Empowering the Other:

Balancing on the Boundaries of Genre Conventions in

Jane Eyre and *Wuthering Heights*

By

Solveig Hillesdal

Master's Thesis
Department of Foreign Languages
University of Bergen
May 2011

Abstract in Norwegian

Jane Eyre av Charlotte Brontë og *Wuthering Heights* av Emily Brontë er klassiske romaner som gjennom tidene har vært gjenstand for mang en litteraturkritikers analyse og tolkning. Blant disse er f. eks. feministisk og psykoanalytisk litteraturkritikk framtredende, hvor de litterære verkene har blitt analysert i forhold til de gotiske sjangertrekkene, ofte med fokus på rollen til den gotiske heltinna i Jane og Cathys skikkelser. Selv om mange av disse kritikerne har basert seg på den gotiske sjangeren i sine analyser, er de allikevel uenige i hvorvidt disse bøkene kan klassifiseres som tilhørende denne tradisjonen eller ikke. Denne uenigheten er noe jeg har sett nærmere på i min masteroppgave. Fokuset i oppgaven er på hva som gjør at disse romanene på mange måter både tilhører og ikke tilhører den gotiske sjangeren. Jeg ser på hvordan tradisjonelle gotiske sjangertrekk som ”the other” og ”the return of the repressed” blir framstilt på en ukonvensjonell måte i disse bøkene, og hvordan parodi blir brukt for å snu opp ned på tradisjonelle gotiske element. Hvordan dette fører til at selve sjangerens rammeverk i disse bøkene blir destabilisert, og hvordan den utradisjonelle framstillinga av flere klassiske gotiske sjangertrekk påvirker både heltinnene, ”the other”, samt selve sjangertilhørigheten til *Jane Eyre* og *Wuthering Heights*, er noe jeg utforsker i denne masteroppgaven.

Acknowledgements

There are those who deserve my thanks:

My supervisor Lene M. Johannessen for her excellent supervision, and not the least for understanding the multitasking a mother sometimes has to deal with. This has helped me to not panic over how much I have had to do, and instead stay focused on doing it.

Katrine, Ragnhild, Håvard and Anne for reading through parts of my thesis and offering me some useful tips.

My friends and family for their warmth, love and support at all times. My parents deserve special thanks for their weekly (and sometimes even more often) conversations which have helped me to stay focused and sane all through the process of writing this thesis. You believe so much in me that at the end of each phone call I cannot help believing in myself.

And finally, Sindre and Daniel, you are what I look forward to coming home to at the end of each day. Thank you so much for your love and care. You two are truly little rays of sunshine in my life.

- Bergen, May 2011

Contents

Introduction

The notion of genre generally creates strong expectations in a reader. It is what usually guides us in our choice of literature, for having found a favourite genre we often search for other novels written in the same style for further amusement. And from the moment the unopened book lies in our hands, to the moment where we have finished reading the last page there are certain characteristics we assume to find and certain events to take place for the novel to meet our expectations.

The genre of Gothic fiction has existed for over 200 years. The genre, which began with the works of amongst others Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Matthew Lewis has since its beginning had a rather modest development stylistically, and the conventions that applied to the genre in the late eighteenth century still to some extent apply to more recent literature. However, even if this "stagnation" makes the reader recognise all the well-known characteristics of the genre, will it continue to make the novels interesting literature? And even as the genre in itself has stagnated, it seems that the criticism concerning it has as well:

> Recent studies of Gothic fiction have drawn on literary psychoanalytic, Marxist, and feminist theory to offer a wide range of interpretation and assessment of the Gothic's social and political significance. However, as in the past many of these studies have tended to proceed by cataloguing and codifying the literary conventions perceived to be common to the form (Jacqueline Howard, 1994: 13)

The criticism applied to Gothic fiction appears to place literary works in the genre within a rather rigid framework, whether these novels succeed in meeting the expectations of the generic conventions or not.

Such novels are for example Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*[1] and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*[2], which both have been the focus of, amongst others, feminist literary critics who consider the texts according to the conventions of their own theories in relation to the Gothic genre, thus limiting the number of possible voices these literary works may host. I believe this manner of examining literature may indeed be unrewarding, for as Howard further claims: "… problems arise with such ahistorical and homogenizing approaches, as they impose a ´monologic` structure or closure – that is, a single ´authoritative` reading which disallows a text's semantic richness and suppress alternative ways of speaking" (1994: 14). Both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* are to be considered as classic, literary works that hover on the edges of the Gothic generic framework, and thus the examination of these novels ought to open the novels up to the multiple possibilities of voices that stream through them, both in the way they are related to the genre and in the way they at the same time destabilize this genre. Our reading should therefore not confine them to one way of thinking or understanding.

How and why these two novels belong to and do not belong to the genre of Gothic fiction will be the main focus of this thesis, addressing questions such as, what the disruptions like the representation of parody, and the figuring of "the return of the repressed" do to the generic conventions of Gothic fiction in general, and I will especially be reading for the irregularities which is to be found in the representation of the element of the "other".

To engage the novels from such perspectives, I will first examine the generic conventions of Gothic literature by looking to its beginning, the characterisations of the

[1] Originally published in 1847, the version I will be referring to was published by Penguin Books in 2006.
[2] Originally published in 1847, the version I will be referring to was published by Wordsworth Classics in 2000.

heroine, and the novels which established the form as a genre. What do *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* have in common with these, how do Jane and Cathy relate to the classical Gothic heroines, and what separates both the heroines and the novels from the traditional characters and works of the genre? Following this I will, in the second chapter, discuss ways of perceiving genre in general, especially with a focus on Bakhtin's exploration of genre and his examination of the multiplicity of voices in literary texts: how literary works relate to genre, and what makes them disrupt or destabilize a given generic framework. In order to demonstrate how *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* do this I will illustrate with examples from the two novels. In my last two chapters I will concern myself with two specific elements which are found in both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, and which in a direct manner contribute to the destabilizing of the Gothic genre in these novels. These are the representations of parody and "the return of the repressed" respectively, leading to a discussion of how the latter relates the element of the "other" with the British Empire, as Tabish Khair also does in *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness* (2010). In addition to stating that there is a relation between the British Empire and the "other" in these two literary works, I will also focus on how the unconventional representations of the "other" affect the heroines and the generic frameworks of the two novels. Moreover, at the end of the thesis I will focus on how both of these elements have contributed to how these novels belong to and do not belong to the genre of Gothic fiction, and how this leads to the way in which they thus negotiate with the past, both generically and in the narratives themselves.

Chapter One:
The Conventions of Gothic Fiction

A common conception is that the first novel to be named a Gothic story was *The Castle of Otranto* (Horace Walpole, published 1764). It has since often been credited for the invention of the Gothic, and the genre as it is known today was "founded" in the late eighteenth century by writers such as Walpole, Matthew Lewis and Ann Radcliffe. In the conventional Gothic novel, there is one character who has often been especially prominent, and that is the Gothic heroine. The characteristics of this figure were well established in the late 1700's, especially through the writings of Radcliffe, who continued to develop the nature of the heroine in line with the personalities of the two heroines that are introduced in *The Castle of Otranto*. The Gothic heroine has traditionally played a significant part in the plot of the Gothic novel, as most of the action usually revolves around her. Since the plot in these novels over the years has had a tendency to become rather rigid and unchanging in its form, the Gothic heroine has also in some ways been prone to becoming a stereotype. Often the personality of the heroine has been made up of the same character traits no matter when or where the novel is written. Before I examine Cathy and Jane as Gothic heroines it might consequently be useful to establish some of the character traits that are considered typical of the genre they are often grouped in.

In "European Gothic" Neil Cornwell defines typical Gothic fiction as follows:

> What we may now see as ´classical Gothic`, then, will normally involve dynastic disorders, set at some temporal or spatial distance and in a castle or manorial locale; defence, or usurpation of an inheritance will threaten (and not infrequently inflict) violence upon hapless (usually female) victims amid a supernatural ambience (2000: 29)

Hence the Gothic heroine's place will be at the heart of the story, and she is thus the person that the other characters of the novel mainly focus on. Releasing her from the sufferings that are inflicted upon her would most often be the aim toward which both she and the Gothic hero tirelessly work to achieve, and the actions taken to do so are usually the main components of the plot.

The indisputable innocence of the Gothic heroine is one of the most important aspects of her character. She is to be morally impeccable in every sense, and she is to have a purity of mind which is unrivalled by any other (Syndy McMillen Conger, 1983: 94). Her whole being is supposed to be flawless; she is never to say, act or even think anything which is disagreeable in any way. The generic conventions that enforce this character trait does impose some limitations to her fictional personality, and having to live up to this ideal often leaves the traditional Gothic heroine as a character without much depth or complexity, and often bereft of the possibility to develop her personality throughout the novel. The Gothic heroine is consequently more or less the same person at the end of the story as she is at the beginning, and this trait is found in varying degrees in most representations of the Gothic heroines. It is most pronounced in the early Gothic heroines such as, for instance, in the character of Antonia from *The Monk* (Lewis, published 1796), who is so innocent that she does not even recognise the evil in Ambrosio's eyes when he gazes upon her: "…Elvira had not sufficiently explained herself upon the nature of his designs, to make a girl so ignorant of the world as her

daughter aware how dangerous was his acquaintance." (1998: 282). The mother in this novel even finds it necessary to edit the Bible before her daughter reads it, so as to maintain her ignorance and innocence:

> She had in consequence made two resolutions respecting the Bible. The first was, that Antonia should not read it till she was of an age to feel its beauties, and profit by its morality. The second, that it should be copied out with her own hand, and all improper passages either altered or omitted. (1998: 223)

In addition to having an unsurpassed purity of mind, the Gothic heroine is also supposed to know her place in the hierarchy of family and society. This means that submissiveness is another key generic characteristic (Conger, 1983:94). It does not matter whether requests or demands come from her father or the typical tyrant who has killed her parents and imprisoned her; the Gothic heroine is to submit to the will of her superior, thus displaying her value: "…feminine virtue in such a world consists of submitting to definition by an alien patriarchy" (Eugenia C. DeLamotte, 1990: 176). The parent or guardian is the one who instructs her, and the one who shapes the mind and personality of the Gothic heroine. One can for instance see this very well illustrated by Emily's father in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Radcliffe, published 1794), who decides which books she is to read, and encourages the kind of behaviour he finds suitable in a young woman:

> St. Aubert cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. He gave her a general view of the sciences, and an exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature….. 'A well informed mind,' he would say, 'is the best security against the contagion of folly and of vice' (1998: 6)

As one can see from the above illustrations, the Gothic heroine is to be obedient in all situations, and the only way in which she can demonstrate resistance towards the one who tyrannizes her is by doing so passively: “Active, constructive resistance lies outside the ken or capability of the early Gothic heroine” (Conger, 1983: 93). Even when she is persecuted and held captive the ideal Gothic heroine is supposed to remain passive in the sense that she is to resist only by attempting to flee, plead with her tyrant, or perhaps utter an “unheard shriek” from time to time. She never under any circumstances attempts to fight or argue with her capturer, since such behaviour is unheard of in a true heroine. This can be perceived as another confirmation of the submissiveness and the total self-sacrifice of her character. For instance, at the hour of her death, Matilda from *The Castle of Otranto* begs her mother to forgive her father for being the one who murdered her: “Where is my father? Forgive him, dearest mother - forgive him my death; it was an error…” (Walpole, 1996: 112). Even as she is dying she is supposed to act submissively, accept her fate, and not have any thoughts of vengeance.

A heroine containing these character traits would often be perceived as somewhat naïve. She typically lacks formal education and it is therefore not surprising that she often turns to a supernatural explanation to account for the odd experiences she has. As Nina da Vinci Nichols observes: “…the heroine possesses the romantic temperament that perceives strangeness where others see none” (1983: 187). This is also the reason why the heroine often believes an unexplained sound or shadow to be the moans of a starving prisoner, or perhaps a dangerous intruder; or even worse, a ghost haunting the castle. This is what Isabella in *The Castle of Otranto* believes when she hears a noise while fleeing from Manfred in the tunnels under the castle. What other possible explanation could there be to sounds in such a place but a ghost or spirit of some kind? Conger agrees with Nichols that this is a characteristic of the

traditional Gothic heroine: “These heroines have overly vivid imaginations, a propensity to invent dangers where none exist” (1983: 94). Thus, when these heroines are held captive by the villains in the novels, they are often just as much victims of their own imaginations and the horrors they themselves create, as they are of actual ill-treatment from their capturers. Such misperception is also what Jane Austen parodies in *Northanger Abbey* (published 1818) where Catherine, the heroine of the novel, repeatedly jumps to the wrong conclusions, believing there to be secret passageways, long lost documents and prisoners hiding around every corner as in this scene where she has newly arrived at the abbey:

> …when her eye suddenly fell on a large high chest, standing back in a deep recess on one side of the fire-place. The sight of it made her start; and, forgetting every thing else, she stood gazing on it in motionless wonder, while these thoughts crossed her: - ‘This is strange indeed! I did not expect such a sight as this! - An immense heavy chest! - What can it hold? - Why should it be placed here? - Pushed back too, as if meant to be out of sight… (2007: 153)

The disappointment is of course final when she discovers that the chest only contains a white cotton counterpane.

Another noteworthy aspect of the classic Gothic heroine, generically speaking, is that her parentage is often a source of sorrow (Diane Long Hoeveler, 1998: 72). This is manifested in different ways in the various early Gothic novels; sometimes the parents of the heroine die before she is old enough to remember them, thus she will always be longing for the parental love she has never experienced. In other versions she might lose her parents in the very beginning of the novel, consequently having to cope with the sorrow of losing them throughout the rest of the story. It might even be that she has lost one loving parent and is left

in the hands of a tyrannical father and perhaps an evil stepmother who ceaselessly work to dispose of her. Emily loses both her mother and her father fairly early on in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto* experiences that her father tries to marry her to someone she does not love. He has never loved her, and it is he who in the end kills her when he mistakes her for Isabella.

The Gothic heroine is moreover also traditionally placed in a conflict situation between two men, a dark seducer and a fair lover who fight over her (Conger, 1983: 100). One is often the tyrant who holds her captive or tries to lure her into marrying him in some way, whereas the other is the tender, young man who helps liberate her from her imprisonment and thus wins her heart. As she is not to resist actively under any circumstance, she cannot partake in this struggle either, but must remain a passive witness to the commotion that arises: "…the Gothic typically pictures a woman 'trapped' between the demands of two sorts of men – a chaste 'lover' and a 'demonic' lover…" (DeLamotte, 1990: 155). Since generic conventions require her to stay on the sideline waiting for the struggle to end, she consequently lets fate decide whether or not she is to be happy. Because, even though she is physically trapped between the two, she is to demonstrate her pure heart in this situation as well as in others, and she is not to waver in her sentiments for the chaste lover. However, as she is to have a passive nature, this is not something she can act on, but must wait for him to announce his love for her. Only when there are no obstacles in the way can she confess that she feels the same way as him. This character trait is easy to find in most Gothic novels, and even the less conventional ones that try to break with the tradition most often place the heroine between two men who both want her, and very often they also allow the happy ending with marriage between the two deserving parts.

As I have mentioned, the Gothic novel usually has a happy ending awaiting the heroine who stays true to her obligations, namely the joyful marriage: "Positioning herself as

the deserving and innocent victim of oppression, malice and fraud, the female gothic heroine exchanges her suffering for money and a man, a means of financial support and security" (Hoeveler, 1998: 18). If the heroine of the Gothic novel has acted according to the rules that are set for her, she may be rewarded at the end by being allowed to marry her heart's true love. To be able to achieve this end though, she has to experience a certain amount of suffering earlier in the novel, and her reaction to this suffering has to correspond to the requirements I have already described. A heroine who loses her innocence or in any way rebels against patriarchy will in most cases not be given an agreeable outcome to her story. She will most likely become the fallen woman, who is beyond salvation and is dispatched of in some manner or other before the novel ends. This is illustrated by the story of Matilda in *The Monk*, who starts out seeming to be a sweet and innocent girl, but who gives in to her desires for Ambrosio and turns out to be in league with the devil, and is finally taken by the inquisition. Of course, one can find the occasional heroine who throughout the story proves her innocence and her worth but still suffers an early death, like Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto* or Antonia in *The Monk*. However, in both of those novels one can find a blissful ending for another heroine who has proven her worth as well. Also, both Antonia and Matilda die in the company of the one they love, knowing that the other one cares for them too. Thus, they are given a dignified death as a reward for their impeccable behaviour.

As I have said earlier, the form of the Gothic novel has become rather rigid with time, and even though all of the illustrations I have used have come from early Gothic works that constituted the genre, these traits are rather easily traced throughout the years and into contemporary Gothic fiction as well. The heroines of most contemporary Gothic fiction often display the proper amount of innocence, are placed between two men, and are chased by "bad guys" they need the help of the hero to escape from. A good example of the heroines' lack of development through the years is for instance the little child vampire Claudia in Anne Rice's

Interview with the Vampire (1976), even though this character is a vampire and thus kills to survive, she is nonetheless placed between two men, her heart belongs to only one of them and she is sexually innocent as an "eternal virgin", having been made a vampire before she was old enough to discover her feminine sexuality. Another example would be Bella from Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* (2005). She is also placed between two lovers, and definitely needs their help to get out of all the dangerous situations she encounters. Moreover, as a proper Gothic heroine, Bella does not live out her sexuality until she is well married. This rigidity in terms of generic form might be part of the reason why it is so difficult to find contemporary Gothic fiction of so-called high quality, and it is hard to imagine any of these novels being read by numbers of people in a hundred years or so.

Considering all of the traits I have discussed, one might conclude that a real woman with a personality containing all of them would be very hard to come by. Moreover, she would obviously have to make quite an effort to exceed the expectations she would meet from the patriarchy and society in general. One can consequently ask oneself whether it is possible for such a character to be genuine and still be realistic; how is one to "believe" in a character so flawless? Maybe that is one of the shortcomings of contemporary Gothic heroines: as they are no longer an ideal for women today to live up to they end up not being believable, and thus become rather uninteresting. Hoeveler declares that: "…the female gothic novelist constructs female characters who masquerade as professional girl-women caught up in an elaborate game of playacting for the benefit of an obsessive and controlling male gaze" (1998: 18). However, if this is indeed correct, would not that defy her being really innocent? How can the Gothic heroine come across as truly virtuous and submissive if it is all an act, a pose for society? Moreover, would not this in a sense undermine the basis for her whole character, which is built on her containing genuine purity? Falsity, trickery and deceitfulness are not exactly in agreement with indisputable innocence. If the Gothic heroine is to be the obedient,

sweet and innocent figure that these character traits would demand her to be it has to be real, and not an act of deceit. However, it does seem to me to be something she has to work hard to achieve, and thus Hoeveler is in one sense right in stating that these women are professionally feminine in that they have to make quite an effort to become the heroine of a Gothic novel.

In light of all of the above, where does this leave Cathy and Jane? How can they be placed within the tradition of the Gothic heroine? This is a question that is rather difficult to answer, because they both can and cannot be placed within the generic conventions I have here discussed. One of the most significant features of the Gothic heroine was said to be her indisputable innocence, the way that she is morally impeccable. This is not exactly in agreement with the manner in which Jane straight out refuses to marry St John Rivers, or her resistance towards her aunt as a child:

> 'I am glad you are no relation of mine. I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up; and if anyone asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty.'(C. Brontë: 44)

One would similarly have a hard time arguing for Cathy as the innocent victim, seeing how she manipulates the people around her. One could not possibly imagine Emily or Antonia ever acting like Jane does, opposing an aunt who has taken you in, who feeds and clothes you however grudgingly she does so, or for that matter running around the moors wild and untamed, not obeying one's father or fighting with one's brother and the servants as Cathy is prone to do.

These two heroines can neither be said to act submissively. The self-sacrifice that the traditional Gothic heroine so willingly carries out is nowhere to be found in neither Cathy nor

Jane. The latter is unwilling to act in accordance with her personality to fit in with the family left to care for her, and the former would rather starve herself to punish the ones who love her than make believe to keep them happy: “Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend – if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I’ll try to break their hearts by breaking my own. That will be a prompt way of finishing all, when I am pushed to extremity!” (E. Brontë: 85). In both cases the heroines set their own wishes and their self-respect above the happiness of others.

The belief in the supernatural and the heroine’s tendency to jump to “imagined” conclusions is also not a character trait easily applied to these two heroines. However, Jane has experiences as a child, in the red room at her aunt’s for instance, where she believes that her uncle’s ghost might come back to revenge itself on her aunt for not treating her well. And on several occasions at Thornfield hall she lets her imagination run a little wild whenever Bertha Mason makes contact in some manner, when she hears her laughter somewhere in Thornfield or sees her in her bedroom at night. However, she quickly discredits these incidents as a trick of the mind, something she has dreamt, or believing it to be Grace Pool. On the other hand, instead of the heroines who invent dangers where there are none, and imagine that ghosts and hidden manuscripts are a part of everyday life in an old mansion, both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* present us with actual supernatural incidents, where the heroines either are the ones reacting to these incidents, or where these heroines actually partake in them. For instance, in *Wuthering Heights* we encounter the ghost of Cathy fairly early on in the novel:

> The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, ‘Let me in – let me in!’, ‘Who are you?’ I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself. ‘Catherine Linton,’ it replied shiveringly (why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for

> Linton). ‘I’m come home: I’d lost my way on the moor!’ As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child’s face looking through the window. (E. Brontë: 17, italics in the original)

We also hear that Heathcliff and Cathy are said to walk the moors together after their death. In *Jane Eyre* there is the moment when Jane hears Mr Rochester’s voice calling for her, and that is the moment where she decides to find out what has happened to him since she left.

However, even though some of the character traits pertaining to the traditional Gothic heroine are difficult to apply to Jane and Cathy, there are other features which relate very well. One is how the parentage is a source of sorrow. Jane has no recollection of her parents since they both died while she was an infant. Left to be raised by her aunt after her uncle dies as well, parental love becomes something she yearns for, leaving her wondering whether her childhood might have been a happy one if only she would have been allowed to know her parents. Cathy’s mother dies while she is fairly young as well, and being the wild, reckless child that she is she can never live up to the expectations her father has set for her. This may well be one of the reasons why she indulges her passions and her wild spirit as much as she does. In her eyes, the only way that she can please her father is by being someone she is not; hence, ultimately there is no need to even try.

The traditional Gothic heroine is not supposed to resist actively; this is part of her submissive character. Even though Cathy and Jane do not display this submissiveness of character, they do not actively resist, either. Jane, for instance, decides to flee when she discovers that Mr Rochester is married to another woman:

> I was experiencing an ordeal: a hand of fiery iron grasped my vitals. Terrible moment: full of struggle, blackness, burning! Not a human being that ever lived could wish to

> be loved better than I was loved; and him who thus loved me I absolutely worshipped: and I must renounce love and idol. One drear word comprised my intolerable duty – 'Depart!' (C. Brontë: 363)

She cannot live a life betraying her own principals, not even for the man she truly loves; so she runs away instead. And, the manner in which Cathy punishes her lovers is, as I have already mentioned, by starving herself to the edge of death. Both are passive ways of reaction towards the men surrounding them. Thus, in these examples the two heroines in a sense do act in accordance with the conventions of the Gothic genre as these are methods of passive resistance. However, the actions in themselves do not comply with the characteristics of the traditional Gothic heroine; Jane does not obey her "master" when she flees him in spite of his wishes, and Cathy's starvation is a presentation of her stubbornness and egotism, and these are not characteristics belonging to a Gothic heroine. Hence, these scenes are illustrations of how these novels and heroines both adhere to and not adhere to the conventions of Gothic fiction at the same time.

Both Cathy and Jane are placed in typical conflict situations between two lovers. Jane is placed between Mr Rochester, who is the dark seducer both in appearance and in personality and St John Rivers. Mr Rochester has a dark complexion and is described as a man without handsome features; furthermore, he does not act in accordance with society's guidelines. St John Rivers, on the other hand, is a clergyman said to have Grecian features, and he strictly follows the regulations of what is and is not proper behaviour. Cathy is trapped between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton. The opposition between the two is very clear, Heathcliff is dark, and has a brutal manner of speaking and acting never having been given a proper education; he is a force of masculinity, whereas Edgar is the incarnation of a gentleman, always proper in his language, refined and gentle in his behaviour. Neither of the

two heroines can be said to be emotionally split between the two men, but in contradiction to the traditional Gothic heroine, it is not the fair lover that these two heroines bestow their affection on. Jane is clear from the beginning of her relationship with St John that the affection she feels towards him is strictly brotherly; Mr Rochester is the one in possession of her heart. Cathy, on the other hand, belongs to Heathcliff throughout the entire novel. There may be some disagreement on this point, since she does marry Edgar Linton, and claims to love him in a way. However, in my opinion it is not possible to find any reference in the novel where he affects her the same way Heathcliff does, or where she in any way displays the same kind of affection for him as she does for Heathcliff, her soul mate.[3]

If the traditional Gothic heroine can be said to be a sort of professionalized female exerting herself to live up to the expectations she is met with, Cathy and Jane are professional women in another manner. Where the conventional heroines maintain their perfected innocence throughout the novels, these two heroines actually work to change their personalities, and they both repress aspects of their true selves to live up to society's standards. Cathy's change begins with her stay at Thruscross Grange, and Jane develops during her years at Lowood under the influence of Helen Burns and Miss Temple. Nevertheless, these changes are not genuine, and the reason is that, like the early heroines, both submit to definitions by an alien patriarchy. Jane has to suppress features of her true self to succeed, something she does at the end of the novel with her marriage to Mr Rochester; she is given her happy ending. Cathy has to struggle a lot more to curb the unacceptable aspects of her personality, and she never truly succeeds in this, thus these features lead her to an early death. However, as is seen, this professionalisation is portrayed differently in that the professionalism does not lie in their perfection. Cathy and Jane are neither the flawless characters of the conventional Gothic heroine, and though they both strive to better

[3] There is however some disagreement on this point between critics. Margaret Homans, for instance, claims that Cathy dies of her inability to choose between the two (1983: 276).

themselves, this is done on their own terms as well as in consideration of others'. This can for instance be seen in that Jane, as I have argued earlier, does not change for her Aunt Reed's sake; her development begins when she starts at Lowood where she is met with friendliness in the characters of Helen Burns and Miss Temple. And the continued respect from the people she surrounds herself with is a necessity for her to be willing to accept the norms inflicted upon her.

I have now discussed some of the traditional character traits of the Gothic heroine, who, as I have argued, is a prominent character in the Gothic novel: "Probably the majority of Gothic works in this period were by female authors and about female protagonists … many Gothic fictions counter myths of past or present felicity by focusing on the persecution of women" (James Watt, 2004: 123). Furthermore, this is the reason for my focus on this character. However, in addition to the traits of the Gothic heroine, there are other characteristics of the genre also worth mentioning. Another common feature of the Gothic novel is for instance the supernatural occurrences of various sorts, as it is not always in relation to the heroines' reactions, but also stands alone to interrupt the otherwise plausible stories of the novels. Among these one finds ghosts, spectres, unexplainable events such as the hearing of voices and the movement of objects where there is no living soul behind it etc. Moreover, as I have previously mentioned, these features are found in both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights.*

The first encounter Jane has with the supernatural, or what she believes to be such is, as I have mentioned earlier, when her aunt locks her in the room where her uncle died, and she believes he will return to punish her aunt for not keeping her promise to him: "…I thought the swift-darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings: something seemed near me…" (C. Brontë: 21). This happening is hastily explained away as

the result of Jane's imagining it because she was upset and afraid; however later in the same novel there is an incident which Jane cannot find a rational explanation for. On the evening when Jane has to decide whether she is to be St John's companion on his missionary travels and thus agree to be his wife she hears a voice calling:

> I saw nothing, but I heard a voice somewhere cry - ´Jane! Jane! Jane!` - nothing more. ´O God! What is it?` I gasped. I might have said, ´Where is it?` for it did not seem in the room, nor in the house, nor in the garden; it did not come out of the air, nor from under the earth, nor from overhead. I had heard it – where, or whence, for ever impossible to know! (C. Brontë: 483)

The eerie regarding this event is confirmed when Jane later meets Rochester, and he tells her of a similar episode, where he heard her voice calling the exact answer she expresses in this situation. To the reader this is then meant to be a real episode of the supernatural.

As mentioned above, *Wuthering Heights* also contains paranormal elements, and the reader's first encounter with such an incident is when the tenant, Mr Lockwood, whilst staying the night at Wuthering Heights, is awoken from a nightmare by the ghost of Cathy "…stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!" (E. Brontë: 17). Other ghostly incidents in that novel occurs towards the end, when people claim to have seen the ghost of Heathcliff walking around after his death; a little shepherd boy even runs away scared from the apparition of Cathy and Heathcliff walking the moors (E. Brontë: 244-245). Also, the death of Heathcliff is supposedly brought about by him seeing Cathy when nobody else does, leaving him unable to eat.

In novels of the Female Gothic[4] such as Ann Radcliffe's works, what are presumably supernatural or horrific occurrences more or less always turn out to have a logical explanation. One example is when Emily, the heroine of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, takes a look behind a black veil and feints at the sight of something she believes is a dead body. In the end the corpse turns out to have been made of wax, which our heroine would have found out for herself if she had investigated it further. *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* both veer from this convention, however, in that, with the exception of the incident with Jane in the red room, supernatural elements are given no rational explanation.

The traditional Gothic novel is also usually set in Europe, preferably in some remote haunted mansion or an old convent or castle. The place should be rather unkept and full of secret doors and passageways where the heroine and villain can chase one another. *Jane Eyre* fits the schema perfectly in that respect: the novel begins with her being a resident of Gateshead Hall, she is then transferred to Lowood School, from there she moves to Thornfield Hall, and the novel ends with her living in Ferndean, an old manor-house. All these are buildings of some consequence, and they are described in similar manners as the typical haunted castles of traditional Gothic novels as large buildings with many rooms, many hallways and some of them even have places the heroine is not to enter. *Wuthering Heights*, on the other hand, has no mansions, no castles or convents to spread awe amongst its characters; however the wildness of the moors, and the inhospitable nature of the scenery surrounding them provide much of the same effect:

> ´Wuthering` being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind

[4] Female Gothic is a term used on Gothic novels written by women.

> blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones (E. Brontë: 2).

Indeed, even if it is no castle, Wuthering Heights is still represented as some kind of fortress, having survived through the years against the raging wilderness of the moors.

Walpole introduced one of the foremost thematic features of the Gothic genre, which is the past coming back to haunt the present: "[Walpole] provided a resonant and potentially adaptable account of the past returning to destabilize the present" (Watt, 2004: 121). This element of a haunting past is found in most traditional Gothic novels in some manner or another. It can present itself as the finding of an old document that holds ancient secrets, or perhaps the unravelling of the undesirable truth that the tyrant is actually the heroine's father etc.

Another way in which "the past returning" often manifests itself is in "the return of the repressed", or "what ought to have remained hidden": "Many of the novels … stage in different ways either the defeat of feudal tyranny – most clearly in the case of Radcliffe's fiction – or the potentially disturbing recurrence of what was thought to have been defeated, forgotten, or superseded …" (Watt, 2004: 132). In *Jane Eyre* this element is most readily found in the figure of Bertha Mason, Rochester's mad wife whom he keeps shut up in the attic. This is, however, also one of the instances where *Wuthering Heights* differs most noticeably from the traditional Gothic novel. Rochester clearly exerts himself to keep Bertha Mason hidden from the outside world, and all one is to know of her comes for the most part in short glimpses of her encounters with Jane. Heathcliff on the other hand, being the unwanted

knowledge of the dark side of the British Empire, is portrayed as one of the main protagonists of *Wuthering Heights*, and plays a significant part throughout the novel. The return of the past and the manner in which especially *Wuthering Heights* differs from the tradition of the Gothic genre is something I shall come back to in more detail in a later chapter in this thesis. Above I have mentioned some of the most significant features of the Gothic novel and its heroine, and related these features to the two novels and heroines I am concerned with; however, in what manner does acknowledging these elements, and "locking" the novels in one particular genre help us – or not help us - in our reading of them? In the next chapter, my focus will be on some theories of genre and how the generic frameworks of Gothic fiction do and do not work in relation to *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights.*

Chapter Two:
Genre

In the previous chapter my focus was on the conventional generic traits of Gothic fiction and its heroine; in this chapter I will look at some theories on genre as well as how these conventions work within the worlds of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, and especially at how these literary works do and do not meet with the traditional expectations of the Gothic genre. In order to do so, it may be useful to first state what genre in fact is. There are several arguments for why one differentiates literature according to genre, and how one can and ought to do this, but I think it is important also to recognise that genre is made by humans, for humans, so that it is possible to classify and set apart different kinds of writing. As Hayden White puts it:

> …cultural and social genres belong to culture and not to nature, that cultural genres do not represented genetically related classes of phenomena, that they are constructed for identifiable reasons and to serve specific purposes, and that genre systems can be used for destructive as well as for constructive purposes (2003: 367)

He then goes on to suggest that: "…genres are unstable and potentially constraining, they are also unavoidable and indispensable for both creation and criticism" (2003: 367). This is what I am going to explore further in this chapter: how does one employ the knowledge of genre in a constructive manner? Furthermore, what manner is "destructive", and how does this way of reading potentially damage our understanding of the novels? Moreover, may it be beneficial

in our reading and interpretation of texts to make use of different sets of theories whilst reading, as a means to expand our understanding of them? Because even novels that "belong" to the same genre differ from one another.

One of the many differences between *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* is the manner in which the stories end. Jane, like a true Gothic heroine, obtains her happy ending: "I have now been married ten years. I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth. I hold myself supremely blest – blest beyond what language can express; because I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine" (C. Brontë: 519). It seems that the heroine of that novel enjoys domestic felicity to the fullest, perhaps even more than others because she has managed to overcome all her trials without losing her integrity.

The ending of the two main protagonists of *Wuthering Heights* on the other hand, is an entirely different matter. They both die. Cathy ceases to exist fairly early on in the novel; having just given birth to her daughter, she has to give in to death after starving herself for some time due to an argument between Heathcliff and Edgar: "About twelve o'clock, that night, was born the Catherine you saw at Wuthering Heights: a puny, seven months' child; and two hours after the mother died, having never recovered sufficient consciousness to miss Heathcliff, or know Edgar" (E. Brontë: 119). Cathy dies a disgraceful death, trying to punish those who love her for not complying with her wishes. Heathcliff never recovers from this incident, and in his last days he sees Cathy all the time beckoning him to follow in her footsteps. He finally succumbs to death after several days without eating, and Nellie is the one who finds him:

> Mr Heathcliff was there – laid on his back. His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then he seemed to smile. I could not think him dead: but his face and throat were washed with rain; the bed-clothes dripped, and he was perfectly still. The

> lattice, flapping to and fro, had grazed one hand that rested on the sill; no blood trickled from the broken skin, and when I put my fingers to it, I could doubt no more: he was dead and stark! (E. Brontë: 243).

As we see the endings of the two novels differ significantly from each other. This illustrates how the "locking" of these novels into one schema, one genre alone, may provide fruitless, as also Adena Rosmarin suggests. In *The Power of Genre* she states that:

> We typically strive both to unfold the unique and unmediated particularity of the text or our reading experience and to generalize this particularity, phrasing its explanation in terms not its own. The resulting reduction and distortion has proven always undesirable and frequently untenable (1986: 6).

This is a good description of the typical approach one has to a text. What traits can one find, and what do they mean? How can a given novel be classified and understood? However, are these questions the right ones, or the only questions to ask?

When reading some of the criticism written on *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* it is striking how many of them have a rather narrow, limited and very decided opinion of how these novels are to be read. Everything tends to be explained in one particular manner, and the critics obviously had all the "correct" answers as for how these novels were to be interpreted. If one for instance takes the view of feminist criticism of these works, they often use feminism and parts of psychoanalytical criticism so that the "correct" manner of interpreting these novels typically relates to the hidden sexual desires of women, their aggression, and how they are not to display these elements of their character to the world: "*Jane Eyre*, for example, is a kind of encoded symbolic message in which the heroine is split into two selves,

the ´monstrous,` passionate, sexual woman, and the ´good,` rational, controlled woman" (Karen F. Stein, 1983: 127). And the symbolic message of the split self where Bertha is seen as Jane's dark side is something Diane Long Hoeveler also argues: "Bertha *is* Jane's aggression" (1998: 208; italics in the original). The author's of *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) agrees with this, and further argues that this symbolic split exists in *Wuthering Heights* as well, only here it relates to Cathy and Heathcliff, him being the aggressive, sexual part of her character, since she, as a woman, cannot live out that particular side of her personality. [5]

Rosmarin comments on the tradition of criticisms that offers set answers as follows:

> With few exceptions criticism has treated genre not as the critic's explanatory tool but as a hypothesis, a probable stab at the truth, something whose inherence in a particular literary text or whose independent existence as a schema is potentially verifiable or, at least, refutable (1986: 25-26)

In relation to the Female Gothic, "solutions" more often than not reside either in a feminist literature criticism tradition, as I have suggested above, or in the combination of this and the psychoanalytical one, as these are of the most common criticisms applied to Gothic fiction. These critics believe to have found the only right way to read the novels, and seem to believe that only their analysis is correct, and only they have discovered the ultimate truth, which of course, is related to either feminism or female sexuality, or both. Moreover, they seem to be certain that either the novels they work with are indeed Gothic novels, or they are completely certain that they indeed are not![6] But is it not possible that literary works can employ the

[5] Another example of "set answers" can be found in "Dreaming of Children: Literalization in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*" (1983), where Margaret Homans claim that these two novels presents the woman's fear of childbirth and their alienation from nature.

[6] Hoeveler classifies *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* as works of Gothic fiction in *Gothic Feminism* (1998), however in "Dreaming of Children: Literalization in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*" (1983) Homans claim that they do not to belong historically to the genre of Gothic fiction.

generic traits of Gothic fiction and yet balance between this tradition and others? Might not that be one of the reasons why novels such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* are still read by numerous people, and continue to be celebrated as masterpieces of literature?

Rosmarin comments on this dilemma, saying that: "The problem with this search – whether for the perfectly solid ground or for the perfectly reflective medium – is never ending" (1986: 5). There will always be other ways in which to see a novel, other aspects one has not grasped, and other angles from which the text can be viewed. In *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* William St. Clair quotes Walter Scott's comparison of reading to a journey, a metaphor I think is well worth keeping in mind in this discussion of generic conventions:

> Scott, for example, compared the reading of a long romantic poem to the experience of a passenger going on a journey in a coach. When the passengers look out of the window they all see the same main features, the mountains, the fields, the towns, but they see them at different angles and with individual expectations. The carriage from which they see the view is moving all the time, and, with it their mental states (2004: 401)

This applies to novels as well as to poetry. Every person who examines *Wuthering Heights* reads the same words on those pages; nevertheless they will not experience those words in the same manner, not read with the same experiences, or in the same time period. If one seeks to find one universal truth or one perfect way of reading a novel or a genre, one more often than not will constrict this novel and genre so that they cannot evolve further. Perhaps it is in the challenging and destabilizing of a genre that the masterpieces are made? Here I think it useful to yet again refer to what Howard states in *Reading Gothic Fiction – A Bakhtinian approach*:

"…problems arise with … ahistorical and homogenizing approaches, as they impose a ´monologic` structure or closure – that is, a single ´authoritative` reading which disallows a text's semantic richness and suppress alternative ways of speaking" (1994: 14). If one limits novels such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* to only one "correct" reading, one also removes alternative understandings, and thus literature loses some of its power.

It is as impossible to confine these two novels to one genre only as it is to pin down exactly what each Gothic novel is supposed to contain. Genres are always developing, and every author brings something new, something other into their work, so genres are in constant evolvement. This is true even for genres like Gothic fiction, which in many ways have turned out rather rigid through the years, as I suggested in the previous chapter. This is not, however, how the Gothic started out:

> Literary genres do not emerge overnight, nor do they arise in cultural isolation. This is especially true of the Gothic, which not only underwent an initial period of gestation, development and decline … but also, from the very outset, borrowed liberally from a vast range of sources, foreign and domestic, literary, aesthetic, and scientific (Terry Hale, 2002: 63)

So the genre in which one still in 2011 can find the fainting, blushing, innocent heroines, and which many critics are so eager to pinpoint into a rigid form actually began as a fusion of several other genres; it is even sometimes seen as a hybrid between the romance and the novel (Jacqueline Pearson, 1999: 199).

All of this is not unique to the Gothic genre, but, as Mikhail Bakhtin suggests, applies generally: "Genre is reborn and renewed at every new stage in the development of literature and in every individual work of a given genre. This constitutes the life of the genre" (1984:

106). Genre should consequently be considered almost as a living creature that is in constant change and development.

As mentioned above, genre is something that not only critics need for their work, the authors, too, write with a knowledge concerning genre and what has been written earlier: "Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (Bakhtin, 1984: 69). When texts are contemplated in such a manner, as links in a chain, the text not only relates to earlier texts, but also to texts or responses that are to come, since, as Peter Seitel suggests "…all genres exist in relationships of similarity and contrast to others" (2003: 277). No genre can exist without other genres, since for there to be specific features belonging to one genre, there has to be other genres that these features do *not* belong to.

Moreover, genres communicate with one another and affect one another, just as texts do. Bakhtin takes this notion even further by stating that: "There can be no such thing as an absolutely neutral utterance" (1984: 84). All authors will have been affected and influenced by several circumstances and happenings through their lives, from the environment in which they grew up, to the culture that surrounds them as adults, and not least, what they have previously read, how this has affected them and what the public reception of given works has been. Naturally, these same authors will use that influence and knowledge in their writing. Therefore, literary works will have elements in common, and critics use these similarities to place the literature in different genres, and genre conventions are created. In relation to the act of writing there is no such thing as starting with an entirely blank sheet; genre conventions, for instance, will be in the back of the minds of the authors whether they are aware of it at the time or not.

However, authors also use the generic conventions intentionally to create allusions with the audience. This is natural as characteristics from specific genres would make the readers have certain expectations for the literary work: "While genres, thus, may indeed be

loose but conventional ways of representing human plights, they are also ways of telling that predispose us to use our minds and sensibilities in particular ways" (Jerome Bruner, 1991: 15). To do this the authors purposely use features from earlier texts within one specific genre, so as to set the mood for the readers: "A genre lives in the present, but always *remembers* its past, its beginning" (Bakhtin, 1984: 106; italics in original). In any novel then, one can find remembrances of the past, features also found in other works such as those I have previously pointed out in *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, but in any novel, if it is to outlive its own moment, one will also find something new, something the author brought with him/her and which is particular to exactly this piece of literature, and these features may or may not coincide with the conventions of the genre. Here the centrality of the heroines in Gothic fiction is such that I at this point have to return to discussions concerning their characterisations, so as to shed light one some important elements of the disruption of the genre in these two novels.

In terms of the remembrance of the past in *Jane Eyre*, one of the most prominent elements to link this novel to Gothic fiction is, as we have seen, the life and fate of the heroine: Jane's is the typical Gothic heroine history, growing up as an orphan, and the traditional Gothic heroine fate, she gets to marry the man that she loves. In *Wuthering Heights* on the other hand, one of the most conventional aspects of the novel is not related to the heroine, but to the style in which it is narrated. The narrative style of the Chinese box, the tale within the tale and the reader getting acquainted with the narrative through Nelly's storytelling are all traditional traits in Gothic fiction. However, these heroines do not only contain conventional features, they also bring new elements which represent a significant disruption of the Gothic genre.

Considering the element of "something new" that these authors have brought into the development of the character of the Gothic heroine, there is much to choose from, and I can

only give a few examples here. Although Jane has the typical history and fate of the Gothic heroine, she is at the same time a rather atypical Gothic heroine. As a child she actually fights back when her cousin John Reed attacks her, first she calls him wicked and cruel when he throws a book at her, then she defends herself when he again assails her:

> He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant: a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent suffering: these sensations for the time predominated over fear, and I received him in a frantic sort. I don't very well know what I did with my hands, but he called ´Rat! rat!` and bellowed out aloud (C. Brontë: 14)

A traditional Gothic heroine would never have acted this way as she is, as I have argued earlier, supposed to be passive. Jane has none of the traditional naïveté of the Gothic heroine, she does not even believe herself to be beautiful, but frequently refers to herself as having plain features. She leaves Rochester when he wishes to marry her, even if she loves him, since she knows he is already wed to another, and thus she makes a decision which is right for her and consequently chooses her own fate. Moreover, even though she leaves Rochester, she does not accept the offer of marriage from St John Rivers; she cannot love him although she knows him to be a learned, good and respectable man:

> But as his wife – at his side always, and always restrained, and always checked – forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry, though the imprisoned flame consumed vital after vital – *this* would be unendurable (C. Brontë: 470, italics in the original)

Jane has a much too passionate disposition to consider marrying a man whom she loves only like a brother, only because he seems to be the "correct" choice.

Cathy is also a much too passionate heroine to completely fit the schema of the Gothic heroine. As a child she can be mean and unfeeling towards others: "…she was never so happy as when we were all scolding her at once, and she defying us with her bold, saucy look, and her ready words…" (E. Brontë: 29). Cathy receives no understanding from her father as a child, and after the loss of her mother turns more and more wild, enjoying the attention which improper behaviour grants her. There is also a tendency in her character to be unfeminine. Conventional feminine traits such as sympathy and empathy is something which she displays rather sporadically, and more often than not she presents no emotions of the kind when met with weakness, like when Heathcliff tosses a mug of hot apple sauce on Edgar who, along with his sister, begins sobbing: "´Well, don't cry,` replied Catherine, contemptuously; ´you're not killed. Don't make more mischief; my brother is coming: be quiet! Give over Isabella! Has anybody hurt *you*?`" (E. Brontë: 41, italics in the original). Her passionate nature finally drives her to imagine herself ill and to starving herself to death when she cannot have both Heathcliff and Edgar in her life at the same time:

> ´I'm nearly distracted, Nelly!` she exclaimed, throwing herself on the sofa. ´A thousand smiths' hammers are beating in my head! Tell Isabella to shun me; this uproar is owing to her; and should she or any one else aggravate my anger at present, I shall get wild. And, Nelly, say to Edgar, if you see him again tonight, that I'm in danger of being seriously ill. I wish it may prove true. He has startled and distressed me shockingly! I want to frighten him… (E. Brontë: 84)

This quotation speaks of the beginning of Cathy's illness, which in the end results in her death, and it is begun by her obstinacy. She will not accept that her marrying Edgar has changed her relationship with Heathcliff; they should still be friends. Neither will she accept that Edgar will never admit Heathcliff into their lives, him being inferior in status, and not least being a person that has a relationship with Cathy that he cannot understand or partake in. Thus she punishes them both by making herself ill and letting herself die.

These elements of "something new" which the authors bring to the novels are constituents of the genre evolving. They can also be viewed as a manner of destabilizing the generic frameworks of Gothic fiction as these elements do not correspond with the conventions of the genre. Charlotte and Emily Brontë both disrupt the Gothic genre by the complexity of their characters. Almost all of the characters have both inferior and redeeming qualities, and they all change throughout the narrative. The heroines too, have radical features compared to the traditional Gothic heroines, like for instance in their choice of men, as they both choose the dark seducer, the "wrong" man according to the conventions of the genre.

Moreover the authors have both created strong, wilful heroines who have little interest in complying with the wishes and rules bestowed upon them by others, even if those others are of authoritative figures. Cathy does not comply with her father's wishes concerning her behaviour, and Jane never regards Mr. Brocklehurst with any respect even though he is a parson and the headmaster of her school. By letting their main protagonists, their heroines undermine some of the generic conventions of Gothic fiction Charlotte and Emily Brontë thus create another dimension in their novels and give the readers something new. The changes made in the heroines destabilize the "safe world" of the genre and one suddenly does not know what to expect. This might even be another manner of creating a disturbing feeling with the readers, as they can no longer be sure of what comes next.

If one were to lock these novels into one specific reading, on the other hand, as I have argued that some critics do, the new touch of the authors will be diminished. It will no longer be possible to read the novels in a different perspective; the characters of Jane and Cathy lose some of their captivating qualities, and the destabilizing of the genre will lose some of its power, as many of the unconventional character traits of the heroines are explained away. Thus, overlooking rigid readings and definitions leaves the novels open for exploration by new readers – and old. As for methods of destabilizing and enriching the genre of Gothic fiction, among the most interesting ones are the element of parody and "the return of the repressed", or "what ought to have remained hidden." How these two elements figure in relation to the two novels is the focus of my next chapters.

Chapter Three:

Parody

Several theorists claim that all types of parody have to contain a comical element or aspect, among them is, for instance, Margaret A. Rose. In *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* she says that: "The majority of works to which words for parody are attached by the ancients, and which are still known to us in whole or in part, suggest that parody *was* understood as being humorous in the sense of producing effects characteristic of the comic…" (1993: 25, italics in the original). This tendency is something also Linda Hutcheon recognises in *Defining Parody*: "The majority of theorists want to include humor or derision in the very definition of parody…" (2000: 51). However, while Hutcheon claims that parody indeed can include a comical element, she also states that it does not necessarily need to, and her definition of parody is thus: "…a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity" (2000: xii). In this chapter I will concern myself with this definition of parody, and its application in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, exploring how parodic representations disrupt the conventions of the Gothic genre. I will in particular focus on how parody as a destabilizing element relates to the characters in these two novels, and especially to the two Gothic heroines, Jane and Cathy; as well as the functioning of the element of the carnivalesque in these novels, and how this feature of parody especially contributes to the disruption of the genre.

Parody is often seen as relating a new text to one specific older text or original artwork, however in many art forms it is quite as common for parody to relate to several works belonging to the same artistic genre: "In the visual arts, parody can manifest itself in

relation to either particular works or general iconic conventions…" (Hutcheon, 2000: 12). This is how parody relates to *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*: the parodying is associated with the Gothic genre conventions and characteristics in general. It is in the nature of parody to change and alter what is known and familiar so as to take the reader by surprise when his/her expectations are not met. Rose says that parody leads to an "evocation and destruction of expectations" (1993: 172). As it is the elements of the Gothic genre which are parodied in this case and not only one particular literary work, the figure of parody alters the genre conventions of Gothic fiction and leaves the expectations of the reader disturbed.

As I have argued in an earlier chapter, one can find critics who claim that *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* belong in the Gothic genre, as well as critics who claim the exact opposite. This may amongst other things be because of the nature of parody and its connexion with other texts, for as Hutcheon says: "…parody is transformational in its relationship to other texts…" (2000: 38). Parodic texts both include and modify the texts they are parodying. This can be seen in both these novels in the characters of Jane and Cathy, since, as I have argued earlier[7], these two protagonists encompass many of the traditional features of a Gothic heroine at the same time as they are also developed further as characters with a far more complex nature than the established Gothic heroine typically had. Neither Jane nor Cathy are one-dimensionally containing only good or only bad features, they both develop throughout the novels, and they are given more free will and decision of character than earlier heroines. This can be seen in, for instance, how Jane acts in the manner of a lady for the most of the time, as a real heroine ought to, but which changes when she is confronted with a difficult situation, like when she makes the decision to leave Rochester after discovering his marriage, doing what is best for her in that situation, regardless of both her feelings for him and his feelings for her. Moreover, Cathy is headstrong and passionate in all her emotions, and treats

[7] See chapter 1 on the conventions of Gothic fiction.

the people around her well as long as it suits her and they comply to her wishes. In fact, her only redeeming quality might actually be found in her capacity to love, something she is capable of doing in a very passionate and all-consuming manner.

Thus *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* both possess and alter the conventions of the Gothic genre, and therefore they at the same time belong to and deviate from it. This is an aspect of parody that Hutcheon also comments on: "Parodic art both deviates from an aesthetic norm and includes that norm within itself as backgrounded material…" (2000: 44). The quotation relates to elements which clearly can be seen in both these novels as they contain some of the traditional genre traits, such as having the heroine placed between a fair lover and a dark seducer. They also contain the element of the "return of the repressed"[8], and they include several incidents of the supernatural, such as the ghost of Cathy, and the voice of Rochester[9]. Nevertheless, at the same time as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* enclose some classic genre traits, the characters of these two novels are, as I have previously stated, significantly more complex than in the early, established Gothic literary works. Moreover, the conventional elements of the supernatural and "the return of the repressed" are also presented in a slightly different manner than what can be found in earlier Gothic novels.

Jane Eyre and *Wuthering Heights* thus contain several layers of texts, and as is typical of parody one can find both new and old features:

> …the parody does not just let the parodied text ´glimmer` through its own text or ´level` … , but first sets up the text to be parodied … so that the reader will expect it, and then produces another version of it which the reader does not expect and which sets up some incongruous contrast or comparison with the original work (Rose, 1993: 171)

[8] The degree to which the element of "the return of the repressed" deviates from the classic Gothic conventions is such that I will explore this seperately in the next chapter.
[9] This is something which I have previously discussed in the chapter on genre.

While Rose refers to the parodying of individual works, the observation also applies to the parodying of broader, conventional generic traits making changes to traditional expectations.

Bakhtin's theories on parody are related to his view on literary works in general as being linked to one another[10], as texts always remember the past and previous literary works it is natural for the voices of those earlier works to leave traces in the new texts. Furthermore, this relates especially to parodic texts as they in several ways interact with earlier works; Bakhtin therefore stresses the diversity of voices that are inherent in parodic texts: "…his concept of parody as both a ´double-voiced` form and one which is based on contrast and dissonance…" (Rose, 1993: 126). By keeping some old features as well as renewing others, the parody can speak with two different voices, one being the voice of the original work which is to be found in the text, and the other being the voice of the modification. In the case of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* this would be several voices as they present parody in relation to a whole genre and not only one specific literary work. This double-voicedness is a manner in which a literary work can be renewed: "…the peculiar ´dual-codedness` of the parody allows it to renew and present that which it is parodying…" (Rose, 1993: 153). In relation to *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* they are part of a renewal of a genre, both conveying a fresh mode of Gothic fiction, and taking part in the development of an already established genre.

One might expect that this doubling of voices that Bakhtin discusses, and the presence of many layers of texts in a novel in part would reduce the given literary work, or lessen the significance of the original work being parodied. Seeing as how the parody is a blend of two or several texts it is by some critics seen as a contaminated literary figure, as the bringing with it of remnants of other texts makes it unclean, less original. And some critics do perceive

[10] This is something which I have previously discussed in the chapter on genre.

parody to be a lesser literary form since it often cannot succeed entirely on its own, but is dependant on the reader being acquainted with the original work to be understood fully. However, Hutcheon disagrees with this, and comments that: "[Parody's] two voices neither merge nor cancel each other out; they work together, while remaining distinct in their defining difference…" (2000: xiv) These voices thus work together in the parodic literary text, giving both the old and the new text a fresh aspect of understanding. Neither work is in any way compromised by being related to the other and, the parodying text can attain a completely different level of understanding in relation to that of the original. The reading of the parody might in fact inspire the reader to look upon the original with fresh eyes and see different aspects than before.

Jane Eyre and *Wuthering Heights* provide the Gothic genre with more complex and interesting characters, and in that manner provide the genre with a way out of the static conventions that had been established. Even if genres are always developing and being modified by new texts, there are nevertheless certain expectations. Consequently, so-called classic Gothic fiction follows a quite determined pattern in the fate of its villains, heroes and heroines, but this is something *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* break with. Jane strays from the pattern of the traditional Gothic heroine in her choice of the dark seducer as her husband, though with him she actually obtains a happy ending. Cathy on the other hand deviates entirely from the expected path: she marries the correct man, but for the wrong reasons, still loving the wrong man and she dies long before the ending of the novel.

As I have already argued, the parody relates to the original text, or as in the case of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, to the genre conventions in a transformational manner. It is therefore a literary strategy in which the new challenges the old and the established forms, and where the reformation of conventional forms leads to a renewal of the genre: "… parody can, like carnival, also challenge norms in order to renovate, to renew…" (Hutcheon, 2000:

76). The changes made to the Gothic heroines of these two novels can readily be understood as a challenge of the established norms. As the innocence and purity of the heroine is to be uncontested in Gothic fiction, the presentation of Jane and Cathy as headstrong, passionate and imperfect characters defies the classical conventions of the genre. However, the manner in which parody challenges the well-established norms of the genre is also a component that can be found in the changes that are made in literature in general, as Bakhtin states: "…´we may even say that language and languages change historically primarily by means of hybridization, by means of a mixing of various ´languages` co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect…" (quoted in Rose, 1993: 134). This observation can be related to genres as well as to languages; as the development of genres often comes from the influence of other genres, the inception of new ideas and new elements into an already established genre will little by little alter the given genre into something else, and thus sometimes, a new genre has come into being.

However, the alteration of a genre is also dependant on the properties of the parody, and its ability to liberate itself from the original work/genre, at the same time of its belonging to it:

> Parodic works like [*Don Quijote*] – works that actually manage to free themselves from the backgrounded text enough to create a new and autonomous form – suggest that the dialectic synthesis that is parody might be a prototype of the pivotal stage in that gradual process of development of literary forms… (Hutcheon, 2000: 35)

In relation to *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* it can be said that they manage to free themselves from earlier Gothic works to a certain degree, and that they are both autonomous literary works that can be read and comprehended without prior knowledge of the Gothic

genre. Furthermore, the disagreement between literary critics as to which genre these two works might belong to is a confirmation of their additional development of the Gothic genre, and how the novels both contain elements from, and differ from the genre of Gothic fiction at the same time.

Bakhtin speaks of the carnivalesque in relation to parody, and how these two figures sometimes are incorporated within each other. In fact, he claims that carnival has seeped into many literary genres, and in such novels the carnivalesque is an element of the parodic and in that manner assists in the genre disruptions. Bakhtin says of the carnival that:

> All the images of the carnival are dualistic; they unite within themselves both poles of change and crisis: birth and death (the image of pregnant death), blessing and curse … praise and abuse, youth and old age, top and bottom, face and backside, stupidity and wisdom. Very characteristic for carnival thinking is paired images, chosen for their contrast (high/low, fat/thin etc.) or for their similarity (doubles, twins)… (quoted in Rose, 1993: 161)

Such elements of carnival are readily found in both the novels I focus on here. In *Wuthering Heights* similar contrasts are found between the fair Edgar Linton and the dark Heathcliff, and between Cathy dying whilst giving birth to her daughter Catherine.[11] Here is also a presentation of the doubles, as Cathy and her daughter share the same name. The doubling of names is also found in the use of Linton for the last name of those belonging to The Grange, and the first name of Isabella and Heathcliff's son. The contrast Bakhtin speaks of is in *Jane Eyre* most immediately found in the relationship between Jane and Bertha: Bertha may be

[11] I will, throughout this thesis, refer to the younger Catherine as Catherine, and her mother as Cathy to be able to tell them apart.

seen as a distorted picture of Jane, of what she might become, as can be seen in one of Jane's encounters with Bertha where the latter wears and tears at her wedding veil:

> But presently she took my veil from its place: she held it up, gazed at it long, and then she threw it over her own head, and turned to the mirror. At that moment I saw the reflection of the visage and features quite distinctly in the dark oblong glass … Fearful and ghastly to me – oh, sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face – it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments! (C. Brontë: 327)

This quotation presents a dreadful and savage bride only days before Jane herself is to marry Rochester, displaying the distorted image of what Jane might become if she gives in to her emotions and passions, and marries a man who is already wed to another. And this is typical of carnival, the uniting of contrasts: "Carnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid…" (Bakhtin, 1984: 123). Here it is displayed in the combination of Jane and Bertha, one is the bride-to-be that Rochester worships, the educated Englishwoman who acts as a lady should; the other is the lawful wife he hides in the attic, the debased Creole who behaves like an animal. And of course we also find the traditional contrast between the fair lover in St John Rivers and the dark seducer in Mr. Rochester in the novel as well.

The debasing of Bertha represents the lower aspects of carnival which is profanation: "…*profanation*: carnivalistic blasphemies, a whole system of carnivalistic debasings and bringings down to earth, carnivalistic obscenities linked with the reproductive power of the earth and the body…" (Bakhtin, 1984: 123, italics in the original). Bertha is presented as the animal in *Jane Eyre*, she is the illustration of what happens to women who do not repress their

sexual verve and instead live out their bodies' needs and desires. Rochester himself tells Jane of the degrading he experienced in being married to an unchaste wife (C. Brontë: 353). And, in Jane's only meeting with Bertha during daytime, she is described as having animalistic features:

> What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face (C. Brontë: 338)

Bertha is in many ways displayed as the element of the carnivalistic sexual energy in *Jane Eyre*; and she exemplifies the feature of degradation in relation to physical behaviour.

Fire is another element in the carnivalesque, for as the carnival is an up-side-down version of the real world, the fire has the power to demolish this world at the same time as it has the ability to renovate: "Deeply ambivalent also is the image of *fire* in carnival. It is a fire that simultaneously destroys and renews the world" (Bakhtin, 1984: 126, italics in the original). This element can be found twice in *Jane Eyre* and both instances relate to Bertha, connecting her even closer to the carnivalesque depiction in the novel. The first occurrence with fire is when Jane wakes in the night to find Rochester asleep in his burning bed: "Tongues of flame darted round the bed: the curtains were on fire, In the midst of blaze and vapour, Mr Rochester lay stretched motionless, in deep sleep" (C. Brontë: 174). This fire does not seem to destroy anything in particular apart from the draperies hanging around Rochester's bed, and thus is not immediately related to the carnivalesque fire. However, on a less material level the fire does destroy one of the psychological barriers between Jane and Rochester. It is the spark that first allows Jane to see Rochester's regard for her, and he leaves

the next day to bring home a large party of aristocrats and in this way tries to ignite Jane's jealousy. Therefore the fire does, in a way, destroy barriers, renew and help develop their relationship. The other instance of fire is easier to connect with the carnivalesque. This is the fire of Thornfield Hall, this too, is started by Bertha and it ends her life as well as it completely obliterates Thornfield Hall. This fire is the destruction of Rochester's old life, of him on top of the hierarchical structure with his wealth and masculine virility. The fire cripples him, and it is because of the fire and Bertha's death that Jane and Rochester are able to marry and live their happy ending as equals.

Bertha's laughter is a symbol of the uncanny in *Jane Eyre*. It frequently occurs during Jane's stay at Thornfield, from her very first tour of the place, to the revelation of whom the laugh belongs to which ends in Jane leaving.[12] As I have argued earlier, Bertha's character is connected with the animalistic along with sexual desire, and her laughter thus becomes uncanny in a world where these features of female sexuality were supposed to stay repressed and hidden. Moreover, this is also another element relating her to the carnivalistic, as the carnivalistic laughter is explicitly connected with, amongst other things, the reproductive act and thus female sexuality: "All forms of ritual laughter were linked with death and rebirth, with the reproductive act, with symbols of the reproductive force" (Bakhtin, 1984: 127). The hearing of this laughter is the reason why Jane awakens and finds Rochester in his burning bed. The laughter becomes a bad omen for Jane, a symbol of the ever-present threat of what she might become if she is to give in to her physical desires to Rochester.

The carnival contains an element of a disturbed world order: "Because carnivalistic life is life drawn out of its *usual* rut, it is to some extent ´life turned inside out, ` ´the reverse side of the world`…" (Bakhtin, 1984: 122, italics in the original). This applies well to both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. In the first one can find this feature in for instance Cathy's

[12] By uncanny I here refer to the definition in Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny" as something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light (Freud, ed. J. Rivkin and M. Ryan, 1998: 156).

behaviour during her illness. She acts almost as a madwoman, plucking the feathers out of her pillow, not recognising her own face in the mirror, believing to be back in her childhood home and acting more or less as a child instead of the grown up lady she is supposed to be. And all this she has in fact inflicted upon herself through the making of her illness. Just as carnival is play, Cathy's illness begins with her playing ill to gain Edgar's sympathy and her own will, but as one has to *live* the carnival life as long as it lasts, she never escapes from it alive.

Another way in which this aspect is found is in the reconstruction of the hierarchical systems which takes place during carnival: "…what is suspended first of all is hierarchical structure and all the forms of terror, reverence, piety, and etiquette connected with it…" (Bakhtin, 1984: 123). In *Wuthering Heights* this relates well to the total chaos that Heathcliff sets in motion at his return. As Steven Vine says in "The Wuther of the Other in Wuthering Heights": "Heathcliff restlessly invades and overturns the generic and narrative protocols of the novel" (1994: 341). He terrorises the locals, in particular those who debased and degraded him in his childhood, frightening Edgar, tricking Isabella, and gaining power over Hindley as can be seen in the latter's exclamations towards Isabella:

> …´should he offer to leave me, he's a dead man: persuade him to attempt it, and you are a murderess! Am I to lose *all*, without a chance of retrieval? Is Hareton to be a beggar? Oh, damnation! I *will* have it back: and I'll have *his* gold too: and then his blood; and hell shall have his soul!... (E. Brontë: 102, italics in the original)

Heathcliff truly disturbs the natural world order of the British countryside by placing himself on the top of the hierarchical chain through manipulating people and possessing wealth no one knows where came from.

In *Jane Eyre* it is Bertha who executes all the terrorising, and even if she belongs to the lowest parts of the hierarchy, she inflicts fear on the inhabitants of Thornfield. She stabs her brother, the aristocrat Mason, and thus demonstrates her power over him. It should have been the other way around, since he, as a man and her brother should have had power over her. She especially instils fear in Jane, who seems rather helpless in all her encounters with Bertha. It is clear which one of the two is the empowered one in their night time meetings: "People who in life are separated by impenetrable hierarchical barriers enter into free familiar contact on the carnival square…" (Bakhtin, 1984: 123). Even though Jane clearly is the one with the ability to lead her own life, and Bertha is entrapped, degraded, and at the hands of another, this all evaporates during the short encounters they have at night, serving as a kind of "carnival square". In those meetings, Bertha is in fact the one in charge. As Jane is unaware of Bertha's existence, she frames the circumstances of their meetings, and Jane, being often found in bed, is the one without power.

This overturning of the hierarchy exists for the period of the carnival, thus the participants have to obey the rules of the carnival throughout its duration: "Carnival is not contemplated and, strictly speaking, not even performed; its participants *live* in it, they live by its laws as long as those laws are in effect…" (Bakhtin, 1984: 122, italics in the original). Jane has no choice but to stay passive, as she is living in and with carnival time. She does not know of Bertha, or that Rochester is married at all. During the course of the novel Jane lives two such deceptions, one is the belief in her happy circumstances with Rochester the first time, where she is deceived into believing him free. The relief from this lie does not eliminate the carnival world entirely because she still lives in the belief of her poverty. This is in turn a lie manufactured by her aunt Reed, who refused to make her acquainted with her rich uncle. Thus when this uncle dies, Jane is not made aware of her inheritance.

Cathy lives in the carnival world during her illness in *Wuthering Heights*: “Tossing about, she increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, and tore the pillow with her teeth; then raising herself up all burning, desired that I would open the window…” (E. Brontë: 88). Even though she has inflicted this decease and madness upon herself through starvation in protest against Heathcliff and Edgar’s rivalry, she nevertheless manages to become truly ill, seeing sights, dreaming and yearning for the wildness of the moors and the freedom of the wilderness. And during her illness she makes this world so real, lives it so thoroughly, that it is actually the cause of her death.

As an element of the parodic, the carnivalesque also contains a renewing force: “This carnival sense of the world possesses a mighty life-creating and transforming power, an indestructible vitality…” (Bakhtin, 1984: 107). Jane’s vitality and strong constitution is presented in her survival at Lowood; even though many of the girls there died as a result of under nourishment and an unhealthy climate, little Jane endured, and this is something which Rochester comments on as well: “´Eight years! you must be tenacious of life. I thought half the time in such a place would have done up any constitution!...” (C. Brontë: 143). She also manages to survive after leaving Rochester and Thornfield, and although this nearly kills her, she is nurtured back to perfect health by Diana and Mary Rivers.

In *Wuthering Heights* on the other hand, it is Heathcliff which is the absolute embodiment of vitality. During his childhood he stands erect through kicks and punches from Hindley, enduring it as long as he gets his way in the end. And he manages to outlive every single one of his childhood acquaintances except from Nelly. Cathy, Hindley, Isabella and Edgar, they all die while he remains, and in the end he has even acquired all the wealth once belonging to these characters.

However, at the end of the novel, it might seem like the carnival is at an end, for as I have previously argued, the characters of the novel only lead the carnivalistic life as long as

carnival time lasts. This is why Heathcliff is in charge, while Catherine and Hareton, the rightful heirs of the Grange and Wuthering Heights are his subjects. But, at the end, when everything has turned out exactly as Heathcliff wanted it to, he does not manage to finalize it; he does not care to make the final strike. The carnival is over, Heathcliff soon dies, and Catherine and Hareton can at length lead the lives that are rightfully theirs. Thus the world is restored to its "natural" order and carnival time has ended. The same goes for *Jane Eyre*, when she finally learns of her fortune and rejects St John Rivers, she seeks out Rochester, who is free from Bertha at last, and she is given the proper ending for a Gothic heroine.

Thus, the parodic and carnivalesque elements of these novels represent a destabilizing element of the Gothic genre, except the presentation is not lasting. At the end of both novels the reader is presented with an "appropriate" ending for the genre, and this may in fact be one of the reasons why these novels both belong to and do not belong to the Gothic genre at once. In this they are also a good illustration of carnival itself in that, during a short period of "fictional time", the texts play with, disturb, and disrupt the expectations of the genre only to restore everything back to its right order in the end.

To conclude this chapter I will mention a final aspect of parody. Hutcheon claims that parody also functions as a way to connect the present with the past: "It is one of the ways in which modern artists have managed to come to terms with the weight of the past…" (2000: 29). This functioning of parody can be found in these novels in the element of "the return of the repressed", which I will explore in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Four:

The "Other" as "The Return of the Repressed"

The element of the return of the past in Gothic fiction has already been extensively covered by various critics: "The Gothic theme that the sins of the father are visited on the offspring is manifested in the representations of the illegitimacy and brutality of paternal authority, the repetition of events, and the doublings of figures and names in successive generations" (Fred Botting, 1996: 129).[13] In *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* one can find the more traditional representations illustrated in for instance Mr. Earnshaw's obvious preferment of Heathcliff to his own son and daughter, the repetition of the name of Catherine in both mother and daughter, or in Linton being the surname of Edgar and Isabella and becoming the first name of Isabella and Heathcliff's son. We also see this theme reflected in the brutality with which Rochester is treated by his father and brother, who force him to marry for money as his father is not willing to leave any share of the estate to his younger son.

In this chapter I will mainly focus on how the element of the return of the past contributes further to the destabilizing of the expectations of the Gothic genre in these two works. More specifically I want to explore how "the return of the repressed" or "what ought to have remained hidden - but has come to light" is represented in a controversial way in these two novels. I will in particular concentrate on the way in which this element is related to the characters of Bertha and Heathcliff.

[13] I have already discussed how Walpole was one of the author's to introduce this feature in the chapter on the conventions of the Gothic genre. Also, the return of something which ought to have been hidden is one of the definitions of the uncanny in Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny" (ed. J. Rivkin and M. Ryan, 1998), which often has been used by critics of Gothic fiction.

The return of the past is one of the main characterisations in many Gothic works, so the alteration of this element becomes a quite substantial disruption of the genre: “Gothic atmospheres – gloomy and mysterious – have repeatedly signalled the disturbing return of the past upon presents…” (Botting, 1996: 1). The traditional Gothic plot generally contains an element of something that comes form the past, which is hidden or forgotten, and through the story of the Gothic novel eventually comes to light; Heathcliff and Bertha are unconventional presentations of this in *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*.

In *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness*, Tabish Khair states: “Every definition of the Gothic highlights a version of Otherness, an event, personage or term that is finally a partial or flawed attempt to conceptualise that which is vital to the Self and absolutely not the Self” (2010: 6-7). As many critics have pointed out, this otherness manifests itself in both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* in the characters of Bertha and Heathcliff[14], Bertha being the mad wife Rochester keeps hidden in the attic, and Heathcliff the dark little orphan without a history who is brought back from Liverpool by Mr. Earnshaw. Moreover, in both these novels the otherness that these characters represent also stands for the “return of the repressed” in several manners. I will however mainly concern myself with the relation it can be said to have to the British Empire.

In both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* there are many aspects to the figuring of the British Empire, on the one hand it is from the imperial subjects Jane obtains her wealth and freedom, and the British aristocracy lived well of the money streaming in from the Empire’s borders. Nevertheless, Empire is also a source from which darkness, contamination, and brutality in the figures of Bertha and Heathcliff spill over into Britain, the British countryside, and the homes of the common Brit.

[14] There are other ways in which otherness may be viewed in these novels as well, for instance, a feminist reading of these two novels would have Cathy and Jane as one version of the ”other” as they are both female, and thus the ”other” in relation to a masculine world.

From the beginning of the British Empire and onwards the nature of the bond between Britain and its foreign subjects went through a change:

> …Britain's national identity and national culture – Britain's sense of itself and of its very modernity – were by the end of the eighteenth century comprehensively shaped by the discourses of imperialism and by Britain's changing image of and relations with its cultural others (Saree Makdisi: 2004, 62)

Where the beginning of the age of the Empire recognizes Orientalism as a popular trend in literature and culture, the development through the years altered this trend into an alienation of the foreign subjects. Edward Said treats this in his work *Orientalism* (1979), where he argues that the concept of Orientalism changed through the course of the years. The late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries saw what could be described as a kind of an oriental renaissance, with the orient's mystique and exoticism becoming very popular. However, as the field of study increased, this imposed limits upon the thoughts people had concerning the orient and its inhabitants, and finally the underlying notion of "them" versus "us" came to the surface: "For Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, ´us`) and the strange (The Orient, the East, ´them`)" (Said, 1979: 43). The otherness which the imperial subjects came to stand for became less fascinating to the British aristocracy, and the strange cultures no longer excited curiosity or the feeling of exclusivity, but were related to darkness, destruction and incomprehensibility: "…it (the east) was instead to be regarded as a source of contamination threatening to the well-being of the Western and British self who sought to know and to rule it" (Makdisi: 2004, 70). Given how the British treated their imperial subjects it is not strange that they came to fear them in the end; as they came to the colonies to rule and

live off of the labour of native inhabitants, they made the natives slaves in their own countries, and extracted from these countries valuable resources and profits. Thus the colonizers ended up in the same state as all tyrants eventually do, living in fear of the subjects they oppress. This fear was projected onto the mainland Brits as well, as they feared what the foreigners and their cultures could do to the "civilized" British society if they were given entrance.

In "Colonial and Postcolonial Gothic: the Caribbean" Lizabeth Paravasini-Gebert says that Gothic fiction, a genre which is to arouse fear and thrills in its readers, was a device which well could take on the problems of the Empire (2002: 229). This is something Khair also argues : "Perhaps Gothic fiction was best situated to access, within the limits of the genre, the hauntings and dreams, the nightmares and anxieties of empire brought home to roost in the British countryside, the English metropolis and the British castle" (2010: 9-10). Being a genre already relying on the element of the supernatural and the mysterious, the exoticism of foreign imperial subjects could fit well with the traditional traits of Gothic fiction, and bring fresh perspectives to the well-established genre.

This is exactly what both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* do with the characters of Bertha and Heathcliff. These characters represent the darker side of the Empire coming back to haunt the British countryside and its inhabitants, but as I have argued earlier in this thesis many of the most prominent analyses of these novels "trap" them within rather rigid readings, where Bertha and Heathcliff are often read as elements of Jane and Cathy's characters.[15] However, they both, and especially Heathcliff, are allowed a more extensive influence on the main narrative than the "other" previously has had in Gothic fiction.[16] Heathcliff is actually one of the main protagonists of *Wuthering Heights*, and it is this feature of the element of "the

[15] This reading of Heathcliff and Bertha as the "other" relates them to the oppressed sexuality and agression of Jane and Cathy (their masculine features), and not to the British Empire as I do here.
[16] The "other", especially as a version of "the return of the repressed" is usually kept hidden in traditional Gothic fiction, where the reader only catches glimpses of this element throughout the narrative, and it is rarely narrated directly.

repressed" I would like to explore further, as the effect their representations in these novels has on the workings of the genre and on the heroines is something that in my opinion has not been previously treated to a satisfying degree. Even though both Khair and Paravasini-Gebert address the significant role Heathcliff has as a protagonist, they do not discuss the effects this element has on the frameworks of the genre, or on the heroine, which is what I want to concern myself with. Moreover, Bertha is, as usual, considered to be a traditional representation of the "other", something which I only in part agree with.

I begin by relating the element of "the return of the repressed" to these two characters and novels, starting with Heathcliff and *Wuthering Heights*. In this novel, Heathcliff is a representation of the "other" and as such he is part of what excites fear and terror in the reader. Khair claims that in the Gothic narrative in general terror usually takes place elsewhere (2010: 69-70), the story is most often situated somewhere in Eastern Europe, leaving the domestic comforts of home safe and unharmed. However, as Khair also states, this is not the case with Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* : "Terror takes place when that which has been disowned, exorcised, banished, exiled, prevented entry, nevertheless crashes the barriers" (2010: 70). I agree with Khair in this, and I think this quotation is very well related to Heathcliff's position in the novel. As the young orphan boy brought into the Earnshaw family, he never really becomes a part of this family, but instead becomes a seed of displeasure as he creates enmity between the different members of the family. He has no history, no surname, no known relatives, and thus has no rights, no status, and no position in society. His origin is unknown; one is only told that he was picked up from the streets in Liverpool, which at that time was one of the main harbours between Britain and the Caribbean subjects of the Empire. Liverpool was also a connecting point between Britain and Ireland, and thus, where Heathcliff actually comes from becomes a source of uncertainty.

In *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* Terry Eagleton claims that he might just as well come from Ireland as anywhere else: "Heathcliff starts out as an image of the famished Irish immigrant, becomes a landless labourer set to work in the Heights, and ends up as a symbol of the constitutional nationalism of the Irish parliamentary party" (1995: 19). However, the Irish were considered to be just as little worth, and just as different and alienated from the English gentleman as the imperial subjects from the Caribbean were, consequently they too were in many respects the "other" in relation to the Brits. Therefore, whether he is the one or the other, Heathcliff represents the banished and the exiled as his figure comes to stand for the negative aspect of exoticism and otherness. His manner of entrance into the Earnshaw family may furthermore well be said to be a way of "crashing the barriers" when he comes unwelcome into their home described as a little gypsy: "…a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's; yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish, that nobody could understand…" (E. Brontë: 25). Heathcliff is thus a good example of the estranged, the "other"; however, even in his difference, his character comes to dominate *Wuthering Heights* in a manner not common for the element of "the return of the repressed". For as Khair says of the "other":

> …they are seldom narrated directly; their materiality is downplayed rather than heightened … Tucked away into the recesses of the narratives, haunting its corridors more in the shape of ghosts and nightmares than as fully fledged and fully fleshed characters (2010: 37)

Khair relates this amongst others with the way Bertha is narrated in *Jane Eyre*, but his description of Heathcliff, on the other hand, is that of a terrorist invading the country (2010:

64). And as can be seen, Heathcliff is given significantly more attention and influence in *Wuthering Heights* than a typical illustration of the "other".

Consequently, as I have just argued, the description of the traditional "other" does not relate well to Heathcliff, this is something Khair claims as well, as he is one of the main protagonists throughout the novel. Moreover, the way in which Heathcliff is the untraditional "other" is one of the most significant manners that *Wuthering Heights* differs from and destabilizes the features of the Gothic genre. This way of destabilizing a genre can be related to Bakhtin's earlier mentioned "chain of utterances"[17]. If every utterance is indeed a link in a great chain of utterances, both the Empire and the voices of the colonial subjects can be read as such utterances that trickle through the main narrative to be heard in the novel. This relating of the Empire and its subjects within the genre of Gothic fiction is part of the disrupting of the genre, as well as the presentation of the "other". The "other", the repressed, that which should have remained hidden and "lurking" in the background, is pushed into the frontline of *Wuthering Heights* constantly reminding the readers of its presence as it is in fact represented as one of the main characters of the novel.

Heathcliff is first introduced as the landlord of Mr Lockwood, through whom we are made acquainted with the story. Heathcliff then dominates the narrative first by being the companion of the young Cathy, and later as being the one to cause the damnation of several of the other characters. He is also the one character with most influence on the Gothic heroine of the story, Cathy, and thus he also affects one of the most significant characters in the Gothic novel. Cathy and he share a unique bond from their childhood, and the fronting of Heathcliff and the significance his character has for the story's outcome in spite of him being the "other" is one of the reasons why Cathy becomes the heroine she is. When grown up she seems to have led a quiet and harmonic life with her husband Edgar and sister-in-law Isabella at the

[17] I have previously discussed this in the chapter on genre.

Grange while Heathcliff is absent, and his reappearance disturbs her, and eventually determines her fate. The unconventional representation of the element of the repressed thus not only disrupts the generic expectations in themselves, but also in a significant manner generates the changes that can be found in Cathy as a Gothic heroine in opposition to the conventional Gothic heroines as well.

There are several approaches to reading Heathcliff as "the return of the repressed" in *Wuthering Heights*, and in many ways he turns the world inside out, not only the world of the characters, but also that of imperial Britain. When he returns to Wuthering Heights after his absence of several years he has become quite a changed man. He has acquired a fortune, although nobody knows how, and he has the seeming conduct and looks of a gentleman. As Vine suggests, he mirrors and turns, or develops further the manners with which his opponents, Edgar and Hindley act and treat him: "…Heathcliff gives back to his victims an ironic image of their own repressed significance: grotesquely repeating or exaggerating the characteristics of those he ousts…" (1994: 342). Not only can we say that Heathcliff represents what should have remained hidden in his own role as "other", he also returns from his years away mirroring the repressed notions these men have of themselves. Edgar, who is born rich and who is the genteel gentleman, never really caring for displaying wealth, is mirrored and twisted in Heathcliff's violence and the demonstrations of his own wealth to control and gain power upon his return. Hindley, who subdued and hit him in his younger days, is repaid threefold: Heathcliff strips Hindley of all his valuables, reducing him to a kind of prisoner within his own home, and his son Hareton, is turned to a labourer within his own home at the death of his father. Heathcliff even makes Hareton love him, and reduces him to an ignorant peasant who scorns fine manners and has no wish for book learning. Thus Heathcliff's vengeance is complete.

It is however as a reminder of the dark sides of the British Empire that the figure of Heathcliff carries most significance. His descent is unknown, but as I have argued, he is found on the harbour in Liverpool, and thus he might very well come from a distant part of the Empire. The descriptions of him also hint at an un-British background as his features are always portrayed as dark and foreign: “A ray fell on his features; the cheeks were sallow, and half covered with black whiskers; the brows lowering, the eyes deep set and singular” (E. Brontë: 67). Thus, Heathcliff comes as a reminder that British wealth and prosperity is built on the poverty, degrading and defiling of others, and, as Susan Meyer comments, it is this relation he destabilizes; and this treatment is one he turns inside out:

> …He sexually appropriates, imprisons, and beats British women, and subjects them to sexual and economic coercion. He creates a world in which physical force and economic power – coming from a mysterious external source – take the place of law or local standards of morality. His actions hideously mimic the ugly brutality of British Imperialism (1996: 116)

Heathcliff comes into the British countryside and treats its inhabitants in many ways in the same style as the British aristocracy came to other “less civilised” continents and treated the natives there. His role in the degradation of Hindley, his conduct in his marriage with Isabella Linton, how he lures her into it and his appalling behaviour towards her afterwards are all examples of this. He even repeats this pattern with his own son Linton, and with Catherine, the daughter of Edgar and Cathy. This can be seen in Linton’s fear for his father and his reprimands, and Catherine soon learns of Heathcliff’s true nature as well:

> Catherine was too intent on his fingers to notice his face. He opened them suddenly, and resigned the object of dispute; but, ere she had well secured it, he seized her with the liberated hand, and, pulling her on his knee, administered with the other a shower of terrific slaps on both sides of the head… (E. Brontë: 196)

This quotation displays Catherine's first meeting with the brutality of Heathcliff as he holds her captured by force so that she shall marry Linton, and fail to see her father before he dies.

Nonetheless, it is in his relation with and in the treatment of Cathy, the heroine, where one perhaps finds the ultimate manner in which Heathcliff represents the "return of the repressed" in *Wuthering Heights*. Cathy has married Edgar, and tries to lead the life of a gentlewoman; however the reappearance of her childhood-friend and love alters the calm and steady life she has been leading: "With Heathcliff's arrival the earlier phase of Cathy's history – her childhood at the Heights – returns like the repressed in psychoanalysis, breaking into the bourgeois complacencies of the Grange with all the delayed and destructive significance of trauma" (Vine, 1994: 352). Vine's observation underlines how, after Heathcliff's arrival, Cathy's life goes steadily down-hill, and the rivalling between Heathcliff and Edgar is something she cannot understand. In her opinion they should be good friends since they share their love for her, and the fact that they cannot manage this she takes as proof for that they do not love her well enough. This literally tears her apart, and causes her death, as this passage reflects:

> ´What now?` said Catherine, leaning back, and returning his look with a suddenly clouded brow: her humour was a mere vane for constantly varying caprices. ´You and Edgar have broken my heart, Heathcliff! And you both come to bewail the deed to me,

> as if you were the people to be pitied! I shall not pity you, not I. You have killed me – and thriven on it, I think… (E. Brontë: 115)

As we see here, Cathy claims the rivalry between Heathcliff and Edgar to be the reason for her illness, which eventually causes her death. Their failing to act as she wishes has strained her emotions and nerves to the breaking point. Furthermore, as I have argued in an earlier chapter, Cathy's function as a Gothic heroine is one of the more significant disrupting elements of the Gothic genre, consequently the power the character of Heathcliff has over her, and his being the "other", only strengthen this destabilizing feature.

The representation of Bertha in *Jane Eyre* is, on the other hand, a seemingly more conventional presentation of the element of "the return of the repressed", as many literary critics have argued earlier. Bertha is the "other", she is a woman, she is also Caribbean and described as having dark features, and she is mostly placed on the side of the main narrative, never being allowed to raise her voice for herself. Consequently, she is in a sense a clear traditional image of the "other" in Gothic fiction. In relation to this, there might be disagreement as to whether she is the "other" because she is female, or if it is because she is foreign. For instance, Gayatri Spivak accuses *Jane Eyre* with racism and praise of imperialism in her literary criticism of the novel, and this is based on the treatment of Bertha as "other", and how she has to die in order for Jane to have her happy ending: "I must read this as an allegory of the general epistemic violence of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating colonial subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer" (1985: 251). It is true that Bertha has to be "cleared out of the way" for Jane to have the man she loves; and it is also true that Bertha is described as a rather hideous and animalistic being, as in Jane's descriptions of her here: ´This, sir, was purple: the lips were swelled and dark; the brow furrowed: the black eyebrows widely raised over the bloodshot eyes. Shall I tell you of

what it reminded me?` … ´Of the foul German spectre – the vampire.` (C. Brontë: 338) Nonetheless, Bertha's madness and grotesque appearance can also be read as a stab at the Empire; she is after all a living example of the management of the Empire. As a woman and as a Creole she is doubly degraded and thus in a manner, twofold subjected to Rochester, the white, aristocratic man. Consequently Bertha can also be seen as the result of the treatment of the "natives" of the Empire when subjected to the rule of the Englishman, as she can be seen as a trope for the imperial subjects, and a living proof of what happens when subjected to the will and force of "superior" others. The connexion between the darker aspects of the Empire with both Bertha and the British aristocracy is my focus in the remainder of this chapter.

The British Empire stands for a notable amount of the wealth and prosperity in *Jane Eyre*. Rochester has become rich through imperial workings, and Jane herself receives her wealth and freedom from plantations worked by the imperial subjects. Nevertheless, in other parts of *Jane Eyre*, it is insinuated that the British Empire might in fact not be so glorious, for instance in one of the earliest scenes with Jane and her cousin John Reed, where she links him with the Roman Empire in a most unflattering way: "´Wicked and cruel boy!` I said. ´You are like a murderer – you are like a slave-driver – you are like the Roman emperors!`" (C. Brontë: 13). This quotation clearly makes a connexion between the British aristocracy through John Reed and an empire with a rather bloody history, insinuating that there might be a likeness between these two empires, and that perhaps even the British Empire may have had blood on their hands.

And there are other implications as well linking the British ruling class with darker aspects of the Empire, Susan Meyer for instance, finds them in the descriptions and wording concerning the aristocrats visiting Rochester, and in particular the description of Miss Blanche Ingram with her: "´Tall, fine bust, sloping shoulders; long, graceful neck: olive complexion, dark and clear; noble features; eyes rather like Mr Rochester's, large and black, and as

brilliant as her jewels" (C. Brontë, 185). This description does not convey an image of a typical Englishman, rather someone more exotic and clearly more similar to the native subjects of the British Empire. Moreover, this can also be seen in connexion with the descriptions of Bertha in the novel: her features are also dark and exotic, however they may be seen as a mirroring and a distortion of the members of the British aristocracy represented by Blanche Ingram and Rochester. Also, this mirroring is yet another manner of conveying the result of the British Empire's violence with which the imperial subjects are held down.

Thus, these descriptions of Rochester and Blanche Ingram suggest a linking between the dark complexion of the aristocracy and the Empire. As Meyer argues:

> By associating the qualities of darkness and imperiousness, Brontë suggests that imperialism brings out both these undesirable qualities in the imperialist, that the British aristocracy in particular has been sullied, darkened, and made imperious or oppressive by the workings of empire (Meyer, 1996: 79)

There are several examples in the novel of descriptions of Blanche's black ringlets, and her mother's imperial countenance to underline the link connecting the aristocracy to the Empire, and this is again figured through darkness. Moreover, this connexion emphasizes how the Brits themselves are affected by their governing of the Empire, and how this results in the contamination of the aristocracy, as they become darker and may in the end themselves resemble what they most fear and detest. Therefore, the descriptions of the aristocracy also seemingly represent the demasking of the gloriousness of the Empire.

Even though the representation of "the return of the repressed" in *Jane Eyre* is in a way conventional, I would argue that Bertha nonetheless is given more influence than the "other" usually is. The descriptions of her may be degrading, and she does commit suicide, leaving Jane to her happy ending, but she still affects Jane's life significantly. The revealing

of her marriage with Rochester results in Jane running away, thus escaping a marriage which would have been unequal; she would have been Rochester's subordinate for the rest of her life. Instead she finds friends, who turn out to be her family, and she inherits money, which gives her an equal footing when she returns to Rochester. Bertha is also left with more power than the "other" usually is as is seen when she rebels against Rochester: she is no weak prisoner, but fights him. This can be argued to underline her unfeminine and animalistic character traits; it might even strengthen the argument of Bertha being an image of how the English gained strength and power from their subjection of the natives of the Empire. However, I believe it can also be related to a critique of the Empire and an empowerment of the subaltern, as she is an example of what Jane might have become had she entered into a false marriage. Moreover, Bertha's rebelling against Rochester mirrors how the subjects of the Empire long to rebel against their British masters, and her rambling about and causing mayhem at Thornfield, setting Rochester's bed afire and stabbing Mason with a knife thus gesture at how the imperial subjects have already entered the British countryside, their homes; and that in their dream of conquest, the Brits have already brought the Empire, the foreign, and the "other" back home with them.

Thus, both Heathcliff and Bertha represent a more powerful "other" than the conventional Gothic novels usually present, and their influence both on the main protagonists of the novels as well as on the stories themselves is extensive. Therefore, one ought not to "trap" them in readings containing them as elements of the heroines, but be able to examine these characters in themselves, and explore in what way they both disrupt and enrich these novels.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis my main focus has been on the destabilizing elements which can be found in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. At the beginning of my thesis I concerned myself with how the conventional Gothic novels have been occupied with the fates of heroines, heroes, and villains who chase each other throughout the story, preferably interfered with by supernatural occurrences and terrors, but always ending blissfully with the removal of the tyrant and the happy marriage of the young lovers. The heroine plays a significant part in this plot as she is typically placed between two men who quarrel over her, and she is usually the one to be persecuted and finally rescued to live out her happy ending with the man she loves. However, as I argue in the first chapter, in order to deserve this perfect ending she has to prove herself worthy by exhibiting to the world her impeccable personality, purity of mind, and true innocence.

Jane Eyre and *Wuthering Heights*, on the other hand, do not strictly follow this pattern, which is why I have tried to read them with a rather wide perspective, and tried not to confine them to the conventional generic traits of the Gothic genre, nor within the readings of feminist/psychoanalytical criticism alone. These readings would detain Heathcliff and Bertha as aspects of Cathy and Jane's personalities, living out the sexuality and aggression that they, as women, should not present to the public, but which nonetheless is a part of their character. Moreover, as I argued in the second chapter of this thesis, the placing of any novels within rigid generic frameworks might in fact reduce their literary power, and constrict the manners in which it is possible to read them, consequently diminishing the pleasure of various

readings. And as I also stated, Bakhtin claims that genre should be reborn and renewed with every new literary work, thus it would be futile to confine them to only one (1984: 106).

These novels contain elements from the Gothic genre, as well as something which is new, which is their own, and one of the most prominent ways these novels distinguish themselves from the conventions of the genre is precisely in the characteristics of their heroines. Jane and Cathy as main protagonists are not represented as traditional Gothic heroines, who are usually displayed as obliging, submissive and gentle characters, but rather as strong, unruly and passionate women who stand up for and live out their own wishes, desires and needs. Moreover, the portrayal and significance of Bertha and Heathcliff also distinguish them from more classical portrayals of the "other". There must consequently be other ways of perceiving both theirs and Heathcliff and Bertha's parts in the novels, since neither their personalities, their choices, nor their fates, fit well into the schema of the heroines and the "other" in conventional Gothic fiction. In fact, all of the characters in these novels are represented as more complex than the earlier protagonists in the Gothic genre, as they all contain both good and bad features, and display a dynamic development in their characters throughout the stories. Thus, as I have discussed earlier, the expectations of the genre are only partially met, and these novels consequently both conform to and alter the conventions of the Gothic genre.

It is primarily through the elements of parody and "the return of the repressed" that *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* destabilize and disrupt the traditional generic conventions of Gothic fiction. The representations of these two elements illustrate significant changes to the characterisations of the genre; moreover, the way these changes function in the novels and make them hover on the boundaries of the generic frameworks has been my main focus throughout this thesis.

In the two last chapters of this thesis, I argue for the elements in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* that destabilize and disrupt the Gothic genre with a focus on how Heathcliff and Bertha are unconventional representations of the "other". Heathcliff and Bertha both introduce the "other" in relation to the darker aspects of the British Empire, and in their empowerment display a reversal of the actual power constellation within the Empire. In a reading of these novels as containing elements of the carnivalesque, we saw that both Jane and Cathy *live* the carnival life at some point in these novels. The elements of carnival are presented through the fires, the carnivalistic laughter, and the reversed world order in those instances where Heathcliff and Bertha are the ones in control. Nonetheless, at the end of chapter 3 on parody, I argue that the ending of these novels at the same time present an ending of carnival time, where everything is set back in its right order, with Heathcliff and Bertha dying and leaving Catherine and Hareton, and Jane and Rochester to their happy endings. This is related both to the conventions of the Gothic genre with its traditional happy endings and to carnival itself which only lasts as long as carnival time does.

Nevertheless, even though the endings of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* in a sense are "appropriate" for the genre, they do not manage to completely restore peace and order in the reader's mind, as the endings of the traditional Gothic novels typically do. Rochester does marry Jane after the death of Bertha, but still he suffers from the lasting damages that his former marriage gave him, and the injuries he sustained in the fire of Thornfield Hall:

> He was taken out from under the ruins, alive, but sadly hurt: a beam had fallen in such a way as to protect him partly; but one eye was knocked out, and one hand so crushed that Mr Carter, the surgeon, had to amputate it directly. The other eye inflamed: he lost sight of that also. He is now helpless, indeed – blind, and a cripple (C. Brontë: 494)

Thus, one is always reminded of the past and its events that would leave Rochester crippled. The remnants of the carnivalesque will constantly be present, and the changes in Rochester will serve as a reminder of this and not permit a completely peaceful ending to the story. The death of Heathcliff also does not entirely remove him from the story, since the people around Wuthering Heights claim to have seen him after his death, as Nelly says: "But the country folks, if you asked them, would swear on their bible that he *walks*. There are those who speak to having met him near the church, and on the moor, and even within this house" (E. Brontë: 244, italics in the original). Neither is it possible to forever shake off the sentiment which Heathcliff's overturning has produced. After all, he was in many respects the reason behind Hindley and Isabella's early deaths, if not Cathy's as well. Therefore, his actions will continue to be of importance to the "happy couple"; his interference is the reason why Hareton lost his father early and Catherine never got to know her mother at all. These are events that naturally shape the childhood of the two characters, and it is also a loss that will affect them for the rest of their lives. In this, these novels also display a continuation of the genre, by providing future heroes and heroines with one of the classical characteristics of Gothic fiction, namely having the parentage being a source of sorrow. Thus, this element further promotes the ambiguity of both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*: the overturning of the "natural world order" and the Gothic conventions has been caused through carnival time in both novels, but at the end of the narratives the traditional world order is again restored, and the endings also maintain the classical conventions in the furthering of the traditional characteristic of parental loss.

As I have argued, though the world order is restored, the element of "the return of the repressed" makes a lasting impact in these novels that no happy ending can redeem entirely. This creates a tension between, on the one hand the enduring influence of this element, and, on the other, the carnivalesque which ought to be over as carnival time has ended, but which nevertheless remains present even after the deaths of the two representations of the "other".

This again may be seen as an illustration of the British interaction with the imperial subjects: even though Heathcliff and Bertha are both gone at the end of the novels, there is no way to erase the "stain" which is left on Britain and the Brits after their dealings with the imperial subjects. Parody here works as a way of negotiating with the history of Britain and its past transgressions, and this relates to what Hutcheon claims of parody as being a way that artists can come to terms with the past (2000:29). The opposition between the lasting impact of the carnivalesque versus the seemingly restored order with the happy couples allows the novels to play with the generic frameworks of Gothic fiction, at the same time using the conventional traits to gain expectations with the readers and renew some of these characteristics through the unconventional presentation of otherwise classical features.

Therefore, the unresolved tension one is left with at the end of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* might serve as another explanation for the difficulties there seem to be around placing these novels generically within Gothic fiction. It may also be a reason why it is ineffectual to force these novels into strict and rigid critical or generic frameworks, as this closes the novels into one specific reading instead of opening them up for thorough exploration by readers across time and place. This would indeed be a fruitless way of reading them, and this may perhaps be the time to remember the observation from Hayden White referred to in the second chapter of this thesis: that genres belong to culture and not to nature, thus they are so to speak man-made, and not something which has arisen naturally or of itself (2003: 367). Thus, as it is culture and not nature that wishes to differentiate between genres, it might prove difficult and unnatural to do so in some instances, as is the case with these two novels, they do not belong to one genre entirely.

In the novels the impact of the past returning remains unresolved at the end, so that behind the seemingly happy endings one is left with a notion of uncertainty. As this contributes to the narratives both belonging to and not belonging to the Gothic genre, one is

left with the question of why it is so, what is it that makes the ending so ambiguous? And yet again I need to return to Bakhtin's "chain of utterances" which I discussed in the second chapter: As the ending of carnival time does not manage to entirely remove the notion of change at the end of these novels, it might just be the multiplicity of voices that these literary works portray which cannot help but trickle through, and even though the world is returned to its right order they still remain ever present (1984: 69).

White quotes Alistair Fowler in his essay, saying "… that we think of genre as a ´field of associations` that ´adjust a reader's mental set` and constitute not only an ordered archive of experiences but a model of what order itself can consist of…" (quoted in White, 2003: 372). However, if genre can viewed as a "model of what order can consist of", what happens when the order of the genre is turned up side down, as in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*? These novels alter the power structures in the genre by allowing Heathcliff and Bertha to be in control at times, and as I have argued, the after-effects of these changes are never completely removed from the texts. This brings me back to the main focus of this thesis: in what way do these literary works destabilize the genre, what do the alterations made to the genre do with these novels, and how in turn does this affect the Gothic genre in general?

As I have stated, the endings of the novels also present an ending to carnival time, and if one is to read this as a way for the authors to come to terms with the past, how does one relate this to the fact that the narratives sort of change their minds at the end? The significance that the "other" is given in these texts may imply a sort of redemption project: as traditional imperial subjects they are given power to influence and control the white, British aristocracy for a limited time. However, what happens when carnival time ends and everything is set back in its "right" order? As representations of the "other" Bertha and Heathcliff are both dead, and the remainders of the British aristocracy are given their happy endings. And not least, how does this again relate to the fact that even though carnival time has ended, the impression that

the dominant “other” has left in these texts is not something which the end of carnival time is capable of erasing entirely? I think this might imply an embedded ideology concerning the “other” which can be found in these Gothic literary works. In the introduction I use a quote from Jacqueline Howard where she claims that feminist criticism, amongst others, has a history of interpreting the Gothic genre’s political and social importance, and in feminist readings of these novels one finds the classical struggle between nature and culture where culture, of course, is the “winner” (1994:13). Jane’s anger is “killed” with Bertha gone, Cathy is also deceased, and Catherine and Hareton display the new, more traditional generation of heroes and heroines. However, I have just argued for the endings of these novels not being completely blissful, and that the “other” in these novels does not necessarily have to be related to women alone, or even at all, but also to the British Empire and the imperial subjects. Moreover, the manner of how the “other” is given unusual control and significance, especially in the character of Heathcliff, might demonstrate another approach to the way this element can be viewed. These representations of the “other” are given the power to destabilize the generic frameworks of these novels; they are, during carnival time, set free to wreak havoc in the world where they ought not to belong. When their freedom is again taken from them, they are removed from the narratives; yet the events that took place when they were in control have left a lingering impression on the world. What does this reveal about the position of the “other” in these novels? Might not this be a representation of how the “other”, the inferior, should affect the main protagonists, the main narratives? *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* thus end in an ambiguous manner, considering genre, narrative, the ideology of the “other” in Gothic fiction, and not least in relation to the past with which these novels negotiate.

In the first chapter of this thesis I commented on recent Gothic fiction, and how this genre in a way has stagnated, both the novels and their innocent heroines remaining more or less unchanged, from the original novels up until more contemporary works. I also

commented on how this might result in their not being of interest to future readers, as they thus become very predictable, both in characters and narrative. *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, on the other hand, do not belong in this classification, as they have already proven by being still read by the contemporary audience over 150 years after they were published for the first time. At some point in my research for this thesis I came across a quotation in Peter Seitel's text "Theorizing Genres – Interpreting Works" where he claims that: "… an utterance that completely fulfils all generic expectations probably affords little aesthetic pleasure" (2003: 291), and I think this helps illustrate my point. The lack of changes made in the plot of contemporary Gothic novels has brought the development of the genre to a standstill. Readers therefore know exactly what to expect as they open the books. However, as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* do not conform to these standards, they still remain interesting for readers, where some of the reason for this can be found in their unexpected turns and twists of the generic conventions, and the tension which this results in. Thus, they enable readers to explore these novels for themselves, coming up with *their own* understandings, across time and across place.

I would like to conclude this discussion with a quote from White, who also says that: "… art like culture in general is always examining and testing the boundaries between the possible and the impossible" (2003: 374). The question is then, whether it can truly be possible to confine these literary works, which both conform to, and alter the conventions of the generic framework of Gothic fiction, as well as balance between different ideologies to any given framework? As they also hover on the boundaries of the possible versus the impossible, pushing the limits of art and culture even further, may they not in fact refract a deeper current in their own time? They are, after all, products of their own time.

Bibliography

Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*, 1818. [New York] Vintage Books A Division of Random House Inc, 2007.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics.* Ed. Caryl Emerson [Manchester] Manchester University Press, 1984.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic* [London] Routledge, 1996.

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*, 1847 [London] Penguin Books, 2006.

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*, 1847 [Hertfordshire] Wordsworth Classics, 2000.

Bruner, Jerome. "The Narrative Construction of Reality." *Critical Inquiry, vol. 18 no. 1*. 1991. 15.01.2011.

Conger, Syndy McMillen. "The Reconstruction of the Gothic Feminine Ideal in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*." *The Female Gothic*. Ed. Juliann E. Fleenor [Montréal-London] Eden Press, 1983.

Cornwell, Neil. "European Gothic." *A Companion to the Gothic*. Ed. David Punter [Oxford] Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

DeLamotte, Eugenia C. *Perils of the Night* [New York-Oxford] Oxford University Press, 1990.

Eagleton, Terry. *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* [London-New York] Verso, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund.| "The Uncanny." *Literary Theory: An Anthology* ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan [Massachusetts] Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic* [New Haven and London] Yale University Press, 1979.

Hale, Terry. “French and German Gothic: the Beginnings.” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. Jerrold E. Hogle [Cambridge] Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hoeveler, Diane Long. *Gothic Feminism* [University Park, Pennsylvania] The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998.

Homans, Margaret. “Dreaming of Children: Literalization in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*”. *The Female Gothic*. Ed. Juliann E. Fleenor [Montréal-London] Eden Press, 1983.

Howard, Jacqueline. *Reading Gothic Fiction – A Bakhtinian Approach* [Oxford] Clarendon Press, 1994.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Parody* [Urbana and Chicago] University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Khair, Tabish. *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness* [Hampshire and New York] Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Lewis, Matthew. *The Monk,* 1796 [London] Penguin Books, 1998.

Makdisi, Saree. “Literature, National Identity, and Empire.” *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740-1830*. Ed. Thomas Keymer and Jon Mee [Cambridge] Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Meyer, Susan. *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women’s Fiction* [Ithaca and London] Cornell University Press, 1996.

Meyer, Stephenie. *Twilight* [London] Atom Books, 2005.

Nichols, Nina da Vinci. “Place and Eros in Radcliffe, Lewis and Brontë.” *The Female Gothic*. Ed. Julian E. Fleenor [Montréal-London] Eden Press, 1983.

Paravasini-Gebert, Lizabeth. “ Colonial and Postcolonial Gothic: the Caribbean.” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. Jerrold E. Hogle [Cambridge] Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Pearson, Jacqueline. *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* [Cambridge] Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Radcliff, Ann. *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* 1794 [Oxford] Oxford University Press, 1998.

Rice, Anne. *Interview with the Vampire* [New York] Ballantine Books, 1976.

Rose, Margaret A. *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* [Cambridge] Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Rosmarin, Adena. *The Power of Genre* [Minneapolis] University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism* [New York] Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1979.

Seitel, Peter. "Theorizing Genres – Interpreting Works." *New Literary History vol.34 no. 2*. The John Hopkins University Press, 2003. 10.01.2011.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry vol. 12 no. 1*. The University of Chicago Press, 1985. 15.03.2011.

St. Clair, William. *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* [Cambridge] Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Stein, Karen F. "Monsters and Madwomen: Changing Female Gothic." *The Female Gothic*. Ed. Julian E. Fleenor [Montréal-London] Eden Press, 1983.

Vine, Steven. "The Wuther of the Other in Wuthering Heights." *Nineteenth-Century Literature vol. 49 no. 3*. University of California Press, 1994. 10.03.2011.

Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto* [Oxford] Oxford University Press, 1764.

Watt, James. "Gothic." *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1740-1830*. Ed. Thomas Keymer and Jon Mee [Cambridge] Cambridge University Press, 2004.

White, Hayden. "Commentary: Good of Their Kind." *New Literary History vol. 34 no. 2.* The John Hopkins University Press, 2003. 20.01.2011.