals not only an attempt on Bronte's part to commit herself to Western principles, but also her

disillusionment with the East's Romantic possibilities.

In yet another Eastern allusion, Bronte betrays her inability to make Robert an Eastern prince and to link him with her earlier Romantic heroes. It is clear that she cannot return to the Biblical allusions of romantic love in the juvenilia. For instance, Robert does not become another Zamorna, although a similarity exists. Zamorna's association with the East actually begins with his dark physiognomy. Then, Bronte uses the Biblical term, "Gehenna" to describe the seductive power of his dark eyes; and when she allows him to use common speech of the Eastern people, his Eastern image is complete. Like Zamorna and Rochester before him, Robert, too, possesses a dark physiognomy. In reference to him, Bronte also uses the half-Arabic, half-Biblical word "Gehenna":

Moore laid down the last (of business letters), his nostrils emitted a derisive and defiant snuff; . . . there was a glance in his eye which seemed to invoke the devil, and lay charge on him to sweep the whole concern to Gehenna.
(S, p. 124)

While Zamorna's eyes emitted sparks borrowed from the pit of eternal damnation, Robert's eyes merely invoke the powers of the place. Furthermore, unlike the earlier use of this allusion, the Eastern connotations of the word "Gehenna" are exploited in this passage for a business transaction instead of for romantic love.

In the attempt to make Robert an Eastern prince and a Romantic hero, Bronte exploits an allusion she used in

relation to Rochester. Robert's presence at Fieldhead transforms the mansion into an Eastern palace. Thus, despite frequent associations with the West, Robert's appearance at its threshold links Fieldhead with the East: "The broad pavement in front shone pale also; it gleamed as if some spell had transformed the dark granite to glistening Parian" (S, p. 230). In Jane Eyre, Rochester's manor house, contained Parian mantelpieces and other Eastern features.¹¹ In Shirley, the walls of Fieldhead are similarly transformed into Parian when Robert appears. It is important, however, that the manor house in Shirley is not Robert's. Rather than making Robert another Rochester, this particular allusion therefore points out Bronte's inability to make Robert an Eastern prince. Though an Eastern man, Robert Moore, is no longer a Romantic hero but rather a materialistic, self-interested textile manufacturer.

We sense Bronte's inability to recreate a successful romantic quest in Caroline's desire for the materialistic Robert in multiple un-Biblical Eastern allusions. For example, at Briarmains, Yorke's house, Robert's presence gives Mrs. Yorke's "cap the dash of turban" (S, p. 558). Because there is no other association of Mrs. Yorke in the novel with the East, and because the reference does not enrich our understanding of her personality in any way, her

¹¹Although to a modern reader the reference to the Greek island of Paros might suggest a connection of Robert with the assertiveness of the Greek tradition, it is not likely that Bronte was able to make such a connection. The geographically remote is Romantic for her.

arbitrary link with the East bears more relation to Robert who is in fact frequently linked with the East. His appearance on the scene is what transforms Mrs. Yorke into a proud Turk. The allusion, indeed, recalls the transformation of Shirley's mansion in previous example. And in a similar way, many of the seemingly irrelevant Eastern allusions in this novel can be explained.

An Eastern metaphor usually accompanies the discussion of Robert's character by the other characters, even though such metaphors do not refer to him directly. In conversation with Caroline, Shirley refers to Robert's goodness, and Caroline reminds her that other people hold a contrary opinion of him. Despite this, Shirley responds, "Remember the croaking of the frogs of Egypt! He is a noble being" (*S*, p. 215). Bronte's disillusionment with the romantic power of the East results in dissociating Robert from most of the Eastern allusions generated by his presence.

A semblance of an Eastern quest, nonetheless, survives. However, rather than being a self-fulfilling experience, Caroline's love for the Eastern man is self-destructive. This effect is felt in a geographical references to the East. A great deal of emphasis is placed, now, on the unpropitious nature of the eastern winds.¹⁴ Robert's

¹⁴The association of sickness with the blowing of eastern winds is very common in British culture and literature in the nineteenth century. However, given Bronte's earlier infatuation with the East, her conformity to common beliefs marks a change in her attitude toward the

rejection of Caroline, Caroline's suffering in Robert's love, and the blowing of the eastern winds become inseparable. And because Robert's rejection of Caroline is occasioned by Bronte's increasing awareness of Western materialism, the frequent references to the eastern winds become both an expression of the self-destructive force of the Eastern quest and an embodiment of Bronte's new involvement in her immediate surroundings.

The first of the allusions to the winds occurs when Robert rejects Caroline's affectionate advances for the sake of devoting himself to materialistic gains. His rejection coupled with her uncle's prohibition of any communication with Robert put an end to Caroline's visits to Robert's cottage. One evening, when Caroline's thoughts are filled with the memory of the better days she spent in Robert's company, Bronte's narrator seems curiously concerned with the East wind blowing out of Caroline's chamber:

For Nunnely Wood in June she saw her
chamber, for the songs of birds in
alleys she heard the rain on her
casement; for the sigh of the south wind
came the sob of the mournful east, and
for Moore's manly companionship she had
the thin illusion of her own dim shadow
on the wall. (S, p. 174)

Such an expression of desire does not really display the author's complex awareness of the West, yet it does reveal something important about the shift to the Western way of thinking. The passage contrasts an earlier situation in the

East.

novel with the present one. This entails a movement from a remote romantic setting to more realistic and immediate surroundings, from an imaginative view of the past to a realistic recognition of the present. Simultaneously, Caroline's emotional state shifts from happiness to disappointment, the latter accompanied by the blowing of the eastern winds. At this point, disappointment and the East are clearly linked together in Bronte's creative consciousness.

Other such references reveal still more about Bronte's disillusionment with the East and why the East is now coupled, not with gratification, but with unrequited love. These references, too, result from the instability of Caroline's relationship with Robert. His growing interest in Shirley and her fortune causes Caroline to fall victim to a dangerous illness. The chapter that describes this crisis begins:

The Future sometimes seems to sob a low warning of the events it is bringing us, like some gathering though yet remote storm . . . commissioned to bring in fog the yellow taint of pestilence, covering white Western isles with the poisoned exhalations of the East, dimming the lattices of English homes with the breath of Indian plague. (S, p. 415)

Her reference to the Indian plague is a most revealing sign of Bronte's intellectual exploration of the East. The exploration prompts speculation as to the source of the wind, which leads to thoughts of India. It is worth noting that this speculation occurs even though the passage begins

as a poetic juxtaposition of East and West. For Bronte, the abandonment of this aesthetic for a new manner of reference to the East is a move into a less romantic perception of the Eastern world. And, as Caroline's illness and disappointment continue, the destructive nature of the east wind intensifies. The weather during that illness is described as:

very dry and very dusty for an arid wind
had been blowing from the east this
month past: very cloudless, too, though
a pale haze, stationary in the
atmosphere, seemed to rob of all depth
of tone the blue of heaven, of all
freshness the verdure of the earth, and
of all glow the light of day. (S,
p. 437)

The balance in favor of Western principles over Eastern enchantment reaches a climax when the author manipulates well-known cultural symbolism about East and West, to express her changed conception of both worlds. If Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" reveals the conventional Romantic usage of East and West at the time, then Shirley constitutes a reversal of that convention. The Eastern world retains its charms in Shelley's poem as reflected in his address to the West wind: "Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams/The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,/ Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams." But the East has lost its charm for Bronte:

So long as the breath of Asiatic deserts
parched Caroline's lips and fevered her
veins, her physical convalescence could
not keep pace with her returning mental
tranquility; but there came a day when
the wind ceased to sob at the Eastern

gable of the rectory . . . A little cloud like a man's hand arose in the west . . . Caroline's youth could now be of some avail to her . . . Crowned by God's blessing, sent in the pure west wind . . . (they) rekindled her long-languishing energies. (S, p. 438)

According to this passage, the Eastern world has no dream-like quality about it, as it does in Shelley's poem and the East wind is a destructive force. Furthermore, the West wind is given credit for the revival of Caroline's health, while, according to Shelley, in some sense, the most palpable and immediate influence of the West wind is its destructive power. This effect remains a valid aspect of the role of the West wind even when an ultimate symbolic function of construction is discovered in its movement. To this effect Shelley addresses the West Wind:

O thou,
who chariotest to this dark wintry bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
With living hues and odours plain and hill:
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere
Destroyer and preserver;

While ignoring the immediate destructive manifestations of the West wind, Bronte grants it the revitalizing power which was given instead to the Spring breezes from the South and East in Shelley's poem. Certainly, Bronte manipulates Romantic symbolism to express her changed attitude towards the concepts of East and West.

The disillusioned perception that governs Bronte's attitude towards the East extends to the most appealing of

its charms, as portrayed in The Arabian Nights. The imaginative powers represented by the East could fulfill wild dreams in the juvenilia. Caroline Vernon, for example, wishes for Alladin's lamp in order to realize her impossible desires. In Shirley, on the other hand, this magical power brings about a confrontation with some kind of bitter truth. Similarly, Caroline Helstone wishes for Prince Ali's tube to gain access to Robert's mind. But in this case, ironically, only disappointment waits for the Bronte heroine, as she tells Shirley:

if a magician or a genius had at that moment offered me Prince Ali's tube (you remember it in the "Arabian Nights"?), and if, with its aid, I had been enabled to take a view of Robert . . . I should have learned, in a startling manner, the width of the chasm which gaped between such as he and such as I: I knew that, however my thoughts might adhere to him, this were effectually sundered from me. (S, p. 226)

The magic of The Nights becomes due means for dispersing the fantasy of romantic love. This new meaning of the Eastern element determines its function in Bronte's final novel.

However, a certain degree of ambivalence in Bronte's treatment of the Eastern man and the Eastern quest in this novel does remain. Such ambivalence surfaces in Bronte's portrayal of Robert's emotional life. Although he denies the validity of emotions, Robert is capable of emotional receptivity. The first confrontation between the would-be lovers reflects Robert's capacity to indulge his emotions. He presents Caroline with flowers, invites her to spend the

evening with him, kisses her on his return, and walks home with her at the end of the day. However, as Caroline disappears into her house, Robert soliloquizes:

'This won't do! There's weakness--
there's down right ruin in all this.
However,' he added, dropping his voice,
'the frenzy is quite temporary, I know
it very well. I have had it before. It
will be gone tomorrow.' (S, p. 94)

And the next day, indeed, he rebuffs Caroline and devotes himself entirely to his work at the mill. Such receptivity and denial characterize all his responses in the novel. When Yorke's daughter Jessy, informs Robert that Caroline has defended him against the local gossip, Moore once again spurns physical proximity: "Moore stroked Jessy's hair; for a minute he seemed as if he would draw her nearer to him, but instead he put her a little further off" (S, p. 158). Such ambivalence allows for Robert's conversion into a more receptive man at the end of the novel. In other words, though denied the passionate nature of the Eastern prince earlier, the deficiency is partly made up at the end. His conversion indicates that Bronte still retains some of the East's earlier meanings. Caroline is allowed union with the Eastern man only when he becomes more emotionally responsive and abandons some of the rationality of the West. On the other hand, Caroline Helstone, the Eastern traveller in Shirley, acquires some of Shirley's sarcasm, practicality, and intellectuality. While such traits are connected with survival in the West, the disengagement of the East from the Romantic aesthetic in Shirley is not absolute. For example,

Nunwood's scenery is one of the most wild and romantic settings in Shirley,

This was no trodden way; the freshness of the wood-flowers attested that foot of man seldom pressed them; the abounding wild-roses looked as if they budded, bloomed, and faded under the watch of solitude, as in a sultan's harem. (S, p. 371)

It is perhaps the residue of such imagery in Shirley that occasions the survival of the East as a language for the imagination in Villette, despite Bronte's growing disillusionment with the East's Romantic possibilities.

CHAPTER V

VILLETTE

It is in Robert Keefe's description of the course of events pursued by the heroine of Villette that a Western critic first draws significant parallels between Bronte's narrative structure and the Romantic journey to the East: "Lucy's divinely appointed journey is an exile, not a mission. Many of the myriad Oriental references in the novel refer to the Babylonian captivity of Israel."¹ Although he ultimately incorporates the metaphor of captivity in a psychoanalytic interpretation, the transition from one level of meaning to the other is a logical one: "We have seen already that Lucy views her European journey through the metaphoric lens of Israel in exile. The land in which she resides seems to be ruled over - again metaphorically - by a sensuous older woman."² According to Keefe's interpretation, the two women ruling over the land of captivity are Cleopatra and Vashti as represented in the novel by the portrait of the first and the play that

¹Robert Keefe, Charlotte Bronte's World of Death (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 161.

²Keefe, p. 162.

dramatizes the life story of the second. In Keefe's psychoanalytic terms, the two older women comprise a mother figure that Bronte has to overcome through her heroine's rejection of these queens.

Keefe's subjugation of the metaphor of Oriental captivity to his Oedipal terms prevents the Eastern references from demonstrating their full meaning in the critical discussion of the novel. For this purpose, Lawrence Dessner's critical views on Villette offer an observation that better expresses the complete function of the Oriental references than Keefe's more direct remarks. Pursuing the issue of Romanticism versus conventional Realism in Bronte's final novel, Dessner paradoxically claims that "Villette is her most realistic and most fantastic work."¹ Indeed, the fantastic in Villette demonstrates itself in Bronte's increasing dependence on the East. For, more than the other novels, Villette is rich with Eastern images, metaphors, and allusions. These allusions create a pattern of an Eastern quest unmatched in its complexity by anything except the juvenilia. Furthermore, the earlier meanings of freedom and self-indulgence commonly associated with Eastern journeys in Bronte are also present in Villette.

While such an attitude towards the East indicates an unshaken belief in its liberating powers, there are other

¹Lawrence J. Dessner, The Homely Web of Truth: A Study of Charlotte Bronte's Novels (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), p. 116.

indications to the contrary. In Villette, Bronte displays a distrust of the Eastern quest's ultimate value. Her doubt, indeed, goes beyond anything she expresses in Shirley, and this doubt is revealed as the Eastern journey loses some of its Romantic features. For example, the Eastern traveller, Lucy Snow, lacks the willful self-assertiveness of the earlier heroines. Furthermore, the Eastern man, Graham Bretton, is no longer a Romantic hero. And, above all, the Eastern quest does not culminate in a Romantic union between the heroine and the Eastern man, the object of her quest.

Bronte's paradoxical treatment of the East also extends to the West. While the Eastern world loses its Romantic features, the world of common experience inherits these same Romantic characteristics. In Villette, the heroine's Eastern journey is not a conscious act of the will, whereas her ultimate survival in the West is. Finally, the Eastern man is no longer a Romantic hero, but the Western man becomes one.

Bronte's belief in the individual's will versus social order implicitly resides in the conflict between Anglicanism and Catholicism in Villette. In its basic creed, Anglicanism relies on the individual asserting his own will and creating his private form of communion with Heaven, whereas Catholicism places trust in an objective authority, such as a priest. Lucy's rejection of the latter coincides with an increasing sense of self-reliance. This

strengthening of personal will finally enables her to survive independently in the practical world, indicating the transference of Bronte's Romantic creed to the West.

The change is also apparent in the creation of a character such as Paul Emanuel. With his dark physiognomy, willful, and passionate nature, Paul is the Romantic hero of earlier fiction. Because he helps the heroine realize practical independence in the world, he embodies the transference of Bronte's Romantic aesthetics to the West. This shifting process actually begins in Shirley, and it is crucial to a thorough understanding of the meaning of Orientalism in Bronte's fiction. Therefore, my discussion of this paradoxical treatment of the Eastern element in Villette will also concern itself with Bronte's growing Western Romanticism.

The Eastern allusions in Villette are not scattered arbitrarily on the surface of the novel. Their appearance consistently relates to the movement of the heroine, Lucy Snow, from a constricting center, namely Madame Beck's school, to other external physical locations. Whenever Lucy makes such a move, a number of Oriental references arise, depicting the new location she enters. These allusions, disappear, significantly, on Lucy's return to Beck's school. Three times in the novel this pattern repeats itself, and such repetition suggests that Bronte conceives of Lucy's outings in relation to the journeys to the East pursued by her other heroines. It is worth recalling that in the

juvenilia Bronte's traveller sought freedom from social restraints in Eastern settings. In The Professor, the quest for freedom in Eastern realms took the form of the metaphoric journey to the Promised Land of the East, and in Jane Eyre, Jane's introduction into Thornfield is a move into an Eastern palace. There she encounters, again metaphorically, an Eastern prince in the figure of Rochester. Through her attachment to him, she experiences freedom, the indulgence of her desires, and self-knowledge. Taken in this light, Lucy's frequent moves into Eastern settings in Villette re-create a basic theme and a dominant pattern. Bronte's return to the journey motif, after abandoning it in Shirley, is only one sign of her ambivalence towards the East. Her paradoxical treatment of Lucy's Eastern journeys suggests an intensification of the ambivalence on Bronte's part.

Lucy's Eastern journeys take her from a constricting center to a more expansive Eastern setting, thus mirroring Bronte's ambivalence toward's the East as well as re-enacting the old pattern of the juvenilia. Though a school with a comparatively relaxed system of discipline, Madame Beck's contains a community governed by a set of moral and social values that do not agree with Lucy. For example, Madame Beck's constant spying and lying are standards that everyone accepts as perfectly normal, whereas Lucy finds them corrupt and constricting. Closely connected with this repressive atmosphere is the figure of the nun and the

history of her individual will and desires, contradicted by objective authority. Significantly, as if to embody the heroine's sense of alienation and repression at Madame Beck's school, the nun appears only to Lucy. It is also important that the nun's appearance usually precedes Lucy's confrontation with Graham, as if to create the stimulus for her Eastern journey for freedom.

Lucy's initial move from England to Europe is not the move into Oriental captivity which Keefe believes it to be. Rather, Lucy journeys thrice to the East in a metaphorical sense after she arrives in Europe. The first of these journeys is Lucy's trip to La Terrasse, the house of the Bretton family in the city of Villette. The Eastern imagery that emerges just prior to the heroine's change in location suggests Bronte's conception of that move as a journey to the East. These images depict Lucy as a traveller in an Arabian desert who stumbles upon an Eastern realm where she experiences temporary relief but which she must ultimately leave. The comparison begins to develop when Lucy, left by herself during a summer vacation at Madame Beck's school, reflects on her desolate life in the following words: "When I had full leisure to look on life . . . I found it but a hopeless desert, tawny sands, with no green field, no palm tree, no well in view."⁴ This image of Lucy as a thirsty traveller is closely connected with that of Graham Bretton

⁴Charlotte Bronte, *Villette* (1979, rpt. New York: Penguin Books, 1981), p. 228. Subsequent references will be cited in the text in the following form: (V, p. _).

as an oasis in the emotional desert of her life: "he was good to me as the well is to the parched wayfarer" (V, P. 327). This awareness of her own life as a desolate one gives way to her miraculous and genii-like transportation into the house of the Brettons.

The genii first appear in Villette when Lucy compares her empty life with Ginevra Fanshawe's on this basis: "the best of the good genii that guards humanity curtailed (Ginevra) with his bending form. By true love was Ginevra followed" (V, p. 230). Graham's support and protection therefore has magical properties, and it is not long before Ginevra's lot becomes Lucy's own. Presumably a genii's intervention in her destiny takes Lucy to Graham's house where she enjoys the attention, if not the adoration, of its master.

Although Lucy's move to La Terrasse has the logic of realistic causality, Bronte also suggests an Eastern magic in the episode. The plot details inform us that Lucy falls unconscious on a church threshold where a Catholic priest finds her and delivers her to Graham who just happens to be passing by. More important, however, is the parallel between this incident and an Oriental tale. Lucy awakens to find herself in Graham's house, among the Bretton furniture which she knew as a girl in England:

I thought of Bedridden Hassan,
transported in his sleep from Cairo to
the gates of Damascus. Had a genius
stooped his dark wing down the storm to
whose stress I had succumbed, and
gathering me from the church steps, and

'rising high into the air,' as the eastern tale said, had he borne me over land and ocean, and laid me quietly down beside a hearth of old England? (V, p. 240).'

In this imaginative speculation, Lucy reveals her desire to submit to the control of Eastern genii. Bronte allows her to share with the earlier heroines in the juvenilia their wish to belong to an Eastern world and, later on, their longing to be mated with Eastern men. In Shirley, such license is completely absent in Caroline Helstone's desire for Moore's affection. Though an Eastern man in the author's consciousness, Robert is not perceived as such by Caroline. Lucy's license also surpasses any verbalization of her own desires made by Jane Eyre. For, although she perceives Rochester as an "Eastern emir," Jane, unlike Lucy, does not associate her move to Thornfield with an Eastern journey. It is only in Bronte's creative consciousness that the move is considered a trip to the East, as the pattern revealed through Jane's movements indicates. Therefore, Lucy's wish to belong to the magical world of the East comes close to Vernon's dream to become a Sultana Zara - Esmeralda. Bronte returns in Villette to the fantastic element of the juvenilia.

'The Penguin edition identifies the source of this reference as The Arabian Nights. In fact, the story has two genii contrived transportations. The first is when the hero is moved from Iraq to Egypt. The second is the one exploited by Bronte. Significantly the one Bronte picks up follows the consummation of the hero's marriage in Egypt which will break his bride's heart. Bronte is choosing the pessimistic side of the tale.

However, Lucy's longing to identify with the East is the only characteristic she shares with the heroines of the juvenilia. The differences, in fact, are equally striking and more important since they point out the author's increasing ambivalence towards the East. For example, while Vernon expresses her Eastern fantasies openly and directly, Lucy disguises hers in a speculation concerning the possible interference of genii in her life. She lacks the aggressive self-assertiveness of Vernon and Jane Eyre. Thus, although Lucy's move from a constricted center to a more expansive Eastern setting recalls the Romantic pattern of the Eastern quest in Bronte's juvenilia and in Jane Eyre, the disappearance of willful rebellion is a crucial variation on that pattern. Despite her increasing dependence on the East, it appears that Bronte no longer believes in the heroine's Eastern journey as a positive means for survival. Lucy must not enter the Eastern realm of Graham Bretton by a conscious act of will.

The East's retention of some of its earlier associations with freedom and indulgence also reflects Bronte's ambivalent attitude. Lucy conceives of Ginevra's easy and indulgent life as one protected by a genii. By speculating on a genii's possible interference in her destiny, Lucy actually attempts to make Ginevra's good fortune her own. Gilbert and Gubar see this as the main point of Ginevra's presence in the novel. "It is Ginevra," they write, "who best embodies Lucy's attraction to self-

indulgence and freedom."'

The West can only offer Lucy the prospect of loveless labor, and her desire to escape this fate is clear in her move to Graham's house, a move linked with the East. Lucy conceives of her move as a death to the West and a rebirth into an Eastern world. She dies to the West when she writes:

Where my soul went during that swoon I
cannot tell . . . She may have gone
upward and come in sight of her eternal
home, hoping for leave to rest now . . .
an angel may have warned her away from
heaven's threshold, and, (guided) her
weeping down . . . to that poor frame,
cold and wasted, of whose companionship
she was grown more than weary. (V,
p. 237)

A heavenly angel brings about the reunion of soul and matter that rescues Lucy. Yet, it is into an Eastern world that she is transported and reborn, for an Eastern angel controls her destiny:

Thousands lie round the pool, weeping
and despairing . . . Long are the
'times' of Heaven: the orbits of angel
messengers seem wide to mortal vision.
. . . To how many maimed and mourning
millions is the first and sole angel
visitant, him easterns call
Azrael.' (V, p.252)

While she conceives of the rest of humanity as a tortured

' Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Mad Woman in the Attic (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 409.

'Even the Penguin edition recognizes Azrael as the Islamic Angel of Death without speculating as to where Bronte got the word. I suggest The Arabian Nights as a source because traditionally in translation the names are retained in their Arabic forms.

race waiting for God's mercy to descend in the form of Azrael, Lucy sees herself as actually tasting that mercy. Azrael drives her back from Heaven's gates to the Eastern realm of the Brettons. There, she enjoys the friendship of that family and prays to heaven to "let (her) be content with a temperate draught of this living stream" (V, p. 251).

Like the heroines' quest in the juvenilia, Lucy's Eastern journey to La Terrasse leads to a confrontation with an Eastern man, in this case, Graham Bretton. His associations with the East actually begin before the La Terrasse episode. During her stay with her godmother in England, Lucy, a passive spectator of the lives of the people around her, imaginatively transforms the scene into an Eastern drama with Graham as a Grand Turk and Paulina as an Oriental concubine. According to Lucy's perception of the situation, Graham is "more than a Grand Turk in (Polly's) estimation" (V, p. 82). Polly, in turn, is usually "seated like a little Odalisque on a couch, half shaded by the drooping draperies of the window near" (V, p. 87).

Readers tend to take Lucy's unsympathetic reaction to Polly's youthful sentimentality at face value. Moglen, on the other hand, believes that "The story (Lucy) tells is ostensibly her own, but she is not its subject."⁴ According to Moglen, Lucy tells Polly's story "not because

⁴Helene Moglen, Charlotte Bronte: The Self Conceived (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1976), p. 197.

she is unable to feel, but because she feels too much, not because she cannot identify with Polly but rather because the degree of identification is extreme." Taken in this light, Lucy's Eastern drama expresses her willingness to participate and identify with the East. Bronte allows her heroine to entertain such fantasies. But it is also important that Graham is identified with the negative in the East, the Oriental despot, for this reveals Bronte's reservations about the East. In other words, Lucy's presence in the novel, and the particular form that her Eastern fantasies take, allow Bronte to be ambivalent about the East, to both express her attraction and her reservations.

During the La Terrasse section, the linking of Graham with the East continues, establishing his position of dominance over the Eastern realm that Lucy enters and is about to explore. Graham takes Lucy to theatres and museums where pieces representative of Eastern culture are displayed. During these tours, Lucy describes Graham as an Eastern man who "seemed to possess the 'open! Sesame,' the secret "of every door which shuts in an object worth seeing, of every museum, of every hall, sacred to art or science" (V, p. 273).

The most prominent object which unveils these cultural secrets is a portrait of Cleopatra. Sensual and voluptuous, the queen represents an aspect of the East towards which

Bronte is highly ambivalent:

She lay half reclined on a couch . . .
 She had no business to lounge away the
 noon on a sofa. She ought likewise to
 have worn decent garments . . . out of
 abundance of material - seven and -
 twenty yards. I should say, of drapery
 - she managed to make inefficient
 raiment. (V, p. 275)

Lucy's description of Cleopatra recalls her earlier comparison of Paulina with an Oriental odalisque. While evoking the sense of sensuality and indolence attached to the earlier picture, the description also recalls Lucy's previous disguised desire to identify with the East.

Bronte's reservation this time reveals itself when she makes Lucy reject the image of the East embodied in Cleopatra as "an enormous piece of claptrap." Lucy must overcome the inclination towards self-indulgence as embodied in her attraction to, and her detailed description of, the indolent oriental queen.

In the museum, colored now with the presence of Cleopatra, Graham is again linked with the East:

This way came Dr. John, in usage, in
 shape, in hue, as unlike the dark acerb,
 and caustic little professor . . . as
 the high couraged but tractable Arabian
 is unlike the rude and stubborn
 "Sheltie." (V, p. 281)

Despite his fair physiognomy, for Lucy, Graham has affinity with the East. This connection objectifies Lucy's desire to escape her hard and desolate life for some remote Eastern world and points out the separation of Bronte's Romantic aesthetics from the East. Because he is light in complexion

and dispassionate in nature, Graham contrasts with the dark, impulsive, and passionate Eastern princes in Bronte's earlier fiction. In this scene, the author transfers these positive Romantic traits to Paul Emanuel. It is Paul, not Graham, who is dark, passionate, and impulsive. Thus, the Eastern man is no longer a Romantic figure in Villette.

Lucy's involuntary journey to the East in Graham's company nonetheless continues. As they enter the town hall to attend a musical concert, Lucy's desire to identify with the East again surfaces when she describes the place in terms identical to those exploited in Bronte's juvenilia:

[S]oon the front of a great illuminated building blazed before us . . . I hardly noticed by what magic these doors were made to roll back . . . within was disclosed a hall . . . whose sweeping circular walls and domed hollow ceiling seemed to me all dead gold . . . Pendant from the dome flamed a mass that dazzled me - of rock crystal, sparkling with facets, streaming with drops ablaze with stars, and gorgeously tinged with dews of gems dissolved, or fragments of rainbows shivered. It was only the chandelier, reader, but for me it seemed the work of eastern genii: I almost looked to see if a huge, dark, cloudy hand - that of the Slave of the Lamp - were not hovering in the lustrous and perfumed atmosphere of the cupola. (V, p. 285)

The brilliantly lit dome of gold, the fantastic sense of luxury, and the perfumed atmosphere are all features of earlier Eastern palaces. Lucy's imagination completes the scene with final touches of Eastern magic. Furthermore, the music at the concert recalls the unearthly music of Eastern genii in the enchanted palaces, such as in "The Twelve

Adventurers." It also evokes the sense of self-indulgence experienced by the earlier travellers during their Eastern confrontations. Compared with the tightly controlled re-creation of such a palace in Jane Eyre, this dome suggests a release of Bronte's imagination from her former commitment to social control. Like the earlier traveller, Lucy enjoys the fantastic in the East, and as Dessner aptly observes, "Villette not only refers to Lucy's exercise of an Angrian imagination, but itself illustrates the Angrian imagination in action."¹⁰

During this concert, another important event further links Graham Bretton with the East. He wins a contest and is rewarded a turban. In that turban he looks:

quite Eastern, except that he is so fair. Nobody, however, can accuse him of having red hair now - it is genuine chestnut - a dark, glossy chestnut; and when I put my large cashmere about him, there was as fine a young bey, dey or pacha improvised as you would wish to see. (V, p. 355)

The epithets of "bey, dey or pacha" designate a Turkish man of high position, particularly a political ruler. Because it emerges in relation to the fantastic pleasure dome, this image of Graham as an Eastern prince establishes him in a position of dominance over that palace. In this way, Bronte allows Graham what she denies Robert Moore in Shirley, namely the possession of an Eastern palace. Lucy's relationship with Graham thus typifies an Eastern

¹⁰Dessner, p. 112.

confrontation more than Helstone's involvement with Moore does. Again, this suggests a release of Bronte's imagination from some earlier reservations.

Graham's mother, rather than Lucy, reinforces the above-mentioned link between Graham and the East. Thus, it indicates how fixed the association between a desirable man and the appeal of the Orient is in the author's imagination. The re-creation of the Eastern man in Graham expresses not only Lucy's desires, but also Bronte's inclination. In Villette, he is what Zamorna, Rochester, and Robert Moore were in earlier works. This view of Graham dominates the critical response to his personality. Dessner, for example, suggests that "Dr. John (is) a more faithful incarnation of the spirit of Zamorna than Rochester."¹¹ This remark indicates that, while the three characters may differ in depth and intensity, they are the same in essence. Graham's association with them necessarily strengthens his image as an Eastern prince.

Although she goes beyond Shirley and sometimes beyond Jane Eyre in indulging the fantastic element of the East, Bronte's distrust of its liberating powers continues to grow. Beginning with Shirley, Bronte increasingly divorces the East from her Romantic aesthetics. This revised attitude first emerges in the earlier novel with the appearance of a dark Romantic heroine who longs to travel: not to the East, but to the West. The divorce is also

¹¹Dessner, p. 114.

apparent in the dispassionate and materialistic Eastern man, Robert Moore. Nevertheless, it is important that Robert is still dark in complexion, and, to a certain degree, emotionally responsive. The divorce of the East is not an absolute one, for these traits clearly link Robert to Zamorna and Rochester. Caroline's union with him at the end of the novel tells us that Bronte still sees the Eastern man as a source of emotional gratification.

This view no longer held true in Villette. Unlike Robert Moore, Graham is fair in physiognomy, which, in turn, distinguishes him from the other Eastern men in Bronte's fiction. Graham is also less capable than Moore of emotional receptivity; thus he lacks another Romantic feature essential to the other Eastern princes, Rochester and Zamorna. For example, Graham is completely insensitive when Lucy reveals her emotional investment in his letters: "He asked me, smiling, why I cared for this letter so much" (V, p. 327). And, later on, when Paulina re-appears on the scene, he completely forgets about Lucy; he even neglects to speak to her for three months. Several critics, including Dessner, have remarked that Graham "has no 'inside', no self-consciousness, but is merely an attracting force."¹² This absence of consciousness is due to Graham's loss of the passionate side of the Romantic hero. Thus, Bronte withdraws her Romantic aesthetics from the Eastern man, and he ceases to be the ultimate object of the heroine's quest.

¹²Dessner p. 114.

Lucy's relationship with him must terminate.

When the relationship with Graham comes to an end, the failure of Bronte's belief in the Romantic and the East's liberating powers fully emerges. In this case, Graham takes Lucy to a drama concerning the life story of the Oriental queen, Vashti.¹³ While Cleopatra's sensuality aroused Lucy's ambivalence, Vashti's passionate nature forces her to confront the power of the East:

Where was the artist of the Cleopatra?
Let him come and sit down and study this
different vision . . . the strong
magnetism of genius drew my heart out of
its wonted orbit . . . I had seen
acting before but never anything which
astonished hope and hushed desire, which
outstripped impulse and paled
conception. (V, p. 339-40)

As Lucy approaches complete identification with the Eastern queen, the final stage of the Eastern quest, a fire breaks out in the theatre. It is useful to recall that Jane's quest of the Eastern man is fulfilled when she becomes a Scherezade, an Eastern queen, but Lucy's love for the Eastern man is not to be fulfilled. She will not become the Eastern queen, Vashti. To underscore this change in narrative structure, Bronte reintroduces Paulina Home and has her capture Graham's heart with her conventional English

¹³Gilbert and Gubar feel that Vashti transcends "the distinctions between private and public, between person and artist, between artist and art," p. 424. This remark can be supported by both the artist and drama since both are given the same name as the Biblical queen, Vashti. Such a phenomenon supports my view that at this point in the novel Lucy confronts the passionate side of the East as embodied in Vashti.

beauty, rank, and fortune. Without an object of desire, Lucy's journey to the East must end abortively at this point. She has experienced the freedom, self-indulgence, and self-knowledge commonly associated in Bronte's work with journeys to the East. Yet Bronte's conception of the East has lost its positive value and transcendent power. The Eastern man can no longer be the object of a Romantic union with self. Thus, the Eastern world of princes and palaces can only be a means to temporary freedom and self-indulgence, but never an end in itself.

Bronte's portrayal of Lucy's gradual disillusionment with Graham also illustrates the divorce of the East from the Romantic. Lucy's passionate longing for love constitutes a desire that Graham's dispassionate nature cannot possibly gratify. His kind yet cold letters inflame without relieving Lucy:

In the very extremity of want, I had recourse again, and yet again, to the little packet in the case - the fine letters . . . It was always at night I visited them . . . and pasted on my crust from the Barmecide's loaf. It did not nourish me: I pined on it, and got as thin as a shadow. (V, p. 350)

We should recall that the imaginary feast offered by Barmecide to the beggar in the The Arabian Nights was a source of temporary relief to Jane at Lowood school. Jane transcended the scarcity of food by preparing nightly in imagination the Barmecide supper. That same feast can no longer pacify Lucy, for Bronte's Eastern metaphors lose their Romantic and transforming power after Shirley. This

is illustrated by yet another reference to the Oriental tales. Discovering that Graham's letters were 'borrowed' from her drawer by Madame Beck, Lucy wonders:

What did she think of the few kind words scattered here and there - not thickly, as the diamonds were scattered in the valley of Sinbad, but sparsely, as those gems lie in unfabled beds? Oh, Madame Beck! how seemed these things to you. (V, p. 377)

Although she uses the East now to portray Lucy's frustrated desires, Bronte has used it earlier in this novel to depict the heroine's emotional needs. This ambivalent attitude again surfaces as a paradox when Lucy reflects on her disappointment with Graham:

That goodly river on whose bank I had sojourned . . . was bending to another course . . . The change was right, just, natural; not a word could be said: But I loved my Rhine, my Nile; I had almost worshipped by Ganges, and I grieved that the grand tide should roll estranged. (V, p. 378)

The eastern river, the Nile, mentioned in conjunction with European rivers, gives the East no privileged status in Bronte's imagination. It is as real and unromantic as any object related to the West. Such treatment of the East contrasts with the fantastic picture of the hall that Lucy enters escorted by Graham. Again, the contrast emphasizes Bronte's paradoxical treatment of the East in this novel.

Although a cause of Bronte's ambivalence towards the East is the changed conception of that world as a real entity, instead of the earlier Romantic one (a change that fails to abandon the earlier faith in the East's Romantic

possibilities), there are other causes operating as well. Bronte's awareness of the need to survive in a materialistic world has become too intense to allow faith in the form of transcendence that the East might still provide. The Romantic transcendence realized through the Eastern journey involves a form of escape from the immediate world into isolated Eastern realms. Such an escape points out the East's failure to provide a satisfactory form of survival in the West.¹⁴ Therefore, the heroine's emotional investment shifts from Graham Bretton to Paul Emanuel.

Lucy's emotional attachment to Paul Emanuel represents Bronte's Western quest in Villette. As embodied in St. John, the Western quest in Jane Eyre was the means of sanctifying Jane's union with Rochester, but never an end in itself. After Shirley, however, Bronte associates Romantic aesthetics with the values of the West. Consequently, the dark, passionate and impulsive characters are the intellectuals as well as the practical survivors in the social world. In Villette, Paul Emanuel embodies both the Romantic traits of the earlier travellers and the Western

¹⁴It is worth noting that, although Paulina Home realizes emotional gratification in her relationship with Graham, this fact does not negate my argument that the East is not a means for survival in the West for many reasons. First, Paulina is not the Brontean traveller in the novel, whereas Lucy is. Second, Paulina is metaphorically an Eastern woman, an "Oriental Odalisque" which means she already belongs to the Eastern world of princes and palaces. Third, Paulina becomes an aristocrat through some distant relatives which, again, associates her with the East. This association of the East with the aristocrats in Bronte goes back to The Professor.

ethics necessary for social survival. Hence, he is now the ultimate object of the heroine's spiritual quest.

However, the spiritual confrontation with the West is actually achieved through an Eastern journey. This curious path to fulfillment is a reflection of Bronte's ambivalent attitude. Lucy's trip to Madame Walravens', yet another metaphoric trip to the East, stimulates her emotional attachment to Paul. At Madame Walravens' she discovers the truth about Paul's generous nature and chivalric deeds, and the discovery consequently helps her to overcome her hesitation concerning another emotional commitment in her life. Lucy emerges from her journey to Madame Walravens' totally attached to Paul Emanuel.

As mentioned, the paradoxical nature of the Eastern experience re-appears in Lucy's journey. The movement to the Eastern setting of Madame Walravens' exhibits a deviation from the established pattern of previous works, a deviation similar to that implied in Lucy's journey to a La Terrasse. Just as her move to La Terrasse is presumably a genii-contrived experience, Lucy's journey to Walravens is plotted by Madame Beck. The journey therefore cannot be construed as a self-assertive and rebellious act of the will, although some aspects of the old pattern still remain. When Madame Beck asks Lucy to deliver a basket of fruits to Madame Walravens, Lucy ventures into a comparatively remote and isolated physical location, and Eastern allusions accompany her journey. In Lucy's imagination, the secluded

setting is transformed into an Oriental city. And just as the earlier travellers initially experience a sense of liberation on first journeying to the East, Lucy feels psychological expansion:

I fear high wind because storms demand that exertion of strength . . . I always yield with pain; but the . . . dark rush of rain, asks only resignation - the quite abandonment of garments and person to be drenched. In return, it sweeps a great capital clean before you; it makes you a quiet path through broad grand streets, it petrifies a living city as as if by eastern enchantment; it transforms a Villette into a Tadmor. Let, then, the rain fall, and the floods descend - only I must get rid of this basket. (V, p. 479)

Ridding herself of commitment to the practical world, Lucy's sense of freedom seems complete.

However, the nature of the Eastern confrontation significantly changes this time. Rather than confronting an Eastern man in this Eastern setting, Lucy merely encounters the "barbarian queen," Madame Walravens. The spiritual revelation generated through this confrontation, furthermore, relates to a Western object of quest, Paul Emanuel, rather than to an Eastern man. Lucy's attachment to Paul secures her ultimate liberation from Madame Beck, and because this attachment is stimulated by an Eastern journey, Lucy's resulting freedom indicates that the Eastern journey has fulfilled its purpose: that of generating a sense of absolute freedom.

Yet, Bronte's unquenched belief in the liberating powers of the East still prevails. For instance, Lucy's

economic survival in the West takes place only after she undertakes her third journey to the East. Under the influence of a sedative administered by Madame Beck, Lucy journeys from the same constricting center to the park in Villette. In her imagination, the European park is transformed into a setting in Egypt or Byzantium:

In a land of enchantment, a garden most gorgeous, a plain sprinkled with colored meteors . . . a region not of trees and shadows, but of strangest architectural wealth - of altar and of temple, of pyramid, obelisk and sphynx; incredible to say; the wonders of Egypt teemed throughout the park of Villette. (V, p. 550)

However, the truth Lucy confronts in this Eastern setting is a false one; she mistakenly thinks Paul Emanuel is in love with his ward, Justine Marie. Such deception certainly indicates distrust of the Eastern, but Lucy nevertheless emerges from her last Eastern journey a free and less ambivalent person. She kills the nun, thus implicitly overcoming the symbol of repression and denied desires. The acquisition of free will soon ensues, for Lucy self-assertively contradicts Madame Beck by expressing her wish to communicate with Paul. Self-assertion leads to a journey towards freedom; Lucy leaves Madame Beck's school and establishes an independent school of her own. However, the journey is to the West: Lucy moves towards a practical and more assured involvement in the world. One can safely say that Bronte finally succeeds in replacing the world of Eastern princes and palaces with a more practical form of

survival in the immediate social world.

Although such an ending suggests a fulfillment of Lucy's Western quest, it is important that Paul Emanuel dies at sea. Lucy remains, in this respect, emotionally unfulfilled and sexually unconsummated, suggesting a sense of incompleteness in the Western quest. Bronte's total acceptance of the reality of the world extends to the gloomiest of its facts, death. Her belief in the necessity for survival resists all needs, including love, ironically resulting in a lack of fulfillment. Yet, only in such total embracing of the West's reality can Bronte exclude the transforming powers of the East from her imagination. Paul Emanuel's death is the only sign of Bronte's triumph over ambivalence towards the East.

CHAPTER VI

AFTERWARD

This dissertation traced Charlotte Bronte's Romantic quest as it takes the form of a journey to the East in her writing. My objective called for a methodology that treats Bronte's fictional works as poems in prose. This break with the traditional criticism of the novel has been deliberate. It has allowed me to elaborate on the poetic principle in Bronte's novels, rather than requiring me to provide thorough discussion of each individual novel. Through such an approach, a recurrent pattern emerges in the Eastern quest as it has been fictionalized into literal or metaphoric journeys to the East. The correspondence between this pattern in Bronte's fiction and the quest pattern Harold Bloom identifies with the Romantic poetry transforms the Eastern journey in her novels into a Romantic quest on her part for full imaginative freedom.

The journeys of Bronte's fictional characters on her textual landscape display a fairly consistent pattern that dominates the juvenilia and continues to reappear in her mature works. Such a pattern as surfaces through my investigation is one in which an exceptional individual

rebels against established order and departs to an isolated Eastern realm where a confrontation with a profound Eastern object generates self-knowledge and further psychological awareness. Although this journey in Bronte's work changes from the earlier protagonist's literal move into an Eastern setting to the later heroine's spiritual yearning to belong to an Eastern man, the physical and spiritual peculiarities of the traveller and the significance of the journey remain the same. Physically, the Brontean traveller is dark and Eastern in physiognomy, whereas spiritually he(he) manifests a willful and an impulsive disposition. The move into physical isolation makes the self the center of the world, allowing the traveller absolute assertion of his individual will as well as a full indulgence of his desires. The traveller's pleasure in these privileges has its counterpart on another level in which Bronte enjoys the absolute freedom of imaginative creativity.

As Bronte's awareness of the objective world intensifies, the pattern of the Eastern journey expands and becomes more complex. As she becomes aware of the moral and religious values governing the social world, Bronte strives to attain the earlier freedom, in a morally and socially controlled context. And, when the necessity for survival in a materialistic world arises, Bronte attempts to combine her heroine's Eastern freedom with social survival. Thus, while the larger poetic quest shifts its objective, the pattern reflected in the smaller metaphoric journeys to the East

expands.

Bronte's awareness of the values governing her Western world is first apparent in the The Professor where, rather than incorporating these values in her Eastern quest, she splits her traveller into two protagonists and sets one on an Eastern and the other on a Western quest. Although she attempts to subdue Hunsden's quest for an Oriental woman, Bronte fails to make Crimsworth's quest purely Western. He and Frances become two Israelites questing for a Promised Land of the East. It is in Jane Eyre that Bronte finally succeeds in reconciling Eastern freedom with Western values. Her success is evident both in her recreation of the earlier Romantic traveller in the figure of Jane, and the two quests in Jane Eyre, an Eastern as well as a Western one. Although Bronte begins by setting Jane on a metaphoric journey to the East, allowing her to indulge her desires in the relationship with Rochester, Bronte delays the fulfillment of Jane's Eastern quest until she undertakes a journey to the West. Jane's Western journey not only reconciles her to the moral, religious, and economic values of the West, but it is also the means through which the fulfillment of her Eastern quest becomes possible; Jane's telepathic communion with Rochester is a transcendental union brought about through St. John's interference. In the creation of this spiritual consummation of her heroine with an Eastern man, Bronte realizes Eastern freedom in a morally controlled framework.

The author's commitment to the West increases in Shirley. Her attempt to incorporate Eastern freedom into Western ethics results in a transference of the earlier Romantic features of the Eastern quest into the West. Rather than departing to an isolated Eastern realm, the dark, willful, and rebellious traveller now becomes a practical survivor in the materialistic world. Shirley Keeldar, the Romantic heroine, is the owner and the manager of an estate. On the other hand, Caroline Helstone, the Eastern traveller in this novel, lacks the earlier Romantic traits of willfulness. Her love for the Eastern man, Robert Moore becomes a self-destructive experience. This is not to say that Bronte's commitment to practical involvement in the West precludes her aspiration for the kind of freedom inherent in the Eastern quest, for Caroline and Robert finally unite in marriage.

This ambivalent attitude towards the East's liberating powers intensifies in Villette. Bronte's still lingering belief in Eastern freedom manifests itself when she allows her heroine, Lucy Snow, psychological expansion through her confrontation with the Eastern man, Graham Bretton. The author's reservations about the ultimate value of such freedom become obvious in her creation of Paul Emanuel, a presumably Western man who brings about the heroine's survival in a more practical, less self-indulgent world. However, because this protagonist bears all the Romantic features of the earlier traveller, he manifests the

transference of Bronte's Romantic aesthetics, commonly associated with the Eastern journey, to the West.

From the previous summary, it becomes obvious that the relationship between East and West changes in Bronte's fiction. Imaginative freedom and social commitment begin as two separate and seemingly conflicting themes, but eventually they redefine each other. While the tension dominates The Professor, in Jane Eyre Bronte achieves a synthesis. Her attempt to maintain that synthesis in Shirley results in a redefinition of both concepts. The East loses its exclusive connection with the private world of self and fancy. Although it retains its previous liberating powers, it also becomes as real an entity as the West. On the other hand, the West ceases to be a completely objective and separate reality. Bronte's Romantic aesthetics become associated with the objective world of common experience; the practical survivors become Romantic figures in Shirley and Villette. East and West cease to be mutually exclusive entities in the late stages of Bronte's career.

Since this pattern of the Eastern quest and the transference of its basic features to the West remained buried for more than a century of critical response to Charlotte Bronte's works, I would now like to take an opportunity to anticipate the ways in which my research should affect traditional scholarship.

The common assumption about the novel form is that it

is a literary form that presumably concerns itself with portraying the ordinary events of everyday life. It is also assumed that this form seeks to create an illusion of historicity and of realistic possibilities through the lives of its fictional characters. On the other hand, the Romantic assumption about poetry is that it is a private act of the imagination which embodies the poet's personal experience and sublimely detaches itself from commitment to the realistic details of everyday life. Such boundaries between literary forms have faded in Bronte's fiction. As she creates a poetic quest of imaginative freedom in a novel form, Bronte challenges the distinction between poetry and prose. Her Romantic quest of the East transforms the historical dimension of the novel form; the novel ceases to be an exclusive record of realistic details about fictionalized characters. While retaining such an illusion, Bronte's novels also become a self-reflexive mirror of the author's poetic vision and imaginative aspirations. This fusion of traditional literary categories then opens up new possibilities for the criticism of both poetry and prose.

For critics of the novel, the poetic quest in Bronte's fiction opens up the possibility of examining this literary form from a poetic perspective. Furthermore, because East and West prove to be conceptually dependent upon one another, in other words, Romanticism proves to be compatible with "Realism." When the objective world of ordinary reality takes on the Romantic features of the private world

of the imagination, and when the East also acquires some of the realistic characteristics commonly attached to the West, such overlapping encourages further speculation of what it is that Romanticism and Realism shared so that both were able to speak to the same moment in history.

For the Romanticist, Bronte's Romantic quest of imaginative freedom proves that Romanticism is not a localized form of experience attached to a group of poets from Oxford. In a remote and obscure Yorkshire spot, a writer emerges, displaying a more consistent pattern of Romantic aspirations than any of the Oxford group. Bronte's Romantic quest of freedom always takes the form of a journey to the East. It also remains an integral part of her writing throughout her career. Such a phenomenon indicates that Romanticism is actually a common way of speculating about the self and the world, their interaction and the possibility of their fusion. By realizing such a fusion both in the changing relationships between East and West as well as in the presence of a Romantic quest in a novel form, Bronte draws attention to a new possibility in Romantic criticism. It is not unlikely that such a fusion exists in Romantic poetry and only waits to be explored.

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ABSTRACT

BRONTE'S JOURNEY TO THE EAST: THE ROMANTIC
QUEST IN HER FICTION

by

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December 1982

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Major: English

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

This dissertation demonstrates that Charlotte Bronte pursues a Romantic quest beginning with the earliest of her tales and continuing throughout her mature works to the end of her career. Bronte fictionalizes this quest into actual or metaphoric journeys to the East. These journeys are commonly undertaken by an exceptional individual who rebels against established conventions and departs to an isolated Eastern realm where a confrontation with a profound Eastern object generates pleasurable feelings and psychological growth. As the nature of the travellers' confrontation changes from the earlier male travellers' encounters with Eastern genii to the female travellers' emotional involvement with metaphorically Eastern men, Bronte reveals a potential for an internalization of her Eastern quest. The reader may further explore this psychological dimension

in the work of the critics of consciousness. Poulet, in particular, is useful for this purpose.

Bronte's fulfillment of her own poetic quest depends upon her characters' experiencing the sensory or sensual pleasures of the East. It is in these moments of pleasure that the author experiences the release of her imagination from the constrictions of her immediate social milieu. Such a realization of full imaginative freedom is not always possible, however. Often, Bronte's psychological quest of the East is inhibited by a contrary impulse: that of self-preservation.

In "The Twelve Adventurers," Bronte actually allows her characters to indulge in Eastern pleasures. Yet, this same fulfillment is inhibited throughout her juvenilia, only to be released in the last of her novelettes, "Caroline Vernon." In The Professor, her first mature work, the inhibiting forces are identified with the protagonist's social survival, and Bronte fails to envision a reconciliation of imaginative freedom and social commitment.

In Jane Eyre, her most unified work, Bronte temporarily succeeds in reconciling the intricate tension between the two impulses; however, her triumphant synthesis of East and West dissolves in Shirley. In this novel, Bronte is increasingly uncertain of the East's capability to provide transcendental freedom. At the same time, she is also highly ambivalent about the compatibility of Eastern transcendence with social survival in a Western world.

Finally, in Villette, this ambivalence continues to increase and, despite Bronte's efforts, remains basically unresolved.