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FROM AMBIVALENCE TO ACQUIESCENCE: STUDIES IN GOTHIC METAPHOR

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A DISSERTATION

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degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

TERRY BRITTON

Norman, Oklahoma

1981

FROM AMBIVALENCE TO ACQUIESCENCE:

STUDIES IN GOTHIC METAPHOR

APPROVED BY

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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FROM AMBIVALENCE TO ACQUIESCENCE:
STUDIES IN GOTHIC METAPHOR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Memory knows before knowing remembers."
William Faulkner

Originally this study began as an attempt to define the gothic metaphor in literature and denote its pervasiveness in important American and English novels in the nineteenth century. As the research progressed, I realized the gothic has been well defined for sixty years, since Birkhead's The Tale of Terror in 1921. Moreover, a resurgence of interest in the gothic in the last decade has led to new definitions that widen the boundaries and include works that previously were not considered gothic. The new emphasis plus my reading of several novels by Charles Dickens, Emily Bronte, Henry James, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bram Stoker, and the Marquis de Sade made me realize, too, that I was dealing with the obvious in trying to show pervasiveness. The realizations forced a shift in the study toward a discussion of a limited number of Victorian novels to discover if the authors' use of the gothic is consistently

comparable.

For the most part, the study is based on an inductive approach. The primary elements of the gothic and my basic definition were arrived at before I began to read the definitions others had written. In some respects, the approach was dangerous as new articles and books appeared that threatened to make the study a useless exercise. However, the attempt to define the gothic is no more than half the purpose of this work. The other half of my purpose was suggested by my experience with American literature students in a survey course. I discovered while teaching them that their previous study of literature had left them with two basic weaknesses. They lacked the ability, first, to read a work as one metaphor and, second, to cross-reference metaphors among various authors of the same or different periods. Comments from them on metaphors and symbols within a work were often insightful and exciting, but too seldom did I hear attempts to sum up all the work from first word to last into one metaphorical construct.

Therefore, students' inability to see the work as a whole metaphorical unit left them unable to say what the experience is <u>like</u>. In other words, they could not relate the experience of reading to any other kind of experience which they had had, heard about, or imagined, including the experience of reading other works. To me,

the most important step in reading, after simple literal understanding, is the step which ties my experiencing of a work to other categories of experience stored in my memory. A work which does not immediately have a referent in my consciousness does not trigger the question of "What does it mean?" until I have settled the question of "What is it like?"

I follow the above approach in reading because I want to greatly simplify my own art of reading. The first time one sees or hears a word as a child his question might well be "What is it?" But if he does not understand the answer, his next query is almost always "What is it like?" He may not even have to ask the question, for often the one questioned will shift to the statement "It is like..." as soon as he sees confusion on the part of the one questioning. A writer, certainly, proceeds more subtly because his task is not to define likenesses for readers, but to allow readers to discover likenesses through the experience of reading. Therefore, the first step in the simplification of my critical approach to literary works was the realization of the primacy of memory to both writer and reader. Language is memory. We know no more words than what we have read or heard. The writer's success, then, depends upon the memory of his reader. Walter Ong says the writer fictionalizes the audience in this process; and, as he states it, "Knowledge of the degrees of admissible

ignorance for readers is absolutely essential if one is to publish successfully."[1]

But it is not simple memory that the writer manipulates. The mind, fortunately and contrary to our advertising, is not like a computer. It does not store data, which is bits of information, into a bank where it can be retrieved and related to other bits in simple or sophisticated processes. What the computer can do sometimes borders on the miraculous to the lay mind, but what it cannot do makes it unlike the mind. The information that the mind stores may be simple data -- date, time, place, person, etc. -- but also stored are impressions from the senses, information colored by feelings such as anger or desire, fantasy information, and other categories that are unique to the individual. Additionally, the mind does not release stored information through the pressing of electronic buttons in a prescribed sequence. Instead, a cumulative process takes place and related information may never be retrieved unless a trigger is pulled at a time of need or desire to bring it back into the conscious mind. The result of the following explosion can range from a simple "Aha! Now I see." to a veritable epiphany where information long thought forgot tumbles back into view.

When Faulkner states "Memory knows before knowing remembers." in describing Joe Christmas, he is stating

in simpler terms what is discussed above.[2] Joe Christmas may not be aware at any given moment of how what he knows is affecting the present situation, but the memory is storing and relating key likenesses. But what Faulkner is also describing is the reading process: As a reader follows a character through experience, he (the reader) is also storing information that he will need for later understanding. The understanding will not only be dependent on what the reader knows from the text, but also how he feels about what he knows. Moreover, the knowing-feeling reaction will also depend greatly on the other experiences the reader has had outside the reading of a given work, i.e. dependent upon what the rest of the memory says this experience is like.

To understand how likenesses are related by the mind, first we must understand how a whole work is a metaphor; how this metaphor can work; and how a writer uses metaphor to relate to a greater body of literary works through manipulating our memory. Although this present study is concerned mainly with three Victorian novels, I find it easier at this point to use short fiction and poetry.

William Carlos Williams' short story "The Use of Force" is a very teachable example for how a work operates as a metaphor. The author's title virtually gives us the category of experience that the experiencing

of the story will be like: actions which involve a justifiable but inordinate use of physical force. In the story, a doctor on a house call is confronted by scared parents and a strong, lovely young girl who is determined to hide the signs of diphtheria by refusing to allow an examination of her throat. The story is presented as a rape. The doctor must have her held down as he rams a tongue depressor past her clenched teeth, but she manages to bite through the wood and splinter it. He still insists, even with her mouth bleeding, that she open up. He forces her to by using a metal spoon, and in her throat he discovers the membrane covering the tonsils, the secret she has been hiding. This "final unreasoning assault," as he calls it, "bred of a longing for muscular release," stresses the language of rape.[3] However, the story is not merely a metaphor for rape. The doctor's action can be rationally justified because of the diphtheria, but the irrationality of his method cannot be. Therefore, the category of actions the doctor's use of force is like are those actions where one has societal opinion (unlike rape) on his side but uses irrational methods to succeed. The story can represent a class of actions including our justification for such huge acts as war to such small acts as losing our temper with students when we berate them for not performing. The story, of course, does not say the doctor's act

is wrong, although the rape imagery may tend to slant it that direction; what it does say is that we have to be willing to accept in such a simple act as a doctor's examining a patient that there are rationally justifiable acts which may be carried through by the power of the irrational. From such acts conflicting emotions may arise that are irreconcilable, the predicament the doctor finds himself in as he tells the story.

Situations that cannot be resolved are also prominent in the poetry of Robert Frost. To present them, Frost often uses conversational dialogs that are never concluded or images of white. In "Death of a Hired Man," Warren and Mary debate the worth of Silas as a hired man and what to do with him now that he has returned. Mary is for letting him stay and Warren wants to send him away. But before they decide, we learn that Silas has died. In much the same way, the dialog in "Home Burial" between a wife and a husband, neither of whom can understand the other's reaction to their child's death, ends in the middle of their argument: she with the door partly open to run away; he threatening to bring her back by force. In each poem, Frost suggests the impossibility of ever penetrating another's perspective.

However, I came to an understanding of the dialogs through other poems, poems that are based on images of

white, a favorite symbol of Frost's. "Design" is a key poem in Frost's canon. In a traditional sonnet form, Frost develops an image of a white spider holding a white moth on a white flower in the first eight lines. In the sestet, however, where normally a reader would expect comment or statement, Frost has three questions followed by a subjunctive clause as the concluding statement. "For Once, Then, Something" presents an image of white with the same kind of conclusion. The speaker, one who peers down into wells to receive only his reflection back, thought he saw something once, "a something white," at the bottom of the water. The speaker gives us choices for what it might possibly be in question form: "...What was that Whiteness?/Truth? A pebble of quartz?...."[4] But if we consider all the possibilities between the options, we realize we have been given no real choice at all. In other poems, Frost gives us this same image of white, often using snow, in a situation where a speaker wants answers but comes up with nothing or an incomprehensible vastness of suggestion. The symbol, if we remember it from poem to poem, ties the poetry together thematically. But it does more as it also connects it to such diverse works as Shelley's "Mont Blanc" and Melville's Moby Dick. It ties it, in other words, to a central theme of Romanticism, the fearful reality of the finiteness of the individual when confronted by the inscrutable hugeness of all that

lies outside him. With Frost one becomes aware of a constant semi-humorous cynicism as he mocks his own name with his wintry imagery, imagery which stymies his speakers' attempts to know. In turn, the reader is put in the same situation as the speakers and musers as he is left with choices that may mean no answer is the answer we must confront daily.

William Wordsworth's lyric poem "The Solitary Reaper" precedes Frost's method by a century and gives us a metaphor for the reading process. In the poem, a passerby hears a Highland Lass singing in the field. She sang beautifully, but in a dialect the traveller cannot understand. Nevertheless, in the third stanza he provides us several choices to consider by asking three questions that give us a range from "battles long ago" to "natural sorrow...that has been, and may be again."[5] Like Frost's poetry, no definition is given in "The Solitary Reaper"; the poem ends with the statement that the music was kept in the heart, "Whate'er the theme...." Reading literature is often the same kind of experience. The experiencing of the song, the poem, the short story, or the novel is there whether the meaning is or not. But it does not necessarily stay in the memory forever without meaning. Another like experience in actuality or imagination may cause recall so that there is greater understanding of both

the new experience and the old. What reading does then is prepare for understanding through providing likenesses. Possibly, because it works in that manner, taste can be accounted for on the part of the individual as most of us tend to proceed toward experience that provides understanding and away from experience that provides none. Not all works, of course, that could provide understanding will be chosen by the individual because we also tend to read those works that help us experience what we want to understand. Necessity such as student assignments and teaching assignments may force those of us in the academic world from reading strictly what we desire to read, but most of us will gravitate toward likenesses we like on our own time. However, even with our own time, we are somewhat controlled by the idea of our field as a "discipline"; thus, even our freedom is not totally free. For this reason, sometimes I believe that we critics and academicians will never be able to successfully define the relationship of reader to text because we have too much self-interest involved.

Nevertheless, my interest in the gothic metaphor used by nineteenth-century novelists remains strong. Such questions as what is it, what drew my interest to it, what experience does it bring to the reader, and what do the novelists say in common about the

nineteenth century will be attempted in this present study. The first question will be handled more by description than definition. The metaphor established by early gothic writers and used by the later writers is simple in its basic pattern.

A young man or woman (and sometimes both), often an orphan, arrives at an old house or castle. Quite often his/her journey is for an expected marriage or inheritance. The inhabitants of the old house are usually strongly associated with the past through the church, aristocratic lineage, or the arts. They seldom venture into the outside world except to bring, by force or guile, the young people into their world. As Pamela Kaufman states in her definition of the gothic, "The central metaphor is imprisonment, usually within a Gothic ruin."[6] The process, however, is not all one-sided. Often the young people choose to go, prompted by their desires for the riches of the past. The ambivalence of the best uses of this metaphor makes a fascinating study of motive. Additionally, this ambivalence becomes a key element in the portrayal of the intense search by nineteenth-century characters for something to believe in as they are torn between a dissolving past and a present changing so quickly that the future is alarming.

Once inside this world, the young person is faced

with violence and terror. Rape and torture are commonplace physical violence in the early gothic, reaching the ultimate in de Sade's Justine. Psychological terror at facing the unknown is as effectively used as physical threat. Much of the latter comes from the confusion of relationships as characters discover they are fathers, brothers, and sisters to one another and have perpetrated terrible crimes against each other. This psychological terror is one of the most heavily used by later writers since the explicit sexual violence becomes more and more taboo as Victorian England develops and becomes subtly symbolized. These later writers, especially, use elaborate family relationships in developing characters' use of psychological violence against one another.

The violent relationships among characters lead to revenge becoming one of the major themes of writers employing the gothic. Frustrated, angry, and hurt, the young person seeks to vent his feelings against the perpetrator, yet he may hold back if he thinks it will harm his fortune. The dilemma exposes ethical choices the character must make in establishing his relationships to his past, present, and future. The authors use these situations to comment on the crippling effect of the past trying to live beyond its time.

Leslie Fiedler's comments on the past are important to consider here. "Behind the gothic lies a theory

of history, a particular sense of the past.... The gothic felt for the first time the pastness of the past; and though it did not, like the later novels of Manzoni and Scott, attempt with scholarly accuracy to document that difference, it tried to give some sense of it; the sense of something lapsed or outlived or irremediably changed.... By and large...the writers of gothic novels looked on the 'gothic' times with which they dealt (and by which despite themselves, they were fascinated) as corrupt and detestable. Their vision of that past was bitterly critical, and they worked with olden days not to sentimentalize but to condemn them. Most gothicists were not only avant garde in their literary aspiration, but radical in their politics; they were, that is to say, anti-aristocratic, anti-Catholic, anti-nostalgic."[7]

The last statement above from Fiedler will not apply directly to the works to be considered in this study since he is writing at this point about the early gothic writer; however, later artists do show a consciousness of this radicalism they inherit with the form itself. The consciousness plays an important part in their consideration of the past and is important in establishing the ambivalence of the characters' attitudes.

One later statement of Fiedler's needs to be

noted here, too. Once he has defined the gothic he remarks, "In general, the European gothic reaches the level of important art only in poetry or drama, not in fiction."[8] In two of the primary works in my discussion, the English novels Wuthering Heights, and Great Expectations, I will illustrate that the gothic metaphor is basic to the construction and, therefore, to the total meaning of the works. In the third, Portrait of a Lady, James' use of the gothic owes as much to the European influence as to his American heritage. Unlike Fiedler, I believe the concern with the gothic is a nineteenth-century concern, not merely a nineteenth-century American concern.

I chose Wuthering Heights (1847), Great Expectations (1860-61), and Portrait of a Lady (1881) as the focal novels for this study for several reasons. First, I consider them three of the finest novels of the nineteenth century in terms of the artistic construction and the comprehensiveness of themes. Second, the publication dates of the three are spread out enough to show concerns with the gothic and similar themes continue to be important to major writers. Also, after I considered the strong similarities of the characters and their symbolic conflicts and predicaments, I was amazed the three had not been considered together before this, though there have been several comments briefly comparing

two of them at once.

Other novels originally were as important to this paper as the novels above: Justine by the Marquis de Sade; The Aspern Papers by Henry James; Bleak House by Charles Dickens; The House of the Seven Gables by Nathaniel Hawthorne; Dracula by Bram Stoker; and Light in August by William Faulkner. They remain influential and my reading of them still informs the discussion. I chose not to consider them as specifically as I had intended when I discovered that a close analysis of a few shed more light on the whole group and kept the study from becoming unwieldly.

The use of the gothic by all these writers pinpoints many of the concerns of the nineteenth century as the artists watched aristocracy makes its last gasp, scientism firmly takes its place as the supreme religion, and money replace God and love as the leading idol and value. The primary feeling of these artists is a deep, nagging pessimism since the replacements are neither those values from and toward which the artists work nor those which might be leading to a brighter future.

Their works show the nineteenth century as a literal life-and-death struggle between the past and present as the past sought to live on at the risk of endangering the future. Much of the conflict is shown as a power struggle between an old upper class whose

weapons of social superiority and wealth were losing force and a new generation who sought the same weapons to fight back with since they had not yet identified forces of their own. By approaching the conflicts through Wuthering Heights, Great Expectations, and Portrait of a Lady, we can see both formal and thematic agreement among the authors in their use of the gothic metaphors even though the particular characters and situations differ greatly.

Endnotes

[1] "The Writer's Audience is Always A Fiction," PMLA, 15, No. 1 (January, 1975), p. 19.

[2] Light in August, (New York: The Modern Library, 1968), p. 111.

[3] Short Story Masterpieces, Robert Penn Warren and Albert Erskine, eds. (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1954), p. 542.

[4] American Literary Masters, II, Charles Anderson, ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), ll 14-15, p. 611.

[5] The Complete Poetical Works of Wordsworth, Andrew J. George, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932), ll. 20,23,24, p. 298.

[6] "Burke, Freud, and the Gothic," Studies in Burke and His Time, 13, No. 21 (Spring, 1972), p. 2180.

[7] Love and Death in the American Novel, (New York: Dell, 1960, rev.in 1966),pp. 123-124.

[8] Fiedler, p. 129.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE OUTSIDE

Years ago as I tried to find ways and means to convey to students how they search for likenesses of experience, I began watching for statements by authors and critics that attempted to define the relationship between the reader and the work. Little did I know at the time that by 1980 the subject would have become an intercontinental critical war between such critics as Norman Holland, Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish, and others.[1] Fortunately, by the time I made an effort to understand the war, I already had a foundation for my own simplified position; therefore, I could remain more an observer than a participant.

My approach began with a statement by Morse Peckham when he defined the function of "psychic insulation" as it applies to artist and perceiver. A work of art allows one to approach it without being threatened; therefore, it insulates. "...It permits the individual to let down his defenses and fully expose himself to disorientation; it permits him to avoid raising defenses when he encounters disorientation."[2] In other words, one can manage situations

in art that he might have difficulty with in real life. Peckham's statement has a curious antecedent in the letter John Keats wrote that contains his famous statement on Negative Capability. "At once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously -- I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason."[3] What I find curious here is that, although the statements make basically the same point if we accept fact and reason as defenses, Peckham is discussing the perceiver and Keats the artist. But if we remember that Keats is a Romantic artist the curious quality creates no problem. The Romantic poet is as much involved in problems of perception as the reader is. He often tries, as we can see in Wordsworth's instructions to the reader in "The Solitary Reaper" where he tells us to "Stop!, Look! and Listen!," to deliberately recreate the process of perception in the reader.[4]

A reader, then, reads a work with a wall of insulation around him and he must suspend his disbelief and not irritably reach for fact and reason. Does this mean that his role is passive? Peckham and Keats don't intend that meaning, and Norman Holland's notion of introjection offers a term for explaining how insulation can make

for active reading, and in so doing, offers support for Peckham's ideas about role playing.[5] Simplified, introjection allows us experience removed from role playing. To Holland, the formal aspect of literature allows the reader to enter the world of aesthetic pleasure where the reader enters the work of art and the work of art enters the reader. The words on the page create a recognizable and potential experience, but once the words enter the mind one no longer consciously sees them and he becomes involved in what is happening. The reader recreates, and the further he can leave behind his role as critic, teacher, student, beggarman, lawyer, or thief the more actively involved he becomes.

Holland's term introjection I have found extremely useful in teaching. Where he and I part company is his stress on an individual reader's fantasies. In Five Readers Reading and other works, he spends too much time for my taste on examining the differences of response; at times, the responses are based on misreading.[6] Even if the response is real, I don't find it too useful in teaching to collectively interpret (students and teacher) based on error, which brings me to another principle of reader response. In another letter, John Keats wrote, "But the Minds of Mortals are so different and bent on such diverse journeys that it may at first appear impossible for

any common taste and fellowship between two or three under these suppositions. It's however quite the contrary. Minds would leave each other in contrary directions, traverse each other in numberless points, and at last greet each other at the journey's end."[7] Keats' description of how the mind works is a suitable description for the act of reading a novel. An author has intentions. His construction of the work is intended to manipulate us to a journey's end. Along the way we may daydream about ourselves or project ourselves into the novel, but the daydreams and projections are by-products of reading, not the act of reading. We can say that the novelist intends for us to daydream and to project because part of his intention is to involve us on the deepest level of the mind. But we can never categorically state that he intends a specific individual to have a specific fantasy. We can, however, come to some conclusions about how he intends for us to feel about his work. Stephen Dedalus' remark about the artist's unconcern for his work must be taken with a grain of salt. I find it useful to remember that he is a fictional character and not the author.[8] An artist does want the perceiver to care about his work. He wants engagement and involvement. There may be some totally nihilistic artists who believe they are sending nothing into nothing, but I find generally it is an attitude

the artist struggles against and not for.

Not accepting nihilism allows me to accept Kenneth Burke's idea that one can look at a writer in terms of what he intends for a work "to do." His essay's title, Literature as Equipment for Living, is a statement of a bias I have toward literature: The reading of literature does equip one by providing intellectual-emotional experiences. Burke's idea is that a work such as a novel like Madame Bovary is a strategy for revealing an experience that recurs often enough for us to need to name it. "A work like Madame Bovary...is the strategic naming of a situation. It singles out a pattern of experience that is sufficiently representative of our social structure, that recurs sufficiently often mutatis mutandis, for people to 'need a word for it' and to adopt an attitude towards it."[9] As part of that strategy, an author deliberately chooses a structural form that carries with it connotations of meaning even before he has filled in the blank spaces -- e.g. Frost's use of the sonnet form ending with a question is deliberate irony and manipulation of the reader.

Equipped with notions of insulation, introjection, negative capability, and gothic form as strategy, I reread the three novels Wuthering Heights, Great Expectations, and The Portrait of a Lady. What I discovered immediately is that the situations of the

three main characters is almost a metaphor for the situation of the reader. Just as the reader must start from outside the novel, Heathcliff, Pip, and Isabel start from outside the main societies depicted in the novels and must find their individual places and perspectives, and just as we are guided by the authors, each of the three is brought into juxtaposition with the respective society by another character.

Heathcliff and Pip, especially, have little choice in their initial contact with strange social forces that will determine their dreams and disappointments; Isabel, even, had an alternative given her by a forceful aunt who makes personal choice rather insignificant. The authors' presentation of the initial contacts between the characters and their worlds of hope offer considerable insight into each novel as a whole by clarifying the motives of the characters as well as the conflicts they face with the external world.

The three novels under consideration, like many novels with a central gothic motif, establish early a setting dominated by an old home, castle, or church rich in a storied past. The opening chapter of The Portrait of a Lady is no exception:

> The house had a name and a history; the old gentleman taking his tea would have delighted to tell you these things; how it had been built under Edward the Sixth, had offered a

> night's hospitality to the great Elizabeth (whose august person had extended itself upon a huge, magnificent and terribly angular bed which still formed the principal honour of the sleeping apartments), had been a good deal bruised and defaced in Cromwell's Wars, and then, under the Restoration, repaired much enlarged; and how, finally, after having been remodeled and disfigured in the eighteenth century, it had passed into the careful keeping of a shrewd American banker, who had bought it originally because (owing to circumstances too complicated to set forth) it was offered at a great bargain: bought it with much grumbling at its ugliness, its antiquity, its incommodity, and who now, at the end of twenty years, had become conscious of a real aesthetic passion for it, so that he knew all its points and would tell you just where to stand to see them in combination and just the hour when the shadows of its various protuberances - which fell so softly upon the warm, weary brickwork - were of the right measure.[10]

This long, terribly complex, relaxed, typical Jamesian sentence captures much of the tone of the opening chapter. Carefully placing three of the central characters at tea in the garden of the English manor house, James prepares for the entrance of Isabel Archer, who is soon to arrive from America with her aunt, Mrs. Touchett, the old man's wife. For several pages the characters remain nameless, for James' concern is more to establish them within a setting and an atmosphere than to establish their identity. The rich brocaded

description in this first chapter establishes an almost idyllic setting.

The idyllic tone established through the rhetoric is severely undercut by the presentation of the character's situation, however. The charm of the tea, the afternoon, and the "rustic simplicity" of the old gentleman is actually used to soften that the old man is crippled, the son seriously ill, and Lord Warburton, the guest, is "sick of life."[11] There is also the pointed remark that Mr. Touchett's personal life has not been entirely satisfactory since the wife's coming home is a rarity. Furthermore, he has reservations about the future as he states, "I'm convinced there will be great changes; and not all for the better."[12]

A strong ennui has affected Lord Warburton and Ralph Touchett as their walk and talk are aimless, spiritless. They appear at a deadend until the old man prompts talk from them, and we learn they are bored and cynical. Mr. Touchett accuses them of being "too fastidious, and too indolent, and too rich."[13] In addition, James twice repeats his description of Ralph as "ugly."[14] On one of these occasions the description is simply "the ugly young man," giving emphasis to it.[15]

The relationship of this first chapter with its contrast between the idyllic setting and rather odd set of characters to Isabel's situation is critical even though she does not appear physically until chapter two. Lord Warburton first questions about her, "Is the

young lady interesting?"[16] Thus, Isabel can be seen as a catalyst to alleviate the boredom. A second comment of importance is Mr. Touchett's warning to Lord Warburton that he not "fall in love with her."[17] He repeats this warning twice in chapter one.

This first chapter gives the reader an advantage over Isabel. He can see what she will confront and how much she is anticipated. The reader can also see the immediate problem she will face: the interpretation of a world where the external is peaceful, grand, and idyllic and the internal is weak, bored, cynical, and literally sick. The chapter, interpreted in this manner, provides a foreshadowing of the errors in judgement Isabel will make in her marriage to Osmond, a matter to be pursued later in this study, when she interprets motive and character through appearance as it satisfies her desires rather than reality which should have been obvious throughout.

Charles Dickens' development of Pip's similar predicament is, in some ways, even more complicated for the reader. Pip is shown the reality of the dream world he hopes to profit from. His first view of Satis House, his gothic horror, comes when he is sent there by Mr. Pumblechook to play:

> Within a quarter of an hour we came to Miss Havisham's house, which was of old brick, and dismal, and had a great many iron bars to it. Some of

> the windows had been walled up; of those that remained, all the lower were rustily barred. There was a courtyard in front and that was barred....
>
> My young conductress locked the gate, and we went across the courtyard. It was paved and clean, but grass was growing in a little lane of communication with it; and the wooden gates of that lane stood open, away to the high enclosing wall; and all was empty and disused. The cold wind seemed to blow colder there than outside the gate.[18]

So, Pip, who had been locked out, is now locked in. The pattern of his quest for riches and other great expectations is metaphorically established at this point. For the remainder of the novel he will be pulled back and forth between Satis House and the outside, always desiring to be allowed permanently inside the world of Satis House. The question is why, given the above external impression plus the impression of Miss Havisham as "waxwork and skeleton," does he want to stay?[19]

The answer comes in Chapter IX. Pip, who has had to live with a cruel older sister determined to "raise him by hand," desperately wants a new life. He sees what is before him at Satis House, but he interprets it differently. In Chapter IX Mr. Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe Gargery (the sister) put him under stern questioning about what he saw at Satis House. He tells them Miss Havisham is a very tall and dark lady who sits in a black velvet coach and eats cake and wine from gold plates. Even more astounding, she has four dogs who

fought over veal cutlets in a silver basket.[20] Pip's explanation for these lies is "I was perfectly frantic - a reckless witness under the torture - and would have told them anything."[21]

These answers come from a boy under pressure who grasps at whatever springs to mind. He admits to Joe Gargery later that they are lies, but are they? Could they not just as well be the truth about what Miss Havisham already represents to him thus explaining why they spring readily to mind? Dickens wants us to see graphically the conflict that is already established in the mind and emotions of Pip. That he can translate the real experience into these terms even with the excuse that he believes Pumblechook and Mrs. Joe will not believe the truth signifies how desperate he is to escape from the hand of Mrs. Joe and the poverty and ignorance he constantly feels. Also, since we are dealing with a narrator who is telling the story in retrospect, a self-conscious narrator, we must constantly remember that any excuses he gives about past motives may or may not be true. The adult Pip was hurt greatly by his past and much of the rhetoric in the novel, even the humor, is his attempt to play down past disappointment and intense pain. Even the beatings he received are told humorously, a quite human trait of all of us who do not care to remember exactly how much something hurt.

Satis House, Miss Havisham, and Estella dominate

Pip's life from his first visit until he leaves England at the end of the novel. His wishing to be good enough to enter this world of death and destructive passion will rouse in him strong passions of desire and revenge that will cause him endless pain. Heathcliff's equivalent to Satis House is Thrushcross Grange. His entry into Wuthering Heights earlier in the novel is painful enough as the older son, Hindley Earnshaw, taunts him, teases him, and beats him. But it is Thrushcross Grange that will ultimately cause him the greatest pain. His first real impression of Thrushcross Grange is much like Pip's imaginary one of Satis House. He describes it to Nelly Dean: "---Ah! it was beautiful -- a splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson-covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glassdrops hanging in silver chains from the centre and shimmering with little soft tapers... We should have thought ourselves in heaven."[22] However, his attitude toward this heaven is tempered by the people in it. He scorns the Linton children for fighting over who should hold the dog: "We did despise them."[23] His despising them has an additional motive that is after the fact. After he and Cathy are caught outside Thrushcross Grange, Cathy stayed to recuperate from the dog bite she received on the ankle from Skulker, the watchdog. Heathcliff is put back outside where he intends to remain in the event Cathy needs to be rescued: "I intended shattering their great glass panes to a

million fragments, unless they let her out."[24]

Cathy, on the inside, is washed, fed, and pampered. Heathcliff says, "I left her, as merry as she could be, dividing her food between the little dog and Skulker, whose nose she pinched as he ate."[25] The literal separation of Catherine and Heathcliff, at this point, signifies their separation forever. Catherine begins to become the lady she is expected to be because of her family name and position. Only the Lintons can bring about such a change since both her parents are dead and her brother Hindley has no real influence over her. That Heathcliff already senses their ability to separate him from the only person he has loved or will ever love can be recognized by the reader who realizes his bitter condemnation of them stems more from loss of Cathy than from anything they did to him. Their treatment of him cannot be considered unjust; he was not put out until he insisted on continuing to curse them. He could, however, feel their disapproval of him; since he was dark and ragged, the Linton children likened him to a gypsy thief.

Isabel Archer, Pip, and Heathcliff are thus placed as outsiders -- outside an older world that each wants to investigate, a world of promises and threats, of pleasant dreams and fearful imaginings. Pip's fantasies can be readily seen; Heathcliff's anger is a more subtle reaction that shows his fear is more a fear of what he

imagines than what is before him. Isabel reveals her attitude when she enters in Chapter Two and proclaims of the world before her, "It's just like a novel."[26] She differs from Pip and Heathcliff in that she does not see beyond the surface and she expects only the best. Part of this attitude comes from a life that so far has been free of unpleasantness,"even too free, she thinks."[27] That she thinks so may be a clue that she will unconsciously seek it out. Her finding considerable unpleasantness later in the novel may be as deliberate an action as Heathcliff's revenge.

The irony of Pip's, Isabel's, and Heathcliff's situation is that they are young, vital people who have placed their hopes on worlds that are petty, weak, and ill. Each of them is in much the same situation. Pip, for instance, is initially brought to Satis House so that Estella can have someone to practice on as Miss Havisham trains her to revenge all hurts Miss Havisham imagines men have caused her. She instructs Estella to "beggar him."[28] As she has explained it to Pumblechook, Estella needs someone to "play" with.

Heathcliff finds at Wuthering Heights much the same attitude, no matter what Mr. Earnshaw's nobler motives. Except for Catherine and her father, he was an object for the others to taunt, tease, and bully. Only his ferocious spirit kept him undefeated, but the treatment

plus Catherine's rejection of him for the small spirited Edgar Linton perverts his huge vitality into a single-minded focus on revenge.

The attitude in the opening of Portrait is much the same, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Ralph Touchett and Lord Warburton look forward to Isabel much as two children look forward to someone new to "play" with, someone to freshen up the surroundings. Her high spirits and vitality in no way disappoint them when she does arrive. Ralph is so taken with her that later in the novel he is able, through Mr. Touchett's fortune, to allow her to "play" upon the continent.

What we see in the novels, as in most gothic novels, is Past and Present coming together through an invitation from Past. The motives of Past, however, are rather involved since Past actually is looking toward the future. Count Dracula invites people to his castle in Transylvania for the sole purpose of using their blood to continue century by century. Present is not to be condemned for accepting the invitation, for what is more real to us than the past. Castles, no matter how moldy or worn, are proof of existence, as are artifacts. Past leaves much that can be weighed, measured, touched, and tasted. Present is often intolerable with its pangs of hunger, sights of misery, and smells of the groaning masses around us. And Future, that hoped-for heaven, seems more available if approached through a doorway

already built and with gold already cast.

Our primary characters are much like poor readers of fiction who are misled by surfaces and reason out books to have the meanings they are most comfortable with. Students often laughed as I read them the passage where Pip describes Mrs. Joe caning him with "Tickler." I asked them why they laughed at a child being severely beaten. Because they were fond of Pip, usually their response was one of feeling guilty. Then I reminded them that Pip tells the story comically, if by no other means than naming the cane whip; thus, they were supposed to feel the humor. At this point many gave up, but those who had known the complexity of feeling began to understand Peckham's notion of insulation. Dickens has Pip protect himself from many painful memories by telling of his past in comic tones, and Pip in turn protects the readers from raw pain. Yet once one has an awareness of the function of the comic in the novel, he can feel deeply the misery of one small boy -- one mere Pip -- trying to survive with and in spite of great expectations.

By reading in this manner and by teaching reading in this manner, I have hopes of greater success for my students. I cannot comfortably read Great Expectations any more, nor for that matter, The Portrait of a Lady, not because I feel I have extracted all the meaning from it, but because I don't want to

go through the experience of pain again with Pip or Isabel. Somehow I think learning to read without wanting to go back again is an answer to a former professor's question in a seminar about why we study the same novels over year by year as we progress through our education. Until a student can be taught to experience a poem or a novel or a play, he can be shown intellectual meanings forever, or as long as we have professors with wit and imagination. Then he can chose his own combination of meanings and renew the cycle. We too often assume the student's felt reaction. Feeling is not first in art. Form is first. Feeling and experiencing through form must be taught.

Endnotes

[1] Stanley Fish, "Why No One's Afraid of Wolfgang Iser," diacritics, (March, 1981), pp. 2-13.

Rudolph E. Keunzli, ed., "Interview: Wolfgang Iser," diacritics, (June, 1980), pp. 57-74.

Steven Mailloux, "Reader-Response Criticism," Genre, 10, No. 3, (Fall, 1977), pp. 413-431.

These three essays offer an excellent place of entry for understanding current reader-response theory.

[2] Morse Peckham, Man's Rage For Chaos, (New York: Schocken, 1967), p. 83.

[3] "Letter to George and Thomas Keats," Selected Poetry and Letters, Richard Fogle, ed., (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1951), p. 304.

[4] 1.1, "Behold her..."; 1.4, "Stop here..."; 1.7, "O Listen...";pp. 298-299.

[5] Norman Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 96.

[6] Norman Holland, 5 Readers Reading, (New York: Yale University Press, 1975), see especially p. 137 where Holland discusses the "knitting" mistake.

[7] "Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds," p. 308.

[8] James Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, (New York: The Viking Press), p. 215.

[9] The Philosophy of Literary Form, (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 259.

[10] The Portrait of a Lady, (New York: Dell, 1961, first published in 1881), p. 14. All subsequent page numbers are from this edition, abbreviated as PL.

[11] PL, p. 17.

[12] PL, p. 19.

[13] PL, p. 18.

[14] PL, p. 16.

[15] PL, p. 19.

[16] PL, p. 20.

[17] PL, p. 21.

[18] Great Expectations, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1967, first published in 1860), pp.54-55. All subsequent page numbers are from this edition, abbreviated as GE.

[19] GE, p. 67.

[20] GE, p. 67.

[21] GE, p. 67.

[22] Wuthering Heights, (New York: The Modern Library, 1950, first published in 1847), pp. 55-56. All subsequent page numbers are from this edition, abbreviated as WH.

[23] WH, p. 56.

[24] WH, p. 59.

[25] WH, p. 60.

[26] PL, p. 24.

[27] PL, p. 38.

[28] GE, p. 59.

CHAPTER III

AMBIVALENZ, A NEW WORD

The theory supporting a common Indo-European source of language asserts that people began with a common root language and that some of the differences of development depend on what new words man needed as he began to migrate to new locales. As culture developed and man became more and more capable of abstraction and idea, language became even more sophisticated. We are determined to name what we see, feel, and think. The modern world needed ambivalence: thus, it was coined.

Ambivalence is a curious combination of the Latin prefix ambi- joined with valence, a word generally used only in the physical sciences in discussing electrons; yet its meaning as we know it was coined by psychologists. The American Heritage Dictionary gives credit to S. Freud; The Encyclopedia of Psychology states that E. Bleuler, the early twentieth century Swiss authority on schizophrenia, introduced it; the 1939 O.E.D. doesn't list it at all. But these curious differences are the least of the interests the word holds out.

Was man previously not ambivalent enough in his strongest desires to need a name for the feeling? Was life before the modern world a dichotomy of love-hate,

attraction-repulsion, or life-death? Or did Freud (or Bleuler) discover something that is innate to man but has been ignored? I think the word followed close upon the phenomenon. Man has surely always had ambivalent feelings, but in no literary age does one find it so dominant as in nineteenth-century literature. Whatever else Romantic philosophy did, it definitely provided both attraction and repulsion for those who followed the ideals of self-determination. The glorification of self brings to each individual the responsibility to depend on self. The past, for instance, is not to be depended on as it once was and the future does not exist. For men of great minds and courage such a state might be an ideal, but the prospect for lesser men is fearful. The century wavered between Promethean philosophy and Marxism: the individual and the mass. It did not waver in its basic doctrine to be done with the past. The problem lay in how does one get rid of something that he also finds attractive. The feeling must have been much like that of a mob of poor men who burn the mansion that is the very symbol of what they wish to attain.

This ambivalence must be defined carefully since its use in careless conversation sometimes replaces ambiguity and the two words are not interchangeable. The original Latin flavor of valence (valentia, valens) denoting strength remains in the best use of ambivalence

in psychology. One loves and hates a person strongly if he/she is ambivalent about him/her. In popular use ambivalent often is intended to mean one is "cool" toward something. Bleuler must have seen the strength of the vying emotions to have pointed out its contribution to schizophrenia, the actual splitting of a person by antagonistic emotions.

Ambivalent feelings motivate much of the main characters' actions in all three of the novels under consideration; and, to an extent, the reader is supposed to be somewhat ambivalent in his response to them if I am reading correctly. Inder Nath Kher says in his study of Emily Dickinson, "We should try to apprehend the poem's meaning in the spirit in which it was created. Jung is right in asserting that 'we perceive when we are able to let the work of art act upon us as it acted upon the artist. To grasp its meaning, we must allow it to shape us as it once shaped him. Then we understand the nature of his experience'"[1] I am not quite Jungian enough to give control over the artist to the work, but I will go so far as to state that the ambivalence of the characters was often shared by the three writers.

Society shares this same ambivalence even now. Recently in scanning some "comic" books lent to my children, I ran across one entitled Dracula Meets the Master of the Sky: Bram Stoker's evil Dracula who would use or kill anyone who stood between him and his need

for blood has become in this comic book a misunderstood superhero who must attempt to clear the Dracula name of evil. His power is his ability to turn into a bat at will because of a special serum made from bat's blood that he accidentally drank.[2] Yet I was not too surprised at the comic book since no matter how evil he is in the original novel he has remained attractive to public imagination. When I viewed the 1974 television performance of Dracula starring Jack Palance, I was made aware of the character's dual attraction and repulsion by watching my six-year-old son's response. At times he hid in terror behind my chair when Dracula attacked; but at the conclusion when Dracula has been defeated by the holy cross and impaled to the wall with a huge wooden shaft, he was vehemently angry with the men who killed him. Do we fear Dracula's evil as much as we are attracted to his dedication to do all he can to live as long as possible? Do we appreciate Mr. Hyde more than we do Dr. Jekyl? Similar questions and feelings are central to James, Dickens, and Bronte in the three novels under consideration.

The ambivalent feelings of Pip in Great Expectations and Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights are revealed by the elaborate revenge plots that are carried out in each novel, revenge aimed at the destruction of what each character most desires. In Portrait of a Lady the ambivalence is more subtle, for we are never certain

that the perversity Isabel attributes to herself is not masochism. She, Estella of Great Expectations, and Catherine Earnshaw of Wuthering Heights marry into unhappy situations in spite of warnings and self-doubts.

The key to understanding the full force of Pip's violent feelings is the use of the double in Great Expectations. I owe my understanding of this theme to the unpublished lectures of Professor A.J. Fritz of the University of Oklahoma which were based on an essay by Julian Moynahan.[3] He points out that at two crucial points in the novel we are made graphically aware of how much he wants revenge on Miss Havisham, but only through realizing the extended use of the doubles can we be made aware that he gains revenge on others as well.

Chapter One of this paper points out how the real and imaginative descriptions Pip gives of Satis House and Miss Havisham reveal his mixed emotions. Even more revealing is the violence of those emotions at the conclusion of Chapter VIII when Pip is waiting in the old brewery before going home. Already in love with Estella, Pip is nevertheless ashamed at being "beggared" and "played" with. He at first vents his rage on himself: "I got rid of my injured feelings for the time, by kicking them into the brewery wall, and twisting them out of my hair...." A few lines later his imagination takes revenge elsewhere: "It was in

this place, and at this moment, that a strange thing happened to my fancy....I turned my eyes -- a little dimmed by looking up at the frosty light -- towards a great wooden beam in a low nook of the building near me on my right hand, and I saw a figure hanging there by the neck. A figure all in yellow white with but one shoe to the feet; and it hung so, that I could see that the faded trimmings of the dress were like earthy paper, and that the face was Miss Havisham's with a movement going over the whole countenance as if she were trying to call me."[4]

Near the end of the novel in Chapter XLIX, Pip's love and hate for Miss Havisham are revealed. Miss Havisham confesses to Pip in this chapter about how badly she used him to train Estella to hate men for the wrongs Miss Havisham suffered by being jilted. Pip tells her it is all in the past and she should not "bemoan." His interior feelings are quite different: "And could I look upon her without compassion, seeing her punishment in the ruin she was, in her profound unfitness for this earth on which she was placed...?"[5] That he could is shown soon after when he wanders to the brewery where "A childish association revived with wonderful force in the moment of the slight action, and I fancied that I saw Miss Havisham hanging to the beam." He then returns to the house where he saw Miss Havisham move too close to the hearth and he "...saw a

great flaming light spring up." Grabbing his coat, he leaps on her to put out the fire, but the description reveals even more: "...We were on the ground struggling like desperate enemies, and the closer I covered her, the more wildly she shrieked and tried to free herself."[6] In spite of all these feelings, before he leaves the village to return to London he stops by Satis House where Miss Havisham lies insensible and "touched her lips with mine."[7]

The love-hate relationship between Pip and Miss Havisham is only a small part of his ambivalent feelings. Through the use of the double figures, Dickens allows Pip to get back at everyone who has, in Pip's mind, mistreated him. The main double throughout the novel is Orlick, whose hulking figure shadows Pip through the fog of the moors and the London streets. Dickens further complicates the plot by creating Bentley Drummle as a double for Orlick, and by extension, a double for Pip.[8]

A key point in Moynahan's argument in establishing Orlick as Pip's double is in Chapter LIII when Orlick has captured Pip and taken him to a lime kiln to kill him. Attempting to, however, he is moved to speech: "Wolf!" said he, folding his arms again, "Old Orlick's a-going to tell you somethink. It was you as did for your shrew sister....

"I tell you it was your doing - I tell you it was

done through you....I came upon her from behind....I giv'it her! I left her for dead... But it warn't Old Orlick as did it; it was you....Now you pays for it. You done it; now you pays for it."[9]

In Chapter XVI when Pip has first discovered the attack on his sister, Mrs. Joe, his reaction lends credence to Orlick's statement: "With my head full of George Barnwell, I was at first disposed to believe that I must have had some hand in the attack upon my sister, or at all events that as her near relation, popularly known to be under obligation to her, I was a more legitimate object of suspicion than any one else."[10]

That Orlick is Pip's double is, of course, substantiated by much more than the above passage: He and Pip both worked for Joe Gargery. Each loved Biddy. Orlick followed Pip to London. And in the conclusion, where Pip's convict-prisoner, Abel Magwitch, returns to London from Australia, each is part of the plot: Pip in trying to help him escape and Orlick in trying to thwart him.

The depth to which Dickens exploits this complicated double theme is strikingly illustrated by how he finally removes Orlick from the novel and by the symbolic association of Orlick with Bentley Drummle. His removal of Orlick is anticlimactic. Orlick's attack on Mrs. Joe, his attempted murder of Pip, and his other criminal activities would seem to demand severe punishment. He

will, as far as the reader knows, only be punished for his last crime, the robbery and harassment of Pumblechook. Joe Gargery describes the robbery: "...They took his till, and they took his cash-box, and they drinked his wine, and they partook of his wittles, and they slapped his face, and they pulled his nose, and they tied him up to his bedpost, and they give him a dozen, and they stuffed his mouth full of flowering annuals to prevent his crying out. But he knowed Orlick, and Orlick's in the county jail."[11] Pumblechook's misery is the last of Pip's revenges in the novel, for it was Pumblechook who first took him to Satis House and who always insisted on taking credit for Pip's "successes." Yet he is such an ineffectual, comic figure that justice must not be too severe. And since Orlick has been Pip's revenger, neither can he be punished too severely, for Pip is symbolically the guilty one.

The association of Dolge Orlick with Bentley Drummle is subtly and effectively done. Once when Pip and Biddy walked on the marsh they met Orlick: "When we came near the churchyard, we had to cross an embankment, and get over a stile near the sluice gate. There started up, from the gate, or from the rushes, or from the ooze...Old Orlick." Later in London, Dickens has Pip describe Drummle in like terms: "He would always creep in-shore like some uncomfortable amphibious creature."[12]

To carry through the plot, Drummle was a necessary creature for Dickens. When Pip moved to London to be educated as a gentleman, Dickens needed a double from a better educated class than Orlick represented because Orlick would not have been a plausible student. Also, a better educated double could be used in Pip's revenge on Estella. Estella, who has had no ability to love a man because of Mrs. Havisham's training, develops masochistic tendencies (a subject to be treated later) and married Drummle who beats her regularly until he is fortunately killed by a horse, nicely removing him from the plot. He is necessary only until Pip's most important revenge against his dearest love is accomplished.

In Wuthering Heights Heathcliff's revenge, springing from Catherine's rejection of him, is certainly more direct and open than Pip's, but in reality no more violent and brutal than his. Catherine accepts Edgar Linton's proposal in spite of uttering to Nelly Dean, "In my soul and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong." A few lines later she also says, "I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there [Hindley Earnshaw] had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now...."[13] Through her statements about her own unworthiness and Heathcliff's, Catherine creates the same kind of situation Havisham and Estella created for Pip. Estella's

statements about Pip's "commonness" are statements she was trained to say, however, whereas with Catherine the degradation she speaks of is felt experience. The weakness of Edgar and Isabella Linton is evident throughout, but surrounded by opulent security their life still seems "better" than life at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff overheard most of Catherine's speech and runs away, not returning until Catherine has been married and settled securely in "heaven" (Thrushcross Grange) three years later. From the moment of his return his revenge is ruthless and methodical. His primary aim is to degrade every member of the Linton and Earnshaw families, to strike back not only at Catherine and Edgar, but also at the generation after, at the whole system of class by birth. Yet it is the very fire of his hateful revenge that reveals the great depth of his love. At Catherine's deathbed the fury of the love and the revenge are symbolically expressed in the following passage:

> An instant they held asunder, and then how they met I hardly saw, but Catherine made a spring, and he caught her, and they were locked in an embrace from which I thought my mistress would never be released alive: in fact, to my eyes, she seemed directly insensible. He flung himself into the nearest seat, and on my approaching hurriedly to ascertain if she had fainted, he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not

> feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species: it appeared that he would not understand; so I stood off, and held my tongue, in great perplexity.[14]

Trying to achieve the intensity of love through the intensity of revenge is much like de Sade's character, Clément, trying to achieve the intensity of sexual excitement through all manners of perverse acts." ... One never tires of this mania notwithstanding the fact it is a very pale image of what one should really like to do."[15] Heathcliff suffers much the same fate. The revenge falls short of ever satisfying him, and he is left without his love, also.

Isabel Archer will end up as alone as Heathcliff and Pip, but her situation comments on theirs by contrast. Isabel suffered no pain from Gilbert before she married him. She was not degraded, but, in fact, she felt "upgraded." Gilbert represents culture to her, the fineness of the past. He is, at first, the essence of what she seeks, an ability to live in appreciation of the past. When she discovers he is only veneer, and a cheap one at that, she becomes alone in her isolated, painful meditation just as Pip and Heathcliff do. My question of Portrait becomes, then, a question of why she does not seek revenge against Osmond. Isabel gives part of the answer in the discussion with Casper Goodwood before her marriage to Gilbert Osmond.

> He went on making no exclamation, no comment only asking questions, doing it quite without delicacy. "Who and what then is Mr. Gilbert Osmond?" "Who and what? Nobody and nothing but a very good and very honourable man. He's not in business," said Isabella. "He's not very rich; he's not known for anything in particular."
>
> "...Where does he come from? Where does he belong?"
>
> "...He comes from nowhere. He has spent most of his life in Italy."
>
> "You said in your letter he was American. Hasn't he a native place?"
>
> "Yes, but he has forgotten it. He left it as a small boy."
>
> "Has he never gone back?"
>
> "Why should he go back?" Isabel asked, flushing all defensively. "He has no profession."
>
> "He might have gone back for his pleasure. Doesn't he like the United States?"

The conversation continues in this vein until Isabel says, "Give me up, Mr. Goodwood; I am marrying a perfect nonetity. Don't try to take an interest in him. You can't."[16]

In the passages, the italics are mine because the complex irony used by James to develop Isabel is partially revealed here. By trying to put Goodwood off, Isabel describes Gilbert as she will later come to know him, a nobody whose only power over Isabel lies in having guessed right about her character. Isabel abhors passion because she is afraid of it. She has suffered no real pain in her life and she will avoid it as long as possible.

In the next chapter more of this is revealed to her aunt. She asks of her aunt, "Why shouldn't I like Mr. Osmond, since others have done so?"

"Others, at their wildest moments, never wanted to marry him. There's nothing of him." Mrs. Touchett explained.

"Then he can't hurt me," said Isabel.[17]

Isabel is correct. He, finally, can't hurt her, but she will hurt greatly. Once she sees that she has deliberately blinded herself to his nothingness, she will have to turn inward to face her own motives. She has throughout the novel the freedom and the money to seek out her own life and she chooses nothing. The conversations recorded above are too loaded for us to deny that she actually sought nothingness in spite of her other assertion that it is the life of Europe she has come to find. James clues us several times throughout the novel as he has the narrator, Ralph, Mrs. Touchett, others, and even Isabel herself describe Isabel as "perverse." One of his clearest descriptions of her strange bent of mind and will comes as the narrator describes her once during Osmond's courtship as she becomes aware of her attraction to him after he leaves.

> On this he took rapid, respectful leave. When he had gone she stood for a moment looking about her and seated herself slowly and with an air of deliberation. She sat there till her companions came back, with folded hands, gazing at the ugly

> carpet. Her agitation -- for it had diminished -- was still very, very deep. What had happened was something that for a week past her imagination had been going forward to meet; but here, when it came, she stopped -- that sublime principle somehow -- broke down. The working of this young lady's spirit was strange, and I can only give it to you as I see it, not hoping to make it seem altogether natural. Her imagination, as I say, now hung back; there was a last vague space it couldn't cross -- a dusky, uncertain tract which looked ambiguous and even slightly treacherous, like a moorland seen in the winter twilight. But she was to cross it yet.[18]

James packed that passage. Her future relationship with Osmond is connected to the ugly carpet and to the barrenness of the winter moor. And connected to the problem is that unnatural quality of her spirit, that perversity which determines so much of what she does. It becomes true that the later marriage becomes as an ugly carpet and a winter moor. What she avoids is revealed in a last encounter with Casper Goodwood, who tries to convince her not to return to Rome with Gilbert Osmond.

> "You don't know where to turn. Turn straight to <u>me</u>. I want to persuade you to trust me," Goodwood repeated...."Why should you go back -- why should you go through that ghastly form?"
>
> "To get away from <u>you</u>!" she answered. But this expressed only

> a little of what she felt. The rest was that she had never been loved before. She had believed it, but this was different; this was the hot wind of the desert, at the approach of which the others dropped dead, like mere sweet airs of the garden. It wrapped her about; it lifted her off her feet, while the very taste of it, as of something potent, acrid and strange, forced open her set teeth.[19]

Her choices at this point are opposite, Osmond's winter moor or Goodwood's hot wind of the desert. The first is not what she claims to be seeking but what she chooses; the second, she feels, is death if she should give in to it. When Goodwood kisses her a few minutes later the imagery changes and she feels as if she is drowning.

Therein lies the connection and literary relationship of Pip, Isabel, and Heathcliff. Their respective motives differ, but the overall metaphors show us three young nineteenth century characters who avoid love (especially sexual love) throughout the novels. Pip and Heathcliff seek the unattainable, and Isabel cleverly deludes herself. If we are not careful with these three characters, we might become critical of them, for they do not fit our western tradition of love. They do not share their lives in love with others, and we have too often come to accept that kind of love as the ideal, happy ending. These three are survivors, not lovers. Pip may want Estella, but he hates her as much

as he wants her. Neither he nor Heathcliff ever fully understands how the love each claims he wants is death. Heathcliff literally seeks it in death; Pip is death-in-life by removing himself to Egypt where he can clerk out his life with no more personal complications. Only Isabel seems to understand the personal freedom she has managed to retain by not dedicating herself to a lover.

What is amazing is that in many readers' normal, natural, or traditional terms, Pip and Heathcliff seem to be the more acceptable symbols. Isn't one supposed to give his all for love? Yet in the name of love they perpetrate murder. Isabel is, of course, perverse by the same standards, yet she perpetrates no crimes. What we really have in these novels is what we have in most good novels -- no norms. These three novels may seem more normal than Justine, but they are not. In all three we deal with attitudes toward love that show us, in two, the real destructiveness of what man can do when he releases his passions in the name of love and in the other, Portrait of a Lady, how struggling against these same passions can allow one to maintain personal integrity only at the risk of being labelled unnatural.

So in Kenneth Burke's terms what are the admonitions, exhortations, and implicit commands of these authors on the subjects of ambivalence, revenge, and love? One

conclusion based on the endings of the novels is that there is no home on this earth for Pip and Heathcliff. They are too strongly moved in two directions at once. Love is life and love is death at one and the same time. But the converse is not true, and only James allows his character this realization so that Isabel can go on living in that painful world of the mind between the winter moor and the desert.

Endnotes

[1] Inder Nath Kher, The Landscape of Absence: Emily Dickenson's Poetry, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 75.

[2] Dracula Meets the Master of the Sky. Unfortunately my copy of this comic is lost and I have been unable to obtain bibliographic information.

[3] Julian Moynahan, "The Hero's Guilt," Discussion of Charles Dickens,(Boston: D.C. Heath, 1961), pp.82-92.

[4] GE, pp.63-64.

[5] GE, pp. 404-405.

[6] GE, p. 407.

[7] GE, p. 409.

[8] Moynahan, p. 89.

[9] Moynahan, p. 85.

[10] Moynahan, p. 89.

[11] Moynahan, p. 89.

[12] Moynahan, p. 89.

[13] WH, pp. 93-95.

[14] WH, pp. 188-189.

[15] The Marquis de Sade, Justine, published in The Marquis de Sade: The Complete Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and other Writings, Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse, trans. (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p.598.

[16] PL, p. 305.

[17] PL, p. 309.

[18] PL, p. 290.

[19] PL, p. 541.

CHAPTER IV

THE MONEY METAPHOR

Part of the great error lying behind the characters' ambivalence is their inability to interpret the role of money correctly. Wordsworth's famous poetic statement, "Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers," is an early nineteenth century expression of the concern about money.[1] We should note that he does not say we must waste our powers; his is a simple assertion that we do waste them. Money was a new social power for the nineteenth century, and a good part of the three novelists' concern was to establish fictional situations which defined the role of money in their cultures. Traditionally, three young orphans would not have considered it possible to aspire to a higher place on the social ladder than the ones they held; but by making money available to them, the authors can explore the problems and possibilities of such aspirations.

Arnold Hauser's description of money in French society after 1830 becomes an apt description of what has happened to make it possible for Pip, Heathcliff, and Isabel to move outside their traditional place in society.

> Money dominates the whole of public and private life, everything bows before it, everything serves it, everything is prostituted -- exactly or almost, as Balzac described it. It is true that the rule of capital does not in any sense begin now, but hitherto the possession of money had been only one of the means by which a man had been able to gain a position for himself in France, and neither the most refined nor the most effective method either. Now, on the other hand, all rights, all power, all ability are expressed in terms of money. In order to be understood everything has to be reduced to this common denominator.[2]

In Life Against Death, Norman O. Brown develops the sociological place of money in greater detail than Hauser, but his argument is in quite different terms. Brown first pinpoints what he believes has been our dilemma in understanding the sociological role of money. "At a more philosophic level, sociology... correctly says that money reflects and promotes a style of thinking which is abstract, impersonal, objective and quantitative, that is to say, the style of thinking of modern science -- and what can be more rational than that?"[3] He proceeds to point out that, if this were true, our understanding of money would be greatly simplified. But we can't simplify the process because money is also a sacred "thing."

> Money remains anchored in the domain of the secular. And since the essence of modern rationalism

> as a whole is simply autonomy from religion, money as secular is also rational.
>
> But this static contrast of the sacred and the secular as mutually exclusive is misleading because it is undialectical. The secular is the negation of the sacred, and both Freud's and Hegel's negation affirms its own opposites. The psychological realities here are best grasped in terms of theology, and were already grasped by Luther. Modern secularism, and its companion Protestantism, do not usher in an era in which human consciousness is liberated from supernatural manifestations; the essence of the Protestant (or capitalist) era is that the power over this world has passed from God to God's negation, God's ape, the Devil. And already Luther had seen in money the essence of the secular and therefore of the demonic. The money complex is therefore the heir to and substitute for the religious complex, an attempt to find God in things.[4]

Money, according to Brown, further became part of the psychological sacred realm because it became power.

> At a deeper level, the hidden middle term connecting money and the whole domain of the sacred is power (social power). The ultimate category of economics is power; but power is not an economic category. Marx fills up the emergent gap in his theory with the concept of force (violence) - i.e. by conceiving power as a material reality. We have argued elsewhere that this is a crucial mistake; power is in essence a psychological category. And to pursue that tracks of power, we will have to enter the domain of the sacred, and map it; all power is essentially sacred power.[5]

If both Hauser and Brown are correct in applying

their notions to the nineteenth century, the authors under discussion should have had to deal with the paradox that money is the thing made God in the minds or emotions of man. We can all recognize and rationally deal with money as a thing, but we have never quite adequately dealt with why a man feels bigger and more powerful with his pockets full of money or why he becomes so threatened and paranoid when his pockets are empty. I have seen the loss of pocketbooks totally destroy the equilibrium of otherwise sane men and women. I have seen children understand at an early age that they can walk straight and tall if their pockets jingle a little (jingle that is if they haven't also learned to keep their hands in their pockets and grasp their power tightly). Money has become magic to us.

De Sade presents the paradox well in Justine. Justine is our model of virtue, one who claims to be safe in her knowledge of God. Yet when she is captive in the monastery it is the money she has accumulated that gives her the most peace of mind. "When they had taken my old belongings, I had been careful, as I told you, to remove my little fortune which came to about six louis, and these I had always kept hidden with extreme caution; as I left, I put them into my hair...."[6]

By the time we get to Bronte, Dickens, and James at mid-nineteenth century, the basic metaphor is economic. The action of the three novels is based on

money as power, not merely the power to satisfy hunger and ward off cold, but the power, as well, to guarantee love, to become a gentleman or a lady, or be refined and cultured, to be happy. In each of the novels, the material opportunities are realized, but the emotional bliss is denied.

Arnold Kettle has one of the best economic discussions of Wuthering Heights, an essay that helps us realize how the novel can be at once sociologically realistic yet almost supernaturally surrealistic at the same time.[7] If we follow his advice, we can recognize Lockwood, the narrator, as a naive Victorian who quite by accident is afforded a view of the "hatred, conflict, and horror" that lay behind Victorian complacency.[8] To Kettle, Wuthering Heights is concretely about England in 1847 with "nothing misty about its realism."[9] He is one of the few critics to see that Bronte is much like Dickens in her symbolic approach to writing.[10]

Wuthering Heights is a novel about social revolution. Heathcliff left Wuthering Heights in degredation, but he returned with money. That he came back with enough to "retire" and devote all his time to his revenge doesn't tell us where he obtained it, but does tell us that he knew what he needed and that he went after it with the same fierce dedication he shows in every other action. He obviously had the realization that money was the source of power, not class. With this power he destroyed the two families "with their own weapons

of money and arranged marriages."[11]

Why was the little, black urchin brought into the household by Mr. Earnshaw in the first place? Nelly Dean's remembrances give us only a partial answer: "The master tried to explain the matter; but he was really half dead with fatigue...."[12] She understood it to be a matter of kindness and let it go at that. Yet Mr. Earnshaw named the boy Heathcliff after a son who had died. Furthermore, "He took to Heathcliff strangely, believing all he said...., and petting him up far above Cathy."[13]

The idea possibly came to Bronte from understanding her own father who took a serious interest in the social changes of his day and special interest in the cottagers.[14] He likely understood and talked to his children about the subject. It was his habit to keep them aware of social issues, even when they were very young.

> ...Her[Aunt Bromwell's] bedroom became their classroom. Here they read their lessons, sewed their samplers and learnt to turn collars and cuffs of shirts and dresses. But here too they were encouraged to read and discuss current affairs. Through newspapers and journals, often supposedly in appropriate material for young children, through Blackwoods, The Lady's Magazine and all kinds of pamphlets, religious and otherwise, the children were introduced to a wide variety of writing. In this, Aunt Bromwell reinforced Patrick's habit of including the children in discussion of events of the time through which they were living, for not only did he maintain an interest in military campaigns, the business of the houses of parliament, but he also drew the

> matters to the children's attention, expecting and encouraging them to become well-informed and able to express opinions founded upon knowledge.
>
> Many commentators have been impressed by this unusual habit, and the older children's ability to discourse at length on affairs of the day became legendary with the servants and acquaintances of the family.[15]

The family was also aware, first hand, of economic hardships of the day. Patrick Bronte had worked his way up from poverty until he earned a reasonably comfortable salary, but he had little security beyond that. "Patrick Bronte was not a rich man, he had no private source of income, no property and no rich relations. His own struggle for education had brought him to Haworth, he now faced the harder struggle of providing for the children and securing for them the means, should the necessity arise, of earning their own living."[16]

In reading Bronte, then, we are reading an author well-read and well-practiced in dealing with the harsher side of life in the nineteenth century. Even though she would die young, she lived long enough to see her family destroyed by sickness and death. I can see how it was not a long leap in imagination for someone of her sensitivity to realize the potential of characterizing all the undercurrent of violence in her times and turning it loose within a given setting, especially if that society was running complacently along believing

that order was assigned according to class structure and not realizing that the great equalizer had already arrived -- money.

Nelly Dean, trying to console Heathcliff after he felt rejected by Catherine in favor of Thrushcross Grange, plants the first notion in his head of money as power. At this time Heathcliff knew nothing of envy according to her: "The notion of envying Catherine was incomprehensible to him...." But with her prompting he soon becomes aware of envy. "I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he [Edgar Linton] will be!" She consoles him with "You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together?" Before he feels the rejection of him is final, Heathcliff is already aware of what he needs in order to be "equal" to Edgar Linton. At the time Dean tells him this, he is placated. "...And Heathcliff gradually lost his frown and began to look quite pleasant."[17]

After Heathcliff returns from his three-year absence, his climb to power is expressed totally in a money metaphor. He comes back with money that he uses to gamble with Hindley Earnshaw until Earnshaw

is mortgaged heavily to pay the losses. The duel is strictly money versus property and money wins. The metaphor reminds me of the stories of the weakling who runs away only to return after he has mastered the art of hand-to-hand fighting or weapons such as pistols and swords. Once home, the ex-weakling challenges the bully to a fight or a duel and kills him. In the case under discussion, Heathcliff has mastered money as a powerful weapon, but not as a means to obtain happiness with Catherine.

Dickens and James rely just as heavily as Bronte on money as a central symbol in the plot. Pip, like Heathcliff, always referred to by a single name even though we know the whole name in this novel, is born with nothing, but born in an age where money seemingly can make all things possible. His first encounter with the upper class, personified by the yellow, moldy Miss Havisham, is being brought to play with Estella. For all his playing he is paid twenty-five guineas, but he receives it indirectly since it is given to Joe Gargery as Pip's indenture fee. Thus he is bought and sold all at once. Only Joe Gargery understands this should not be so, for he refuses, in a scene that is painfully embarrassing to Pip, to speak to Miss Havisham when he and Pip stand before her to be paid for Pip's services. All his responses to her questions are to Pip. When Havisham presents the money, Gargery

receives it from Pip as a gift, not as a bondage. "This is very liberal on your part, Pip," said Joe, "and it is as such received and grateful welcome, though never looked for, far nor near nor nowheres."[18]

Later, after four years of blacksmith apprenticeship, Pip is again put on the block when Joe is informed by the lawyer, Jaggers, "that he [Pip] has Great Expectations." But Jaggers does not talk of this until he has cleared what it will cost to cancel his indentures. Again, Joe refuses to put the relationship in terms of money. The great expectations, though, will still be worded as an indenture.

> "I am instructed to communicate to him [Pip]," said Mr. Jaggers, throwing his finger at me sideways, "that he will come into a handsome property. Further, that it is the desire of the present possessor of the property, that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman -- in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations."
>
> "...Now, Mr. Pip," pursued the lawyer, "I address the rest of what I have to say, to you. You are to understand, first, that it is the request of the person from whom I take my instructions, that you always bear the name of Pip. You will have no objection, I dare say, to your great expectations being encumbered with that easy condition. But if you have any objection, this is the time to mention it."[19]

And Pip had no objection since he believed more than what was said; he believed the fantasy world he had created about Miss Havisham and Estella was coming true.

Symbolically, Dickens shows here that Pip has sold his very identity; he will forevermore be Pip, not a name, just a sound.

He will continue with his money to try to buy his way into class. One of his most revealing buys is in this following passage:

> I had begun to be always decorating the chambers in some quite unnecessary and inappropriate way or other, and very expensive those wrestles with Barnard proved to be. By this time, his rooms were vastly different from what I had found them, and I enjoyed the honour of occupying a few prominent pages in the books of a neighboring upholsterer. I had got on so fast of late, that I had even started a boy in boots -- top boots -- in bondage and slavery to whom I might be said to pass my days. For, after I had made this monster (out of the refuse of my washerwoman's family) and had clothed him with a blue coat, canary waistcoat, white cravat, creamy breeches, and the boots already mentioned, I had to find him a little to do and a great deal to eat; and with both of these horrible requirements he haunted my existence.[20]

Dickens allows Pip to make two important admissions here, even though the admissions are made with comical irony. First, the central sentence about bondage and slavery can be read two ways, both the Avenger (Pip's name for the boy) and Pip are in bondage and slavery to one another. Secondly, Pip, in his own words, has

created a monster. In view of Pip's own violent nature discussed in the previous chapter, the term monster is not to be taken lightly. Pip himself has become monstrous, so much so that when Joe Gargery visits him in his London rooms, Joe is unable to understand the relationship between Pip and the boy. He can't understand why the Avenger is not treated as a member of the group at tea. A third admission, of course, is in Pip's name for the boy, Avenger. Pip, too, is a nameless, created person, created out of what he now treats as refuse -- the blacksmith's shop -- and he, too, is an avenger through his doubles.

Later in the novel with the death of his benefactor, the criminal Magwitch, Pip will lose all his expectations, for the money and property will be appropriated in the name of the crown. With the loss of Magwitch and his expectations, which included his expectation that he and Estella were still destined for one another, Pip falls into a deep fever where he "confounded impossible existence with my own identity; that I was a brick in the house wall, and yet entreating to be released from the giddy place where the builders had set me; that I was a steel beam of a vast engine, clashing and whirling over a gulf, and yet that I implored in my own person to have the engine stopped, and my part in it hammered off...."[21] Each of the images, the brick and the steel beam, is industrial and inanimate.

In his feverish dreams, Pip sees himself as helpless material that has been shaped by forces beyond his control. Thus Dickens, through Pip, is able to link Pip and money and the industrial revolution all in one package. Pip will soon have his part in it hammered off.[22]

After his illness but still in despair, Pip tries to return home to Biddy, only to discover that she has married Joe Gargery on the very day of his return. His despair is in the statement "My first thought was one of great thankfulness that I had never breathed this last baffled hope to Joe."[23] "Within a month, I had quitted England, and within two months I was clerk to Clarriker and Co."[24]

For me the novel proper ends when Pip "hammers off" his part in society and removes himself to Cairo. He will earn enough to become a company partner and he will return eleven years later to visit Joe and Biddy who have a son they named Pip (a damnable name for the boy considering the bleakness of the novel), and he will have a chance once more to see Estella. But Dickens finished the character when he left for Egypt. Pip has been bought and sold for the last time, and Dickens has given us a most pessimistic look at the new world where money has become all values.

James might well have dubbed Portrait of a Lady as a second novel about great expectations. Like Pip, Isabel receives a windfall that will allow her freedom

from work and want. R.P. Blackmur sums up the novel:

> But first we had better put compactly what the novel is about. Isabel Archer is given the chance to do what she can with her life, thanks to her uncle's surprising bequest of some seventy thousand pounds. Everybody tampers with Isabel, and it is hard to say whether her cousin Ralph Touchett, who had arranged the bequest, or the Prince, Gilbert Osmond, who married her because of it, tampers the more deeply. At any rate, the whole novel shows how people tamper with one another because of motives that pass like money between them. The story of the book is the story of Isabel's increasing awareness of the meaning of the relations between herself and her husband, her husband's ex-mistress Madame Merle, and the young girl Pansy Osmond (who passes as the child of the first Mrs. Osmond but is really Gilbert's daughter by Madame Merle). The money is at the center of these relations.[25]

My personal view of the novel at first agreed completely with Blackmur's and still does, for the most part. But the question of who tampers most, Ralph Touchett or Gilbert Osmond, troubled me because it seemed too clear an answer. I think finally that the great love between Ralph and Isabel convinced me that tamper is not quite the word for what he does for her. What we must realize is that Ralph and Isabel are second-generation Americans who are buying their future in the European past. As I pointed out in an earlier chapter,

the Uncle has bought his European spot and now sits crippled in his wheelchair dying in an atmosphere he very much loves. His son, too, is dying, and his wife is a bright, active woman who has become emotionally brittle trying to fill her time by jumping from continent to continent. Isabel is symbolically Ralph's spirit continuing for the family in place of Ralph.

In a London square Isabel and Ralph have the following conversation: Ralph tells Isabel, "You've got a great many friends that I don't know. You've a whole past from which I was perversely excluded."

Isabel responds, "You were reserved for my future. You must remember that my past is over there across the water. There's none of it here in London."

Ralph answers, "Very good, then, since your future is seated beside you. Capital thing to have your future so handy."[26]

Even in such a brief conversation, James is able to stress ironically the importance of money with "capital thing." With Touchett money, Isabel, the orphan, becomes the Touchett family in the second stage. She is the only one of the four who has both the energy and the imagination to probe further and deeper into Europe, seeking that ineffable something that the family tried to buy. She, then, receives the money that would have gone to Ralph; he keeps the house which becomes the place where she will come back to report to him. Her relationship with Ralph is early

developed in Chapter XV as very complicated. As they sit and talk, he constantly tries to get her to define for him what she feels and what she said to herself before a decision. He wants inside her thoughts and feelings. He describes himself when she asks if he means to propose to her: "By no means. From the point of view I speak of that would be fatal; I should kill the goose that supplies me with the material of my inimitable omelettes. I use that animal as the symbol of my insane illusions."[27] (Again we see Jamesian irony in the use of goose, often a symbol of stupidity.)

If we step back from the novel, then, we can see the two stages easily. Touchett established a beachhead in Europe, but the family's future, Ralph, is too crippled and ill to go further. He and the father die there. Isabel, as agent operating for herself but also for Ralph, penetrates further into Europe. However, irony of ironies, she married an ex-American who is there before her, Gilbert Osmond. He has found the Europe he wants but he needs more money to possess it: Isabel becomes his goose as well as Ralph's. Now he can continue to try to buy Europe and, furthermore, hopefully to marry his daughter to Lord Warburton so as to become European by family connection. Osmond has become a hard man without Ralph's sensitivity and love. Ralph wished to appreciate; Osmond, to possess; Isabel, to know. They all tried to purchase their

wishes.

But this is not simply a novel about the ugly American, even though Ralph is described in just those terms as we have seen. Portrait of a Lady is a novel about the mistake of believing life is a novel where emotions and desires can be controlled to a satisfactory conclusion. Each of the above men tried to manipulate Isabel so that he would get the desired emotional satisfaction. Neither gets his wishes because Isabel grows beyond his expectations. Osmond is left with cold anger toward her, and Ralph almost believes he ruined her. Even though Isabel is able to ameliorate that notion somewhat, he does die wishing her to stay at Gardencourt, possibly in the belief she will be safer there.

To comply with the rules of his own novel, James cannot leave her safe at Gardencourt, nor assure us that she will resign herself to Rome. He cannot, as Bronte did in Wuthering Heights, gives us a conclusion that pretends the future is brighter. Neither can he insist that Isabel will have a better future by prospering through diligence and hard work as Dickens does with Pip. Isabel simply disappears from the novel as the narrator chooses not to give us an answer or any assurances of her future. We are done with her. We have seen her exposed nerve endings as she battles between the will to live and the desire to die; the

wish to believe in herself and the belief that she cannot believe in herself.

Portrait of a Lady provides an interesting contrast to Dracula. Dracula, because he had the position and the money, came out of the East and attacked the West (Lucy Westenra = Lucy Western). The Europeans with the help of an American joined forces, drove him back, and killed him. The West was made safe from the Eastern Past. In Portrait, all the central characters, except Lord Warburton, are Westerners; and even Warburton has liberal leanings toward the West. The Westerners are buying Europe -- property in England and property in Rome. Yet they wind up dissatisfied, knowing they found something but not understanding why it is not enough. They are not a part of what they have. Whereas Dracula could make his victims share in his blood, the Americans in Portrait cannot have blood sharing with Europe. In other words, James shows that it is impossible for Osmond or anyone not European to be European. Neither is Europe a place to go where one will find life by simply buying its blood. Europe is Europe and one can only come to find it, not to find himself.

Pip and Heathcliff, of course, do not contend with this problem of trying to buy Europe, but they do try to buy their goals. Thus, all three books deal with Hauser's common denominator, and all three main characters show the confusion Brown attributes to the mixed

secular-sacred power of money. Money buys what one pays for. Money as a tool can make mistakes a concrete reality. Pip can buy clothes and pretend to be a gentleman, but he cannot buy noble blood or spirit. Pip and Heathcliff never quite see that there is no abstract goal for them to attain by following money. The end is more money, some money, and no money. Estella and Catherine are subject to the same common denominator as they are and are unattainable as ideals. Part of the reason why neither Isabel nor Pip nor Heathcliff can go back is that each bought what he/she has. All three give up the struggle at the end and refuse to buy more.

Endnotes

[1] "The World Is Too Much With Us; Late And Soon," l.2, p. 349.

[2] Arnold Hauser, Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age, Vol. IV of The Social History of Art, (New York: Vintage Books, 1951), p. 10.

[3] Norman O.Brown, Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), p. 234.

[4] Brown, p. 240.

[5] Brown, p. 249.

[6] de Sade, pp. 622-623.

[7] Arnold Kettle, "Emily Bronte: Wuthering Heights" in Twentieth Century Interpretation of Wuthering Heights, ed. by Thomas A. Vogler, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 28-43.

[8] Kettle, p. 30.

[9] Kettle, p. 28.

[10] Kettle, p. 29.

[11] Kettle, p. 38.

[12] WH, p. 43.

[13] WH, p. 44.

[14] Brian Wilks, The Brontes, (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 11 ff.

[15] Wilks, p. 40.

[16] Wilks, p. 40.

[17] WH, pp. 65-67.

[18] GE, p. 102.

[19] GE, p. 139.

[20] GE, pp. 220-221.

[21] Dickens, p. 470.

[22] Moynahan, p. 92.

[23] GE, p. 486.

[24] GE, p. 488.

[25] R.P. Blackmur, "Introduction," The Portrait of a Lady, (New York: Dell, 1961), p. 5.

[26] PL, p. 140.

[27] PL, p. 143.

CHAPTER V

THE ORPHAN AND INCEST

An orphan's curse would drag to hell/
A spirit from on high.[1]

> The novel becomes the leading literary genre..., because it gives the most comprehensive and profound expression to the cultural problem of the age -- the antithesis between individualism and society. In no other form do the antagonisms of bourgeois society make themselves felt so intensely, in none are the struggles and defeats of the individual described so thrillingly. It is not without reason that Friedrich Schlegel called the novel the romantic genre par excellence. Romanticism sees in it the most satisfactory representation of the conflict between the individual and the world, dreams and real life, poetry and prose, and the deepest expression of the acquiescence which it regards as the only solution of this conflict.[2]

The above quotations from Samuel Coleridge and Arnold Hauser highlight the focus of this chapter, a focus on the orphan, a central if not the central metaphor of the nineteenth century. In a social structure where one's place has for centuries been determined by his name, the orphan figure in post-romantic revolutionary Europe offered writers a symbol of the new order.

Furthermore, in the three novels under consideration, the involvement of the orphan figures in incestuous circumstances complicates their attempts to be happy within the boundaries society will allow.

Morse Peckham in Beyond The Tragic Vision establishes that the West has had two Christs, not one -- Jesus and Plato. The new philosophies from the Enlightenment displaced both figures. On the one hand, Peckham states that the individual's self became his Christ. On the other hand, a sense of the vast disorders in the world plus man's acceptance of the real world, the natural world, as good in itself will eventually replace Plato's world of the order of plenitude and the ideal.[3] Born into a world, then, without these two Christs to determine our relationships to both the mystical and the real worlds, each person becomes an orphan in the universe who must work out his personal and social identity.

Henry Fielding toyed with the notion of the orphan in Tom Jones. By placing the seeming orphan in English society, he was able to identify the problems of namelessness. Tom is liked and loved, but nothing is ever expected of him except that he behave and stay in his place. When he doesn't, he is chased throughout England, finally landing in prison. However, Fielding cheerfully allows his true identity to become known -- he was only illegitimate, not truly an orphan. He has a name and a

place; he can be freed. That he is a bastard, a fact which would have condemned him in the Renaissance as unnatural and therefore evil, is of no great consequence in an enlightened world since he is a bastard from a good family.

What Tom also escapes by being only a bastard is any real need for self-identification. He will move into his new role already defined by the world around him. The definition of Tom by the social structure is at once Fielding's optimism and pessimism. Tom's fate is, after all, a happy ending; but this writer gets a slight feeling Fielding is whispering, "But what if?" The nineteenth-century novel with its many orphans will illustrate the what if's.

Morse Peckham provides one summation of the orphan in literature of the nineteenth century: "The orphan, the illegitimate child, the foundling are literary figures used again and again to symbolize social alienation when the author is after the uniqueness of the self and its opposition to the social role."[4] It is this idea coupled with Hauser's earlier quotation that I will apply to the three novels under consideration, partially to see if Peckham is right about his book when he concludes, "It [Beyond The Tragic Vision] was not made to explain the past; it was made to relate certain major documents and artifacts which appeared during a crucial period in human history, and in turn relate them to

others which I have not mentioned. It was made to make those artifacts and documents, which are all that truly exist, more comprehensible."[5]

Schlegel's statement in Hauser's quote can be supported on simple grounds. The general use of the term Romanticism suggests to most people the five great English poets: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. Others will throw in Kant and Schopenhauer. Those who do include novelists would probably think of such figures as Scott, or on the American side, Cooper, Melville, and Hawthorne. All the above are, of course, the most romantic of romantics, but I would have to class them all, to borrow a word from Peckham, as "explorers." All of them, especially the poets and philosophers, were engaged in finding how far romanticism could be stretched. In so doing, they gave their readers forms, situations, and characters who define but with whom they would have difficulty identifying. Ahab, Manfred, Prometheus, the Ancient Mariner, Wordsworth's "Commoners" and his own poetic character -- all of them establish the possibilities of this new world ranging from the simple to the bizarre. We can look back less than 200 years to study them and feel how we made it from Napoleon through Hitler, but the us we find is in a generalized, universal sense. Novelists like Bronte, Dickens, and James show us how Romanticism works on a day-to-day existence with rather ordinary

people, including Heathcliff. Through their works, we can begin to feel the reality of romanticism and realize the large readership for psychologic and psychiatric authors, especially those who liberally sprinkle in specific cases, is an historical inevitability. A Romantic writer reflects upon experience to find self. Romantic readers go to romantic writers, and the psychoanalytical pop writer of the seventies is the latest of the line stretching back to Wordsworth with a difference -- the psychoanalyst has files full of confessions that need only to be strung together with transitions. Each of these writers is intent on giving us methods whereby each of us can become his own romantic writer and establish his self and his social role: an admirable goal, but wicked in the doing. Pip shows us that.

Pip is a romantic from his beginning. In the first chapter of Great Expectations, Dickens portrays how man may be "born" more than once, but first he establishes without a doubt that our character is an orphan.

> My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrup, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and

> that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.[6]

A key phrase in this passage is "at such a time I found out for certain...." The phrase assures that his search for the graves was a deliberate act, and the certainty in such a setting is fierce. But the spell is broken by the escaped convict who accosts him the next instant, threatens him, and turns him upside down to search him. I am reminded at this point of a birth scene where the baby is forced into the outside world and immediately, among the other shocks, turned upside down and spanked. I am also reminded of Karl Menninger's statement that the baby is born with fear and hate as his first natural reactions of this world.[7]

What Dickens has established in Chapter One is a birth scene, Pip's "first most vivid and broad impression." Importantly, the scene is created as birth and not rebirth. Pip's identity is born here and his first actions will be to help an escaped criminal escape. Thus, guilt will be added to his burden of fear. By setting all the action in the churchyard, Dickens establishes obliquely that Pip's fear and guilt are only unusual by circumstances,

for the church has depended on establishing these emctions within its members for centuries. Otherwise, the church plays almost no role throughout the novel.

The futility of Pip's search to be happy, then, is established clearly in the first chapter. He is born; he finds self. However, the self he finds -- fearful, alone -- becomes so mixed with guilt, a feeling constantly reinforced by the sister who begrudgingly rears him, that it is not a self he will like or admire. Pip has already been duped into letting those outside him determine his values. The result of the struggle is disastrous. The Pip we meet in the first few sentences of the novel is bright, sensitive, and curious. He wants to know who he is. His worth will never be completely hidden from the reader, but to Pip it is lost as the fear and guilt manifest themselves in revenge after revenge throughout the novel.

Heathcliff's fate very much parallels Pip's. Although he could be a wild, undisciplined child, he retains a cheerful, kind outlook toward everyone except Hindley until Catherine rejects him because he has been "degraded." At this point he disappears for three years and returns more handsome than ever, more gentlemanly in appearance than before, and dedicated to revenge. His desire for total revenge comes only after he is

driven from the Linton house by Edgar Linton and his hired help. The action came at the time Catherine had argued him into despair and nearly convinced him not to marry Isabella Linton merely for revenge. From that point on Heathcliff takes pity on no one.

Yet there is obviously an essential difference between Pip and Heathcliff. The difference is that, whereas Pip will let us know of his violent emotions only in retrospect, Heathcliff generally gives vent to his emotions. Heathcliff is not dishonest. He is able to verbalize his emotions, to let those around him see and hear his inner rages and to accept from them their raging back at him. Life with Heathcliff can be an intense hell, but it is real and honest.

The honesty is Heathcliff's unreality to the reader. He rejects, except sometimes in cruelty, hiding his passionate inner self behind social conventions, as Pip does. The Pip in Wuthering Heights is Lockwood the narrator, and Bronte is pitiless in her portrayal of him. Lockwood is the one who refuses to verbalize, to explore what he feels.

> While enjoying a month of fine weather at the seacoast, I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature: a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. I "never told my love" vocally: still, if looks have language, the merest idiot might have guessed I was over

> head and ears: she understood
> me at last, and looked a return
> -- the sweetest of all imaginable
> looks. And what did I do? I
> confess it with shame -- shrunk
> icily into myself, like a snail;
> at every glance retired colder
> and farther, till finally the
> poor innocent was led to doubt
> her own senses, and, overwhelmed
> with confusion at her supposed
> mistake, persuaded her mama to
> decamp. By this curious turn
> of disposition I have gained
> the reputation of deliberate
> heartlessness; how undeserved,
> I alone can appreciate.[8]

This dispassionate narrator who has come to Wuthering Heights to get away from people can well present to us what he sees and hears, but he stolidly refuses to learn from it. At best, he will feel a vague sense of loss now and then, but not so deeply that he can't shrug it off and justify his life in terms of social convention.

Heathcliff is an historical type with characteristics resembling Shakespeare's Hotspur or Wycherly's Manly in The Plain Dealer, but he has also been affected by Romanticism's natural man or noble savage character. He is one of a line of historical characters who are abandoned in the wild (in his case, the streets, an early use of the street as jungle metaphor) and cannot speak when brought to civilization. His language is a gibberish that no one can identify. Generally when Rousseau's natural man, Kipling's Mowgli, Burrough's Tarzan, or American television's Lucan are presented, the reader-viewer is asked to accept that such a

character has a great potential for understanding the unseen powers of the universe, an ability to speak to all creatures except man, and a great capacity to feel rightly about affairs of the heart -- love, sympathy, simple kindness, and justice. When wounded by his contact with society, this same character will have great depths of physical and psychological strength that enable him to win.

By establishing Heathcliff within the above tradition and the English Gothic world, Bronte gives Heathcliff an aura of the supernatural that can be misleading, yet it allows her to give him violent action and speech that deal openly with passions of the human heart that people are usually taught to stifle. His speeches and actions are so violent that Nelly Dean even wonders if he is "a ghoul or a vampire?"[9] But the motives and actions of Heathcliff are psychologically realistic and correct no matter how well disguised by Bronte. Simple exhaustion leads to Heathcliff's final acquiescence: "O God! It is a long fight, I wish it were over!"[10] He, like Pip, is never able to harnass the terrible amount of energy necessary to harmonize what Peckham labels the drive toward reality (truth) with the drive toward orientation (social roles).[11] But, unlike Pip, he has a greater sense of what reality is and is thus less interested in orientation.

Unlike Pip and Heathcliff who are "born orphans,"

Isabel Archer is orphaned late, when already a young lady of eighteen ready to enter the world. However, she is portrayed as not quite equipped to do so because of her emotional immaturity. Unlike Bronte and Dickens whose novels establish the conflict early between the individual orphans and society, James spends most of his novel allowing the awareness of the conflict to grow in Isabel. There seems to be no conflict. For Isabel's life has taken on a fairy tale atmosphere (or a novel atmosphere in her words quoted previously) and no conflict seems possible. She is brought to a castle, treated generously, and given 70,000 pounds to play with as she wishes. What more could a little girl want? What she wants is what the novel is about and again what Peckham labels as an awareness of the tension between the drive toward reality and the drive toward orientation.

Unlike Pip and Heathcliff, Isabel has no difficulty moving within her gothic world. She is pretty, witty, and rich. The value for the reader for setting the novel in a gothic construct is that he can be made aware early of what she doesn't know, for Isabel's flaw is that what she sees as "a novel" is in reality two tired, sick men and a mouldering castle. To her credit, of course, is her sensitivity and understanding that there must be more value to her life, especially a greater sense of feeling and knowing what right

feeling is (a curse that James puts on nearly all of his major characters), but the importance of sickness and death cannot be overlooked in Portrait of a Lady or the other two novels.

As a beginning, I point to the significance of the original ending of Great Expectations. Numerous critical discussions have been printed in defense of both endings. Most of the argument is futile. The original ending is the one determined by Dickens to be the better until he was convinced by Bulwer-Lytton to provide another. To understate, as a skilled writer, Dickens was able to write a plausible ending that worked thematically with the novel -- some hope but not much. But one symbol lost in the second image is Estella's second marriage to a doctor. By including the doctor, Dickens was able to emphasize the sickness his characters were suffering, especially the sickness Estella manifests in her masochistic marriage to the sadist Bentley Drummle. It is this sickness of character in all three novels that ties them together, a sickness clarified by the gothic structure, as we shall see.

The sickness pervading the novels is, I believe, tied closely to the theme of incest, a theme which is, in turn, tied closely to the gothic houses. The theme of incest is not a strong sexual theme, but is suggested obliquely to comment symbolically on the Romantic stress on imagination and reflection and the Romantic conflict

noted by Hauser and Peckham of the self versus the external world. The latter conflict seems inevitable to us as we look back historically to the nineteenth century. The capitalist society that emerged was Romantic insofar as Romanticism stresses action and adventure. But those elements of the philosophy can conflict with the more passive element of the same, imaginative reflection. What the old houses represent in the novel is a perversion of where imaginative reflection should lead.

To Wordsworth, a clear articulator of the theory, reflection followed action or observation and became product or meaning. To the characters in the novels, the houses became fantasy land, places to which they could withdraw in order to escape action. What each novelist did by subtly establishing incest as a theme is to point out the dangers of Romantic philosophy when pushed too far. The characters became people to whom the external world, including nature, which is notably missing in all three novels, has nothing to offer because they stay too long in the house of fantasy.

Nothing in the novels is as obvious as the incest in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" with the bloody death embrace of Madeline and Roderick, but it is clearly established. In Great Expectations, Pip has two loves. The first is Biddy with whom he is virtually reared after the injury to his sister as

Biddy moves in as housekeeper. She is the love of his humble house. After the death of Magwitch and the general disintegration of his dreams, he tries to return to her, but, as noted earlier, he returns on her wedding day.

He is also reared with Estella, being brought to play with her until he reaches the age of apprenticeship. She is his sister in the sense that Miss Havisham can be seen as his godmother. Even though Miss Havisham is not the natural mother of either Pip or Estella, she does "adopt" them. She symbolically performs the role of parent of Pip when she provides the fee for his apprenticeship to Joe Gargery. Dickens further establishes a brother-sister relationship by revealing that Estella is the natural daughter of Magwitch, the man who adopts Pip by providing him the means to further his great expectations. As shown in Chapter IV of this study, he is also the one who has Pip finally accept his nickname as his legal name. Pip is never able to win his "sister" Estella in marriage, but Dickens does marry her to Bentley Drummle, Pip's double, so that she does not escape the perversity of an incestuous marriage.

Wuthering Heights less obliquely presents incest. When Heathcliff is brought into the house, he is given the name of the firstborn Earnshaw son. The father's intentions seem to be that he will be reared as part of

the family. In childhood, he and Catherine were inseparable as brother and sister. Other relationships strengthen the incest theme, especially Heathcliff's forcing the marriage of his sickly son to Catherine's daughter, who, through the brother-sister relationship of Isabella and Edgar, are first cousins. Even the last relationship of the novel, Catherine's love for Hareton, is a first-cousin relationship. What we are left with, except for Catherine and Hareton, is two families that have disintegrated.

Portrait of a Lady presents incest less openly. Isabel talks of her love for Casper and for Osmond, but her primary love relationship in the novel is with Ralph Touchett, her cousin. It is he who supports her, talks to her, and openly admits his love for her. At no time is she presented with anyone else as intimately as she is with him. In their last conversation before Ralph dies, Isabel and Ralph openly state the relationship. As she held him in her arms, Ralph states, " 'And remember this,' he continued, 'that if you've been hated you've also been loved. Ah but, Isabel -- adored!' he just audibly and lingeringly breathed." Isabel responded to his declaration with the very telling, " 'Oh my brother!' she cried with a movement of still deeper prostration."[12] Thus, Ralph's terminal illness reinforces the futility of their love.

The three authors give us these three sensitive, thinking, orphaned individuals and portray their attempts to make their way in a world which is frantically trying to settle its own values. The dying aristocracy was fearful, probably rightly so, that it would be cast aside carelessly or violently destroyed. The creeping powerlessness affecting the Havishams, Lintons, Earnshaws, et. al. not only left them insecure, but also made them a treacherous base of uncertainty from which others could work. The dependence on the past or on money provides security for Pip, Heathcliff, and Isabel, but does not provide them any self-fulfillment. The incestuousness in the novels expresses their inward turn of spirit as they seek what is primarily self-satisfaction, giving us a symbol for the path we took from Romanticism to the cynicism of twentieth-century existentialism. For each of the characters suffers a nothingness as the novels end in bachelorhood for Pip, death for Heathcliff, and a sterile marriage for Isabel. The traditional symbols of marriage and birth are nowhere presented in the novels as an event or symbol on which much hope for the future can be founded.

Endnotes

[1] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," ll. 257-258.

[2] Hauser, p. 28.

[3] Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision: The Quest for Identity in the Nineteenth Century, (New York: George Braziller, 1962).

[4] Peckham, p. 108.

[5] Peckham, p. 372.

[6] Dickens, pp. 1-2.

[7] Karl L. Menninger, "The Wish To Kill," in Man Against Himself, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), pp. 26-50.

[8] WH, p. 7.

[9] WH, p. 391.

[10] WH, p. 385.

[11] Peckham, p. 110.

[12] PL, p. 531.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOTHIC IN PERSPECTIVE

A building is designed by architects to be functional and beautiful in as many ways as possible. One of the most important functions is to place the people who walk into the building in the proper mood to receive maximum benefit from the services or products offered within the building; or, to reverse it, to let those within the building receive maximum profit from those who enter.

Gothic originated as an architectural term. Gothic churches are the structures that come readily to mind when the term is used. The general church building, external and internal, is built to establish feelings of reverence, awe, piety, quietude, joy, hope, and peace in whatever quantities and proportions to which a particular sect is dedicated. The gothic church offers all the above and more. The excessive detail of the gothic church functions to overwhelm the eye, leaving the perceiver with a physical sense of mystery. The vastness and variety of the universe are suggested.

The gothic structure also offers such curiosities as gargoyles, which are more than merely decorative.

Their leering, hideous perusal of those who pass beneath suggests evil forces and powers. When used as rainspouts, gargoyles become a further curiosity of the devilish linked with redemption and life as the water pours forth -- as if the building itself harnesses the dark powers of nature.

The outside of the gothic church with its spires, massive walls, saints, and gargoyles fills and dominates its space and the surrounding area. Inside, the effect is quite different. The high ceiling with little visible support seems to open up the very space the structure has occupied, suggesting infinity under control. The stained glass windows shut off any view of the dark powers outside so that the church accents sanctity and sanctuary.

I dwell on the fact of the gothic church momentarily to remind us of structure. Every gothic church is different because medieval workmen were allowed to add their own personal touches as they carefully crafted the final product. Yet when I think about the gothic church, I can assemble in my mind a picture of what they all look like, a stereotypical gothic church. My concern in this study has been to try to determine if three novelists seeking a formal structure for their material found a model in the earlier gothic novel. Support for an affirmative answer can be found by returning to a definition of the gothic

where I began, but this time looking only at Pamela Kaufman's definition of the gothic novel from 1760 to 1830, a definition quoted in part in the introduction.

> The central metaphor is imprisonment, usually within a gothic ruin. The hero-figure is split between a captive young woman and an impotent man who is locked outside the castle walls. Sometimes the man doesn't even exist and the maiden must fend for herself. Her situation is marked by isolation: she has no family, and her associates cannot be trusted -- she is alone. Often her alienation is compounded by a strange culture and religion, usually some version of Catholicism or diabolism. The world outside is also hostile, wracked with storms and covered with awesome mountains and forests. Yet she must try to escape, because she is menaced by a persecuting villain: usually the threat is rape, though sometimes it is death, sometimes both. The villain's motives are inexplicable, but they are often related to some past crime which exerts an inexorable influence on the present generation.... The fable involves chases though underground corridors and dark rooms. The heroine usually solves the mystery of the past.... Common themes which underscored the plots were alienation, guilt, terror, penance, and death.[1]

The definition may seem at first not to fit the three novels under consideration until one realizes that what the novelists did was to reverse the point of view: i.e. tell the story from the perspective of

the impotent young man on the outside, or young woman in James' novel. By shifting to the one trying to break into the gothic world, the novelists did not have to deal with escape from the past but could treat nineteenth-century ambivalence to the past as the individual characters struggled for some kind of meaningful relationship with it and failed. The shift also allows the author a greater range of setting as the gothic house is a center but not a restriction or prison. Moreover, putting the emphasis on the impotent outsider creates a situation where a clearcut villain is unnecessary since the emphasis is on what the outside character desires and not from what the inside character needs rescued.

Some current criticism, however, in an attempt to expand the limits of gothic literature de-emphasizes attempts to tie the term gothic to a specific structure or devices. Representative of these critics is James M. Keech who wants to define gothic by our response to it. "The term 'Gothic,' as I see it, consequently means a response, or effect, of fear characterized by foreboding and intensity rather than a set of traditional stock devices. The devices are merely a time-honored method of producing the effect with a minimum of artistic originality. Unfortunately, the word will never, perhaps, divorce itself from this association with ruined castles, graveyards, skeletons, ghosts,

and imperiled maidens."[2] Instead of devices, Keech would define what is "basically Gothic" as "apprehensive fear, ominous atmosphere, the sense of frightening power inherent in evil."[3] By following Keech's method we can include under the term gothic any literature which is "a means of working a response, both emotional and moral, to those aspects of life which we fear, or ethically should fear, most."[4]

I must take issue with Keech on some points. First, the obvious: A writer's use of stock devices is not always a matter of his wishing to expend "a minimum of artistic originality." A writer, as shown earlier with Frost, may use stock devices (the sonnet form itself is a stock device) in an attempt to obtain an original effect that in itself depends largely on the reader's memory of the form. To write using stock devices is an excellent means of manipulating the reader. Also, it is not "unfortunate" that gothic continues to keep its connotations. Keech's essay, itself, is dependent upon the connotations to link his new categories to the original gothic form. What he actually wants is to add additional connotations without dropping the old because the old stock devices were early metaphors representing "apprehensive fear, ominous atmosphere," and "those aspects of life which we fear."

Keech's stretching of the gothic definition, one

of numerous critical attempts to do so, reminds me of where I started my research. Originally, I wanted to establish three categories of gothic: the Love Gothic, the Faustian Gothic, and the Promethean Gothic. In the first category, I included works such as Great Expectations where the hero wanted to take his beloved away from the sickness and perversity of the old house. By extension, I could then include Portrait of a Lady even though the roles were reversed. In the Faustian Gothic I would have included science fiction, starting with Frankenstein. The Promethean category was to include works dominated by larger-than-life figures such as Byron's Manfred, Bronte's Heathcliff, or even Melville's Ahab. But as I proceeded in this direction, I went further and further from likeness and more toward differences. The establishing of three categories in the first place should have been my clue. With that realization I backed up to see just what could I isolate among the works I was considering that would give me some definable categories. I finally decided that we have had terms that separate much of the literature we have lumped into gothic had we only paid closer attention to the element of time and cleared up some confusion that exists among the terms gothic, grotesque, and science fiction. We can, I believe, establish the gothic as depending on a confrontation between the present and the immediate past; grotesque as the

alienated present; and science fiction as fear of the future.

Radu Florescu points to the problems we have with terminology in his book on Frankenstein. "In what literary tradition can the novel Frankenstein be placed?... 'It is Gothic," says one commentator. 'It is science fiction," responds another. 'It is philosophical allegory.' 'It is twaddle.'"[5] If we follow my categories, Mary Shelley's work should have been disqualified rather than declared a winner. She did use gothic machinery in creating her novel, but her emphasis is futuristic. A reader will not find orphans fleeing from the present to the past in her work; he will find instead am ambivalence about the path science will take. Her book, I believe, should be placed as a forerunner of modern day science fiction, and science fiction should not have been established as a sub-genre of the gothic. In science fiction the emphasis is placed on discovering a new scientific technique, a new chemistry, a new planet, or any new element whereby or wherein or whereon a dangerous or potentially dangerous "enemy" is revealed that threatens the future of the race. Science fiction basically deals with man's probing beyond his ability to control. Part of the limitation of the genre is that a situation is set up where somehow a seemingly uncontrollable force must be controlled. In creating such a situation,

the science fiction writer undergoes the same kind of close scrutiny from the reader that the mystery writer does, and he must be extremely skillful to sustain the suspension of disbelief. Many times the paradox of the genre simply disallows successful suspension. The difference between science fiction and gothic is well represented by the difference between Dracula and Frankenstein. In Dracula man is dealing with a monster from the past, a creature he had no part in creating. In Frankenstein, man must control what he himself has created. Some elements, then, may be common to both forms, but this one distinction separates works into more manageable categories.

Also, a distinction should be made between gothic and grotesque to further reduce the number of works classified as gothic. As an obvious example, much of Poe's work may have been too simply classified as gothic whereas the grotesque might be a better category if we can establish a workable distinction between the two terms. In the chapter "Book of the Grotesque," the introductory chapter to Winesburg, Ohio, Sherwood Anderson provides us a beginning definition of grotesque.

> That in the beginning when the world was young there were a great many thoughts but no such things as a truth. Man made the truths himself and each truth was a composite

> of a great many vague thoughts ...
>
> And then the people came along. Each as he appeared snatched up one of the truths and some who were quite strong snatched up a dozen of them.
>
> It was the truths that make the people grotesque. The old man had quite an elaborate theory concerning the matter. It was his notion that the moment one of the people took one of the truths to himself, called it his truth, and tried to live his life by it, he became grotesque and the truth he embraced became a falsehood.[6]

From this introduction, the novel proceeds to present us with numerous characters obsessed with individual truths. Their lives have become cut off from past and future as each lives unchangingly attached to his obsession. The characters are much like Poe's characters, who, though often surrounded by gothic trappings, are not actually involved in the gothic conflict with the historical past. Their battles are with such obsessions as fame, fortune, incest, and necrophilia. Any sense of the past on the part of a character is usually personal past. Their houses of conflict are houses of the mind, not of antiquity. The actual past, history, is of no great consequence to the fate of the characters -- is not real to them.

Dickens makes the distinction clear. Great Expectations is a gothic novel, but it contains a great many grotesque characters. The main character, Pip,

has real and imagined battles with the past as his ambivalence toward it defeats him. The past is real and is symbolized by Havisham who uses him. Other characters such as Wemmick have removed themselves from the battlefield by devoting themselves to a strict code. Wemmick keeps his balance with a schizophrenic life as he never lets home and work mix. One world, work, is the world of "portable property," his euphemism for money, and the other is his world of love for Miss Skiffins, and his father, Aged P. His life is comic, bizarre, and narrow as he ignores any other concerns. The lawyer Jaggers is grotesque in the same manner as he hides behind his protective truth of the law. Like all grotesque characters, Jaggers and Wemmick refuse to engage with the world at large; they refuse to entertain new possibilities. All their energies are spent clinging to the one obsession which becomes a falsehood because it is accepted as the whole truth. The gothic world, if nothing else, presents us characters who have not settled on a single truth as they test out what is real and unreal.

More simply put, characters in a gothic situation are subject to change through conflict whereas the grotesque characters are static. Great Expectations reveals this difference by presenting Pip, who is actually involved in the conflicts of the nineteenth

century, surrounded by grotesque characters who have withdrawn from the battlefield.

Support for this distinction between gothic and grotesque characters comes from Wolfgang Kayser's definition of the nature of the grotesque. Kayser states "THE GROTESQUE IS THE ESTRANGED WORLD."[7] The estranged world is exactly the world Anderson's protagonist, George Willard, investigates in his encounters with the many grotesques of Winesburg, Ohio who represent another characteristic Kayser says belongs to the grotesque: "The grotesque is not concerned with individual actions or the destruction of the moral order. It is primarily the expression of our failure to orient ourselves in the physical universe."[8] The orientations that grotesque characters do make usually displace them from the normal order and allow them to live in a world apart. They need no more truths than what they have accepted.

When we do restrict our use of the term gothic and apply it to works that have readily identifiable similarities like the three novels in this study, we can more easily understand why the gothic in twentieth-century literature is primarily fiction of the American South. The fiction of William Faulkner, for instance, depends heavily on the imagery of the young man or woman isolated in the house of the past. In

his fiction, the past is a presence with which his characters do battle. In Light in August, the past is Joanna Burden who tries to keep the orphaned Joe Christmas through sex. When sex fails, she tries to adopt him and make him a lawyer who can carry on her work. When he refuses adoption, she tries to kill him and is murdered. In The Sound and the Fury, the past cripples all the Compson children. Unable to manage the present, they are driven to suicide, prostitution, and sadism.

Later fiction of the South,however, shows a decided move away from the gothic toward the grotesque, including Faulkner's later fiction. The characters of Tennessee Williams, the later Faulkner, and Flannery O'Connor became static as the past of the old South becomes less affective in the new, urban, industrialized south. Faulkner's Flem Snopes or O'Connor's Manley Pointer are characters who singlemindedly pursue self-satisfaction with no thought of past or future. Even William's Blanche Dubois and other women characters become grotesque because their sense of the past is shallow and they are dominated by their eccentricities. This is not to say that the authors have left the past out of their grotesque works. Rich symbolism like Faulkner's nature imagery and O'Connor's peacocks plus her Catholic symbols represent a valued past which the reader can see.

Elizabeth MacAndrew explains the O'Connor's use of the grotesque: "Flannery O'Connor, too, uses the grotesque to present a society that lacks the transcendent values in which she belives.... She portrays very ordinary human beings as fantastically idiosyncratic."[9]

In other words, Faulkner's and O'Connor's characters, for the most part, are unaware of the significance of the symbols. The characters are, however, not "flat" characters. They have depth and complexity. But they are grotesquely static as they live in Carson McCuller's world of "spiritual isolation."[10]

The gothic metaphor, then, is usually a transitional metaphor. It was popular between the Enlightenment and the Romantic period, the late eighteenth century. It was used extensively by nineteenth-century writers as a bridge between the conflicts of subjectivism and objectivism, aristocracy and capitalism, society and self, and love and money. Writers of the American South used it to show the change when the landed, agrarian southern "aristocracy" was finally beaten not merely by the Civil War, but by urbanism, industrialism, and capitalism.

What gothic novelists do with their novels is much like what dramatists did with tragedy in the Renaissance. The simplest workable definition I ever devised is that a tragic situation in literature occurs when the

depicted society sacrifices its best representative of cherished values. Thus, for genuine tragedy it is helpful to have a system of ranking in terms of good, better, and best. The Renaissance, certainly, had its hierarchical system that made tragic thinking natural. As a matter of fact, the demise of this system of thinking helped make for one last brilliant upsurge of tragic writing. The one central tragic loss of the Renaissance is the sacrifice of clear authority to the new gods of equality. A society built on the authority of a king or ultimately on the authority of God is not better than a democracy or a republic, but it was a system that man valued highly. In our British-American culture, one swing of the axe in 1649 brought the system literally to an end; but Shakespeare, Webster, Ford, et.al. saw the end years before, wrote of it in a tragic event, and saw little hope for anything better. The tragic dramas are our written record of the intellectual-emotional upheaval of the thinking man of the Renaissance.

The gothic novel presents, too, the end of the past, but does not present it as tragic. The past the gothic presents is a corrupt and corrupting past at the last edge of potency. Through the mind of Joe Christmas in Light in August, William Faulkner

sums up this phase of the past as symbolized by Joanna Burden who becomes nymphomanic just before she enters menopause.

> Within six months she was completely corrupted. It could not be said that he corrupted her. His own life, for all its anonymous promiscuity, had been conventional enough, as a life of healthy and normal sin usually is. The corruption came from a source even more inexplicable to him than to her. In fact, it was as though with the corruption which she seemed to gather from the air itself, she began to corrupt him. He began to be afraid. He could not have said of what. But he began to see himself as from a distance, like a man being sucked down into a bottomless morass. He had not exactly thought that yet. What he was now seeing was the street lonely, savage, and cool. That was it: cool; he was thinking, saying aloud to himself sometimes, "I better move. I better get away from here."
>
> But something held him, as the fatalist can always be held: by curiosity, pessimism, by sheer inertia.[11]

Joe Christmas reveals here the fatal gothic error, the same error made by Pip, by Isabel, and by Heathcliff. They all waited. The respective pasts they became involved with -- Burden, Havisham, Earnshaw, and Osmond -- had no real power over them. They surrendered to it because of what they hoped to gain, whether power, money, or love. They allowed themselves to be held from heroic action by a hand from the grave.

The imagery that well describes this past in which they are trapped is in Light in August. Joe Christmas usually goes to Burden's house at twilight time. Once in the house and supper over, he moves through the darkness to Burden's bedroom or wherever in the house or on the grounds she has chosen for him to seek her. They avoid any contact during the day. In the same manner, Miss Havisham keeps all her windows and doors closed up so that she will not have to see time passing. Darkness also pervades the other novels as most significant actions take place indoors and usually at night. The conclusion of Portrait of a Lady stresses this importance of darkness when Isabel has her last encounter with Casper Goodwood.

> He glared at her a moment through the dusk, and the next instant she felt his arms about her and his lips on her own lips. His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed: and it was extraordinarily as if, while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his fact, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense identity and made one with this act of possession. So had she heard of those wrecked and under water following a train of images before they sank. But when darkness returned she was free.[12]

Once in the gothic world, freedom is in darkness. Dracula can only begin to stir from the grave when the

sun goes down. Catherine visits Heathcliff in the night. Pip's doubles strike under the cover of darkness. Isabel can see clearly where to go:

> She never looked about her; she only darted from the spot [where she was kissed]. There were lights in the windows of the house; they shone far across the lawn. In an extraordinarily short time -- for the distance was considerable -- she had moved through the darkness (for she saw nothing) and reached the door. Here only she paused. She looked all about her; she listened a little; then she put her hand on the latch. She had not known where to turn; but she knew now. There was a very straight path.[13]

Where she goes, of course, is back to Rome to the house she has described earlier: "Between these four walls she had lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life. It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation."[14]

Thus, the novels which begin <u>like</u> each other end <u>like</u> each other. The confrontations the characters have with the past culminate in nothing. The hopes and the energies of Heathcliff, Pip, and Isabel are gone. To use Hauser's term, they have acquiesced. With this theme of acquiescence, we come to a difference between these Victorian novelists and the early gothic writers, a difference made clear by Ronald Schleifer in his essay comparing Stoker's <u>Dracula</u> to James's "Turn of the Screw." Schleifer points out that

Dracula, as it looks backs to the early form, gives the past a potent reality in the person of Dracula -- gives a something to be battled.[15] "The Turn of the Screw" represents the modern tradition "with James's ability to base his novel on absence, on the fact that there is nothing, that nothing happens."[16] James's consciousness of this theme we have already seen in Portrait of a Lady where Isabel constantly used the negative terms to describe Osmond, her choice in marriage. Her quips at the time were intended playfully, but became the painful truth. Pip's imaginative attempts to make something grand of Miss Havisham end in the same disillusionment; she had nothing for him once she had paid his indenture fee. Without Catherine, Heathcliff can find no meaning on earth; therefore, one last feeble hope is that through death he can rejoin her. For Mina Harker in Dracula there is hope if only they can catch Dracula in time and destroy him. Pip and Heathcliff have no hope because what they battle are their own illusions of what the past represented to them. For Isabel, no battle can be fought against nothing.

Thus, the structure and the stock devices linking these novels to the earlier gothic novels are significant likenesses not to be dismissed. The confrontation of present and past is important in both, but the nature of the confrontation has changed. The threat

of a real vampire is replaced by an enemic past that can only destroy the individual who passively submits to it. It is through the use of sameness, then, that the novelists provide us the difference.

That these same novels may create responses, finally, that are like the responses to other fiction like Moby Dick is a position against which I cannot argue. As I established in the introduction with "The Use of Force," a work can operate as a metaphor that will relate to numerous kinds of experience. I believe for instance, that most important literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries presents us many of the same questions -- How does one define himself? Is reality internal or external? Does good and evil exist, or is there only nothingness? What is our relationship to the past, present, and future? Therefore, our responses to much of that literature will be alike. But it is a primary intent of the gothic to get the reader to respond to these questions by presenting a relationship with time.

Putting gothic, grotesque, and science fiction in political terms is helpful (although a bit of stretching of the imagination is required). The early gothic writers were radicals. The past to them was an active, often evil, force that should be destroyed. The grotesque writer is a reactionary as he laments the loss of past values. The science fiction writer

is a conservative who is fascinated by the possibilities of the future but distrustful of man's ability to manage it. The gothic novelists used herein for illustration are like cynical liberals. They distrust the past, but they have little faith that contemporary man, considering his primary motivation is self-interest, will be able to break loose and establish a better world. One of the reasons Faulkner provides a background of nature symbolism is to clarify man's problem in dealing with the past. Man too often looks back only at the immediate past, at the land denuded of its forests and stripped of its topsoil. He is usually angry with the past for depleting nature's resources before he could exploit it himself. Unable to look farther back in time to the real potential of what the land could be again and unable to be guided by this vision, he continues to exploit or to try to make the past pay him back for what it exploited. Whatever victories he gains through this viewpoint are as hollow as Heathcliff's.

Finally, then, my response to the novels is not "a sense of frightening power inherent in evil." My response is not "apprehensive fear." I end the journey in much the same frame of mind the characters have -- resignation, acquiescence. I have experienced the futility of the battle they endure. Fear with the characters and for the characters may occur at points

in the novel, but it does not remain as a result of the novel. And it is this final result that is important if we see the "pattern of experience that is sufficiently representative of our social structure" for us to "need a word for it."[17] A short poem is a metaphor for a response to a moment. A novel is a metaphor for extended experience, sometimes a whole life. The naming of the response to the particular social structures in Wuthering Heights, Great Expectations, and Portrait of a Lady is acquiescence. Being what they are -- works of fiction -- they do not recommend acquiescence nor do they condemn acquiescence. They present acquiescence. The reader who arrives there still has the choice of what to do with the experience. One of the beauties of literature is the experience it can give the reader so that he can base his choice on felt knowledge rather than mere commandment.

Endnotes

[1] Kaufman, p. 2180.

[2] "The Survival of the Gothic Response," Studies in the Novel, 6, No. 2, (Summer, 1974), p. 134.

[3] Keech, p. 140.

[4] Keech, p. 141.

[5] In Search of Frankenstein, (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), p. 163.

[6] (New York: Modern Library, 1947, first published in 1919), pp. 4-5.

[7] The Grotesque in Art and Literature, (McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. 184.

[8] Kayser, p. 185.

[9] The Gothic Tradition in Fiction, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 244.

[10] MacAndrew, p. 247.

[11] Faulkner, pp. 245-246.

[12] PL, p. 542.

[13] PL, pp. 542-543.

[14] PL, p. 395.

[15] "The Trap of the Imagination: The Gothic Tradition, Fiction, and 'The Turn of the Screw'," Criticism, 22, No. 4, (Fall, 1980), p. 298.

[16] Schleifer, pp. 299-300.

[17] Burke, p. 259.

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