UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND THE OTHERING OF THE RURAL

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Contents

Abstract

This thesis explores the notion of rurality as a form of constructed identity. Just as feminist and postcolonial studies identify the formation of hierarchies within gender and ethnicity, I argue that the rural is constructed as inferior in opposition to its binary counterpart, the urban. The effect of this is the othering of the rural. This thesis takes Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* as a case study, using a critical approach to explore the ways in which it presents rurality, and to consider its role in the creation and reproduction of rural identity. The case study suggests that the adoption of a 'rural reading', in which an awareness of rural othering is fostered, can be a useful and productive strategy in textual analysis and interpretation.

The first three chapters of this thesis focus on rural construction generally. Chapter 1 draws on semiotic theory to examine the creation of binaries, and Derridean notions of linguistic hierarchies to suggest reasons for the inferior position of the rural. Chapter 2 considers the historical location of the urban/rural binary in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, within the context of the Enlightenment, the growth of capitalism, industrialisation and rapid urban expansion. Chapter 3 explores rural othering as a feature of contemporary culture, examining the textual presence of idyllic and anti-idyllic versions of the rural. Chapter 4 introduces the methodology of the case study, explaining the relevance of *Wuthering Heights* to the study of rural othering, providing a précis of the novel and an overview of previous critical responses. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 explore the three themes of nature, deviance and space. These are derived from the examination of rural construction in Chapter 3. In Chapter 5, the representation of nature in *Wuthering Heights* is explored, and the presence of animals within the novel in particular. In Chapter 6, the depiction of deviance in *Wuthering Heights* is discussed, with special focus given to the presence of deviant speech patterns, reflecting changing expectations of behavioural norms in the early nineteenth century. Chapter 7's consideration of the relationship between space and rurality within Brontë's novel considers her representation of landscape. Chapter 8 argues that a similar rural reading can be applied to other texts, literary and otherwise, opening up a fresh set of perspectives and possibilities for interpretation.

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Introduction

In *The Editor's Preface to the New Edition of Wuthering Heights*, published in 1850, Charlotte Brontë defends her sister's novel:

> I have just read over 'Wuthering Heights', and for the first time, have obtained a clear glimpse of what are termed (and perhaps, really are) its faults; have gained a definite notion of how it appears to other people – to strangers who know nothing of the author; who are unacquainted with the locality where the scenes of the story are laid; to whom the inhabitants, the customs, the natural characteristics of the outlying hills and hamlets in the West-Riding of Yorkshire are things alien and unfamiliar.

> The wild moors of the north of England can for them have no interest; the language, the manners, the very dwellings and household customs of the scattered inhabitants of those districts, must be to such readers in a great measure unintelligible, and – where intelligible – repulsive.

Why would readers think Emily Brontë's novel is unintelligible and repulsive? Perhaps it is due to the extremes: the excessive cruelty, the wanton violence or the barbaric immorality. Charlotte refers specifically to the manners, characteristics and the household customs. The readers, Charlotte assumes, are strangers to places like this. Furthermore, she implies an inseparability between these cultural practices and their rural location; the place creates the people. What can *Wuthering Heights* reveal about the meaning of the rural and how that meaning takes its shape?

This thesis was initially motivated by my own awareness of the construction of rural identity, having grown up in rural Shropshire and feeling critically disposed towards representations of rurality in various cultural artefacts, including film, art, television, radio – and literature.

The urban and the rural constitute a familiar duality. They play a role in forming identity, in establishing geographical categories, and in creating cultural difference. This thesis takes a critical approach to understanding the urban and rural, which entails exploring them as socially constructed entities. Focus is placed on the rural.

However, since the meaning of rurality is inextricably bound up with that of urbanity, it is impossible to separate them entirely.

The rural construction is approached through an exploration of the complexities of its meaning within various forms of discourse. I take the anti-essentialist position that rurality is an imaginary location arising from particular social, cultural and historical conditions. The meaning of rurality is unstable, arbitrary and subject to potential transformation. It is imbued with values, which position it hierarchically in relation to the urban.

The rural has been thoroughly explored as a location in which othering takes place through processes of exclusion and marginalisation, in for example Cloke and Little (1997), Crouch (1997), Cloke (2006b). In this thesis however, the position is to explore the hierarchical positioning of the rural in relation to the urban: to explore how the rural as a whole is made other.

The presence of this hierarchical positioning, and of constructions of rural meaning in general, is textually located. Encountering it requires the application of a strategy for approaching the text which could be labelled 'rural reading'. This entails reading with an awareness of the othering of rurality and the drawing out of implicit and suppressed hegemonic assumptions about the rural. My focus is an analysis of Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights.* This novel is particularly well-placed for the application of a rural reading strategy. Its remote Yorkshire setting is recognisably rural in terms of the various definitional meanings which are applied to rurality, and which are explored in this thesis. In addition, the publication of *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, came at a time during urban expansion when the urban population of Great Britain became numerically predominant. Brontë's novel may therefore be imbued with meaning that dramatizes this social and cultural transformation. Thirdly, the fame, influence and monumentality of this novel suggests not merely its refraction of cultural values, but also its role in the creation of those values, in the construction of rurality and in rural othering.

This thesis takes a distinctive approach in three ways. Firstly, in providing an understanding of rurality as other, rather than as a location in which othering takes place. Secondly, in suggesting a reading strategy analogous to those adopted within

feminist and postcolonial studies, in which culturally conditioned assumptions about rurality are addressed and questioned. Thirdly, in considering the implications of applying such a reading strategy to *Wuthering Heights* and suggesting the possibility of using similar approaches for understanding of other texts.

The first aim of this thesis is to investigate the construction of rurality as culturally other. This aim is established in Chapters 1 – 3: firstly, by an understanding of rurality drawing on the concept of binary oppositions, secondly by considering the historical positioning of rurality and thirdly, by exploring the constructed shape of rurality and the signification processes by which it is made other. The second aim is to apply an understanding of rural othering to a reading of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. This aim is addressed in Chapters 5 – 7, through an exploration of the novel in relation to three themes of rurality's construction as other: nature, deviance and space. The implications of applying this reading strategy will be considered in Chapter 8.

Chapter 1: Binaries and othering

The aim of this chapter is to provide a basis for an understanding of rurality in Chapters 2 and 3 by exploring its construction as a member of a binary pair, the significance of which is intimately related to its opposition with the urban. The construction of binary pairs is examined with reference to semiotic concepts.

Binary constructions are explored generally, by addressing the significance of the part they play in the everyday experience of reality, drawing on understandings from critical theory. Discussion then extends to an exploration of the urban/rural binary. An understanding of the interrelation of polar opposites informs an understanding of the concept of the rural as emerging in a condition of mutual co-dependence with the urban.

Since the naturalisation of oppositions informs lived experience, objections to constructivist accounts of the entities they form are considered. In terms of the rural, such accounts may be seen as outmoded or lacking usefulness, but consequent attempts to provide useful definitions of rurality are interrogated.

A semiotic approach to understandings binaries provides valuable tools for approaching the construction of binary meaning, which are utilised in this chapter. The first of these is the notion of paradigmatic associations among arrays of oppositions. This concept concerns the way in which binary poles are attached in alignment, and is used to explore the way meaning is transferred by analogy from one pair of binaries to another. This understanding informs an approach to the construction of the urban/rural binary, which sees it connected with concepts such as civilisation/nature, self/other and centre/margin.

Discussion then moves to the idea of 'markedness' in binary opposition, drawing on Derridean understandings of linguistic hierarchies. Consideration is consequently given to the presence of markedness within the urban/rural binary. An analysis of binary alignments provides support for the identification of 'rural' as the inferior term.

Parallels with gender and ethnicity are made in order to inform discussion of rural markedness, drawing on feminist and postcolonial analogies. This provides a basis for building a theory of rural othering which is developed more fully in Chapter 3, after a consideration of its historical meaning in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Rurality and History

This chapter builds on the examination of rurality as an ideologically imbued construction, by exploring the circumstances of its creation. The approach used is not simply to look for material circumstances to form foundational causal explanations for the creation of an urban/rural binary, since these causes are themselves discursive constructions. Instead, material social and cultural discourses are observed, which come together to form rural significance.

The origin of the notion of rurality is explored, informed by its condition as a binary pair, which depends on the emergence of the category of urbanity. Consideration is given to the problems arising from ascribing cultural ideas to particular eras. Such ascription can involve making assumptions about the extent to which perceptions, beliefs and values are shared beyond the texts which are used to provide evidence.

A critical view is taken with regard to perspectives which project the urban/rural into preindustrial cultures. It is argued that the urban/rural distinction is emergent with the

period of industrialisation, and urbanisation and is imbued with values embedded in the Enlightenment and capitalism.

Accounts which seek to explain the emergence of British industrialisation are considered as elements of the complex and contradictory interrelation of meanings with which the urban/rural binary has been constructed, and which ultimately contribute to the valorisation of urbanity.

The unprecedented scale and rapidity of eighteenth and nineteenth-century urbanisation is seen as crucial in the construction of urban/rural meanings. Together with the forming of new social relations under capitalism and the increasing importance of consumerism and commodification, this created a recognisably modern conception of rurality.

Chapter 3: Rural othering

This chapter aims to explore the othering of the rural as a feature of contemporary culture, but also makes reference to the historically situated emergence of rural othering discussed in Chapter 2. It builds on the discussion of urban/rural binaries in Chapter 1, taking the conclusion that rurality is 'marked' within the binary pair and examining the wider implications of this. This lays the basis for examinations of rural othering in relation to *Wuthering Heights* in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The widely discussed concept of the rural idyll is addressed. This concept seems to stand in contradiction to the concept of an inferior rurality, as it appears to constitute an elevation of the rural over the urban, providing an ideologically driven view of the rurality as embodying national aspirations and ideal qualities. Even where the rural idyll is seen as a construction, rather than a naturalised entity, it is interpreted as embodying positive characteristics. The rural idyll is encountered throughout contemporary media forms, and could be considered generic; its proliferation is understood to feed back into lay discourses, which inform and become part of the lived experience of 'armchair tourists', rural visitors and also people who live in rural locations. Idealisation of the rural involves the establishing of criteria by which rurality is measured. The exclusionary aspect of the rural is understood in this light.

This chapter questions the assumption that this constructed rurality holds a superior position in its binary opposition with urbanity. The main thrust of this suggestion is

that the rural idyll parallels other forms of idealisation, in which the idealised is simultaneously objectified, most notably in discourses of gender and ethnicity. In such discourses, a range of criteria are used by which the objectified may be judged under the gaze of the subject. An examination of these criteria can provide an anatomy of the objectified other.

These criteria for rurality, or as they are referred to here, 'themes', are components of rural construction derived from the discourses themselves: the concept of nature, the transgression of social norms and the involvement of landscape and space. These overlapping themes appear to be at the centre of most definitional discussions of the rural, and provide a starting point for an anatomisation of rural othering.

An exploration of the involvement of constructions of nature in rural othering allows the extended consideration of its historical positioning, identified in Chapter 2, while the introduction of the Bakhtinian concept of grotesque realism is explored as a possible counterpoint to Romantic ideals. Discussion also encompasses the involvement of gendered notions of nature in the othering of rurality. A discussion of 'anti-idyllic' constructions of rurality overlaps with an exploration of the othering of the rural through markers of social division and transgression. This draws on the relevance of historically situated class differences and idea of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, the construction of space is explored as a definitional aspect of the rural. The extent to which this spatiality of the rural is implicit in the othering of rurality is discussed.

Chapter 4: Approaching *Wuthering Heights*

This chapter introduces the case study. It begins with a description of the methodology and presents a justification for the use of a single case study together with an explanation of the particular relevance of *Wuthering Heights* to the exploration of rural othering. A précis of *Wuthering Heights* is included. The chapter concludes with a review of a selection of critical responses to Emily Brontë's novel and is organised thematically. It considers Victorian, humanist, structuralist, psychoanalytic, deconstructive, feminist and postcolonial approaches. Finally, the position of this thesis is considered and contextualised in relation to the previous responses.

Chapter 5: Nature, rurality and *Wuthering Heights*

This chapter extends discussion of the othering of rurality through its association with nature, begun in Chapter 3. *Wuthering Heights* is considered in relation to these concepts. The idea of nature is approached in relation to its constructed opposite: the civilised. The civilisation/nature binary is aligned by association with that of the urban/rural. In addition, consideration is given to the connection between this and colonial ideas of the ascendancy of Western civilisation over the savage other. Interpretations are made concerning Western ideologies of domination through the application of Bakhtinian notions of the grotesque in order to provide a new perspective on the idyllic and anti-idyllic features of the rural which emerge from *Wuthering Heights*.

These ideas will be drawn out through focusing on two main themes: firstly, explorations of externalised nature through an examination of the presence of animals in the novel, and secondly explorations of internalised nature, or human nature, especially with respect to conceptions of selfhood. Consideration will be given to the apparently contrasting Romantic and Enlightenment conceptions of nature within the text, and to the distinct notions of human nature, drawing on spiritual and materialistic perspectives found within *Wuthering Heights*.

In discussing nature, there is necessarily overlap with other chapters. In Chapter 6, proximity to nature is understood as part of the constructed explanation for the peculiarity of rural behaviour. Chapter 7 includes discussion of the 'natural' meaning of rural space, including aspects of weather and topography. The overlap is a consequence of the centrality of the concept of nature in the construction of rurality, and also of the associative fluidity of the concept and its constellation of meanings.

Chapter 6: Deviance, rurality and *Wuthering Heights*

This chapter continues to explore a central theme of Chapter 3, namely the othering of the rural by means of the attribution of a separate set of values and social norms. The implications of this for a reading of *Wuthering Heights* are explored. As already discussed throughout this thesis, urban and rural separation is conditioned by forces associated with the Enlightenment, industrialisation and the rise of capitalism. Social changes associated with these conditions have their origin in hegemonic power

structures, which can be labelled bourgeois, and are associated with urban centres. The growth of such urban centres is posited as a factor which embeds the new social norms within patterns of social class. New social norms are associated with these social structures. Constructed rurality is distinguished by its failure to adopt such norms, and so to transgress them.

Consideration is given to the expression of revulsion towards *Wuthering Heights* among the Victorian readership, if not to the novel as a literary work then to the nature of its subject matter: the depiction of behaviours and practices which transgress Victorian norms and values. This revulsion gives rise to a revealing defence, or explanation by Emily's sister Charlotte Brontë. This leads onto an examination of the construction of the author herself, as a 'literary' character.

Wuthering Heights is explored as a text which presents rural social transgression in relation to emergent social norms related to social hierarchies. The latter half of the chapter focusses on the presence of this in the linguistic features of the novel, especially the representation of dialect and speech patterns among the characters. The presentation of 'authentic' dialect acts as a marker, not only of social hierarchies, but as an aspect of the performativity of rural separation from urban culture.

Chapter 7: Space, the rural and *Wuthering Heights*

This chapter continues to explore the relationship between spatiality and rural othering discussed in Chapter 3. The understanding of the relationship between the spatial and the rural provides a perspective for interpreting *Wuthering Heights*.

Consideration is given to the notion that space itself is a category imbued with otherness. Space is approached as an ideologically imbued construction. The experience of space as abstract void is a form of naturalisation, and is conditioned by social forces whose origin can be historically situated in the period of industrialisation. There is an exploration of the suggestion that the abstraction of space and the importance of time measurement meant that space as a social category became associated with the archaic. The implications of this for rurality are considered and applied to a reading of *Wuthering Heights*.

Wuthering Heights is considered to be a spatially-oriented novel. This is especially, but not exclusively, linked to the presence of landscape. The relationship between the characters, the landscape and the conditions of social change which are dramatized in *Wuthering Heights* is explored. Connections are made between this and the construction of an urban/rural binary in the novel. From here, rural-spatial themes are explored: categories of centrality and marginality, urban rural boundaries and the significance of mapping for the production of spatial meaning. Consideration is given to the meaning readers have attached to the landscape in *Wuthering Heights*, as they attempt to connect the imagined landscape of the novel with the directly-experienced and mapped landscape of North Yorkshire.

Chapter 8: 'Rural' readings and 'urban' texts

This chapter asks what a reading of *Wuthering Heights* together with a consideration of the shape of rural construction can reveal about either. It assesses the adoption of a particular approach to reading the novel: a 'rural reading'. This approach is derived from an understanding of the rurality as other. The process of rural othering is ideological in form; its presence is readable in the text in, the same way that ideological perspectives on gender or the colonised other can be observed and read. This position gives rise to an exploration of the viability of adopting a reading strategy that focusses on the othering of rurality in the text. Such an approach might require the coining of alternative terminology with which such texts can be interrogated, opening up a fresh set of perspectives and possibilities for interpretation.

Applying such a perspective to *Wuthering Heights* gives an indication of possible avenues for exploration, and shows how the rural themes constructed within and in relation to Emily Brontë's novel can be used to draw out and also interrogate various theoretical considerations. Firstly, the canonical and monumental status of *Wuthering Heights* is a significant aspect of both is meaning and power, augmenting its production of rural meaning. This is especially relevant in relation to the time and place of the novel's creation, which is significantly attached to industrialisation, urbanisation, capitalism and the intellectual influence of the Enlightenment. Secondly, the participation of *Wuthering Heights* in the naturalisation of rural constructions is discussed, and similarly the presence, or otherwise, of naturalised

rurality within the novel. Thirdly, the three overlapping themes carried through this thesis are reconsidered in relation to readings of *Wuthering Heights*: rural space, rurality and social transgression and the intertwining of rurality with nature.

Finally the chapter looks at possibility of applying rural reading strategies to other cultural forms, both literary and visual, which can provide a new understanding of constructions of rurality.

Chapter 1: Urban/rural binaries

Introduction

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Binaries and experience

Opposition seems to be a fundamental aspect of everyday experience. The existence of oppositional concepts such as 'black and white', 'up and down' and 'hot and cold' appears to be an objective fact, a governing principle of the universe. Opposition is present throughout experience, both as it is lived and reflected-upon: the individual encounters and also understands it readily. The concept of binary or polar opposites is a central feature of semiotic and critical analysis and is recognised as 'one of the most important principles governing the structure of languages' (Lyons, 1977, p.271) and 'a fundamental and characteristic operation of the human mind' (Hawkes, 2003, p.13). The concept is familiar in the exploration of various cultural constructs, and has informed cultural production from ancient times.

Aristotle explores a whole array of binary pairs: the four paired elements of earth/air and fire/water. In addition he identifies form/matter, natural/unnatural, active/passive, whole/part, unity/variety, before/after, being/not-being (Aristotle discusses this throughout Book 10 (Iota) of *Metaphysics*). Opposites are mutually exclusive. For example, the temperature of water can be indicated on a scale of hot, or cold. It can be labelled 'hot' or 'cold', or something in between – 'tepid' perhaps. However, it is not possible to make the water both hotter and colder at the same time. This concept is implicit in Aristotle's assertion of the law of contradiction: 'it is impossible for anything at the same time to be and not to be' (McKeon, 1941, p.737). Paul de Man describes this concept as 'the most certain of all principles' (de Man, 1979, p. 120).

This thesis approaches binaries as social constructions, whose existence is textual and conceptual, rather than objective or material. The analysis of binaries, and of the urban /rural binary in particular, is therefore concerned with signification within the text. Binaries are categories; as such, they are constructed through the process of signification. They are subject to change in relation to other patterns of signification and to historical and cultural shifts in values and ideas.

As a starting point, it is necessary to draw upon relevant aspects of the critical tradition with regard to binaries. Binary pairing is a key concept within twentieth century critical theory, from the structuralist semiotic theory advanced by Saussure (1916/1983) to the post-structural theory of Derrida (1981). The significance of this is that within the tradition of linguistic and critical theory, the ontological status of binaries is contested and their stability undermined.

Saussure (1916/1983) explores how ideas are governed by the process of signification, in which signs are only present in contradistinction to other signs. Oppositions, as pairs of signs, are themselves constructed through the process of signification, and so are products of language systems, rather than entities which pre-exist in an external reality. Derrida (1981) goes further, by undermining the pre-eminence of language systems in discussion of linguistic construction (and so, turns the analysis inward: the langue/parole binary is itself subject to deconstructive approaches).

Nevertheless, the relevant aspect of these perspectives is that they give rise to the understanding that (along with other aspects of signification) binary oppositions are arbitrary, ephemeral and illusory: arbitrary in that they can potentially be radically reconfigured; ephemeral in that they are subject to change in relation to historical and social dynamics; and illusory in that they provide an ideological or value-driven version of reality, while at the same time their naturalisation presents them as if they were built on axiomatic foundations.

The origins of urban/rural opposition

The creation of the urban/rural binary has its precedents in the ancient world. Raymond Williams discusses the origins of rural representation apparent in Hesiod, for whom the rural is the objectified, pastoral and retrospective Golden Age of Greek mythology (1975, p.24). Indeed, Williams sees the pastoral tradition in literature throughout history as a ubiquitous expression of nostalgia in the face of constant societal change. However, this thesis will argue that the construction of the rural, in the modern world, owes most of its shape and appearance to the period of industrialisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Bunce

While classical civilization's attitudes to the countryside reveal how educated society has responded over the longer span of history to the process of urbanisation, its links to the modern countryside ideal are tenuous… they exist primarily through neo-classical revivalism in art and literature rather than through historical continuity (1994, p.6).

Underlying this approach is an understanding of binary construction. Binaries exist in relation to one another, through *différance.* It makes no sense to speak of the rural if the urban does not exist. The category 'urban' has emerged in the industrial period. The sense that 'urban' constitutes a culture, a geography, a way of life and a set of experiences which is shared between different urban locations is only possible when there are such places to share the experience. If a settlement is unique, then it cannot be considered to be a member of a general category.

Furthermore, in creating (oppositional) meaning for each pole, oppositional differences must be attached relating to pre-existing oppositions. For example, in the case of urban/rural, the emergence of the urban landscape is accompanied by perception of its difference from that which is not urban, which lies outside of its defined borders, or its edges. Its existence can only be expressed if the urban centre creates spaces that constitute an experiential difference: small towns and villages may be experienced as either rural or urban places. This experience is itself developed by a prior exposure to a cultural-linguistic understanding of the world. Before industrialisation, urban centres of sufficient size were too few, and too lacking in the provision of a differential experience for 'urban' to be considered as a separate category.

Hence, Chapter 2 considers the historical emergence of the urban/rural binary. This is important not only in thinking about the origin of the urban and the rural, but also about its instability and potential for change. In discussing the rural idyll, Mingay refers to its changing meaning:

The rural idyll is a changing concept: the countryside at the end of the twentieth century is very different from that of a hundred years ago...Each generation of country dwellers and observers sees what it wants to see in the land: romantic beauty, nostalgic traces of the rustic past, peace, tranquillity; despoiled

landscapes, brutal intrusions of modernization, hurry, noise, pollution (Mingay, 1989, p.6).

This thesis is not restricted to discussion of idyllisation; however, Mingay's assertion can be extended to refer to the meaning of rurality in general.

In ordinary discourse it can seem counterintuitive to deny the essential reality of binaries, such is their centrality to the organisation of lived experience. 'Common sense' appears to dictate that 'black' is opposite to 'white', that 'up' is opposite to 'down' and that 'hot' is opposite to 'cold'. Furthermore, since binaries are a central feature of language, it is impossible to discuss them without using them. The previous sentence, with its invocation of the concept of 'centrality' (which implies an opposite, 'marginality') illustrates this problem, namely that their expression also requires the summoning of binaries whose essential presence can in turn be repudiated on the grounds that they are themselves constructions. The inescapability from binaries illustrates the difficulty with discussing signification: it is impossible to 'step outside' of them, or as Derrida puts it: 'There is nothing outside the text' (1976, pp. 158-9).

These difficulties, along with the counterintuitive aspect of exploring the constructedness of binaries, can make essentialist accounts of binary oppositions more attractive. In rural studies, constructionism is viewed by some as out-dated. As Castree and Braun (2006) argue, this is because rural studies is a hybrid discipline, drawing on many different approaches which are not necessarily informed by critical theory or the 'cultural turn'. Castree and Braun (2006) describe new approaches as 'post-constructivist' and assert that 'enthusiasm for the social construction thematic is on the wane' because 'the theoretical limits of constructionist arguments have been exposed' (p.161), and perhaps because of academic ennui. In some ways, this appears to be a retreat from constructivism, rather than a refutation, especially within perspectives where the effect of meaning is not of prime concern. Rurality remains a useful concept; if its status as a coherent idea is undermined by constructivism, perhaps this leaves little room for explorations that do not seek to question its meaning. For example, Cloke outlines how, for some theorists, the cultural turn has '*dematerialized*' (in the case of Philo, 2000) and '*depoliticized*' (according to Mitchell,

1995, 2000) rural research, moving emphasis away from political and social change and resulting in a de-radicalisation of debate (Cloke, 2006, pp.22-3).

Where the meaning of rurality requires at least provisional stability, a clear conceptualisation of the rural may be offered, using a functional, denotative definition. Cloke (2006, p.20) summarises this as follows:

> …rurality can be defined in terms of areas which:
>
> 1. are dominated (either currently or recently) by extensive land uses, notably agriculture and forestry;
>
> 2. contain small, lower order settlements which demonstrate a strong relationship between buildings and extensive landscape, and which are thought of as rural by most of their residents;
>
> 3. engender a way of life which is characterized by a cohesive identity based on respect for the environmental and behavioural qualities of living as part of an extensive landscape

Although the urban/rural binary appears to occupy an entrenched position within cultural and linguistic expression, there is also widespread recognition that constructions of rurality, especially idyllic constructions are illusory. However, this recognition is prone to being accompanied by attempts to contrast the illusion with a 'real' state of affairs. As Cloke (2006) points out, attempts to pin down definitions of rurality are inherently flawed; they fail to achieve their purpose, which is to arrive at a stable and satisfactory account of rural "reality". This is because empirical evidence demonstrates the changing, unstable and complex nature of rurality. Political and economic perspectives have sought to eliminate this problem by eschewing the rural/urban dichotomy entirely, since it is seen as irrelevant to economic, political and social experience. This point is discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

Attempts to define or delineate the urban and the rural against each other meet the difficulty of considering intermediate states. Where can the line between urban and rural be drawn, when categories such as 'suburban' exist, along with other indeterminate zones, such as industrial parks, motorways and tourist attractions?

These places seem to have qualities which apply to both the urban and the rural, or perhaps to neither. The source of this problem is the expectation that the urban and the rural can be neatly defined by a set of simple criteria. It arises partly from a co-location of visual and spatial criteria (for example, whether the area is built-up, the level of its population density and whether it 'looks' urban or rural). However, there are further considerations which cause an elision of definition: the purpose to which the zone is put, the lifestyle and culture of its inhabitants, and its role and status within the cultural make-up of society. In applying these criteria, there may seem little meaningful difference between the urban and the rural.

There is a further reason for the instability of definitions of rurality: they are constructions which emanate from the dynamics of signification. From political and economic viewpoints, the reality of rurality rests on its functionality. But this does not make alternative conceptions more 'real', it merely exchanges one construction for another that appears more stable because it is currently more useful.

In this thesis, the meaning of rurality is very much the focus. A consideration of semiosis reveals that opposites do not exist in nature, but are constructed as a necessary part of the process of signification. This is because opposition is a form of categorisation, and all categories are necessarily of cultural origin. Binaries are culturally created categories, the effect of which is to generate order from experience. This is the case for the urban/rural binary as much as for any other linguistic construct.

Some binary pairs appear to be especially fundamental to Western cultural conceptions. This view is illustrated by Jakobson when he asserts that 'the binary opposition is a child's first logical operation' (Jakobson, 1956, p.60). Lacan also demonstrates this idea when he asserts that the original binary is self/other, created in the mirror stage of an infant's development (Lacan, 1997). It might appear that the identification of some constructions as 'fundamental' is vulnerable to the deconstructive urge to question and overturn such hierarchies. In this thesis, the hierarchical aspect of binaries (and all constructions) is taken to be an effect of value systems; it is recognised that the hierarchies themselves are culturally produced, rather than somehow pre-existing in the structural relationships between the

binaries. Thus the hierarchies are not fixed, but are fluid, unstable and liable to change, or at least subject to the possibility of change.

Binaries form analogous alignments with other binaries. Levi-Strauss shows that differences are encoded by analogy for example in the case of edible/inedible, native/ foreign. 'Edible becomes aligned by association with native, while its opposite, 'inedible', becomes associated with 'foreign'. Thus, by analogy, 'edible' and 'foreign' become opposed, even though, in Levi-Strauss' terms, they are found in different 'planes'. Perceived natural categories become cultural categories:

> The mythical system and modes of representation it employs, serve to establish homologies between natural and social conditions or, more accurately, it makes it possible to equate significant contrasts found in different planes: the geographical, meteorological, zoological, botanical, technical, economic, social, ritual, religious and philosophical.
>
> (Levi-Strauss, 1962/1974, p.93)

This is achieved by the paradigmatic association of each of the terms with an array of connotative, analogous associations, driven by ideological underpinnings. Silverman identifies these oppositional arrays as cultural codes:

> a cultural code is a conceptual system which is organized around key oppositions and equations in which a term like 'woman' is defined in opposition to a term like 'man', and in which each term is aligned with a cluster of symbolic attributes (Silverman, 1983, p.36).

For example, in the masculine/feminine binary, 'masculine' is associated with analogous concepts such as 'mind', 'activity' and 'strength', whereas 'feminine' is associated with binary opposite concepts: 'body', 'passivity' and 'weakness'. Positive and negative connotations underline such thematic paradigms.

Jakobson explores polarities using Saussure's notion of associative (paradigmatic) and syntagmatic planes of meaning. He distinguishes between metaphoric and metonymic combinations of signs. Metaphoric connections are established through resemblance between the signs, whereas metonymic connections are established

through the implied presence of signs 'within' signs. The free play of meaning is loose and complex. Qualities, objects and orientation become interchangeable: presence/absence, inside/outside, think/feel, strong/weak are created from nouns, prepositions, verbs and adjectives respectively: the malleability of language creates links that are 'mysterious'.

The mysterious nature of association is acknowledged by other structuralist semioticians. Lévi-Strauss describes it as the 'socio-logic' of the human mind 'which structures nature in its own image, and thus establishes the foundation of the systems of totemic "transformations" that overtly or covertly underpin our picture of the world (Silverman, 1983, p.69). Greimas describes the 'elementary structure of signification' being based on our perception of oppositions. 'We perceive difference… and thanks to that perception, the world "takes shape" in front of us, and for our purposes' (cited in Hawkes, 2003, p.70).

His assertion of the fundamental ordering principle is a recognition of opposition and negation that has its basis in a pre-existing human nature, similar to Chomsky's notion of competence[1] preceding linguistic performance (Chomsky, 1965) and Saussure's prioritising of *langue* over *parole*. As a result, all linguistic constructions, narratives and stories are seen as being formed through a set of conditions which lie outside the semiotic realm itself. This position is self-refuting, since the pre-existing conditions are themselves constructed by this very process. The objection arises as to how they can construct themselves. The position is essentialist, or as Derrida describes it *metaphysical*, in asserting something that lies outside of, and is anterior to, signification. How can this be, when such metaphysical entities are themselves encapsulated by signs? Derrida's assertion that 'there is nothing outside the text' is a recognition of the paradox raised by such fundamentalism, and encapsulates the poststructuralist response: the explanation of binaries must begin with themselves.

Binary alignment and rurality

The focus in this thesis is upon the rural. However, its formation within the binary pair along with its opposite necessitates the consideration of the whole. Urban/rural is an

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[1] Linguistic competence describes the notion of an innate capacity to understand linguistic rules. This underpins Chomsky's theory of generative grammar.

opposition in which both terms are constructed as poles. Related terms, considered to be synonyms, underline this opposition, sometimes nominally, sometimes adjectivally. 'Urban' is related to 'city', 'town', 'built-up area', 'municipality', 'metropolitan' and 'borough'. These terms form a cluster in opposition to terms for the rural, such as 'countryside', 'rustic', 'pastoral', 'bucolic' and 'georgic'.

Out of the denotative definition discussed above by Cloke, it is possible to begin to piece together the cluster of homologous qualities and ideas which adhere to the notion of rurality, and to show how they contrast in corresponding measure with opposite qualities adhering to the urban. All three points of the definition concern either 'the land' or the 'landscape'. The rural is a spatial category, in which the important relationship is between humans and their physical surroundings, as much as, or more than, between individuals themselves. The centrality of the landscape may imply a diminishing of the importance of the individual or of relationships. The importance of 'agriculture and forestry' implies a close association between rurality and nature. Although human beings have a hand in shaping the animal and plant life surrounding them, the products of agriculture are not perceived as wholly created by human beings, but by nature.

A conception of the rural can be attempted initially by sketching out a range of connotative analogous concepts. The connotative meanings of complex signs such as 'urban' and 'rural' cannot be fixed or universal but are subject to variation among individuals; their meanings are formed by the range of experience of each individual. In addition, meaning is subject to diachronic change, undergoing variation over time as experience occurs. This fluidity and instability seems to make it impossible to discuss the connotative meanings of such terms. However, without the persistence of a relatively stable correspondence of meaning, any signs would be rendered effectively meaningless. Clearly, signs are not meaningless, otherwise communication would be impossible. Therefore, in order to assess the connotative meanings of 'urban' and 'rural' it is valid to use individual experience as a starting point for exploration.

Raymond Williams (1973) provides a clear outline of the meaning of rurality. For Williams, the country gives rise to a mixture of positive associations which reflect 'a natural way of life: peace, innocence and simple virtue' (p.1). Simultaneously, there

are negative connotations: 'backwardness, ignorance and limitation'. The city, is similarly infused with a mixture of positive and negative connotations: on the one hand with achievement, 'learning, communication and light', but on the other, with 'noise, worldliness and ambition'. The city has been achieved through human endeavour. It exists as a result of progress:

> In the long history of human settlements, this connection between the land from which directly or indirectly we all get our living and the achievements of human society has been deeply known. And one of these achievements has been the city: the capital, the large town, a distinctive form of civilization (Williams, 1973, p.1).

Achievement and civilization are both positive and negative. Williams sees them as creating a deep sense of nostalgia for their opposite, which expresses itself in an idealistic conception of rurality. This accords with Bell's identification of idyllic rurality, a lost golden age, set against modernity. He asserts that the three driving motivations for this construction are 'romanticism, authenticity and nostalgia (for simpler ways of life, for example), all stamped onto the land and its inhabitants (plants animals, people)' (Bell, 2006, p.150). Williams goes on to contrast what he calls 'the stereotype' with the real history by highlighting the historical and regional variety within both urban and rural contexts. He points out that the city has been the state capital, administrative base, religious centre, market town, port, mercantile depot, military barracks and industrial concentration. County life has encompassed hunters, pastoralists, farmers, factory workers, small peasantry, tenant farmers, rural communes and tribes. It has been located on the manor, the feudal estate, the latifundia, the plantation and the state farm. It seems that these lists of associated concepts do not rid us of the stereotypes, but merely serve to add to our awareness of their complexity. The power that the urban/rural dichotomy exerts over the cultural imagination is illustrated by the passage in Williams's introductory chapter, in which he which sets out a personal reflection of 'the meaning of country life' (1973, p.3) imbued with rich, pastoral images created by a myriad of cultural influences which he subsequently sets out to explore.

This thesis attempts to diverge from this all-encompassing view of urban and rural construction, which extends to a broad swathe of historically identified urban and

rural categories. Such a view risks the backward projection of present understandings of the urban and rural. Instead, it follows Stewart's (1996) identification of the rural idyll as 'a product of the bourgeois imaginary that emerged with modern urban-industrial culture' (cited in Bell, 2006, p.150). However, rather than restricting this to a consideration of one aspect of rurality – the idyll – this thesis sets out to approach the more general category of rurality.

Binaries and deconstruction

In addressing binary oppositions, the deconstructive strategy sets out to disrupt, undermine and transform essentialist doctrines. Deconstruction seeks to overturn those conceptual oppositions present in essentialism. This includes essentialist assumptions about difference. In gender studies, this means inverting the hierarchies that structure oppositions: for example, Masculine/feminine and Father/mother, along with associated couplings such as strong/weak, active/passive, rational/irrational and presence/absence. In terms of urban and rural, other hierarchies can be overturned in the same way. In addition, a deconstructive reading also entails an undermining of the basis on which such hierarchies operate by exposing contradictions which exist as a consequence of the constructed nature of the concept, attacking their foundations and exposing the flimsiness of binary analogies.

For Derrida, the principle of *différance* encapsulates the recognition of difference and also the deferral of meaning, which frees language from the constraints of structure. Instead of arising out or representing a pre-existing reality or presence, language participates in the creation of reality. Meaning is the product of an endless interplay between signifiers with no obvious starting point. Since it does not reside within the signifier, but in what the signified is *not,* the difference between signifiers, meaning is in a sense absent from the signifier, and is distributed throughout language. Because *différance* is not contained by universal structures, meaning forms a complex web in which signs point to signifiers and those signifiers are themselves signs. Their meaning is dispersed through language, but meaning is therefore unstable, conditioned by social and historical context and by individual experience.

In terms of approaching the concept of rurality, the rural, the countryside, and its binary other, their relationship must also be seen as historically and culturally

unstable, its meaning distributed throughout cultural signifiers. It is therefore important to examine how historical considerations inform the interplay of meaning around this concept, and also how rurality is itself historically situated, rather than fixed or universal. At the same time, it must be recognised that the individual perspective of the critic is relative and contextual. Any analysis of the binary concept of urban/rural must implicitly acknowledge this inescapable condition. This understanding underpins discussion of the historical situation of rurality in Chapter two.

Each component of a binary at once denies and confirms its interdependence upon its other. Binaries require each other in order to define themselves. In addition, their opposition is really a similarity, since they do not form poles simply by virtue of *différance*: this is why it makes no sense for 'man' to be the opposite of 'table'. It is only through the recognition of significant association that they are 'entwined in a binary pair. The binary exists through similarity. This notion motivates essentialist beliefs in the fixed nature of binaries, and can be seen as an expression of ideologies which seek to suppress similarity and reinforce difference. For example, it could be argued that a patriarchal culture clings onto clearly defined notions of masculinity and femininity present in men and women, because it wishes to define the roles of men and women in a strict way. An understanding of this ideological component informs the discussion of rural othering in Chapter 3.

Markedness in binaries

The operation of binary pairs in the process of othering is conditioned by markedness. Jakobson asserts that

> Every single constituent of any linguistic system is built on an opposition of two logical contradictories: the presence of an attribute ("markedness") in contraposition to its absence ("unmarkedness")' (cited in Lechte 1994, p. 62).

This concept is important for this discussion, in that it demonstrates a clear connection between the formation of binaries within linguistic construction, and the process of othering which informs this approach to an understanding of urban/rural binaries and subsequently to a reading of *Wuthering Heights.*

In a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand (Derrida, 1981, p.41).

In the construction of binaries, there is always a hierarchy between the pair. The hierarchy is created as the expression of a set of values which prioritises or 'valorises' one of the terms of the opposition over the other. Derrida's description of this hierarchy as 'violent', implies that these values are contested, that they can be understood as ideological and political in their social effect, and that they are arbitrarily yoked together on these ideological grounds. One of the terms tends to be 'marked'; that is, its signifier indicates that it is the term that is governed.

In some cases, markedness is indicated by morphological distinctions between the terms (with the use of prefixes such as 'un-' or suffixes such as '-ess'). This can be observed in relation to gender in the binary terms male/female, or man/woman. In these pairs 'fe-male', since it contains the term 'male' can be understood as an extension, or special case of 'male', which becomes the default term. The marked term 'female' then, indicates the presence of additional attributes; the term 'male', correspondingly indicates their absence.

Not all binaries contain this 'markedness' of the signifier, yet it appears virtually inevitable that the valorisation of one of the terms will take place since, as Derrida points out, the binaries are constructed within an ideological context; the very construction of signs in general is directed by values. Binaries are built onto other binaries by paradigmatic association, their emergence conditioned by the values which drive their construction. An example of a pair in which the less valued term is unmarked is that of centre/margin (which will be discussed later in its relevance to the urban and the rural). 'Centrality' is not only a spatial term, but is also figuratively 'more important', whereas marginality has the opposite figurative, as well as spatial sense.

Following Derrida, and applying the notion of a violent hierarchy or markedness between polar opposites, the question arises as to whether the urban or the rural is the marked term. It is clear that if the rural is identified as the marked term within the

urban/rural binary, this status is far from obvious. The presence of negative and positive analogies attached to both urban and rural shows that the 'violent hierarchy' of this opposition is complex rather than simple and subject to contestation. Does this show that the hierarchy is nuanced and subtle, rather than violent, or is it evidence of the chaos and violence of the struggle? The struggle within binary hierarchies emerges from the competing voices and perspectives which seek to establish themselves through various textual forms and media.

Rural markedness can be found by referring back to the culturally fundamental binaries identified by Jakobson and by Lacan. A hierarchy between the urban and the rural is present in the hierarchical arrangement of these fundamental binaries: self/other, subject/object, presence/absence and figure/ground. In each case, the first term is valorised and it can be identified metaphorically or metonymically with the urban, while the second, unmarked term can be associated with the rural. It could be argued that the fundamental qualities of these binaries and their implicit hierarchies within Western culture, condition the way understandings of the world are created. This means that the relative values of all further binary pairs are determined by analogy with the fundamental binaries. This includes spatially defined binaries (such as inner/outer, near/far, inside/outside, centre/margin and growth/shrinkage) and also binaries indicative of various qualities (such as active/passive, new/old, modern/traditional, progress/regress, artificial/natural, complex/simple, civilized/wild, light/dark, polluted/pure, noisy/quiet, busy/tranquil, masculine/feminine and experience/innocence).

It is possible to indicate how all of these binaries are connected with the urban and the rural, by tracing the analogous connections between some of them. Towns and cities are conceived of as points of presence. They are centres, labelled and strongly identified in relation to each other. The rural is conceived of as an amorphous and disparate zone, without a consistent or strong identity; it is an absence of urbanity. The topological relationship between rural and urban is projected as that of margin and centre. The urban is imagined as that which has expanded into the rural. The urban continues to expand and spread, whereas the rural, threatened, contracts. The urban is new, while the rural is the old into which it extends. Industrial processes and human activity produce pollution. The urban, by definition is unnatural – manmade.

The rural, as the urban's opposite, is viewed as having the opposite characteristics – it is natural. The unnatural pollutes the natural. The natural must be protected. The purity of the rural idyll is threatened by the encroachment of the modern world. This attribution of purity means that the rural is 'represented as not only ethnically homogeneous, but as a depository of core values' (Sibley, 2006, p.403). In this light, the apparent positivity of rurally aligned characteristics is highly questionable: core values and homogeneity are signs of stasis and exclusion.

The urban/rural hierarchy can also be traced to the identification of self/other as a fundamental binary. This concept of the individual subject, a point of view, an isolated form existing within space and interacting with other subjects, finds analogy in conceptualisations of the spatial relationship between the urban and the rural. This can be understood as 'figure' and 'ground', with the urban figure placed within the rural ground. A map consists of empty surface, overlaid by the achievements of civilization: settlements, cities and towns and the roads and railway lines that connect them. The settlements are like individual subjects: they have names and identities, perhaps something analogous to personalities. From the outside, they are conceived of as having internal unity. Like the individual, they have not always existed, but emerged into the world, imposing themselves upon a pre-existing natural order. The town or city is then a gestalt being, a phallic object imbued with connotations of presence, power and agency. On this basis, the urban is the privileged category in the urban/rural binary due to it analogous connection with the human subject.

The spatial relationship between urban and rural is also linked by analogy to other orientational metaphors which are in themselves key cultural conceptions: if the urban is aligned with internality, proximity and centrality, the rural is aligned with the opposites of those things: externality, distance and marginality. The centre is the nucleus; it has importance and value, serving as the focus for meaning and purpose. The periphery is marginalised, ancillary and dependent.

Further analogous concepts arise from these orientational metaphors via a complex interaction of signs. Rurality is objectified, deviating from the assumed normality of urban characteristics and identity. The apparent positivity of the oppositions outlined by Bell, in favour of the rural, can be undermined by exaggeration and connotation.

Peace, slowness and cleanliness can be uninteresting, uneventful and overbearingly tranquil. Noise, speed and dirt are humane, active and exciting. As already indicated, the rural is exclusionary, a place of purity. It is homogeneous, rejects diversity and is a place of denial and exclusion: 'The city, in this imagined geography, is cosmopolitan and a source of others who are potentially transgressive' (Sibley, 2006, p.404).

The perceived unity of rural culture is ideologically untenable, implying intolerance, fear of change and racism. 'Whether the fear of racism is perceived or real is irrelevant. The fact is that many would-be visitors to the countryside are frightened of the potential reaction from local white people' (Agyeman and Spooner, 1997, p.206). Rural dwellers are stereotyped as 'hillbillies'. They are small minded, backward, atavistic and animalistic. This constructed rural identity has become recognisable to the extent that the 'hillbilly horror' (as Bell, 1997, p.97, has it) is a staple filmic genre.

Postcolonial analogies

Postcolonial approaches to literature attack the assumption of essentialism that underlies the creation of ethnic others. Essentialism is regarded as a naïve conception of the world which sees objects and their qualities as somehow belonging independently 'within' objects, instead of being aspects of signification constructed through the application of linguistic categories[2]. Essential qualities are attributed to create ethnic difference, which is ideological in nature, and is imposed through the gaze of the dominant culture. The othering of the rural finds analogy postcolonial theory as articulated by Edward Said in the concept of 'Orientalism'.

'Orient' and 'Occident' are binary, interdependent terms, ideas with 'a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary that have given them a reality and presence' (Said, 1978, p.5). The same is true for the urban and the rural. Said examines the nature of discourses through which the West constructs a 'constellation of ideas' in place of the East. It can be argued that the urban constructs of a constellation of ideas about the rural. Underpinning the construction of these ideas is a relationship of power: of West over East and of urban over rural. The Orient has been conquered and

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[2] Gelman (2005) gives a full account of essentialism. She discusses the cultural history of the concept and also explores it as a manifestation of childhood cognitive development.

dominated through the process of empire building. Just as Western colonial powers have imposed their will on virgin territories, invading them with their presence, so cities and towns (the orientational metaphors lead us to imagine) act upon and colonise the pre-existing rural state, emerging with power and dominance. However, the rural other is an 'internal' other, sharing a wider national and ethnic identity with the urban. The implicit dominance by the urban is located in this complex dynamic based around its semiotic association with presence in opposition to rural absence. The rural is defined by the presence of the urban. The othering process involves creating a set of stereotypes which reinforce the binary concept. These are encountered within representations of the binary ideology as a metonymic palette. In the case of the orient, the items in this palette might include mosques, camels, religious fanatics, culturally oppressed women and so on. A metonymic palette can also be observed in depictions of rurality, such as that in Williams' personal account of the rural imaginary:

> It is the elms, the may, the white horse, in the field beyond the window where I am writing. It is the men in the November evening, walking back from pruning, with their hands in the pockets of their khaki coats; and the women in headscarves, outside their cottages, waiting for the blue bus that will take them, inside school hours, to work in the harvest. It is the tractor on the road, leaving its tracks of serrated, pressed mud; the light in the small hours, in the pig-farm across the road, in the crisis of a litter; the slow brown van met at the difficult corner, with the crowded sheep jammed to its slatted sides; the heavy smell, on still evenings, of the silage ricks fed with molasses (Williams, 1973, p. 3).

In the case of Williams' account, the palette of objects which can be added to a picture of reality are culturally conditioned but applied through his own experience. For many 'the self is experienced as an imaginary being, where places, ideas, sensations which are not directly experienced can achieve an imagined existence' (Cloke and Little, 1997). This is rurality experienced as, in the words of Bunce, 'the armchair countryside' created by a culture 'increasingly separated from direct contact with land, nature and rural community' (Bunce, 1994, p.37).

Aspects of postcolonial approaches bear similarities to understandings of tourism; each of them can connect to an understanding of rural othering. Both the rural and the colonised can fall under the gaze of an observer, or subject, who measures each with a particular set of values. The colonised and the rural are refracted through the observer's discursive representations. The representations themselves are actually constructions, imbued with the ideology and values of the dominant voice. As Robinson points out, this precipitates the 'passive tautology' of tourism in which preconceptions are expected to be endorsed:

> The slow and cumulative process of absorbing certain literary works can shape our worldviews as readers and tourists. We reach destinations forearmed with images and ideologies cultivated from the pages of novels and poems we have read over the course of our lives (Robinson, 2002, p.60).

The confirmation of preconceptions through myriad cultural texts implies a power-superiority through the experience of a gaze which extends only one way. This can relate either to the foreign 'other', or over the nationally internalised rural 'other'. Tourism can be carried out either by visiting a location, or remotely through a medium, in the form of 'armchair tourism'. Reading a novel itself becomes a form of armchair tourism.[3]

> While literature enriches our knowledge of the world and assists in shaping our perceptions generally, it is particularly relevant when it extends to knowledge of others and otherness, and to shaping national, regional and local identities from the armchair' (Robinson, 2002, p.60).

Postcolonial studies recognise that ideologies about race are often subsumed into texts unconsciously. This idea has been addressed by postcolonial theory. This is comparable to the presence of ideologies about the urban and the rural. Discourses of racial othering position novels within culture, requiring what Said calls 'contrapuntal reading' allowing interpretations of 'both what went into it and what its author excluded' (Said 1993, p.79). As with gendered othering, racial difference is related to the presence/absence binary: 'The trope of blackness in Western

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[3] C. Brace's account (2001) of the influence of twentieth-century popular book publishers in linking rural images with national identity, explores the mechanisms by which such constructions are implemented

Discourse has signified absence at least since Plato' (Gates 1984, p.315). Thus, racial others and the rural other find binary alignment in their mutually shared condition of absence. Binaries are mutually dependent. The poles are only regarded as opposite because in some sense they are alike. This means that difference defines sameness. This is true in analyses of constructions of ethnic and gender difference and in terms of Urban and rural difference. Each pole is defined by its difference from the other.

Race is significant in *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff's racial otherness is related to his urban otherness. The 'beastliness' of the characters resembles depictions of the racially other in Jane Eyre. Ironically, as discussed above, racism is regarded as a rural trope, due to the perception that there is a lack of rural diversity. The urban is diverse, and by implication tolerant, accepting and accustomed to difference. This comes to signify modernity and progress. Racism is regarded as old fashioned.

Western humanism has defined itself through the creation of a racial other in relation to which it stands as a homogeneous whole. This rests on an essentialist view of the world. The racial other is bestial, representing an absence of human qualities. This is an ideological assumption.

Othering through literary or (or other) representation can involve the depiction of transgression as a way of shoring up and reinforcing ideologically dominant practices. The transgression of the other marks it out as such. Such depicted transgressions can provoke reactions of disgust, which provides an even stronger enforcement of these values within the individual. At the same time, exposure to transgression can desensitise the audience, ultimately producing the opposite effect: that transgression ceases to be transgressive.

Jervis provides a useful perspective to othering in Western culture, which is to see it as a process of transgressing the modern, conceptualised as an ideology, 'a consciousness and way of life that are implicitly (and at times explicitly) set against an unacceptable "other", thereby unwittingly providing the resources for transgression. In discussing the presence of transgression in the process of othering, Jervis's focus is on the transgression of the modern. In terms of temporal boundaries, his definition of 'modern' is wide, encompassing the historical view of the

modern as beginning with the Renaissance. The early modern period is appropriately named, as Jervis claims that it saw the disciplining of folk culture and the establishment of a new set behavioural norms which helped to shape the emergence of 'modern structures of selfhood'. However, Jervis claims that

> the period to concentrate on is surely that from around the mid-eighteenth century, when modern notions of selfhood had become widely established, along with the matrix of "civil society", and on into the nineteenth century and beyond, with the explosive implications of the technological, industrial and political transformations of the world (Jervis, 1990, pp.4-5).

The importance of the transformations occurring in society, and their relevance to the construction of the urban/rural binary, together with the hierarchical orientation of that concept through the othering of rurality is the central tenet of this thesis, providing a ground for an exploration of its literary expression.

The Enlightenment project, closely bound up in signification with concepts of industrialisation, urbanisation, and a change in social relations could be identified, or at least closely associated with bourgeois values. Jervis's 'project of modernity' (echoing and closely related to 'the Enlightenment project') encapsulates a series of characteristics in relation to which otherness stands: it is purposive and rational, presenting a view of the world that is rational, intelligible and predictable, understood in terms of a scientific and technological world view.

The orientation of civilization in binary orientation with nature acquires a whole set of new associations, and has radical implications for notions of selfhood and identity. The self has agency to aspire to the rational ideals through the acquisition of knowledge and the articulation of reason. This self is fully conscious, bounded by known limits, whole. At the same time it is held back by its own 'nature': the inadequacy of the body and its inability to shake off base and natural instincts, emotions and dispositions. Transgression, which is the reversion to such a natural and therefore uncivilised state is always present within the self, while at the same time projected outwards onto the other, creating the conditions and possibilities for contradiction.

The Enlightenment project stands as a purposefully civilizing project, an explicit aim with a political dimension, influencing state policy. Enlightenment becomes a mission or a duty, intrinsically intolerant of otherness. As an aspect of colonialism, it seeks to either transform or exclude on the basis of race, culture and gender.

> The civilized/primitive, contrast maps all the human/animal, mind/body, reason/nature, freedom/necessity and subject/object contrasts… A gendered reason/nature contrast appears as the overarching, most general, basic and connecting form of these dualisms (Plumwood, 1993, p.45).

Nature, including human nature, is there to be dominated, controlled and civilised. It belongs in the primitive past: a time before Enlightenment values emerged. At the same time it is inescapable, immanent, a challenge to civilisation while at the same time, according to Jervis, a source of hope for the future: 'a hope of escape from the artificial and the over-civilised' (Jervis, 1990, p.6).

Jervis observes Outram's conclusion that this is embodied in the conception of women as 'closer to nature, hence credulous, emotional', but also 'moral exemplars', carriers of an ethic of family life that could create a society that would be natural, polite and modern. This holds true not only for the othering of women, but also for the othering of rurality, and encapsulates the contradictions inherent in the binary distinction between town and country. This set of contradictions is embodied in the emergence of Romanticism which dramatizes the contradictions between nature and civilisation, seeking to value the former over the latter while at the same time entrenching the location of the natural and the primitive outside or in distinction and opposition to the civilised:

> for two hundred years culture has carried within it an antagonism between culture as a universal and as a cultural difference, forming a resistance to Western culture within Western culture itself (Young, 1995, p.54).

The process of othering is described by Plumwood as bound up with dualism as being more than dichotomy, difference or non-identity, resulting from a denied dependency on a subordinated other. It is

> a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalised in culture and characterised by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders construed as systematically higher and lower (Plumwood, 1993, p.47).

Otherness is created as a way of neutralising the threat that cultural difference poses to the coherence of identity and ideology. This suggests that two dimensions of othering can be observed. Firstly, it takes the form of exclusion, distancing and denial. The other is seen as opposed in the extreme, so that the very possibility of self/other hybridity is a contradiction. Secondly, the other is assimilated and incorporated, conceptually subsumed and accounted for, so that it is denied independence or identity outside of the modern cultural perspective. These dimensions of othering work together to create marginalisation and the application of values, but also fragmentation which allows for better assimilation or rejection of aspects of the other. Furthermore, the objectification and homogenisation of the other takes the form of the application of stereotypes, which generalise, exaggerate and fix characteristics, rendering them universal and immutable.

Gender analogies

As well as drawing on analogies with the colonised other, the urban/rural binary can also be understood by considering connections with gendered othering. To do this, it is instructive to reconsider the links formed through binary alignments discussed above. Like the urban and the rural, gender is also hierarchically orientated. The rural and the female are both constructed as subordinate terms and are recognisable through stereotypical tropes and representations.

The defining stereotypical features of femininity, resting on absence, the marked signifier, are implicitly connected with the condition of phallocentrism. The phallus has presence, whereas the woman's genitals are conceptually defined by their 'absence'. All binaries are defined by their relationship to presence/absence. The build-up of analogous binary terms around the presence/absence binary gives rise to the association of reason, truth and logic with the authority and dominance of masculinity. Language itself delivers the logical and rational as the dominance of masculinity, a state of affairs encapsulated within the Derridean concept of

'phallogocentrism', which 'unites an interest in patriarchal authority, unity of meaning, and the certainty of origin' (Culler, 1983, p.61).

In this sense it could be said that the urban is phallic, an 'object' of presence set against the rural absence of this. Its presence attracts the build-up of analogous concepts of activity, authority and dominance. Furthermore, it is where decisions are made, political power is kept and organised, where truth, logic and rationality reach their apotheosis; it is the geographical, physical expression of the Enlightenment project.

Notions of urban and rural difference are also underpinned by essentialist assumptions. Essentialism (the belief that differences are a consequence of qualities that inhere objectively, rather than being constructed conceptually through the process of signification) is identified by feminist theory as prevalent, though not universal, throughout society in terms of gender. Postcolonial theory exposes essentialism in terms of ethnic identity. It is also viable to claim that rurality and urbanity are subject to prevalent essentialist assumptions. In addressing this issue, it is useful to consider the nature of the significance of urban/rural by comparing it with the essentialism of gender.

Many gender theorists regard feminist identity politics as problematic, since it tends to entrench essentialist assumptions about gender on the part of the women who adopt it, creating a 'disorder of identity' (Derrida, 1998, p.28). As Butler points out, identity politics 'presumes, fixes and constrains the very "subjects" that it hopes to represent and liberate' (1990, p.148). Therefore, the project to deconstruct and fracture, to problematize and undermine gender difference is preferred.

In the case of urban and rural essentialism, the idea of a politics of urban/rural identity is interesting, since, as Landry points out, such identities are often constructed around attitudes towards hunting originating in the late eighteenth century:

> The splitting of views that began during the late eighteenth century is with us still, embodied in today's arguments among animal welfarists or rights activists and farmers (Landry, 2001, p.xiv).

Pro- and anti-hunters are often identified with rural and urban cultures respectively. But the pro-hunting culture is also stereotypically identified with hierarchical structures based upon social stratification: the landed gentry and the politically c(C)onservative. This is not regarded as a marginalised group, but as a central component of dominant power structures. However, significantly, rural and urban identities outside of the hunting debate seem to be much weaker than gendered or ethnic identities, so the tendency for identity to become 'fixed' or essentialised through the adoption of identity politics appears to be less problematic. In addition, the nature of urban/ rural identity is that it is less fixed than that of gender or ethnicity. It is relatively easy to mobilise between an urban and rural identity simply by moving to or from the geographically rural, or by adopting or rejecting stereotypical features of its culture. The ease with which this can be achieved is not universal, however. The extent to which individuals carry around markers of urban or rural cultural identity, consciously and unconsciously, is a consideration which will be explored in Chapter 3.

Rural reading

Reading literary texts in terms of their urban/rural difference is more than simply a question of recognising the presence of this hierarchy. The most important thing about literary representations of urbanity/rurality is not merely that a particular text can be shown to be expressing or assuming this hierarchy, but that it can call into question essentialist ideas. It is important to avoid the reductive position of merely centring criticism on the author as an agent spreading bourgeois and urban geographical and cultural ideologies. Instead, it may be more productive to unearth the contradictions within the text, searching for internal tensions and paradoxes, to engage with its equivocality and its configurations and reconfigurations of essentialist notions of urban and rural.

The perception of oppositional features in *Wuthering Heights* indicates that the application of a rural reading may provide useful new perspectives on this novel: 'Critics have long seen Wuthering Heights in terms of conflicting polarities: hell/heaven, calm/storm, fair/dark, Heights/Grange… [it is the] instability of the text's apparent polarizations that now attracts most interest.' (Frith, 1997, p.243)

Conclusion

Everyday experience, which is conditioned by language, encounters oppositions as 'naturalised' entities. However, binary constructions are like other signs in that they are created through the process of linguistic signification. The urban and the rural can therefore be understood in such terms. As linguistic constructions, binaries are arbitrary, ephemeral and illusory, rather than fixed, static, or located in any kind of objective reality. Their existence is determined by values expressed through language. 'Rurality' is therefore subject to changes in meaning, conditioned by historical and cultural change. In addition, the concept of rurality has historical origins. These origins are intimately tied up with the emergence of the rural's co-dependent term: urban, since binary pairs are mutually defining.

Although Williams, Bunce, Tuan and other commentators see the origins of rurality in the ancient world, this thesis asserts that a modern understanding of rurality can only really come about with the emergence of urbanity, in the period of urban expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although pastoral and georgic notions, and Arcadian visions are ancient creations, the understanding they convey is one of a relationship between centre and margin, in which the idyllic periphery is contrasted with a unique metropolitan centre. The idea that the urban and the rural are abstract alternative and oppositional 'zones' can only occur where there are many instances of manifest urbanity. To use a linguistic analogy, in pre-industrial times the urban and rural existed as *parole*, unique spatial occurrences. When urbanisation creates and recreates iterations of the urban, an abstract *langue* is identified, against which the emergent urban centres are categorised. The concepts of urban and rural are constructed as generalised oppositional criteria.

Attempts to define rurality have proved elusive, due to the vagueness of the concept and the difficulty of applying criteria that can be quantified. However, the rejection of rural as a category ignores its meaningful use in lay discourse. At the same time, constructivist approaches to rurality may be viewed as having hit a dead-end. However, this seems like a way of sidestepping constructivism, rather than its refutation, and is to a large extent influenced by the approaches of different disciplines; within literary studies, the construction of textual meaning is of prime concern.

The idea of binary oppositions aligning through the sharing of analogous meaning is a useful tool for understanding the ways in which the meaning of rurality has been constructed and embedded within wider cultural conceptions, revealing connections with landscape and space, femininity and nature, stasis and stability. These meanings can be framed in both positive and negative terms. However, Derrida's invocation of 'violent hierarchies' into discussion of binaries, suggest a consideration of the hierarchical configuration of urban/rural. The central hypothesis of this chapter, extended throughout this thesis, is that the rural is the marked or inferior term within the pair. This is discovered through analogous links between urban/rural and ethnic and gendered oppositions. The rural consistently aligns with the marked or inferior term of other hierarchies. This understanding lays the foundation for the central argument of this thesis that rurality is subject to cultural othering.

Chapter 2: Rurality and history

Introduction

This chapter builds on the examination of rurality as an ideologically imbued construction, by exploring the circumstances of its creation. The approach used is not simply to look for material circumstances to form foundational causal explanations for the creation of an urban/rural binary, since these causes are themselves discursive constructions. Instead, material social and cultural discourses are observed, which come together to form rural significance.

The cultural origins of rurality are examined in three ways. Firstly, the origin of the notion of rurality is explored, informed by its condition within a binary pair, which depends on the emergence of the category of urbanity. Consideration is given to the problems arising from ascribing cultural ideas to particular eras. Such ascription can involve making assumptions about the extent to which perceptions, beliefs and values are shared beyond the texts which are used to provide evidence. Secondly, a critical view is taken with regard to perspectives which project the urban/rural into preindustrial cultures. It is argued that the urban/rural distinction is emergent with the period of industrialisation and urbanisation, and is imbued with values embedded in the Enlightenment and capitalism. Thirdly, accounts which seek to explain the emergence of British industrialisation are considered as elements of the complex and contradictory interrelation of meanings with which the urban/rural binary has been constructed, and which ultimately contribute to the valorisation of urbanity.

Applying a rural reading to *Wuthering Heights* requires some consideration of history. 'For' as Eagleton points out 'readers do not of course encounter texts in a void: all readers are historically and socially positioned, and how they interpret literary works will be deeply shaped by this fact' (1983, p.83).

This creates the necessity of addressing a number of considerations. Since *Wuthering Heights* was first published in 1847, how can the contemporary reader be sure that interpretations of the text are not merely retrospective projections of twenty-first century culture, which positions them socially? On the other hand, to ignore historical considerations could be to simply avoid the issue. A possible solution is to regard historical context not as an underlying, foundational basis from which a

reading of the text may proceed, but as itself constructed from socially positioned texts. Context is therefore inseparable from text: history is unstable, contingent and provisional.

Considering the historical emergence of rurality as a 'category of thought' (Mormont, 1990, p.40) is relevant to gaining an understanding of the nature of its construction as part of a binary pair. The circumstances of the origins of rurality must be examined. As discussed in Chapter 3, the urban and the rural are mutually defining – each is defined by what it is not: its polar opposite. It is therefore necessary to consider how these categories came about and to situate them historically. This is relevant in establishing the circumstances of an emergent hierarchy between the two poles – in effect the expression of a dominant discourse. Since these binaries are constructions, examining the historical emergence of the urban/rural is not the examination of material fact, but of significance. Nonetheless, narratives which are established around the assertion of material facts will be examined, since they are significant in themselves. These narratives centre on the Enlightenment project, capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation, terms which are clustered in relation to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

A further reason for considering history is that the writing and publication of *Wuthering Heights* in the 1840s makes it an historical document. *Wuthering Heights* strongly signifies rurality and was written and published within the historical period relating to the emergence of rurality. The effect of this on the construction of rurality within the text cannot be ignored. Additionally, the rise of the form of the novel and a consideration of its readership and its place in culture must be noted. *Wuthering Heights* is a monumental[4] novel which itself plays a part in the construction of rurality

'When did the rural begin?' An exploration of this question can highlight some of the problems that arise when trying to fix the emergence of this construction to a moment in time. This implies that an immediate answer might be that the rural has always existed, since its opposite, the urban, is by definition an artificial

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[4] Kaplan (2007) compares Freud's descriptions of sentimental modern Londoners, who he observes to weep before a memorial to the Great Fire of London, to the modern consumers moved to tears over 'the melodramatic excess of nineteenth-century fiction' (p.15). She identifies Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* as an example of a Western cultural literary monument, but it can also apply to *Wuthering Heights.*

phenomenon. The rural is simply the pre-existing situation into which the urban extended.

As discussed in Chapter 1, it is clear that the rural could not have existed before the urban, since there was no urban from which it could be distinguished. To describe prehistoric (in other words, pre-textual) times as 'rural' seems absurd. It only makes sense to speak of the existence of the rural by virtue of the existence of the urban. It is therefore reasonable to adopt the position that the rural came into existence at the same time as the urban. In addition, it seems that the question 'When did the rural begin?' is really the same question as 'When did the urban begin?' An answer to this question might be sought in material fact, based on empirical evidence. Such an answer might focus on population densities and land use. As Woods shows, attempts to provide a quantitative and objective rural definition are nuanced to the point of being unwieldy, providing 'a large number of different, overlapping, yet non-congruent, rurals' (2011, p.6).

If applying an 'objective' definition to present-day rurality is problematic, it is even more so to apply this to historical rurality. No attempt should ignore the constructed nature of binary oppositions; as Chapter 1 argues, the urban and the rural are concepts derived from cultural practices, rather than naturally occurring properties or essences existing within the material structure of reality.

A more appropriate interpretation of the question 'When did the rural begin?' must be 'When did the rural emerge as a meaningful concept?' or 'When was the rural first constructed?' The 'when-ness' of this question seems to require an answer based on historical and material evidence. The expected answer seems to involve a moment in time. Could this be a specific date? Perhaps the answer could be expressed as a period (sometime between date *x* and date *y*). It is important to consider carefully what the question means. The urban/rural binary is imaginary, so perhaps the underlying question is 'When did the urban/rural binary emerge into people's conscious minds?' This gives rise to a further difficulty: if a binary concept emerges in the mind of an individual, does that mean that it exists as a cultural phenomenon? If so, then any concept existing in the mind of any individual could be examined as a valid cultural phenomenon. A privately held construction cannot be representative of

society as whole, or of a slice of society, and so such an examination would reveal little about wider culture.

There are two possible responses to this. The first is to question the assumption that binary concepts simply appear within conscious minds unbidden and ignores the embeddedness of individuals within cultural and linguistic contexts. Of course, signification cannot occur outside the conscious minds of individuals. However, signification is also social; it is learned and conditioned by individual experience within the cultural-linguistic context, modified, added-to and passed on. Therefore, for the urban/rural binary to emerge within an individual's consciousness, it must be related to the experience of that individual within culture. In other words, although co-ordinated by individual experience, significance must pre-exist within the possibilities of signification. To sum-up: if the binary exists within individual consciousness, it must also exist in some form within the consciousness of others. The construction of significance is one of process.

The second response is that it is only possible to discuss the significance of binaries that are shared as a cultural phenomenon. If private binaries do exist, they are, by definition, unknown. It is necessary to consider the nature of the existence of binaries in the consciousness, since that is where they exist. Attempting to answer the question 'When did the rural begin?' entails asking a question about when, in history, the idea entered people's consciousness. The problem is that it is impossible to read the minds of others, let alone of those who are no longer alive. So how is this task possible? Since this is a question about history, the only possible considerations are textual. The historical positioning of the emergence of an idea can be encountered in texts which yield up meaning about that idea. It is therefore appropriate to study texts from the past. Such study and analysis would at least indicate that the urban/rural binary is recognised by the reader in the implied conscious mind of a particular author. However, taking the principle that such acts of signification must be part of a more widespread cultural phenomenon, the presence of the urban/rural binary within a text can be explored provisionally as evidence of its more widespread presence.

The next problem to consider is how widespread the assumption of a cultural phenomenon can be assumed to be on the basis of evidence from texts. How far do

ideas such as urban and rural extend beyond their authors? How widespread must the ideas be before they can be considered established? Is the extent of the influence of the author of more importance than that of a large number of individuals adopting the idea? If the answer is 'yes', then there would have to follow justification for what appears to be the marginalisation of wider society.

A central aim of this chapter is to connect the take-up of the idea of an urban/rural binary to social and material and economic aspects of existence. This is not to say, however, that cultural and linguistic phenomena are standing on an economic and material base. Economics is really the expression of value with regard to material resources, and the value and meaning ascribed to material resources are themselves part of the sphere of language and culture[5]. However, it does no good to ignore the value and meaning of materials and their distribution. The 'meaning' of urbanity and rurality is bound up with the 'meaning' of economics. Socioeconomic conditions constitute a set of pre-existing meanings from which a reconfiguration of significance can emerge. Individuals reconfigure meaning according to their own understanding based on learning and experience. Where individuals are especially influential, as in the case of widely-read authors, their reconfiguration of ideas may become widely adopted. The author is then majorly involved in the recreation and reconstruction of signification.

With these problems in mind, it is necessary to question accounts of rural emergence. In *The Country and the City* (1975) Raymond Williams traces the separation between urban and rural to ancient times, in which he identifies the concept of rurality with a type of backward-looking nostalgia for an idyllic, lost golden age, or a retreat from the rigours and sophistications of urban life. Williams describes the manner in which the countryside is constructed as a form of nostalgia. Every age bemoans the passing of rural culture, believing that 'A way of life that has come down to us from the days of Virgil has suddenly ended.' (p. 9) Writers observe with regret, the eclipsing of pastoral life, with its simplicity and honesty, by modern, sophisticated, artificial and degenerate lifestyles. This appears to be merely an illusion, a perception, or a matter of perspective, since it seems to occur repeatedly throughout the ages. Williams traces the recurrence of this theme within a range of

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[5] Robbins' classic definition of Economics can serve as a basis for this understanding: 'a science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses' (1932, p.15).

texts, beginning with Leavis and Thompson's *Culture and Environment* in 1932 and moving back on an 'escalator' through time via George Sturt (for example, *Change in the Village*, 1911), the Wessex novels of Hardy (between 1871 and 1896), and the writings of Richard Jeffries in the 1870s, Eliot's *Mill on the Floss* (1860), the early nineteenth-century writings of Cobbett (1820s and 1830s) and Bewick in the 1820s, Clare (1809)[6], Crabbe (*The Village,* 1783) and Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* (1769) (Williams, 1973, pp.9-10) .

Eventually, the escalator leads Williams back to the ancient world to Hesiod's *Work and Days* in the ninth century BCE, the works of the third century Greek bucolic poets and the *Eclogues* of Virgil. The temptation is to see an urban/rural binary rooted in the Hellenistic myth of a Golden Age. However, the sensibility that is being traced here is merely one pre-existing facet of the construction of rurality which was to become realised during the industrial age. The pastoral, georgic or bucolic ideals are merely aspects of the construction of rurality that was to emerge eventually. In the pre-industrial ages, pastoral is not characterised as a conscious contrast between urban and rural. In the case of the Theocritus, Williams argues that the idyllic descriptions of bounteous harvests are an expression of feeling derived from 'living on narrow margins and experiencing the delights of summer and fertility the more intensely because they also know winter and barrenness and accident…' (Williams,1973, p.15). Thus, pastoral is not so much a description of rurality, but of life proceeding in a pleasant way. The pastoral is distinguished from the georgic:

> In pastoral idyll, no one labours and everyone is nourished by a natural plenitude… georgic verse presupposes a need for labor and cultivation to ensure survival… Pastoral fantasies have always had a particular appeal for audiences removed from agrarian realities (Landry, 2001, p.16).

In Virgil's *Eclogues* 'the contrast… is between the pleasures of rural settlement and the threat of loss and eviction' which Williams reduces to a contrast between peace and conflict. This definition of the pastoral could be 'the simple matter in which general truths are embodied or implied: even a modern proletarian industrial novel can be pastoral in this sense!' (Williams, 1973, p. 21). In the world of the industrial

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[6] Williams is referring the Clare's poem 'Helpstone', composed between 1809 and 1813 but not published until 1820. The dates are given in Storey, 1974, p.5.

bourgeoisie, the pastoral becomes a disguise, an allegory and a set of tropes expressing the new ideology of agrarian capitalism, melding into industrial and urban capitalism.

Like Williams, Tuan (1974) sees a similarity between ancient and modern perceptions of urban and rural: '... it is well to be aware that an environmental value requires its antithesis for definition' (p.102). He perceives 'a congruence of feelings' (p.102) in the writings of the Roman poet Horace, the fourth century Chinese poet Tao Yuan-ming and eighteenth-century Englishman Henry Needler. According to Tuan, they appear to share a recognition or assumption of the antithetical existence of the urban and the rural. This recognition comes when people experience society at 'a certain level of artifice and complexity', which they contrast with 'the relative simplicities of nature' (p.103). However, Tuan also notes that

> The evidence of the *Shin Ching* suggests that in ancient China there was awareness of the beauty of earth, but not of a countryside as a scene set apart and antithetical to the city. (1974, p.102)

Unlike Virgil's Roman aristocrats, ancient Chinese court officials did not regard life beyond the city walls as a 'withdrawal from strife' since the Yangtze basin 'still had vast expanses of wild nature that provided little security and gave no delight' (1974, p.103).

It can be argued however, that although the binary is present in a nascent form, this represents not so much an urban-rural binary, but a notion of proximity to centres of power located in a metropolitan centre, perhaps Rome or London. Tuan shows how some cultures conceptualise the relationship between centre and margin as a series of concentric zones. The ancient Chinese version of this, found in the *Shu Ching* (dating back to the fifth century B.C.E.) shows 'a succession of zones of decreasing culture away from the imperial capital' (Tuan, 1974, p. 37).

> The first zone is the zone of the royal domains. This is followed by the lands of the tributary feudal lords; the zone of pacification or the frontier belt where Chinese culture is being adopted; the zone of allied barbarians, and the zone of cultureless savagery. This schema was popular with the Chinese but the Romans could easily have adapted it to their own use (pp. 37-8).

The perception that culture 'declines' in proportion to its distance from the centre of power is seen by Tuan as a manifestation of ethnocentricity for which he claims a universal basis. This perception can be mapped onto other pre-industrial cultures including that of the British Isles. In a fully industrialised world, a retrospective analysis of the relationship between those within the inner zones and those on the margins might conclude that the condition of binary separation between urban and rural matches our own in all important respects. This argument would lead to the further conclusion that this binary took shape in ancient times. However, Tuan's description of concentric zones does not constitute an urban/rural binary opposition at all, but a gradation of geographical meaning dictated by proximity to the centre of power and influence. To assert that this is urban/rural in the post-industrial sense is a step too far.

The notion that urban centres can be categorised collectively as urban, while the realm which lies outside can be categorised as a rural continuum, with each category sharing common cultures and identities, is a modern invention which becomes fully-formed during the era of industrialisation and urbanisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Landry (2001), the word 'countryside' came to mean 'an imaginary generalized space' rather than a specific zone, sometime between the Game Act of 1671 and its repeal in 1831. 'It became an idea, and a way of giving an imaginary, yet material, form to a unified, homogeneous vision of the nation' (p.1).

It is from this period that the contemporary conception of the urban/rural binary emerges. Urban/rural comes about not just as a pair of geographical categories, but as a whole set of cultural categories including landscape, environment, behaviour, morality, politics and identity. The creation of the urban-rural binary is located in socio-economic and historical and material circumstances; it emerges from industrialisation and urbanisation, the establishing of capitalist modes of production and the social hierarchies created within them, and from the resulting cultural identities and understanding based upon patterns of consumption and behaviour.

The circumstances of the emergence of the urban/rural binary are bound up with the set of ideas that grew out of the Enlightenment, and with the conscious awareness of the idea of the modern. The implications for the conception of the individual as well

as for the shape of society, have a strong bearing on the shaping of conceptions of the urban and the rural. In understanding the importance of Enlightenment values, Jervis suggests that

> the period to concentrate on is surely that from around the mid-eighteenth century, when modern notions of selfhood had become widely established, along with the matrix of 'civil society', and on into the nineteenth century and beyond, with the explosive implications of the technological, industrial and political transformations of the world (Jervis, 1999, pp.4-5).

The creation of an urban-rural binary was concomitant with industrial urbanisation. During the nineteenth century, the population of Britain became predominantly urban. The problems associated with imagining historical values, as outlined above, arise again in relation to the effect of this change, giving rise to a series of questions. When did the accompanying sense of urban and rural cultures and identities and a sense of urban and rural categorisation emerge? Did it emerge at the moment when the urban population exceeded the rural? When was it recognised that there were indeed such categories as 'urban' and 'rural'? How did this concept spread among the population? Who recognised it first? Was it the rural people or the urban people? Was it those involved in industrial occupations or those involved in agricultural occupations? Was it those of a particular social class: the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy or those in government? Perhaps artists, writers or thinkers were the first to notice the urban and the rural. Was the opposition of urban and rural 'spheres' consciously recognised as early as the eighteenth century, or was it the nineteenth century before the concept became naturalised? How is it possible to know that the urban-rural binary was being recognised or had been culturally absorbed?

As discussed above, no strict distinction between textual and material explanations of historical change is adopted in this thesis, or between text and context. Each is seen as textual, encountered through an engagement with significance. With this approach in mind, it is worth turning to economic explanations for the emergence of industrialisation and urbanisation.

Allen (2009) describes a long chain of cause-and-effect, which places the roots of rapid urbanisation in the early modern period between 1500 and 1700, during which

the population of London grew tenfold. Allen argues that this was due to improvements in agriculture and manufacturing. The state taxed agricultural income and spent it in London or significant towns such as Portsmouth, where the naval dockyards benefitted. Some cities, for example Bath, were supported by the income from the landed society. However, urbanisation was mostly due to trade and commerce. In the seventeenth-century London's expansion was fuelled mostly by European trade linked to rural manufacturing. At this point in history, industrial processes are not connected in the imagination with urban centres. By the eighteenth century, intercontinental trade took hold and contributed to urbanisation.

Allen's account of the economic causes for urbanisation actually starts even further back, to mediaeval times and the Black Death. He explains that this calamity led to a low population with fewer workers, which in turn gave rise to the establishment in England of a high wage economy. Because high wages were being earned, higher consumption was enabled. Farmers could afford to raise healthy sheep which gave the woollen fabric trade a boost on international markets. A growth in trade and export meant more wealth pouring in to trading centres, mainly London, giving rise to urban population growth in which a need arose for more refined division of labour. This was more efficient, and drove still higher wages, along with demand for coal and further advances in agriculture.

Allen goes on to describe how the large expansion in the population caused poverty and starvation towards the end of the eighteenth-century. When the technology became available to create factories and machinery for manufacturing, this large, impoverished population was ready and waiting to become an industrial workforce. Already subject to a culture used to flexible and insecure working arrangements, they were willing to migrate to new places of work, settling around the new factories.

As Bunce points out, 'What is particularly notable about British urbanisation… is how comprehensively the demographic emphasis shifted from rural to urban during the nineteenth-century' (1994). What features must a settlement have before it conveys that it is categorically different from its surroundings? Perhaps the size of the settlement makes a difference. A hamlet of fifty inhabitants might be considered a rural space; a city with a population of 100,000 might be considered urban. Where does the tipping-point lie: at 5,000, 10,000 or 40,000? Perhaps population density is

the key factor. If a settlement is too attenuated it ceases to be cohesive, or distinguishable from its surroundings[7].

Statistical accounts of urban growth provide a 'factual' narrative for the process. In 1750 only London had a population of 600,000. Edinburgh was the only other city with a population in excess of 50,000. By 1801 eight cities had a population of more that 50,000, including Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, which had become among the most populous towns in England, (Gunn 2007, p.11). In 1841, London had a population of almost five million, Sheffield 111,000, Nottingham 52,000, Salford 53,000 (Hobsbawm, 1968, p.132). By 1851, Manchester had 303,000, Birmingham 247,000 and Leeds 172,000 (Gunn, 2007, p.11). By 1851 the number of cities with in excess of 50,000 had risen to twenty-nine. In each decade between 1801 and 1851, the urban population rose by 20%. There was an absolute depopulation of rural areas and by 1900 three quarters of the population lived in cities. 'After 1850, in effect, Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds began to take on the character of provincial metropolises, the largest urban centres outside London with the exception of Glasgow and Liverpool' (Gunn, 2007, p.12). By this time the binary distinction between urban and rural becomes apparent, rather than merely the distinction between London and that which lies beyond it.

> In England, in the course of the Industrial Revolution, even London's
> continuing and rapid growth must be compared with the still more rapid, the
> explosive growth of the new industrial cities of the North. London between
> 1821 and 1841 grew by twenty per cent; Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and
> Sheffield by more than forty per cent; Bradford by sixty-five per cent (Williams,
> 1975, p.152).

The shared experience of life in the new expanding cities provides a new sense of identity, an urban identity:

> The sheer scale of London, when it stood almost alone, had provoked the
> sense of a new human dimension, a new kind of society. But the industrial
> cities were something different again. Though still in their early stages they

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[7] The British government's urban-rural classification system based on density is discussed in Woods (2011, p.34).

announced, even more decisively than the growth of capitals, the new character of the city and new relations between city and country. (Williams, 1975, p.152)

These new relations are aspects of identity bound up in the construction of the urban/rural binary. Some of these identities might be located in the productive roles of workers: 'Cities, rural industry and commerce required skills that agriculture had not demanded' (Allen 2009, p.11). The close proximity of people sharing particular sets of skill could be imagined to create a cultural connection and a sense of difference from those who do not share those skills. Furthermore, these are new skills and so the cultural formed identifies with the new.

The cultural separation of urban and rural is associated with the imaginary identification of the former with industrial activity. Williams notes the Dickensian contradiction between the unique character of individuals and the constrictive artificiality of the industrial landscape, as portrayed in *Hard Times*:

> This contradiction reminds us of the confusion which prevailed, in Dickens's time and beyond, between the idea of the city and the idea of industry. The identification between them, which had its social base in the new industrial towns, was in some important ways misleading, both generally and specifically for any understanding of Dickens (Williams, 1975, p.153).

This is because Dickens's urban sensibility was more metropolitan; London as an urban environment carries connotations of 'miscellaneity and randomness' (Williams, 1975, p.154) at odds with that of the burgeoning industrial centres to the north. The conflation between the urban and the industrial is not so much 'confusion' as an association of meaning which connects the two. They become linked within a complex web of significance, a constellation of ideas. The existence of internal contradictions is not important in creating urbanity. System, and order, randomness and chaos are all part of the meaning of urban, linking disparate centres (London and 'Coketown') around a single category.

The circumstances of the growth of industrialisation are therefore worth noting. The pre-conditions for industrialisation, a 'proto-industrialisation' have been much explored. It is worthwhile noting the implications of various theories which have

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sought to explain the causes of industrialisation: since the idea of industry is significantly connected with the idea of the urban, while rurality is associated with a pre-industrial age, such theories reveal much about the cultural construction of rurality in the modern age. Allen (2009) categorises theories under the headings of social structure, constitution and property rights, science and culture.

It has been observed that industrialisation engendered a movement from a *moral economy* with 'custom and attributed status as the dominant conditions of human relationships, to a political economy, founded upon contract and the status provided by access to capital' (Cosgrove, 1984, p.224). However, the first narrative identifies the emergent social structure capitalism, as that which paved the way for industry. If the rise of capitalism played a significant part in the emergence of industrialisation, it was therefore significant in the drive to urbanisation. It is certainly clear, that industrialisation, urbanisation and the establishment of new social relations were all aspects of the same set of changes. New forces of production, transport systems and labour practices were bound together with new social structures, so that 'the years surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century represent the culmination of England's transition into capitalism '(Cosgrove, 1984, p.224).

This argument acknowledges that capitalist social structures were strongly established well before industry became the primary source of producing wealth. Indeed as Cosgrove points out, a transition to capitalistic modes of production took place over a long period beginning at least as early as the fifteenth century and 'forming the basis of European ascendancy (Cosgrove, 1984, p.3). It could be argued that capitalism is the most significant factor in allowing the possibility of industrialisation.

A focus on social structures and the transition from mediaeval, feudal social structures to capitalist social structures is especially associated with Marxian approaches, as part of the theory of historical materialism. Historical change is explained in terms of dialectical materialism: a conflict between dominant and oppressed social classes with its basis in the distribution of resources. Stages of history are characterised by the relationships between dominant and oppressed social classes, each of which is defined by its role in production. Significantly, Marxian accounts see this historical change as progressive, with each stage of

history being superior to its predecessor in terms of the freedoms and privations foisted upon the oppressed class. Thus, Marxian accounts lend positive associations to the rise of capitalism (and therefore industry and urbanisation) in comparison to pre-existing feudal social structures[8]. Allen agrees that the restrictions on labour movement and the arbitrary nature of feudal power placed a heavy burden on the mediaeval economy and that 'The emergence of capitalist institutions was a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for modern economic growth' (Allen, 2009, p.4).

Allen also considers the idea that industrialisation has its roots in 'the Glorious Revolution of 1688 that consolidated parliamentary ascendancy, limited royal prerogatives and secure private property' (2009,p.5). The idea that this allowed investment to flourish, laying down the foundations for industrial development has weaknesses, according to Allen, in that there is no evidence of changes in financial institutions after this date. In any case it seems too big a leap to ascribe causal influence from 'the excise tax on beer… to Watt's invention of the separate condenser' (p. 5). In the context of the argument, the Glorious Revolution is presented as a wholly or largely positive occurrence, resulting in the diminution of despotism and a shift towards a more democratic culture. This is viewed as part of general cultural and political progress. The argument aligns such progress with the emergence of the industrial and urban, superseding the pre-existing rural condition characterised by stultifying power structures and the unjust, tyrannical and inglorious exercise of power.

Another account of the origin of industrialisation is that it was based in a preceding 'Scientific Revolution' in the seventeenth century bookended by the ideas of Galileo and Newton. This perception has existed since the time of the Scientific Revolution. In 1671, Boyle predicted that mechanical contrivances would one day be used to perform work and solve problems in ways unimagined in his lifetime, and that

> Inventions of ingenious heads doe, when once grown into request, set many Mechanical hands a worke, and supply Tradesmen with new means of getting a liveleyhood or even inriching themselves (cited in Allen 2009, p.6).

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[8] Cohen (1979) gives an influential account of Marx's theory of history.

However, Allen makes the point that, since the scientific innovations most relevant to industrialisation were developed before 1700, the question arises as to why it took so long for them to have their effect. In addition, many such innovations took place on continental Europe, and yet it was in Britain that industry first took-off. Allen concludes that scientific discovery was a necessary, but not sufficient condition for the development of industry. In any case, the existence of the theory demonstrates a meaningful association between the industrial urban and science. Science itself is associated culturally with a development of knowledge and technique, a movement towards truth and understanding, refined by progress. This forms a significant aspect of the constellation of positive meanings relating to urban culture.

A further set of explanations for the Industrial Revolution invoke cultural superiority as the most important factor. One such explanation follows Weber (1905/2002) who claimed that modern Westerners are more successful and exhibit a greater degree of rationality than their forebears due to the influence of the Reformation. The empirical basis of this theory was underpinned by an early twentieth-century correlation between Protestantism and high incomes, which, according to Allen 'did not obtain in the sixteenth century and which does not obtain today' (2009, p.7).

Weber's theory about rationality seems to have had an impact on development policies in the 1950s and 60s, when irrationality was blamed for the lack of agricultural productivity in developing countries. Studies have found that the peasant farmers in such countries were no less rational in dealing with their situation than their counterparts in the West[9]. Furthermore, with the demise of serfdom, peasant farmers in Mediaeval (Pre-reformation) England engaged in an agricultural revolution, 'undoubtedly promoted growth' (Allen, 1992, p.22). However, the existence of the Weberian theory and its widespread use embodies an acceptance of the associations linking industrial-urban development with rationality and progress, and linking the agricultural-rural setting with irrationality and backwardness.

Between 1760 and 1860, the share of Britain's wealth represented by agriculture shrunk dramatically, from 74% (including 47% for the value of farmland alone) to just 36% (including 21% percent for the value of farmland alone). At the same time, the

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[9] Studies include those of Berry and Cline (1979), Booth and Sundrum (1985) and Mellor and Mudahar (1992).

share of wealth provided by industry rose from a mere 7% to 24% (Cosgrove, 1984, p. 223). Allen (2009) puts forward economic causes for industrialisation: it was worthwhile, that is profitable, in Britain to invent machinery, due to the high wages and cheap energy (elsewhere, labour was cheap but energy was expensive). This is more significant than other causes that have been suggested. 'The emergence of capitalist institutions was a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for modern economic growth' (Allen, 2009, p.4). Cultural factors, he argues, such as constitutional change beginning with the Glorious Revolution of 1688 did not provide a significant precondition for industrialisation. It did not lead to less despotism or lower taxes or security of private property. Most of 'the scientific discoveries that mattered for the Industrial revolution happened before 1700' (Allen, 2009, p.6), and in continental Europe. Only in Britain was it worth the huge expense of putting this into technology.

Capitalism as a mode of production is strongly associated with both industrialisation and urbanisation. Although it is too much to claim that it was strictly necessary for capitalism to exist as a mode of production in order for the other two to come into being, it seems to be the case that there is, at the very least, a strong connection between them in the case of the emergence of industry and urbanisation in Britain. In other words, it might be taken as historical fact that there is a causal connection between them. This idea is bound up with the cultural and constitution arguments for the primacy of Britain (and later, the West) in the acquisition of industrial capability, as outlined and criticised above. As Allen (2009, p.4) argues, the social structures of capitalism were a necessary condition for industrialisation. This is a standard aspect of Marxian accounts of industrialisation, despite counter arguments putting forward more optimistic assessments of the mediaeval potential for growth (for example Clark, 2007, cited in Allen, 2009, p.4). Restrictions on labour mobility and conveyance of land, together with the arbitrary power held by lords surely meant that industrialisation could not have taken place within feudal social structures (Allen, 2009, p.4). Industry required domestic capital, transport innovations, internal trade, food, consumer and capital goods (textiles, building materials) and a monetary system of exchange. As discussed above, it is argued that the conditions for the Industrial Revolution were laid down by the emergence of capitalistic modes of production. By the end of the seventeenth century, capital investment was being put

into land and property, agricultural technology and industrial processes. Perhaps it was the artistic sensibility of the Renaissance, along with its associated hunger for discovery and the spread of literacy, knowledge and information (through the availability of printed texts) that fostered a spirit of opportunism. In any case, this spirit hastened the breakdown of feudalism leading to the transformation of the English countryside. Capitalist modes of production in agriculture became established in the eighteenth-century, and a landlord-capitalist/tenant-wage labourer relationship ensued. The rural proletariat emerged: a land-tied peasantry was replaced by a landless proletariat (Allen 2009, p.8).

This new agrarian capitalism was stimulated by an increase in the population during the eighteenth century. Higher productivity gave rise to a shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture, as new crops and techniques in livestock production were developed. This foreshadowed the introduction and use of new agricultural technology. Enclosure and a transitional shift from arable farming to pasture intensified the move towards capitalism. By 1750 Britain was a market economy, and the world's leading trading nation. It was a diverse economy based on commercial agricultural commodities. Wealth was generated from overseas markets and colonial possessions. This supported the domestic economy of commercial agriculture, small industry and mining.

Bunce (1994) describes how capitalistic modes of production entailed an alteration in social relationships, most significantly in social hierarchies. The feudal system embodied a very rigid hierarchy, a system of rank emanating from the aristocracy at its summit and extending down to the mass of peasants at its base. The economic basis for this was land: simply put land, by and large was the origin of value. The more land that could be gathered and owned, the greater the riches that could be gathered and the greater likelihood that social mobility might be granted. A general trend towards upward mobility began in the seventeenth century. Squires and yeoman farmers acquired land, and the influence of the 'landed gentry' increased. In 1640 the gentry held half the land of England and Wales. A tendency towards larger and fewer estates meant that by 1700 70-75% of land was owned by large land owners. By 1800 this figure was 85%. Enclosure and a transitional shift from arable farming to pasture not only intensified the move towards capitalism, but threatened

the security of the peasantry. The country estate was a mark of prestige and a symbol of dynastic control. 'As estates spread across whole counties, the seventeenth and eighteenth-century countryside came to be viewed, by cultured society at least, increasingly through the filter of the social order and gentrified lifestyles which these estates sustained' (Bunce, 1994, p.8).

The classic Marxian view that the role of the individual in production determines social prestige and the Weberian approach which holds that this is also true for their patterns of consumption underpin these notions of changes in social hierarchy. Landry (2001) explains that in fact, it might be supposed that when social mobility becomes more common, and wealth is less closely connected to rank, it is more difficult for individuals to maintain social status merely by being 'who they are'. In addition, those climbing the social hierarchy wish to disguise their relatively humble origins by emulating and perhaps fetishizing the normal behaviours and patterns of consumption exhibited by the established elite. Thus, such behaviours became outward signals, indicators of social status, supporting social hierarchies. Inclusion and exclusion within social strata become more dependent on these outward signs:

> As foreign visitors observed, nothing distinguished eighteenth-century English society more than "the unceasing struggle of all ranks to emulate those above them". The new politeness promoted in the pages of periodicals such as the *Spectator* was urbane, with a strong influence of mercantile taste (Landry, 2001, p.2.).

The understanding of the countryside is one aspect of this. In the eighteenth century, social position is not merely indicated by its ownership, or position in relation to production, but by consumption. A new sensibility emerged in which the perception and display of social position became all-important. The origins of this were twofold. Firstly, in the rural social order individual recognition was possible and social position was recognised through this; however, the relative anonymity of the new urban centres meant that an individual's social position was not necessarily universally recognised, and so it was necessary to demonstrate it through particular styles, fashions and significant behaviours. Secondly, the possibility of social mobility within the capitalist industrial economy made it possible for individuals to aspire to higher social positions and to have this acknowledged through outward displays of genteel

consumption: 'Commerce, we should note, was "not just about exchange but more fundamentally about consumption"' (Landry, 2001, p.2). According to Landry, consumption of the land meant sport, specifically blood sports: hunting, shooting and fishing. The country estate becomes the locus for not only production, but also a backdrop for these exclusive pursuits. Landry argues that it is this very condition, the commodification of the land, which gives rise to the concept of the countryside as we know it, and that it was the urban arrivistes who were instrumental in its gaining cultural recognition:

> From the beginning there was a contest over meaning and the proper uses of the countryside, in which class differences played themselves out within and sometimes against the urban-rural divide. Until the late seventeenth century, the country had been indisputably the place where field sports – or 'Countrey Contentments' as Gervaise Markham called them in 1615 – had been pursued by all social ranks, from aristocrats and members of the gentry to the poorest of cottagers and laborers. Historians have documented how heroic self-assertions by members of the metropolitan mercantile classes during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries helped produce a code of manners for those outside the aristocracy and gentry, conveying "upper-class gentility, enlightenment, and sociability to a wider élite whose only qualification was money" (Landry, 2001, p.2).

Landry makes an explicit connection between the creation of the countryside as a cultural-geographical entity, and the emergence of an industrial urban bourgeoisie in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. The perspective on the countryside is contradictory. On the one hand, the 'middling sort' sought to attach status to their wealth by adopting or appropriating cultural signifiers associated with the aristocracy and the landed gentry. At the same time, an alternative ideology emerged, which imagined the countryside within the terms of urban experience. It was a 'shift in sensibility regarding hunting and field sports'. The middling urban experience was unaccustomed to the realities of birth and death, and rejected the version of the countryside which included such cruelties. Urbanisation 'had removed many people from their former proximity to animals in economic production and traditional husbandry.' Landry acknowledges the emerging dominance of urban bourgeois

culture extended to the nation as a whole: 'The English became a nation of pet-owners' (Landry, 2001, p.7). The theme of nineteenth-century pet ownership and its relevance to *Wuthering Heights* is picked up in Chapter 5.

The emergence of the urban/rural binary is inextricably bound up with the use of signifying labels. Landry explores the emergence of the term 'countryside' as landscape which excludes the city. 'In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the 'country', usually apprehended as a particular landscape – a country estate or the prospect offered by a hill – had been contrasted with the corruptions of city and court and invested with more moral and patriotic associations' (p.1). If the term 'geographical' can be applied adjectivally to indicate that a concept has significance as extended space, then the country was a geographically defined location, the landscape of the nation. In contrast, the city lacked geographical definition, since its significance was as a location of action, rather than as aesthetic object extended in space. However, urban growth began to create cities which were extensive enough in themselves to be apprehended as alternative geographical landscapes 'Between 1671 and 1831 the term 'countryside' began to replace the term 'country' in this sense, as English society became more urban' (Landry, 2001, p.1). From its inception, the 'countryside' is an object, created and defined as 'other' by the urban bourgeoisie who created it and elevated it onto a pedestal, with the implied application of normativity, judgement and connoisseurship:

> The fiercest defenders of the 'countryside' – as pastoralized aesthetic object – have, ever since the eighteenth century, tended to be members of the metropolitan middling sort rather than upper- or lower-class country dwellers (Landry, 2001, p.17).

Conclusion

An exploration of the historically positioned meaning of rurality is necessary in applying a rural reading to literary texts. In the case of *Wuthering Heights,* published in 1847, an appreciation of conceptions of rurality of that period is usefully approached by considering the historical context as inseparable from the text itself. The positioning of Victorian society in relation to concepts of rurality is problematic in

that it entails the retrospective projection of contemporary values. Therefore a rural reading must recognise the provisional and contingent nature of such an application.

Themes relevant for historical debate collect around the alignment of ideas set against the emergence of the urban/rural binary. The binary itself is revealed to be a product of urbanisation conditioned through its modern emergence as part of the process of industrialisation, rather than, as other commentators suggest, as a phenomenon with its roots in antiquity. Reference to the binary configuration of urban and rural reveals a distinction from the concepts of centre and margin which underpin pre-industrial conceptions.

A refocussing of urban/rural discourse around the themes of social change in the period of industrialisation allows these themes to demonstrate their contribution to urban/rural construction. Contested accounts of the origins of industrialisation reveal their shared cultural assumptions about British (and by extension Western) superiority: scientifically, socially, politically and culturally.

Narratives of social change show inextricable links between understandings of industrialisation, social change, the reforming of social hierarchies and the emergence of the rural as a 'category of thought', placing contemporary conceptions of rurality within this tradition. Various approaches observe that the rural has been reconstructed as a place for consumption as much as for production, and this idea situates this within the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. In fact, this 'consumption of the rural', coincides with its very creation.

This provides a provisional foundation for addressing the othering of rurality in the next chapter, as a construction based within these historical narratives. In addition, historical positioning with regard to the themes of rurality outlined in Chapters 1 and 3 will be carried through with regard to their application to rural readings of *Wuthering Heights* in terms of nature (in Chapter 5), social transgression (in Chapter 6) and space (in Chapter 7).

Chapter 3: Rural othering

Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the othering of the rural as a feature of contemporary culture, but also makes reference to the historically situated emergence of rural othering discussed in Chapter 2. It builds on the discussion of urban/rural binaries in Chapter 1, taking the conclusion that rurality is 'marked' within the binary pair and examining the wider implications of this. This lays the basis for examinations of rural othering in relation to *Wuthering Heights* in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The widely discussed concept of the rural idyll seems to stand in contradiction to this position, as it appears to constitute an elevation of the rural, providing an ideologically driven view of the rurality as embodying national aspirations and ideal qualities. Even where the rural idyll is seen as a construction, rather than a naturalised entity, it is interpreted as embodying positive characteristics. The rural idyll is encountered throughout contemporary media forms, and could be considered generic. The proliferation of the rural idyll through the media feeds back into lay discourses, which inform and become part of the lived experience of 'armchair tourists', rural visitors and also people who live in rural locations. Idealisation of the rural involves the establishing of criteria by which it is measured. This creates an exclusionary aspect to the rural.

This chapter questions the assumption that this constructed rurality holds a superior position in its binary opposition with urbanity. The main thrust of this suggestion is that the rural idyll parallels other forms of idealisation, in which the idealised is simultaneously objectified, most notably in discourses of gender and ethnicity. In such discourses, a range of criteria are used by which the objectified may be judged under the gaze of the subject. An examination of these criteria can provide an anatomy of the objectified other.

These criteria for rurality, or as they are referred to here, 'themes', are components of rural construction derived from the discourses themselves: the concept of nature, the transgression of social norms and the involvement of landscape and space.

These overlapping themes appear to be at the centre of most definitional discussion of the rural, and provide a starting point for a wide-ranging anatomisation of rural othering.

An exploration of the involvement of constructions of nature in rural othering allows the extended consideration of its historical positioning, identified in Chapter 2, and the introduction of the Bakhtinian concept of grotesque realism as a counterpoint to Romantic ideals. It also encompasses the involvement of gendered notions of nature in the othering of rurality. A discussion of 'anti-idyllic' constructions of rurality overlaps with an exploration of the othering of the rural through markers of social division and transgression. This draws on the relevance of historically situated class differences and idea of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, the construction of space is explored as a definitional aspect of the rural. The extent to which this spatiality of the rural is implicit in the othering of rurality is discussed.

Rural idylls

The rural is often idealised. It is celebrated, praised and held up as a source of pride, nostalgia and aspiration. 'Rural people are venerated as national icons' (Woods, 2011, p.29). This is popularly known as the rural idyll. Although it might seem that rurality is therefore the superior term within its binary pair, against which the urban is commonly derided or reviled, this can be regarded as illusory. In this chapter, I will argue that the rural idyll is part and parcel of rural othering.

The rural idyll is often thought of as invested with ideas of nationalism 'a receptacle for national identity – a symbolic site for shoring up what it means to be English, or Dutch, or whatever' (Bell, 2006, p.151). The rural idyll is constructed from various positive qualities: Williams' 'peace, innocence and simple virtue' contrasting with the 'noise, worldliness and ambition' of the city (1973, p.1).

The rural is an escape from, what are imagined to be, the destructive impulses of modernity, and therefore opposed to change, progress and other modern meanings. In 1943, rural writer Richard Harman, felt that 'In an age of destruction, there is a re-awakened interest in the things that endure' (cited in Short, 2006, p.143). The familiarity of idyllic accounts of the rural has extended into the twenty-first century (see Phillips, et al., 2001). However, both Williams (1973) and Short (2006) see its presence throughout European history, as an imaginary version of how the world

ought to be, contrasting with expression of fears and aversions in relation to the 'real' world. The investing of rurality with these values makes it a strongly ideological concept.

> Idyllic representations of country life are as old as writing about the rural, and in each historical era people have embellished the rural idyll with antonyms to their own apprehensions... The rural idyll fed on discourses of anti-urbanism, agrarianism and nature that were used to differentiate between the urban present and a romanticised rural past, particularly by nostalgic urban residents (Woods, 2011, p.21).

These urban residents experience the rural remotely, through representation, in a mode which Bunce (1994, p.37) describes as 'the armchair countryside'. Implicit in this remote experience is the imbuing of the rural with the quality of objectification.

The rural idyll is seen by Landry as an eighteenth-century urban creation:

> The countryside, [in the eighteenth century] began to evoke images of unchanging rural beauty arousing protective, patriotic sentiments in metropolitan minds, often from a considerable distance. (Landry, 2001, p.2).

The idea that the rural needs preserving and protecting is a central aspect, not of its valorisation, but of its othering. Its patriotic significance and its othering occur simultaneously:

> From its beginning as as a linguistic signifier for the heart of the nation, the countryside needed protecting because it was "out there", and perpetually endangered' (Landry, 2001, p.2).

Landry sees the roots of this othering in the sixteenth century:

> The long agricultural revolution, spanning the late sixteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, and devoted to extracting maximum productivity from the land and highest profits from the markets, produced the timeless countryside as its imaginary Other' (Landry, 2001, p.2).

Therefore, the rural, even in its idyllic form, and even as a repository of national essence, is defined by its otherness.

The rural idyll is connected to the pastoral tradition beginning, as Williams (1973) discusses, with the *Idylls* of Theocritus, giving a 'sense of a simple community, living on narrow margins and experiencing the delights of summer and fertility' (p.15). The carefully tended landscape and harmonious way of life depicted within the pastoral can be seen as the imposition of the values of ideal civilisation, without conflict, division or opposition.

As an ideological construct, the rural idyll is a normative concept, 'even if we accept that there are many versions of the rural idyll, they all converge around a normative nostalgic ideal which is embedded in social and economic structures' (Bunce, 2003, p.25). It seeks to construct the rural according to hegemonic discourse emanating from a capitalist industrial culture, 'rather than representing the rural that actually exists' (Woods, p.22).There is a problem in discussing a rural that 'actually exists', since this implies that the 'essential' rural reality is out there awaiting discovery. On the contrary, if nothing exists outside of the text, then any talk of accessing the real is meaningless; the act of ascribing the term 'rural' is the act of constructing the rural.

In this thesis, my approach to applying a rural reading of *Wuthering Heights* in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 is informed by the same rationale as Phillips et al. (2001). They argue against critical interpretations of mediated rurality which seek to arrange rural representations in 'a hierarchy of truth' (p.4) , and instead follow Matless (1994), Jones (1995) and Tuan (1989) in focussing on analyses of the '"surface phenomena" of rural imagery' (Phillips et al, 2001, p.4) and their relationship to the operation of power.

Idyllic rurality is connected with 'Nostalgia for the past – for a rural life now lost or that never existed' a romanticised view of pre-industrial England which 'provides a fertile ground for the advertising images that create consumption desires' (Salamon, 2006, p.335). This is true even in countries that are not-England, especially, as Woods points out, Anglophone countries. Hollywood has promoted this, and has contributed to its global diffusion (Woods, 20011, p.22). This is ironic, as the rural idyll, as a site of stasis, is imagined to be insulated from global (as opposed to local and immediate) influence.

Bell (2006) asserts that, 'mediated ruralities are subject to complicated, even contested processes of decoding' (p.154). Television drama gives a stylised and

exaggerated view of rurality, and millions of people living in cities come to construct their own versions of rurality through the influence of such visions (as also discussed by Phillips, et al., 2001). Thus, urban perceptions of the rural are reinforced, by various plots, scenery, characters and narrative devices. Period dramas play up the nostalgic aspects of the rural construction, with an ideological bias. For example, social structures are strongly hierarchical, but there is an absence of class conflict. In addition, as Phillips et al. note, rural dramas are frequently structured around a narrative device which enact the problem 'how can the "incomer" come to be accepted by the "local"' (2001, p.15). Phillips et al. show this device to be strongly connected with differences in social class. This, as will be discussed Chapter 6, applies to the character Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights*, demonstrating that Emily Brontë's novel may be subject to the same kind of reading.

Another aspect of rural construction is that of rural tourism. This is not really separate from other considerations of rural construction and commodification, since, as Crouch argues

> Visiting rural spaces and cultures continues to be framed by cultural worlds in which individuals live. Television, literature, film and artwork interpenetrate other fields of knowledge of the imagined, material and sensuous character of cultures and physical contours of geography outside cities and towns (2006, p.356).

The rural is encountered as a materialised fiction, shaped in accordance with 'cultural worlds': idyllic images and themes designed to appeal to tourist expectations for commercial gain, in what Dann (1999, p.165) labels the 'passive tautology' of tourism. It is difficult to know where the 'real' rural ends and the fictionalised, tourist-version begins, because there is no boundary. The real rural, the tourists' rural and the fictional rural are the same thing.

The tourist perspective is itself indicative of social hierarchy, which places the leisured observer above the agricultural producer. Landry sees the origins of this in the changing view of the purpose of the countryside in the early nineteenth century, when 'the culture of hunting and field sports began to give way, as the dominant mode of experiencing being in the country, to landscape tourism' (2001, p. xiii). The value of rural is not simply conditioned by agricultural production; its commodity

value is not simply a result of acting upon it. In this sense, the codification of the value of the rural is wrested away from its traditional stewards – agricultural producers, and instead constructed through the passive Romantic gaze. The ability to passively gaze was also a mark of leisured gentility, meaning that the urban gaze and social status are associated with one another. Rank denoted leisure and this meant that 'agrarian objectives were often subordinate to the requirements of gentrification' (Bunce, 1994, p.34).

Versions of rurality feed into the lived experience of rurality in a way which impinges of the understanding and identities of rural people. The lived experience of rurality informs a part of rural 'lay discourse'. This is the everyday discourse which is generated through direct experience of those situated in the rural. It informs Halfacree's invocation of the 'Everyday lives of the rural' in his 'three-fold model of rural space' (2006, p.51). Lay discourse is constantly interpenetrated (or dominated) by formal political representative discourses and is inseparable from its 'framing' cultural context and is informed by an interplay with media representations. It is therefore no more authentic than any other type of rural discourse. Lived experience is not neatly separated from cultural constructions about that experience which are informed by a myriad of sources.

Like other rural discourses, lay discourses can frame the experience of rural life, setting boundaries of identity which define what or who counts as rural, reinforcing a nostalgic and stereotypical view. 'Experiences of these "rural" places and lifestyles are fed back into the collective imagination, refining and modifying the idea and thus contributing to a dynamic process through which the rural is produced and reproduced' (Woods, 2011, p.16).

The rural idyll can be construed as a set of exclusionary criteria, originating from a fixed, 'monocultural set of values, against which entities can be held, judged and categorised. Bell refers to those excluded from the rural as the 'rural abject'

> those people and things dispelled from the idyll, rendered other, cast out… This means solidifying a set of rural/urban oppositions, where the rural is positively valued and the urban denigrated (Bell, 2006, p.151).

He regards this as 'an overturning of modernity's prizing of the urban over the rural' (p.151). The idyllisation of the rural is taken as a straightforward valorisation of

rurality over the urban, in which binaries align in the rural's favour: 'Typical binaries here would be rural=peace/urban=noise, rural = slow/urban=fast, rural=clean/urban-dirty' (p.151). These 'appropriate' forms of rurality are set against debased, or 'anti-idyllic' forms of rurality.

An alternative perspective is to regard the rural idyll as operating in the same way as idealised constructions of gender. As in the case of gendered othering, the rural can be seen as a site of contested symbolic value in which a dominant discourse imposes a particular construction of rurality in order to perpetuate its exclusionary ideological position. In the case of gender, as Usher points out

> This accounts for the ubiquity of the female nude in both 'high art' and popular culture: the fantasy of containment requires revisiting of the image to keep anxiety of the unruly fecund body at bay (2006, p.3).

Dominant ideologies seek to impose idealised identities onto the oppressed other. This is a familiar idea within gender theory, in which femininity attracts an entourage of apparently positive connotations, such as nurturing, beauty, gentleness and grace. For Usher, the ideological drive is motivated specifically by patriarchal need to control reproduction. The attributed qualities, constantly revisited in reiterations of the construction, simultaneously obscure and reveal the power relations within masculinity and femininity. On the one hand, the imposition of apparently positive attributes leads individuals to ignore the imposition of inequality; on the other, the qualities imply powerlessness and objectification.

Characteristics of femininity are held as ideals to which women are encouraged to aspire but can rarely match (Glick, and Fiske, 1997). At the same time, grotesque constructions of femininity proliferate throughout culture. Russo (1995) makes clear the identification of the feminine with the cave: 'Low, hidden, earthly, dark, material, immanent, visceral' (p.1). The idealised and grotesque forms combine to provide a discourse of dominance based on approved and unapproved forms. Rurality also contains idealised constructed forms – the idyllic – alongside its debased forms, the anti-idyllic. Like the alternative constructions of gender, they are not antagonistic, but combine in the objectification of rurality through a discourse of control.

It could be argued that rurality is categorically different from femininity in two ways. Firstly, it does not represent any fixed or personal identity; rurality is really a context,

linked more to landscape and cultural practices than to the individual. Secondly, whereas it is difficult to escape our gender, we can escape our urban or rural context, and also acquire (or eschew) the associated cultural practices as we see fit. In response to these objections, there is a strong case to be made that rurality can and does constitute an aspect of identity for many people. This can be as important as localism – the formation of identity in relation to place. Secondly, gender is not categorically different from rurality (or any other form of identity) by virtue of the difficulty of escape. This difficulty is dependent on the societal pressures opposing such escape.

There is a correspondence with idealised identities imposed onto colonised cultures. Said has revealed that the Orient, created by the Western gaze, is presented as a place of exotic and romantic beauty. Again, this is far from an affirmation of oriental superiority, quite the reverse: it is '*contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks' (Said, 1978, p.41). The application of orientalism to the rural context is discussed by Cloke and Little (1997). Rurality is said to be

> subject to forms of internal colonisation not unlike those described by Said, in that the discursive formation of the rural rests on a complex hegemony of domination which both materially and culturally constitutes an acceptance and belonging for some, and a marginalisation and exclusion for others (p.7).

According to this approach, the othering of the rural is only the othering of those who are excluded (Bell's 'rural abject', noted above). As Cloke and little note, in any hegemonic power relations there is a problem with identifying who is dominant and who is made other, due to the complexity of 'networks of cultural circulation' (1997, p.7). The problem arises because Orientalism, along with other forms of othering, concerns meaning, which cannot be fixed to political structures with any kind of stability. The same problem does not afflict gendered othering, since the attribution of gender to sex is a relatively fixed cultural phenomenon. In the case of the rural, the problem is even more acute, since the other is not in a different part of the globe, but right here, a form of 'internal colonialisation' (Cloke and Little, 1997, p.7) embodying national, domestic and familiar significance.

The rural resembles both the gendered other and the colonised other. It resembles the gendered other because the dominant discourses which direct its meaning

attribute both idealised and debased forms. These discourses of normativity, extolling both the virtues and the vices of the rural, allow it to be dominated and controlled. The rural emerges as a site of potential transgression.

Rurality resembles the colonised other in two ways. Firstly, because its meaning is tied to space – it is a geographical category, albeit internal, rather than external. Secondly, its status as a form of identity is unstable and difficult to determine, so the location, direction of dominant discourse is uncertain. The rest of this chapter considers the othering of the rural in relation to the natural, spatial and social aspects of its construction.

At this point it is worth turning to a consideration of the 'vices' of rurality by focussing on Bell's (1997) exploration of the anti-idyll. Bell regards this concept as an inversion of the idyllic version of the rural construct. The anti-idyll takes place in media and chiefly filmic representations of rurality, especially in the horror genre. For Bell, the anti-idyll feeds on urban fears and prejudices and presents an array of negative stereotypes. The anti-idyll is the rural's 'sick, sordid, malevolent, *nasty* underbelly' (Bell, 1997, p.94).

The anti-idyll cannot be separated from the idyll, which contains the seeds of its own contradiction and inversion into anti-idyll. The very idealisation which seems to valorise the rural means that it is also a place of exclusion, where outsiders may not feel welcome. Therefore, the anti-idyll is a reactive expression in relation to the presence of rural othering in the idyll.

This is the context for Bell's identification of a particular subgenre of the Hollywood horror film: the rural slasher. In these films, innocent urban newcomers are pitted against the visceral evils of rurality. Such films are regarded as decidedly low-brow, but also as corrupting in themselves, perhaps 'pornographic', reflecting fears about the degeneracy of American culture. The rural slasher movie features a group of strangers 'coded as urban' (Bell, 1997, p.95) who pitch-up in a rural backwater in search of pleasure, adventure or temporary escape from the city. This is a feature of their codified urbanity: they are tourists. In addition, Bell suggests that 'like anthropologists stumbling across a lost tribe, the urbanites meet an alien culture where the norms of their own society count for nothing' (Bell, 1997, p.99). Being 'like anthropologists' they are connected with the culture of rationality which forms the

basis of their and the implied audience's world-view. Typically, their car breaks down or they become lost, perhaps through taking a wrong turn off the highway. In the rural setting they are inept, like 'fish out of water' and become prey to the local inhabitants, who proceed to terrorise them with their own brand of rural horror. The urban strangers are placed under pressure by their environment, to the extent that the trappings of civilization are stripped away. The rural environment gives rise to the erosion of their norms and values, and encourages transgression. The 'fragile nature of all limits and boundaries' is highlighted (Creed, 1995, p.175)

In the US, the rural is a place of so-called 'hillbillies', 'rednecks' and 'mountain men'. The British mythical figure is the 'village idiot'. Cultural myths surround the lifestyles of these figures. They indulge in insularity and interbreeding, backwardness and sexual perversion, incest and bestiality. For Bell, such figures as symptomatic of social, cultural and economic processes having a profound effect on rural regions.

Bell sees part of the origin for this in anthropological and ethno-cultural studies in the mid twentieth century, which gave a gloss of truth, based upon empirical evidence, to the presence of rural communities in the US with an identity distinct from that of city dwellers. This is due to effects of isolation, despite the on-going industrialisation and progressing modernity elsewhere (Bell, 1997, p.97). One such study was the Kinsey Report. It reported on the surprisingly common occurrence of same-sex activity among woodsmen, or lumberjacks: 'these men have faced the rigors of nature in the wild. They live on realities and a minimum of theory' (cited in Bell, 1997, p.98). Homosexuality and other transgressive forms of sexuality, such as incest and bestiality are all linked to rural ways of life. In *Deliverance*, one of the Films discussed by Bell, the character Bobby suffers rape at the hands of the hillbillies.

In rural slasher horror, a whole range of deviant behaviours are on display, including sexual and violent behaviours. However, the nature of the transgressions is deeply embedded into notions of rural culture and the rural anti-idyll. The transgressions themselves are regarded as norms within the rural setting, so that it is as if a new cultural setting has been entered. An alternative set of norms operates in the rural. This has several components. Firstly, it is partly due to the isolation of the rural culture; untouched and uninfluenced by the progressive tendencies of mainstream culture, it has developed its own set of values and norms, or retained those of a

bygone era, their retention a sign of backward abnormality. Secondly, the marginality of rural space means that it exists beyond the usual mechanisms of social control – the authorities, the police, law and order. The power structures governing such mechanisms are centred in the city. The rural police, insofar as they exist at all, are more likely to be subject to the loyalties and fraternal feelings generated within the 'close-knit' rural communities (in which everyone is related) than with urban power structures and the values that emanate from within them. Thirdly, the transgressions themselves fit into particular categories of natural and cultural inversions, to understand the nature of which requires drawing on notions of the bodily grotesque and of cultural and hierarchical inversions.

Bell highlights the Ed Gein murders as lending an archetypal hook to the rural slasher genre, and particularly cites Lesy's 1973 photo-essay *Wisconsin Death Trip* which juxtaposed pastoral images of rural Wisconsin with accounts of Gein's horrific crimes: 'The themes of repetition and romanticism… further emphasise the everydayness of the atrocities' (Bell,1997, p.101). Levy (1991) sees the move from idealised and romantic views of rurality, towards a more nightmarish vision as a 1970s phenomenon.

In the American context, there is perhaps a sub-textual North/South divide. The rural setting is virtually always one of the former confederate states. This gives a number of additional cultural resonances. Firstly, the sense of a political separation endures, in which inhabitants of the southern states bear a continuing resentment towards the federal Union, giving an additional reason for them to desire to destroy the outsiders and everything they represent. Secondly, Northern Americans make the historical identification of the southern states with slavery, and hence of cruelty, inhumanity and the perpetration of evils. The rural slasher movie conflates the otherness of the south with that of the rural to create an enhanced sense of the other. The imperial domination of a culture entails the need to overwhelm it with the imperial vision of itself. When a culture experiences its own identity through the gaze of the oppressor, this represents complete domination.

Fear of the rural is partly engendered by a sense of guilt and a realisation that the urban strangers represent the forces of cultural oppression. In *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Bell describes the rural environment encountered as a landscape in which

the effects of capitalist progress have destroyed rural culture. The context of the film is that in the rural economy, agricultural jobs on which communities are dependent (in the film, the slaughtering of animals) have become mechanised, obviating the need for labour, resulting in the impoverishment and degeneracy of communities. The rural backwater is portrayed as a place that has been, in a sense, betrayed by the forces of progress, whose origin is the city.

In *Deliverance*, another film discussed by Bell, a whole valley in rural Georgia is being dammed and flooded in order to provide electricity to supply the needs of the citizens of Atlanta. Although Atlanta is a Southern city, culturally it has more in common with, and is more connected to, other (Northern) cities than with, its regional rural hinterland. This represents the decline of that much valued American frontier myth at the hands of urban advancement. The rural landscape of *Deliverance* is littered with rusted vehicles and run-down shacks; it is populated by deformed children and toothless, incomprehensible adults: stereotypical mountain hicks. The condition of this environment represents the kind of decline mentioned above; this place is expendable in the face of urban progress. But the dramatization of its expendability also carries a condition of unease for the viewer, of self-reproach: 'the city approaches the country guilty' (Clover, cited in Bell, 1997, p.105).

Nature

The significance of nature as a component in rural construction is widely recognised: 'the relationship between human and non-human, or people and nature, is heavily stressed in discourses of rurality' (Woods, 2011, p.193). 'Nature' can be given meaning by its association with particular kinds of living things: plants, animals fungi and so on. Denotative definitions of nature, to which Woods alludes above, settle on that which is 'non-human'. This perhaps is a rational, broad and 'scientific' conception of nature. Nature thought of in this way entails the invocation of a 'dark' kind of other: that which is unknowable. It is outside of the human sphere, only partly, temporarily and contingently under human control. It is perhaps that which is imagined 'outside the text', and yet simultaneously brought into discourse. Its identity as a radical other is a central shaping feature of rural construction.

Rural culture has shaped the natural world for agricultural ends, creating

a safe countryside where humanity nurtures and is in return, nurtured by an accessible, appropriated and unthreateningly recognisable nature' (Buller, 2004, p.132).

The irony implicit in Buller's description is that in the process nature is destroyed, polluted and encroached upon. In environmental discourse,

The countryside has become largely devoid of the larger predatory species who… thrive on the very animals humanity has painstakingly bred and engineered… (Buller, 2004, p.132).

The term 'engineered' is telling, in that it seems inappropriate in application to nature and involves a suppressed criticism of industrial agriculture and the commodification of the natural world. Buttle (2006) asserts that empirical evidence shows that

'unsustainable' agricultural practices arise from structural process, and that farmers' environmental (or other) attitudes and values bear little relation to their practices and conservation behaviours' (p.215).

Attempts to refocus the debate indicate that rural culture is to blame.

Romantic ideas are also bubbling under the surface of discourse which attacks the poor stewardship of nature by rural culture. Pristine nature should be free from human agency, or else humanity will be obliterated by its overwhelming power. Rural culture's involvement with nature is thus doubly-negative. On the one hand it is associated with the unknowable other, the dark and fearful void of nature; on the other hand it is implicated in ecological destruction, 'engineering', spoiling and polluting, guilty of using nature for material gain, and failing to treat it with due reverence.

As outlined in the Chapter 2, this thesis approaches the othering of rurality as an aspect of Enlightenment values. The rural idyll, discussed above, is not antagonistic to this, but finds a home within the ideological discourse of the Enlightenment. The idyll is constantly under threat from transgression, caused by the inherent and internal contradictory aspects of significance of rurality. The rural is bound up with ideas of transgression implied by the dualistic distinction between civilisation and nature. Transgression implies exceeding limits or breaking a law. The otherness of rurality is derived from its associative links with nature. Nature is repressed, but

forms a constant and troubling aspect of the dominant, civilised structures of society. This leads to a range of oppositions between culture and nature. At this point, it is useful to draw on Bakhtin's notion of the grotesque body. For Bakhtin, the strictures and rules of dominant, civilised culture are overturned in the spectacle of the carnival. The grotesque body is an aspect of this, and as such is 'carnivalesque'. It overturns the official, civilised aspects of the self, by celebrating aspects which are held as taboo and are seen as being unworthy of celebration. The grotesque body is a reclamation of these unworthy or degraded aspects of the body.

> Degradation here means coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better. To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy and birth. Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth. (Bakhtin, cited in Jervis, 1990, p. 19).

The official body revels in the spiritual, rather than the material. This is a concept rooted deep within culture and is a central and complex aspect of (at least) western theology. It therefore rejects and sees as worthless the material aspect of the body, which is identified with nature. The grotesque body reminds us of the materiality of the body and of the self by emphasising the aspects of the body which transgress its wholeness and unity. Such a reminder is also a reminder of death, hence the proximity of birth and death highlighted by Bakhtin. This is a source of taboo, and forms a central part of the explanation for the rural anti-idyll described by Bell. The anti-idyll deals in all these transgressive themes because the rural is so closely associated with nature in its dealings with growth, death and birth in the form of crops and livestock, while at the same time at sufficient distance from the centres of civilisation to be outside of its constraints, hence free to be controlled instead by nature and its degradations.

In discussing the connection between the rural and nature, it is necessary to contextualise this in relation to Romanticism. The Romantic is seen as antagonistic with Enlightenment values. As Jones suggests, this is expressed in the oppositional

pairing of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, which embodies Romantic valorisations of innocence, nature, countryside and childhood, and his *Songs of Experience,* embodying 'the Enlightenment's deadening traits of experience, adulthood, urbanity and rationality' (1997, p.164). Romanticism has been, and it could be argued still is, very influential in cultural constructions of nature. The emergence of Romanticism as a reactive movement is very much bound-up in the processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and the establishing of new social relationships that provide the context for rural construction.

Implicit in the Romantic opposition to the world of experience in the period of industrialisation was a reactive attitude of artists and poets to the application of market economics to artistic endeavours and 'the emergence of a theory of the "superior reality" of art as the locus of imaginative truth' (Cosgrove, 1984, p.224). Rather than see their work reduced to another aspect of commercial necessity, in which they are producers fulfilling the needs of consumers, they moved to elevate artistry above mere craft and to impart to art and poetry a sublime quality, previously only attributable to ancient and Biblical texts. Within this view, the artist channels sublimity; artistic representations are imparted through some kind of natural process (as opposed to the working and refining process required to produce commercial products). The artist has a special connection with nature, which seems to determine and dominate artistic vision. This entails an elevation of both nature and the individual. Cosgrove (1984) observes the irony of this: individuality is a central component of bourgeois ideology. Thus in reacting against the new relations, Romantic artist unwittingly aligned themselves with it.

In the face of Nature, mankind's achievements are at best paltry and ephemeral, at worst a force for enslavement. On the other hand, Nature is awesome and terrifying. Human beings are at its mercy. Cosgrove (1984, p.227) draws on Edmund Burke's definition of the sublime to show that to experience this aspect of nature was seen as accessing the sublime. This is a sensation divorced from any object, but which is a unifying human experience. Nature is thus neither positive nor negative, but remains that which is beyond human control and intention: the 'dark other'. It is associated with the uncanny and the unfamiliar, that which is accessed by those with special vision, and by others either through their works, or by direct access to the landscape.

Romanticism established access to the sublime through direct experience. Urry discusses 'the complex connections between visualism and the discovery and recording of nature as something separate from human practice' (1999, pp. 36-7). The connection between an eighteenth-century shift towards the visual and the manifestation of Romantic visuality in photography is made, in which the Romantic is characterised as solitary, involving a 'sustained immersion and sense of awe' creating a 'Gaze involving the sense of the auratic landscape' (p.39). The visual sensation of the spatial and the connection between Romantic ideals, nature, spatiality and the rural is revealed. It is to be experienced with conscious awareness, by accessing the 'natural' environment: the mountain, the lake, flora and fauna. This at once democratises and estranges nature, for in being consciously aware of it, the subject simultaneously understands it to be other, even while acknowledging its internal presence. At the same time, the democratisation of the sublime only extends as far as the bourgeoisie: the person of leisure, the tourist and the reader.

Cosgrove (1984) discusses the implication of land commodification for the consumption of landscape painting in the late eighteenth century. Consumption of such paintings rose with the move from a view of land as having its value in production, to being viewed in terms of its exchange value. Popular works depicted scenes in which the value of what was represented could almost be counted for example healthy livestock and efficiently tended land. Other than this, wilderness landscapes were favoured. Either the rural was packaged and given an exchange value, or it was a sublime wilderness. The indeterminate countryside was not so popular: the rural poor and everyday life were not regarded as worthwhile artistic subjects. The rural had to fit into acceptable categories.

Romanticism sees Nature as an awesome force, or that which underpins humanity. Mankind's efforts to escape the influence of nature, or to proceed against or without heed to nature is doomed. However, Cosgrove notes that the version of nature which romantics present belongs to the pre-rational world. Romanticism can be seen as a reaction to the intellectual direction of the Enlightenment, and against the elevation of empiricism and insistence on the rational, which contain the seeds of a materialistic world view: this was to become the scientific world view. This world view suggests that a binary opposition between that which can be observed and measured (or can be hypothesised within the framework of the observable and

measureable) and that which cannot: in other words, the real and the unreal. Romanticism, with a discourse centred on the spiritual and sublime, the unworldly, the heavenly, can be seen as at-odds with the Enlightenment view. It is a continuation of the tradition which rejects the worldly and material and elevates the spiritual and the soulful, but Romanticism identifies the latter with nature.

The Enlightenment, with its materialistic implications, inevitably leads to a view of nature as material cause and effect. The human subject is no more than the sum of the atoms which make up the body. Hence, the body is, if not elevated, seen as the reality of existence; spirits and souls are illusory. In this case, civilization is that which saves mankind from the wild and frightening savagery of nature. Thus, Romanticism, with its focus on the sublime (the divine in nature) follows an interesting orientation towards dominant discourse. In one sense, the romantic sensibility concurs with a particular form of dominant ideology: that emanating from centuries of Western religious culture, which elevates the spiritual above the material. Nature is awesome because it contains the divine. On the other hand, it is at-odds with the implied materialism of the rational and the analytic. Perhaps it is in the rural that these two contradictory elements are forced to exist. The rural is at once the location of nature as sublime beauty and spirituality, while at the same time, nature as the reminder of the transgressive corporeal self. This contradictory set of meanings applied to nature goes some way towards describing the contradictory existence of rural idylls and anti-idylls, and underpins the normativity of rural discourse.

As discussed above, rural othering finds an analogy with gendered othering. This may reveal a deeper connection in which landscape, gender and rurality are wound into an array of interlinked associations. Constructions of rurality are 'highly charged with gendered metaphors (Woods, 2011, p.19). Rurality is particularly defined by the idea of land and landscape. The rural landscape signifies, the natural world. As such, it is represented as 'female'. Little (2002) documents the identification of the land with the feminine in art: the rural landscape, with its curves and in its passive recline, is identified with the female body. The rural landscape is connected with the female along pre-existing patriarchal notions of femininity: at once virgin, mother and seductress.

As 'virgin territory' the land requires taming, settling, enclosing. In the old world, or European context, the subjugation of the land is already complete: it has been husbanded and fought-over again and again, perhaps (in the cultural imagination) for thousands of years. The capturing, control and, perhaps, penetration of the land by active, 'masculine' settlers is bound up in feelings of national and ethnic identity. The virgin metaphor reveals the connection between colonising and gendered forms of domination.

Little (2002) documents the maternal aspects of femininity projected onto the land. It is the abundant and generous giver of sustenance. The rural is defined by agriculture, a practice awash with reproductive metaphors, carried in the etymology of the word 'husbandry'; the sowing of seed carries a similar metaphorical connection. The land is thus equated with the concept of 'Mother Earth'.

However, humans do not only benefit from the harvest; they also sow the seed. Rose (1993) indicates that domination of the land as mother in this way can also imply incest and rape. Thus, the transgressive aspect of rurality is not something imposed from outside, but is embedded in the fundamental relationship of human beings and the land. It is the proximity to the land which gives rise to such transgressions.

The constructed masculinity of the humans in proximity to the landscape is bound up not only with the binary of the active and passive, present and absent, but also with the concepts of ownership. Rose (1993) links the exploration and objectification of the landscape to the voyeuristic objectification of the female body, observing parallels in terms of control and consumption through the processes of consumer capitalism. Rose identifies the tourist, who consumes and objectifies the landscape, as masculine, a construction to be found in tourist guides. Thus, the rural and the female are both subject to commodification within the male gaze and bound up within the forces of capitalism.

Rural deviance

As discussed in the previous chapter, the nineteenth-century period of urban expansion saw a corresponding change in social relations and the movement from a *moral economy* where human social relations are based upon custom and ascribed status, to a *political economy*, in which they are based upon contract and status

derived from access to capital. Since the social relations and the fact of urbanisation are closely entwined, this has implications for the perception of urban and rural cultures. The new social relations are associated with the new economy and with urban culture. The old social relations, on the other hand, are associated with rural culture

Bell (2006) notes characterisations of rurality using typical key words: 'isolated', 'remote', the landscape is 'wild' (or 'managed wild'), the life is 'simple' and 'rustic'. Farming dominates. There are 'fine vistas', 'peace and quiet', animals are present, 'traditional foods at the market', 'kids can roam free, climb trees, watch cows' (p.149). Rural pastimes include walking, bird-spotting, sight-seeing. This construction implies denial or erasure of something – the culture of the city, making the rural a place of exclusion. It is threatened, not just by the advance of the city, but also by the paradox of tourism (Rojek and Urry 1997)[10]. In addition (as discussed above) agribusiness threatens the idyll: mechanical farm machines and modern farming practices, intensive farming, electric fences, pesticides, anything which does not fit into the 'image'.

Bell presents the rural as a manufactured landscape, 'the product of a particular moral ordering or act of purification' (he attributes this idea to Sibley, 1995). An opposition is set up between purity and pollution, in which purity is the keeping pure of the countryside. From the perspective of its supporter, its creator, the disturbance of the rural idyll reveals the uncomfortable reality: that it is merely an inauthentic illusion, and therefore, un-idyllic.

Bell asks 'What is the rural idyll for?' What does he mean? Does it need to have a function? What is its imagined function? How does it reflect ideological motives? He gives several answers to his question. Firstly, it is a symbolic landscape. A whole host of imaginings, identifications and ideologies are projected onto. Secondly, it is a reminder of a past which has been ousted by the forces of modernity. Thirdly, it is a symbolic food-store for the nation. Fourthly, it is a place of romantic wilderness which allows people to get closer to nature. Fifthly, it is a restorative place, full of peace, where meditation and contemplation can take place.

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[10] As Rojek and Urry (1997) point out, one way in which tourism is paradoxical is that the gaze of the tourist transforms its object. Too many tourists spoil the purity of the place, which becomes less desirable as a result.

To whom does this idyll belong? This question is prompted by the ideological nature of the rural construction and implies ideas of exclusion and purity. The wish to avoid 'pollution' makes the idyll exclusionary; as Sibley (2006) shows, 'the language of "dirt"' (p.406) is habitually employed by the media as a metaphor with which to exclude unwanted others: 'Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers and New Age Travellers' (p.406). Bell describes the excluded as 'the rural abject'. These are people and things rendered 'other' than rural:

Rurality is very much connected to the past. The notion of the rural as an expression of nostalgia is well-established. Rurality retains traditions and practices handed down from tribal ancestors. The rural is a refuge from modern life (Short, 1991, cited in Woods, 2011, p.29). This idea is discussed by Raymond Williams (1973) in some depth, and forms a central component of his view that rurality and nostalgia are intimately linked in an 'elevator' to the past. Even the Romans, he argues, thought of the rural retreat as a form of escape from metropolitan life.

The English village is linked to tradition, opposed to the advance of modernity: it 'seems to be assumed that the English village lies on the side of tradition against modernity, with those two terms in opposition' (Matless, 1998, p.79). Of course, this raises a number of questions. What counts as tradition and what counts as modernity? How old does an aspect of rural culture have to be in order to be labelled as 'traditional', and therefore, it is assumed, worth preserving? In addition, to what extent is the wish to preserve merely a disguised version of the process of commodification? It can be argued that preservation is not carried out for the benefit of the agricultural economy, or of working practices, but so that the urban gaze can be satisfied that rural idyll conforms to its vision. On the other hand, as the ability of agriculture to sustain local economies wanes, the encouragement of tourism through reconstructing an idealised rurality is often seen as a viable alternative.

Space

Space is an area of intrinsic significance in the project of rural othering. The urban and the rural are conceived of as alternative spatial zones, each with a set of defining characteristics. Of the two zones, perhaps the rural is imagined more in terms of its space and its landscape. Halfacree asserts the pleonastic nature of the term 'rural space', since 'the concept "rural" is inherently spatial' (Halfacree, 2006,

p.44). From the outset, the association of the rural with the spatial is a significant aspect of its otherness.

Space is not fixed, but is a product of social practices. Foucault claims that 'The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far' (2002, p.229). This implies that space is culturally contingent. This (drawing on Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony) is also the premise of Lefebvre (1974/1999) according to whom, every society 'produces a space, its own space', which 'cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space', but as the result of inter-crossing social practices (p.31).

Locating the cultural contingency of space historically, Jakubowski asserts that 'Space has surpassed time as the dominant mode of cultural perception', drawing on Bachmann-Medick's exploration of the return of the spatial paradigm after the dominant mode of the Enlightenment which sought to favour time, with associated discourses of progress, and logocentrism favoured by colonialism and industrialisation (Jakubowski, 2010, p.18). Mitchell (1989) demonstrates the ideological separation of space and time as fundamental to the Enlightenment project. Space 'is regularly accompanied by a whole series of predictable values, opinions and prejudices'. It 'tends to represent "primitive" societies and cultural others as living outside time, in a realm of spatialized stasis' (Mitchell, 1989, p.93).

Space's social production is concealed and naturalised in a way that finds similarities in the construction of gender. It is done through the repetition of myriad social practices. It is 'not only a means of production but also a means of control, and hence of domination/power' (Lefebvre, 1943/1999, p.26). Capitalist society contains and assigns places for its members, dictating spatial categories and practices. It dictates who has access to spaces and when. Space is imaginary and real at the same time, rooted in material and economic forces. Space is "'real' in the sense in which concrete abstractions such as commodities and money are real'. (Lefebvre, 1974/1999, p.26-7). Capitalism seeks to use spatial control to reproduce social relations through hegemonic forces. Spatial arrangements play a significant role in the naturalisation of ideologies, 'Supporting a set of ideas and values, unquestioned

assumptions about the way society is, or should be organized' (Duncan and Duncan, 1988, p.123).

In literary terms, space is connected with the descriptive and is at odds with the very nature of narrative. Space in narrative, is illusion and therefore secondary: description is 'a mere auxiliary of narrative' (Genette, cited in Mitchell 1989, p.94). The natural context for spatial representation is in the visual arts, which represent space with space. In literature, spatial mimesis can therefore be regarded as a form of ekphrasis. So in this opposition between time and space, there exists 'a dominant sense of space as the Other, the negative realm which must be colonized under the banner of Time' (Mitchell, 1989. p. 94). Time and language belong to each other: the logocentrism of the Enlightenment is that which is encompassed by and dictated by linguistic and rational principles. The rural then is intrinsically other as a function of its implied spatiality. The representation of rural space in literature constitutes an inversion of the dominant logocentric ideology. The emergence of the novel as a dominant literary form (as a result of the very forces of logocentrism) and as an intrinsically temporal form contradicts its cultural imperatives by representing rurality. The othering of the rural in the novel is therefore a 'concentration' of othering.

The novel is temporal, (like music) rather than spatial (like painting). However, as Mitchell, (1989) asserts, ekphrasis allows the spatial to imitate the temporal and the temporal to imitate the spatial. In the novel, description is regarded as outside the narrative: it is static within the chronology of the fictive time, even while, as expressed through narrative it is created through the reader's time. Genette places description beneath narration in terms of literary value, though they are mutually interdependent. Description is 'the ever-necessary, ever submissive, never emancipated slave' to narration. (Genette, 1982, p.134).

From a constructivist perspective, assumptions regarding spatial ontology must be rejected. The human subject conceives of space as something 'inside' which they, along with other human subjects, exist. Space is a context within which action and movement can take place, within which events can occur. This conception involves the construction of a subject/object binary pair, which has implications for all spatial considerations, including the construction of spatially distinct urban and rural zones. The subject/object binary is ultimately incoherent, as will be demonstrated in the

following argument. If the subject exists within an independent, objective world, they can only experience that world by recreating a mental model from sensory experience.

It is assumed that the sensory experience derives from an external, objective world. However, this can only remain an assumption, since the mental model is the only thing the subject is able to experience, there being no direct access to any objective world. Furthermore, since, according to this conception, the model exists within the mind of the subject, it might be more reasonable to say that space resides within the subject/body, rather than the other way round. The subject/object dichotomy is thus self-refuting: the notion of subjects existing within space is demonstrably a construction. The mental model is constructed through the process of signification. The subject's sense of an external world, and of dimensionality, is thus another feature of this process.

This is important in terms of the conception of rural landscape, in that it explains how the idea of subject/object division plays a part in the analogous ascription of subjective and objective status to the urban and the rural respectively. The centrality of the city is an analogous extension of the notion of centrality of individual selves within a spatial model. As Foucault asserts: 'we do not live inside a void, inside of which we could place individuals and things […] we live inside a set of relations that delineate sites' (2002, p.231).

Two important considerations arise in discussing the characterisation of urban and rural spaces. Firstly, that of relation. This involves notions of centrality and marginality and the attachment of values, in the form of importance, power, relevance and presence itself. Within this, it is important to explore the mapping of the landscape, and the conceptualisation of the relationship between the physical map, the conceptual 'map' and the landscape itself. Secondly, a consideration of interaction between urban and rural is required. Spatially, where does the boundary lie between their edges? This consideration gives rise to questions about physical transgression of idealised space and how that leads to uncertainty, instability and fluidity of meaning. How do hybrid spaces fit into the binary scheme? Each of these considerations illuminates the process by which rurality is marked and made spatially other.

The relationship between centre and margin can firstly be considered as having analogy with the human bodily condition.

> The human body lies prone, or it is upright. Upright it has top and bottom, front and back, right and left. How are these bodily postures, divisions and values extrapolated into circumambient space? (Tuan, 1977. p.6).

The human subject's conception of the human body is powerfully analogous with other aspects of experience. Its power has underpinned functionalist theories about the nature of society. However, it is important to be conscious of the relationship between the conception of the body and its effects on conceptions of space. The human body itself provides a template for, or underpins the perception of and experience of space. This has the effect of determining a symbolic analogy, by which the human subject identifies with the city, whereas the rural is identified with that which lies outside the body. The city is the self, the rural is the other. To develop Tuan's point, if 'place' is the urban, 'space' is the rural.

The human being experiences itself as a subject and space is that within which the human being acts. Space is defined and characterised in terms of its relation to the human subject. The human is in this sense, the centre. The city, town, settlement or home is an extension of this, and the human being therefore, identifies with the city. The city has been created by human beings for their use, and it is where they congregate, and so an expression and extension of human physicality. Like the body, it comprises of many different 'organs' and components, centres and margins. As with the human subject, the many components of the urban centre are unified. The human and the city are given names which unify them at the same time as distinguishing them from that which is other. Just as the human subject is embodied within the context of a nameless spatial continuum, so by analogy, the urban is embodied in the context of a nameless rural continuum.

Another aspect of the conceptualisation of space which Tuan considers is the use of prepositions. Their deployment is informed by the values attached to the objects being signified. Thus, to use Tuan's example, we would say that 'the book is on the table', rather than 'the table is under the book' (1977, p.45). The location of a settlement may be determined by its proximity to another settlement. Thus a hierarchy of importance is established. Rural locations are often indicated by their

proximity to a named settlement, which therefore occupies a higher rung of this particular hierarchy. So a hierarchical spectrum is established, with large cities at one end and the nameless, rural space at the other.

Alternatively, rural places are denoted by their position 'in' a defined political boundary, such as, in the case of England, a county. A location might be described (somewhat paradoxically) as 'out in' the countryside. Most regions have within them a town or city (a county town, perhaps). On the map at least, it is like the nucleus of the cell, the vital and controlling centre. Rural places are thus defined by how far they are from urban centres. The idea of distance is closely connected with the deployment of pronouns. That which is here is 'this'; that which is further away is 'that'. The identification is, generally speaking with the object in close proximity and also with the people in close proximity. Hence, 'this' and 'that' approximate with 'we' and 'they': distance is a factor in identifying people as being the same or 'other'. Thus, the very building blocks of language used to express rural positionality, create an inclination towards the othering of rurality.

Tuan asserts that 'The prestige of the centre is well established. People everywhere tend to regard their homeland as "the middle place", or the centre of the world' (1977, p.38). If those people are in the majority, or if they have access to the necessary channels of communication, then a view of the world with them at the centre is most likely to be distributed throughout society. When nineteenth-century urban dwellers become the majority of the population in Great Britain, their worldview pervaded society. This worldview incorporated their 'egocentric' understanding of their place in relation that of rurality, which they now recognised as other. This worldview was expressed in the form of representations of urban and rural differences.

Mingay suggests that 'Each generation of country dwellers and observers sees what it wants to see in the land: romantic beauty, nostalgic traces of the rustic past, peace, tranquillity, despoiled landscapes, brutal intrusions of modernization, hurry, noise, pollution' (1989, p.6). This may be, as Bell claims, how 'the rural morphs to fit new times' (2006, p.150). On the other hand, it is interesting how Mingay implicitly assumes the pre-existence of 'the land' onto which rurality is projected.

Woods claims that assertions about the urbanisation of the countryside are hence based on subjective characterisations of the urban and rural. They do however, point to the empirically demonstrable fact that rural localities today are tied into networks centred on urban sites of economic, political and cultural power, and this extends to discursive representations of the rural (Woods p.44). This is a questionable approach; it implies that this is a trend which has come about recently. However, this is due to a confusion between the idea of urban as 'centre' and urban as 'zone'.

Spatially, it makes little sense to describe the rural as objectively marginal, since this assertion belies conceptions of spatial hierarchies which are obviously culturally constructed. In measurable terms, the rural is only marginal in an economic and political sense. This is a state of affairs that has existed for a very long time, and underlies the whole idea that the urban/rural binary has existed for the same very long time. The urban/rural as a binary of special zones is a more modern invention and coincides with the rise of a predominantly urban population and a massive expansion of urban landscapes separated from each other by rural inter-zones and each bearing sufficient similarity for there to be at least a family resemblance allowing different urban zones to be categorised together.

Only with a pre-existing notion of urban space as a type of extended physical landscape can notions of a 'hybrid' space ensue, in the form of parks, garden cities and gated communities. The same is true for other types of hybrid or semi-rural (or 'peri-urban') zones, which bear physical resemblance to rural settings, but which operate economically, socially and culturally as urban or suburban zones.

Another consideration of rural space is the significance of the boundaries between urban and rural. Developing his theory regarding the link between bodily orientation and space, Tuan asks whether the city, like the body has a front and back, representing the sacred and profane, respectively. Houses and other buildings usually have a front: front doors, and front rooms for the accepting and entertaining of guests. The preindustrial city had walls and gates, internal gates with triumphal arches, processional streets for accepting important visitors. The modern urban area has less obvious 'sides', their orientations, spaces, structures and conduits are created more through practical and economic reasons than symbolic or visual ones:

'The width and appearance of the highway (landscaped or lined with giant posters) tell the motorist that he is entering the city by the front door' (1977, p.42).

In terms of an implied relationship with the rural hinterland, it could be argued that the mediaeval city, with its relative small size, dependence on the products of agriculture, ever vigilant to the dangers lurking beyond its fortified walls, was outward-looking, and felt itself to be contextualised by its position in the landscape. The modern city by contrast, is indifferent to the rural hinterland. It does not depend on it economically. It survives through connection with the broader, more distant commercial, industrial and financial networks; the rural, if considered at all, is a place for leisure, for spare time (as opposed to crucial or important time).

Maps

'Space' is more abstract than 'place'. What begins as undifferentiated space become place as we get to know it better and endow it with value' (Tuan, 1977, p.6). As Tuan acknowledges, place carries value. Tuan distinguishes between experiential and conceptual knowledge. In terms of its application to space, he describes experiential knowledge as that which is acquire through direct sensory experience, by living within a particular space. Conceptual knowledge is that which is derived through geographical understanding – an awareness of space through for example, the study of maps. It would be wrong to assume that value is imposed on space (resulting in 'place') only as a consequence of the acquisition of the former category of knowledge. Value is derived not just from a conscious belief that a location is positive or well-liked place, but also from the very awareness of its presence, of its existence. In terms of mapping, the map or atlas, really only features that which is conceived of as in some sense present, and is really a record of those things which are thought to have presence and therefore value. This view is in accordance with Tuan's observation that 'Objects and places are centres of value…The particular things we value may be given names…People have proper names… (1977, p.18). Like people, settlements have names, in the form of proper nouns, identifying their uniqueness. In this way the settlement corresponds to the person, the rural to the surroundings.

A further useful tool in explaining rural othering is Tuan's threefold notion of spatial experience. The three special categories which comprise spatial experience are

defined in terms of the subject's relationship to the space. Tuan labels these the mythical, the pragmatic and the conceptual. The mythical experience requires a practical involvement in the space, and a knowledge of what happens in the space. He gives the example of the experience of planting crops. Pragmatic space is experienced through a more conceptual knowledge, perhaps a second-order understanding which contextualises the space. The example, following on with the same theme, is applying knowledge of soil types in order to achieve a practical end (in this example, growing crops).

Conceptual experience is a further abstraction of this, in which a symbolic, cartographical awareness of soil geography is expressed. The three overlapping principles could be envisaged as a linear spectrum, with the mythical and experiential at one end and the conceptual and abstract at the other. This provides a useful perspective for understanding rural othering, for it appears to correspond with a mythic dynamic at the heart of Western culture, namely the Enlightenment project. This incorporates the cultural narrative of a progression from a natural, simple relationship with the world to one in which abstraction and reasoned awareness allow a mastery over space. The Enlightenment is the age in which reason, and the practices of exploration and the mapping of experience reach a point of dominance within Western culture. The city and the awareness of distinction between urban and rural spheres is associated by analogy very strongly with the product of the Enlightenment, with Enlightenment culture and the products of reason and the scientific, industrial age. The rural is the pre-existing culture into which that brilliant endeavour flashed. So, the connection between abstract mapping and urban culture is clear, along with the connection between the rural and the notion of experiential sense of space. The mapping of urban and rural is then, an urban endeavour. The urban map, encapsulates rurality in its own terms. The urban approach applies scientific method and understanding to 'master' and encapsulate the rural, just as the West has done, by analogy, with its colonised dominions. Rural spaces are not experienced, but are points on the map which are objectified and abstracted. The rural is that which is encountered conceptually. When the rural is encountered it is by travellers, explorers who use the map as their reference point. They encounter the rural experientially, and their experiences are encountered vicariously by the armchair tourists.

Furthermore the rural, in terms of its presence on the map, is really just a continuum of space – extension with no value. The map only records 'place' features which, in Tuan's terms, have value. The features are mostly manmade: roads, railways, canals. By implication, these are extensions of the cities towns and settlement, connections between them, and important for that reason. Other topographical features which are either not man-made, or are perceived to be not man-made: woods and forests, rivers and lakes, hills and valleys defined by contour lines. These are recorded on the map because they are hazards, impediments to travel.

Conclusion

The notion of a rural idyll appears to suggest that rurality is constructed as an aspiration category, a sphere of meaning carrying connotations of nationalism, nostalgia and desire. However, the very act of constructing rurality is a form of objectification, riven with stereotypical features. The idea of a coherent rurality, with a particular set of defining characteristics is perpetuated through the media. This coherent view presents rurality as an undifferentiated, idyllic whole, rather than a body made up of a heterogeneous and diverse set of locations, meanings and practices. This is in contradistinction to the idea of the urban as being comprised of unique entities. The constructed coherence of the rural idyll is linked to negative ideas of exclusion and homogeneity. In addition, the existence of the rural idyll, is not so much an elevation, as a means by which domination and control can be imagined, through judgement and objectification. This finds parallels with idealised conceptions of femininity visible within patriarchal cultures. The idyll represents the way the rural ought to be, in the same way that femininity presents an idealised form against which women are judged. The anti-idyll, also a necessary aspect of rural othering, signifies a repository for negative othering, by which urban identity distances itself from the rural as it objectifies. Idyll and anti-idyll are therefore mutually sustaining, rather than antagonistic aspects of rural othering.

The association of rurality with nature means that aspects of natural meaning are also closely connected with the meaning of rurality. The application of Bakhtin's concept of grotesque realism reveals how the rural is associated with transgressions of bodily unity and stability: cycles of life, the materiality of the body and the ephemerality of life. These notions associate rurality with the fact of death and are at

odds with the dominant ideology of Christian spirituality, and Romantic ideas of the sublime. Although this should mean that it is aligned with Enlightenment ideas of rational materialism, rurality remains the object upon which the rational can subject its gaze, rather than being the origin itself of rational concepts. This is because the rural, as home to nature, is situated in opposition to civilised rationality. In Chapter 5, these conceptions of nature are used to explore rural othering in *Wuthering Heights*.

The differentiation of rural culture creates a sense of is social separation, and therefore of the possibility of social transgression. This is due to the rural association with the past, the flip-side of the coin, on the other side of which is rural nostalgia. Rurality, as a sphere of stasis, is associated with outdated social practices in the face of an ideological drive for progress, modernity and change. In addition, the marginality of the rural, or the perception of rurality as beyond the reach of centralised forms of social control, means that outdated, illegal and perverse practices can flourish beyond the reach of authority, perhaps substituting forms of surveillance and control to police its own alternative set of values. These values may be informed by the lived experience of rural dwellers in terms of their close proximity to nature. Chapter 6 picks up this theme; it deals with the possibility of differentiation between urban and rural cultures in *Wuthering Heights,* and focuses in particular upon patterns of speech as markers of difference.

The marginality of the rural and its separation from the centre is an aspect of the means by which rurality is made other through conceptions of space. The naturalisation of space conceived of as an abstract void, conceals its construction through ideology and practices. The abstraction of space is related to its commodification and is linked to the rational, the capitalistic, and the forces of industrialisation. This means that the abstraction of space is related to urbanisation and the emergence of the urban/rural binary. It also means that the construction of space is ideological. The relationship of city-space to rural-space is analogous to the relationship of the individual to the world – self and other. The conception of the self is also a product of the socio-political changes of the Enlightenment, industrialisation, the rise of capitalism and urbanisation. Chapter 7 explores the presentation of rural space in *Wuthering Heights*, especially the effect of space as landscape and within the novel and its wider cultural influence.

Chapter 4: Approaching *Wuthering Heights*

Introduction

This chapter introduces the case study which comprises chapters five, six and seven. It begins with a description and justification of my research methodology, followed by a précis of *Wuthering Heights* and finally a review of some of the most influential critical responses to Emily Brontë's novel.

Methodology

The methodology for this research involves the application of critical interpretation and analysis to a literary case study. The starting point for my enquiry was to derive insights into the urban/rural dichotomy. From the outset it seemed clear that notions of dichotomy are grounded in the meaning of the terms themselves, Following this understanding, the urban and the rural are not so much physical zones, qualities or essences, but aspects of signification. The method that suggested itself therefore, was one of critical discourse analysis. It follows Fairclough's approach to this method in that it focusses on how discourses act upon the world and with

> the relationship between language, the subject and social processes, viewing
> the subject as capable of influencing perceptions of the world, and thus of
> changing things through his or her use of language.(Griffin, 2013, p.98).

This entails the view that language is not a neutral medium for conveying facts but participates in constructing perceptions and understandings of the world. Secondly, it approaches linguistic discourse as reflective, reproductive and creative in relation to wider culture. In addition, it applies the notion that cultural constructions are historically situated, contingent and subject to change, rather than universal, inevitable or essential structural features of the world. Finally, it entails the understanding that language is bound up with values and hierarchies that constitute culture.

In applying this perspective, I hoped to gain understandings of the construction of rurality by drawing on an awareness of how the urban/rural dichotomy is given shape through language. This awareness involves viewing the construction of the

urban/rural dichotomy in relation to other cultural constructions, identifying the specific historical cultural locations of urban/rural constructions, and examining the ways in which discursive conventions in relation to the urban and the rural are naturalised, embodying relationships of power.

The method I applied was to focus on the ways in which meaning is ascribed to rurality, with particular attention given to naturalised constructions expressive of power relations. This involved looking for lexical, grammatical and semantic textual patterns, and identifying features which are particularly relevant to and revealing of rural construction.

The next step was to select texts for critical analysis. I had in mind at this stage, an intertextual Foucauldian approach, in which 'the first step is to collect a wide range of texts that are relevant in some way to the research question in hand' (Rose, 2013, p.84). I originally considered collecting and recording multiple instances of the replication of urban/rural binaries. This involved surveying a range of sources in order to build up a large body of material to which the analysis could be applied. I included contemporary media sources, such as fictional representations in film, television and theatre, as well as novels, poetry and printed text. I was also interested in non-fiction media, such as journalistic sources, including television, radio and newspaper reports and magazine articles, documentaries, biography and memoir. Additionally, I considered visual arts, including fine art, illustration and design.

After an initial survey of such sources, it soon became clear that it would be possible to build up an enormous quantity of relevant items. This seemed as if it might provide an excellent method for gaining an understanding of the presence of the urban and the rural throughout culture.

However, these methods also created a number of obstacles. Firstly, it was rather unwieldy. The body of evidence was so large that to present it within a single thesis would fail to do it justice. Secondly, the act of exhaustively gathering every replication of urban rural dichotomy seemed likely to become an all-consuming endeavour. In terms of providing new insights, it appeared that this would provide diminishing returns: each new source would become merely another iteration of the same phenomenon, without shedding any new light on the central questions. Thirdly,

for each source, it was clear that the most profound understandings could be obtained by applying close textual analysis; even relatively short extracts began to yield lengthy critical responses. It appeared that deriving a worthwhile depth of meaning from such a large set of sources would not be possible within a single thesis.

It would therefore be necessary to limit the study of sources in some way. I chose to confine my research to a specific medium: literary texts. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, as my ideas emerged during the research, I began to construct the idea of applying a critical reading which demonstrated the assumption of an urban/rural binary. I ascertained that this assumption was part of a wider tendency which might be observed in all manner of cultural artefacts. In applying this reading to one form of text, it was evident that this could be applied to other forms. It seemed unnecessary to demonstrate the possibility of further application by example. Secondly, my attention was held by questions regarding the historical emergence of an urban/rural dichotomy. I wanted to contend the notion of its universality. Therefore, I felt that in order to understand the emergence and development of the dichotomy it was unnecessary to extend my research to contemporary sources. This meant shifting my focus away from electronic media sources and towards forms that have historical precedent. I felt that literature would provide a fertile area for analysis.

My research suggested to me that gaining an understanding of the meaning of industrialisation and urbanisation in Britain was key to understanding the meanings of the urban and the rural. Therefore, I began selecting literary sources from the nineteenth century, the period during which these events were giving rise to momentous cultural changes. I also looked at contemporary literature dealing with rural themes, in order to explore the development of rural constructions.

Although this comparative avenue is not without merit, I rejected it for a number of reasons. Firstly, the comparative approach may have yielded answers to questions about the continuity or the endurance of urban/rural dichotomies, but this consideration was in itself a somewhat restrictive approach that did not seem to justify focussing on a number of texts. Secondly, before embarking upon a full comparative study of rural construction in different historical periods, it seemed that

there was much work to be done in looking at the shape of rural construction *per se.* Thirdly, as my research progressed, and the notion of applying a rural reading strategy emerged, it seemed that the most productive approach would be to focus my critical analysis on a single text in order to test the usefulness of such an undertaking. Attaching the term 'case study' to my approach helped clarify the purpose: 'Some of us emphasize the name *case study* because it draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the single case' (Stake, 2000, p.435). My focus was not merely on what could be learned about the text, but also on what the text could reveal about the urban/rural dichotomy.

I chose to study a novel, rather than other literary forms, such as poetry because novels are themselves 'industrial' forms, which became available, popular and widely read as a result of the advent of industrial scale printing distribution and infrastructure, and the growth of urban consumers. It seemed possible therefore (though not inevitable) that a novel would be imbued with the culture of urban/rural separation. Fairclough points out that discursive power is not historically constant, but variable:

> Discourse in modern as opposed to pre-modern societies is characterised by having the distinctive and more important role in the constitution and reproduction of power relations and social identities which this entails (Fairclough, 2010, p.97).

The novel could therefore be regarded as genre which emerged at a time when the role of discourse as a vector for the exercise of power was growing.

I considered various nineteenth century texts containing portrayals of rural life, including the works of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and Mary Webb, each of which might have proved to be valuable sources. Although I did not consider *Wuthering Heights* to be a uniquely suitable text for application of rural readings (in fact the possibility of applying such readings to other texts is promoted in this thesis) it is nevertheless particularly suitable as a starting point for this endeavour. The main reasons for this are as follows. Firstly, its setting is entirely rural and therefore it gives extensive scope for an analysis of rural construction. Secondly, it was written and first published during a particularly crucial point in the nineteenth century: 1845-47. The 1851 census indicates that the tipping point at which Britain became a

predominantly urban society had been reached. It therefore seemed possible that constructions of urban and rural difference might be emergent within *Wuthering Heights*, and that this would provide additional scope for considering its significance. By the time that, for example Eliot published her first novel (*Adam Bede*, in 1859[11]) or Hardy published the first of the 'Wessex' novels (*Far from the Madding Crowd*, in 1874[12]) nineteenth-century constructions of rurality are likely to have been more developed and established. Thirdly, *Wuthering Heights* is itself an historical novel: the earliest point described in the narrative is 1771 (with the arrival of Heathcliff at Wuthering Heights), seventy six years before the novel was first published. The latest point is 1803 (with the marriage of Hareton and Cathy). This feature of the novel provided for the possibility that its analysis would yield understandings of rurality bound up in the socio-cultural changes in the mid-nineteenth century and also perceptions of socio-cultural conditions at the end of the previous century. Fourthly, the fame, popularity and familiarity of *Wuthering Heights* are such that its influence in the creation and reproduction of rural meaning might be particularly significant. This influence was evident by the later nineteenth century when a Brontë 'industry' began to emerge around the works of the Brontë sisters[13].

A précis of *Wuthering Heights*

Wuthering Heights begins with the arrival of Lockwood at the eponymous house in 1801, some forty six years before the date the novel was first published and seventeen years before Emily Brontë's birth. It might therefore be considered a work of historical fiction. The described events take place entirely in rural upland Yorkshire and concern the affairs of two neighbouring households: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The action is narrated by Lockwood, a metropolitan gentleman seeking temporary escape from city living, in the style of a journal or diary. Sometimes, Lockwood describes events he has directly experienced. Most of the novel, however, is in the form of his retrospective transcription of the narratives of other characters, chiefly Nelly Dean, the housekeeper at Wuthering Heights and later Thrushcross Grange.

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[11] The date is given in Ousby (1993, p. 294).
[12] *Ibid*., p.409.
[13] The creation of a 'Brontë industry' is explored by Barnard (2002).

In the opening chapters, Lockwood arrives at Wuthering Heights as the prospective new tenant of Thrushcross Grange, and is met by Heathcliff, the saturnine and taciturn owner of both properties. Lockwood finds the culture of Wuthering Heights and its inhabitants to be disagreeably removed from that to which he is accustomed. A contrast between the warmth and comfort of Thrushcross Grange and the cold bleakness of Wuthering Heights is established. Nevertheless, Lockwood makes a second journey to visit Wuthering Heights by foot the following day. He meets a number of characters: Joseph the aged servant, whose Yorkshire dialect makes his speech difficult to comprehend; the younger Catherine, recently widowed wife of Heathcliff's son Linton; Hareton the son of Hindley Earnshaw and his wife Frances. Lockwood takes offence at the uncivil treatment he receives and demands to be guided back to Thrushcross Grange. This request is refused and Lockwood attempts to make his own way back, despite the onset of snow. He seizes a lantern, and Joseph prevents this by setting the dogs on him, at which he is persuaded to remain at Wuthering Heights for the night.

Lockwood stays in a panelled bedroom and comes across Catherine Earnshaw's diary, written a quarter of a century earlier. It relates Heathcliff's harsh treatment at the hands of Hindley Earnshaw, Catherine's elder brother. When he sleeps, Lockwood experiences a terrifying nightmare, featuring Catherine's ghost. In the dream, unable to open the window to let her in, he breaks it. However, she grabs his hand and in order to free himself from her grasp, he grinds her wrist onto the broken glass. He awakes and Heathcliff enters, alarmed by his cries. Heathcliff reacts emotionally to Lockwood's account of his dream. The next morning, Lockwood returns to Thrushcross Grange.

His curiosity aroused, Lockwood asks the housekeeper of Thrushcross Grange, Nelly Dean, to relate Heathcliff's history. So begins her narrative, which throughout the novel is framed by Lockwood's own narrative. She tells of Heathcliff's arrival at Wuthering Heights as an infant, found by Mr Earnshaw during a trip to Liverpool in 1771, when Catherine is six and Hindley fourteen. Nelly tells of the inseparable bond that is established between Heathcliff and Catherine during these early years. This contrasts with the conflict Heathcliff encounters with Hindley and Joseph. Hindley is sent away to college and Mr Earnshaw dies in 1777.

Hindley returns with his new wife Frances, to whom he has become secretly wed. As head of the household, he curtails Heathcliff's education with the curate, forcing him to carry out farm labour instead. Nelly tells of how, in high spirits and curiosity, Heathcliff and Catherine escape one night to spy on the Linton's, the occupants of Thrushcross Grange. They observe young Edgar and Isabella quarrelling over a small dog. However, the two spies are caught and set upon by dogs. Catherine, once she is recognised has her bitten ankle bathed, but the foul-mouthed Heathcliff is sent back to Wuthering Heights alone.

Catherine remains at Thrushcross Grange for five weeks, and by the time she arrives back at Wuthering Heights, it is Christmas Eve. Catherine's time at the Grange has affected her disposition: she has become more lady-like and refined. This contrasts markedly with the condition of Heathcliff, whose neglect has resulted in his becoming more rough and uncivilised. He feels the contrast deeply. Catherine is accompanied by Isabella and Edgar. In response to a slight from the latter, Heathcliff assaults him with a tureen of apple sauce and is flogged and locked in his room. He vows revenge on Hindley for his brutal treatment.

In June 1778, Hindley's wife Frances gives birth to a son, Hareton, but she dies some months later. Hindley's command over Wuthering Heights becomes increasingly chaotic, and most of the servants leave. Heathcliff continues to be treated with a mixture of brutality and neglect. By 1780, the fifteen year-old Catherine is courted by Edgar Linton. At the same time, she becomes increasingly distant from Heathcliff, whose misery is therefore compounded.

The debauched Hindley arrives home drunk. He threatens Nelly Dean with a knife, and proceeds to dangle his infant son Hareton over a banister. Distracted by the arrival of Heathcliff, Hindley drops Hareton. Heathcliff catches him and Nelly delivers him away from danger and into the kitchen. Here she meets Catherine, who tells of her intention to marry Edgar, even though her true love is Heathcliff. The treason is that Hindley's neglect and brutality towards Heathcliff have degraded him. Nelly notices that Heathcliff has been secretly listening to the conversation, and she sees him leave. He fails to return when called for supper, and Catherine fruitlessly searches the moors for him, despite a violent thunder storm. This results in her contracting a fever. She is sent to Thrushcross Grange to recuperate, but old Mr and

Mrs Linton, Edgar and Isabella's parents, catch the fever and they both die. Heathcliff does not return for three years and in the meantime, Catherine marries Edgar.

A break in Nelly's narrative marks the period between Heathcliff's disappearance and return (during which Lockwood endures four week's illness, and Heathcliff shows kindness towards him by presenting a brace of grouse). Heathcliff returns to Wuthering Heights in 1783, much to Catherine's delight and Edgar's chagrin, and settles back in without incident at first. Isabella reveals her infatuation with Heathcliff and Catherine scornfully relays this to Heathcliff, who appears to dismiss it.

Nelly visits Wuthering Heights out of concern for Hindley. She meets Hareton and finds that he has been transformed into a blaspheming lout, under the influence of Heathcliff, who sees this as part of his revenge over his former oppressor. Nelly departs when Heathcliff appears. Later, during a visit by Heathcliff to the Grange, Nelly observes him embracing Isabella. She informs Catherine of this and a row ensues between Catherine and Heathcliff and subsequently, between Heathcliff and Edgar, during which the latter lashes out with uncharacteristic violence before making a hasty escape. Catherine, torn by conflicting passions, locks herself in her room.

Catherine remains in her room for three days and emerges in a state of feverish delirium, obsessing about Heathcliff and events from her childhood. She reveals her true feelings about her passionless marriage to Edgar Linton and how she has betrayed her love for Heathcliff. Meanwhile, Isabella has eloped with Heathcliff.

Tended by the dutiful Edgar, Catherine recovers slowly. It is revealed that she is pregnant. Nelly receives a letter from Isabella (this is read out directly to Lockwood) painting a bleak and miserable picture of married life at Wuthering Heights. The house is dirty and unkempt, its inhabitants even more so. The refined Isabella is out of place here; the servant Joseph especially pours scorn on her manners and speech.

Edgar permits Nelly to visit Wuthering Heights, but instruct her that no communication should pass between the two households. She finds that Isabella's letter had described the state of Wuthering heights accurately, and that Isabella

herself is looking rather down-at-heel. Only Heathcliff appears gentlemanly in his dress. On learning of Catherine's illness, he persuades Nelly to assist him in seeing her, and gives her a letter as a precursor to this.

Nelly gives the letter to Catherine four days later, while the family are out at church. Moments later, Heathcliff arrives unannounced and clasps Catherine to himself, driven to a fit of distraught intensity by the sight of her wasted body. She believes that she is soon to die, and expresses her greatest anguish to be the separation this will bring between herself and Heathcliff. Nevertheless, she blames him for their plight. She clings to Heathcliff, despite Edgar's return. She faint into the latter's arms and Heathcliff leaves.

Catherine dies giving birth to a daughter, the second Catherine. Nelly observes Heathcliff's inconsolable agony. She leaves open the death chamber window, so that before the funeral takes place, Heathcliff is able to enter and see her one last time. He discards a lock of Edgar's hair from a locket around Catherine's neck, substituting it with his own, but when he leaves, Nelly replaces the hair, intertwining it with Heathcliff's. Catherine is buried in a spot on the edge of the churchyard where the wild moorland encroaches, away from both Lintons and Earnshaws.

One stormy evening, while Nelly is nursing the infant Cathy at Thrushcross Grange, a drenched Isabella enters, having escaped from Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights. She relates to Nelly events from before and after the funeral. Hindley was unable to attend the funeral due to drinking heavily, so he and Isabella stayed at home. When Heathcliff returned, Hindley decided to lock him out and intended to kill him when he tried to break in. Isabella warned Heathcliff, who instead injured Hindley and proceeded to beat him unconscious. The next morning Isabella escaped after goading Heathcliff into throwing a knife at her. After telling this tale Isabella flees to London in order to avoid recapture by Heathcliff. A few months later, she gives birth to Heathcliff's son, Linton. Meanwhile Hindley dies. It transpires that Hindley was indebted to Heathcliff, so Wuthering Heights passes to his ownership instead of to Hareton, Hindley's son.

Twelve years pass. In 1797 Edgar travels to visit his sister Isabella, who is dying, leaving the sheltered Cathy under Nelly's care. Against Nelly's wishes, Cathy takes her pony and visits Penistone Crags, which lie five and a half miles away, beyond

Wuthering Heights. On discovering her charge's absence, Nelly follows and finds that Cathy has stopped off at Wuthering Heights and befriended Hareton, who has accompanied her to the Crags (Heathcliff and Joseph are away). Nelly confronts Cathy angrily, and in the ensuing argument the latter learns that Hareton is her cousin. Cathy agrees not to tell her father of the incident.

Isabella has died and Edgar brings Linton Heathcliff home with him. He is a weakling, both physically and temperamentally. Heathcliff sends Joseph to the Grange to demand that Linton be taken back to Wuthering Heights. Since Heathcliff is Linton's father, this demand has to be obeyed.

Linton knows nothing about the existence of his father. Heathcliff is appalled at his son's sickly and effeminate traits, but sees in him the possibility of triumph in establishing his own legacy over those of the Earnshaws and Lintons.

Two years pass. On Cathy's sixteenth birthday she is allowed to go and observe grouse on the moor with Nelly. They encounter Heathcliff and Hareton. Cathy is invited to Wuthering Heights, where she is reacquainted with Linton, now fifteen. He reveals to her that there is an ancient feud between her father, Edgar and her uncle, Heathcliff. Heathcliff tells Nelly that it is his intention to have Linton and Cathy married, in order that he can secure Thrushcross Grange for himself, alongside Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff revels in the brutishness of Hareton, which he himself has induced, while denigrating the qualities of his own son. Linton and Cathy mock Hareton for being unable to read the inscription above the door of Wuthering Heights, which is that of his long-dead namesake. On returning home, Cathy tells her father of the visit. He is displeased and warns her against associating with the rough and brutal people of Wuthering Heights. Some weeks later, however, Nelly discovers a cache of love letters sent from Linton to Cathy. A milk-boy has acted as a go-between. Nelly sends her own letter, requesting that Linton desist from such communication. She promises to conceal her discovery from Edgar if Cathy promises to burn the letters and send no more.

After harvest time, Edgar falls ill and because Cathy is visibly concerned about her father Nelly agrees to walk with her in the park. Cathy climbs the wall to gather rosehips but cannot climb back. At that moment, Heathcliff rides up on his horse, and, despite Nelly's protestations, informs Cathy that Linton is dying of his

unrequited love for her. He begs Cathy to visit Linton. Because she sees that Cathy is so worried, Nelly agrees to accompany her there.

They arrive at Wuthering Heights the next day to find Heathcliff absent and the servants neglectful of Linton, who appears to be ill. He and Cathy quarrel and he falls into a fit of severe (and according to Nelly, exaggerated) coughing. On the journey back, Nelly's feet become soaked and she catches a chill and is confined to bed for three weeks. Cathy looks after both Nelly and Edgar, but secretly makes evening journeys to visit Linton, despite having promised not to return.

On three evenings during Nelly's convalescence, Cathy obeys her request to read to her, but does so grudgingly. On the third evening, Cathy goes missing and on her eventual return is pressed into admitting that she has been visiting Linton at Wuthering Heights. She describes Linton's challenging temperament and Hareton's illiteracy. Nelly finally tells Edgar about his daughter's transgressions and he forbids her from visiting Wuthering Heights in future, but allows her to write and also to invite Linton to visit Thrushcross Grange.

Some months pass. Linton and Edgar have been exchanging letters, in which the former, egged-on by his father, Heathcliff begs to see Cathy. As Edgar's health deteriorates and he senses his impending mortality, he frets about Cathy's future after his death, seeing a marriage to Linton as some kind of security. He is unaware that Linton's own poor health will not guarantee a long life supporting Cathy. He therefore agrees to allow them to meet (on the moor and supervised by Nelly).

Nelly and Catherine set out to meet Linton at the guide-stone between Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights. However, they are met instead by a young boy with a message that they should meet Linton at a different point, less than a quarter of a mile from Wuthering Heights. They are shocked to see how weak Linton looks. He is unenthusiastic about the meeting and is clearly acting under Heathcliff's instructions.

Meanwhile, Edgar's health continues to decline. Nevertheless, Cathy continues to meet Linton, who appears to be constrained by fear into acting out his role in Heathcliff's plot to take control of the Grange. On one particular visit, Heathcliff asks after Edgar's health, purely, it seems, because he is afraid that Linton will die first, thus scuppering his plans. Heathcliff takes Cathy and Nelly prisoner at Wuthering

Heights, and forces her to marry his son. He whisks her off for this purpose, leaving Nelly trapped at Wuthering Heights for four days.

When she is finally released, Zillah the housekeeper tells her that everyone believes her to be drowned in the marsh. Cathy, now married to Linton, is not allowed to return to Thrushcross Grange to see her dying father. Nelly sends some men to rescue Cathy, but they are unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Cathy does escape through her own devices (through the same window that played a part in Lockwood's nightmare) just in time to see her father die. Linton Heathcliff now owns Thrushcross Grange and through him, Heathcliff controls the whole of the Earnshaw-Linton Estate.

After Edgar's funeral, Heathcliff reveals to Nelly that he bribed the sexton to open Catherine's coffin, so that he could look upon her face, and told him to remove the side of it, together with that of his own coffin (when he finally dies) so that, side-by-side, they can be physically joined in death. This recalls the incident after Catherine's funeral when Heathcliff tries to open the coffin and begs Catherine to haunt him eternally. It sheds light on his frame of mind when he was locked out of the house and Hindley attempts to murder him.

Eventually, Nelly hears from Zilla that Linton is dead. Hareton's attempts to befriend Cathy at this difficult time are rejected. This happened only six weeks before the present time, and Nelly has no more direct knowledge of events. Her narrative ends at this point and is replaced by that of Lockwood himself.

Lockwood goes to Wuthering Heights with a note from Nelly to Cathy. He observes the relationship between Cathy and Hareton: she scorns him for his illiteracy and he is moved to frustrated anger. Heathcliff invites Lockwood to stay for dinner. It is noted that Heathcliff is haunted by Hareton's likeness to Catherine.

Eight months pass, during which time Lockwood has been in London. It is 1802. While visiting a friend in the North, Lockwood finds himself close to Gimmerton and so stays the night at Thrushcross Grange. He learns that Nelly is now living back at Wuthering Heights, and walks over there. On his arrival he is greeted by a warm and tranquil scene: flowers bloom in the garden among the fruit trees; windows are open and a fire is in the hearth. Cathy is giving Hareton a reading lesson. Nelly explains that Heathcliff died three months previously.

The event leading up to this are as follows. The friendship between Hareton and Cathy has been building. Hareton, in order to please her, uproots Joseph's blackcurrant bushes to make room for flowers. This causes a violent argument during which Cathy accuses Heathcliff of stealing her own and Hareton's inheritances. Heathcliff is unable to sustain his anger: both Cathy and Hareton have Catherine's eyes, and Heathcliff cannot bear to look at them. Heathcliff reveals to Nelly that his desire for revenge has been assuaged. He identifies with Hareton, who seems like a version of his own younger self. It appears that Heathcliff longs for the time when he will be united with his love, but his robust health keeps him from death. He remains aloof from company, appears not to eat or sleep, and yet seems strangely joyful. Nelly sends for Dr Kenneth, but Heathcliff refuses to see him. She eventually finds Heathcliff dead next to his open window after a night of rain. Heathcliff is buried next to Catherine and Edgar.

It is revealed that country folk claim to have sighted the ghosts of Heathcliff and Catherine. Joseph sees them regularly and a shepherd boy has seen them on the hill. Cathy and Hareton are to be married on New Year's day 1803 and will live at Thrushcross Grange, along with Nelly. Joseph will manage Wuthering Heights.

A summary of the critical history of Wuthering Heights

There follows a review of critical responses to *Wuthering Heights*. The novel's fame, popularity and influence, together with its entrenched status as a stalwart of the English literary canon is such that it is impossible to include everything that has been written about it. This review makes reference to particularly influential criticism, and is arranged thematically. It begins with Victorian responses and gives special weight to them, since these are particularly relevant to the consideration of social attitudes during the development of urban/rural construction. The further approaches outlined are twentieth century humanism, formalism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism and postcolonialism.

Victorian responses to *Wuthering Heights* on its publication were generally hostile. Various American reviewers expressed revulsion. E. P. Whipple (cited in Allott, 1974, p.247) sees the book as characterised by 'coarseness' and 'animal ferocities', while an anonymous reviewer in *Graham's Magazine* believed it to be a 'compound of vulgar depravity and unnatural horrors' (cited in Allott, 1974, pp. 242-3). *The Literary*

World bemoans the novel's 'disgusting coarseness' but expresses horror at its power to fascinate the reader: 'we become interested in characters which are most revolting to our feelings' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.233).

In Britain, Elizabeth Rigby (Lady Eastlake) implies that her discomfort with the novel is derived from social and religious sensibilities: she describes 'Catherine and Heathfield' [*sic*] as 'too odiously and abominably pagan to be palatable to even the most vitiated class of English readers' (cited in Allott,1974, p.111). James Lorimer sees it as 'a perfect pandemonium of low and brutal creatures…too disgusting for the eye or ear to tolerate' (cited in Allott, 1974 p.115). H.F. Chorley describes the scenes depicted in *Wuthering Heights* as 'coarse and loathsome' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.222), 'the contemplation of which taste rejects (cited in Allott,1974, p.218). *The Examiner* feels that Heathcliff's 'hardness, selfishness and cruelty' are inconsistent with his romantic feelings, implying that *Wuthering Heights* fails to conform to generic expectations (cited in Allott, 1974, p.221). *The Atlas* disagrees that this makes the novel unrealistic, while concurring that it is presents 'shocking pictures of the worst forms of humanity' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.230). This reviewer also asserts that 'a more natural story we do not remember to have read' even though 'the combinations of human degradation which are here to be found moving within the circle of a few miles' is 'inconceivable' cited in Allott, 1974, p.231). An implicit link between the locality, 'nature' and degradation is formed. *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper* imagines how 'the reader is shocked, disgusted, almost sickened by details of cruelty, inhumanity, and the most diabolical hate and vengeance' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.228).

The novel's power is regarded as undermined by its moral purposelessness. American reviewer George Washington Peck is particularly aware of its regionalism and rurality, and the implications this has in terms of social hierarchy and refinement, identifying its 'ill-mannered contempt for the decencies of language, and in a style which might resemble that of a Yorkshire farmer' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.235). His review is imbued with the geographical meaning of the novel: 'We have been taken and carried through a new region, a melancholy waste, with here and there patches of beauty' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.235). He condemns the roughness and savageness in the soliloquies and dialogues. Wuthering Heights 'lifts the veil and

shows boldly the dark side of our depraved nature' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.240). 'Nothing like it has ever been written before; it is to be hoped…for the sake of good manners, nothing will be hereafter' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.241).

In the context of the negative tone of these reviews, Charlotte Brontë attaches an editor's preface to the second edition of *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1850, after Emily's death. For this edition, Charlotte adds a biographical note which removes Emily's pseudonym for the first time. Charlotte defends her sister by acknowledging the sensibilities she may have offended in her readers and attributing to her a set of motives to make acceptable as an author. Against the charge of 'rusticity', incorporating the depiction of 'repulsive' language, manners and customs, she depicts Emily as unworldly and wholly removed from the culture she represents in her novel (cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.17).

The revelation that *Wuthering Heights* was written by a woman gave rise to shocked reactions. This novel, together with Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (first published in 1848) were, as G. H. Lewes puts it, 'coarse even for men, coarse in language and coarse in conception' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.292). Thompson (1996) sees a change in the reception of 1850: Emily is understood as an isolated and unworldly figure to whom normal standards of writerly propriety need not be applied:

> the new awareness of Ellis Bell's way of life, innocence, and regional isolation led to an increased sympathy with her novel, a tendency to excuse the author from normal standards of literary and female propriety… *Wuthering Heights* was not judged as severely in 1850 as it had been in 1847 and 1848 (Thompson, 1996, p.58)

Wuthering Heights becomes 'gendered'. The sense of wonder at the novel's power is replaced by condescension and its re-categorisation as a 'gothic' novel – which, as Pykett (1989, p.77) points out 'was a genre particularly identified with women writers'. Dante Gabriel Rossetti sees it as 'combining all the stronger female tendencies' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.300).

Another turning point in the novel's appreciation can be discerned after Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* was published in 1857, providing a more intimate

biographical knowledge of the Brontës, and leading to greater acceptance and assimilation. *The North American* describes its content as

> the very outpourings of pent-up passion, the cry of unfettered hearts, the panting of hungry intellects, restrained by the iron despotism of adverse and unconquerable circumstance (cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.22).

W.C. Roscoe now sees Emily's 'rude titanic story' as 'rich with barbaric gems and crusted gold' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.350). However, detractors remained. *Bently's Miscellany* continues to voice the reader's 'disgust and detestation' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.449), while Peter Bayne thinks it 'belongs to the horror school of fiction [which] must be plainly declared to blunt, to brutalize, and to enervate the mind' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.325).

By 1873, however, the novel's value seems to have increased. George Barnet Smith describes it as 'perhaps one of the most unpleasant books ever written', but is amazed that it was 'written by a slim country girl' (cited in Stoneman 1998, p.24). It is significant that her rurality, as much as her gender, appears to be the source of amazement. Further astonishment is expressed by T. Wemyss Reid in 1877 that 'this shy, nervous, untrained girl' produced a repulsive and almost ghastly' work of such creative genius' (cited in Allott, 1974, pp. 399-400).

Mary F. Robinson's biography, *Emily Brontë* shifts perspective from the moralist-realist ground, to aesthetic and feminist considerations, while remaining focussed on the author herself. She sees the horrors of *Wuthering Heights* as 'reflected from the passion and sorrow that darkened her home'; Emily's depiction of 'the conquering force of sin and the supremacy of injustice' were predicated on her own sufferance at the fate of Branwell, her brother (cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.26). For Robinson, Brontë's works reveal 'the grim and fearful lessons of heredity', a reference perhaps to Darwinian notions of survival (cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.27).

Walter Pater understands *Wuthering Heights* as part of the romantic tradition, 'woven on a background of delicately beautiful moorland scenery' (cited in Allott, 1974, p.445). Mary Ward also sees Emily's novel as part of the romantic tradition, 'a revolt against classical models and restraints', representing 'the grafting of a European

tradition upon a mind already richly stored with English and local reality' (cited in Allott, 1974, pp.456-7).

Henry James criticised the reliance on biographical considerations in studying *Wuthering Heights*, 'The fashion has been, in looking at the Brontës, so to confound the cause with the result'. This represents 'the high-water mark of sentimental judgment' (cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.30).

In the twentieth century, with the advent of the modernist movement, criticism of *Wuthering Heights* leans away from biography to assess the work in the spirit of objectivity, while retaining the author's mind as the locus of creation. Emily's novel was seen to transcend its time; its perceived lack of realism releases it from specific time or place. Virginia Woolf implies this in 1916, asserting that 'Emily was a greater poet than Charlotte' (Cited in O'Neill, 1968, p.53). Woolf asserts the novel's universality by saying 'there is no "I" in *Wuthering Heights*' (cited in O'Neill, 1968, p.54). Its passions well up from some unfathomable urge.

Lord David Cecil, in 1934, focusses on the physical setting of *Wuthering Heights* in conjuring up his influential 'storm and calm' metaphor with which to describe the structure of the novel. Oppositional forces sit within Brontë's cosmic scheme which encompasses them both:

> The setting is a microcosm of the universal scheme as Emily Brontë conceived it. On the one hand, we have Wuthering Heights, the land of storm; high on the barren moorland, naked to the shock of the elements, the natural home of the Earnshaw family, fiery, untamed children of the storm. On the other, sheltered in the leafy valley below, stands Thrushcross Grange, the appropriate home of the children of calm, the gentle, passive, timid Lintons (cited in Allott, 1992, p.121).

Cecil also makes reference to the isolation and ruralty of Brontë, which enabled her to 'maintain the consistent integrity of her imagination …Against the urbanised landscape of Victorian fiction it looms up august and alien' (cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.40). The themes of Brontë's novel are

nearer to the heart of life than those explored by any other Victorian novelist. Even the varied world-panorama of *Vanity Fair* seems trivial besides this picture of a sparsely-populated country village, revealed as it is against the background of the eternal verities (cited in Allott, 1992, pp.123-4).

The influence of Cecil's analysis was such that in the Introduction to the 1965 Penguin edition of Emily Brontë's novel, David Daiches was restating the 'storm and calm' approach, identifying the opposing forces of 'the artificial world of civilization and gentility' with 'the elemental forces at work in the natural world' (cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.41).

The tendency to regard Brontë as a poet foregrounds the crafting of her writing and therefore draws attention towards the work and away from the author. This heralds a more formalistic approach to *Wuthering Heights* by the 1940s. This is especially evident in North America, where the precursors of 'New Criticism', rejected mere artistic appreciation in favour of a close analysis of the text itself. Mark Schorer in *Fiction and the Matrix of Analogy* (cited in Allott, 1992, pp.134-7) asserts that an analysis of metaphor in *Wuthering Heights* can reveal to the critic meaning of which the author was herself unaware. Schorer focuses on the naturalistic and landscape features of Brontë's novel, together with animal metaphors, seeing these as key to understanding the characters themselves.

Dorothy Van Ghent in 1953 focusses on two particular metaphors in *Wuthering Heights*: 'the window figure and the 'two children figure'. She sees these recurrent figures as structuring principles of Brontë's novel. The 'two children' are Catherine and Heathcliff in the first half of the novel and Cathy and Linton and later Hareton in the second. Through this structuring figure, Van Ghent identifies oppositional realities: 'the raw, inhuman reality of anonymous natural energies, and the restrictive reality of civilized habits, manners, and codes' (Van Ghent, 1953, p.157). Indeed, Van Ghent assimilates the urban/rural opposition wholeheartedly in her analysis of Lockwood:

> A city visitor in the country, a man whose very disinterestedness and facility of feeling and attention indicate the manifold emotional economies by which city people particularly protect themselves from any disturbing note of the ironic

discord between civilized life and the insentient wild flux of nature in which it is islanded (Van Ghent, 1953, p.157).

Q. D. Leavis, in her 1969 essay 'A fresh approach to *Wuthering Heights*' represents a continuation of the tradition of liberal humanism against the grain of New Criticism. She opposes the formalists' obsession with literary technical perfection. This approach, she claims, blinds the critic to its 'recalcitrant elements', resulting in 'sophistical' interpretations (Leavis, 1969, p.25). Leavis prefers instead to foreground the moral and human dimensions of the novel, allowing her to clearly identify its weaknesses, incompatibilities and confusions. Leavis identifies themes of violence as 'Shakespearian' in their influence, while incest is a 'favourite Romantic theme' (Leavis, 1969, p.26). Leavis also identifies *Wuthering Heights*'s folkloric themes, such as the various references to superstition, as well as the presence of archetypal structural elements of fairy tales.

Kermode (1975) rejects what he sees as Leavis's assumption that a single meaning, or even a hierarchy of meanings can be found in literature, as if the novel is 'a nut that can be broken' (p.39). He opts instead to recognise the novel as entailing a plurality of meanings invoked through language, rather than through conscious authorial intention. Kermode denies the validity of attributing an original meaning to *Wuthering Heights* based on historical knowledge: 'Digging and carbon-dating simply have no equivalents' in textual analysis since it is impossible to distinguish 'old signs from new' (Kermode, 1975, p.50). Kermode's approach pre-empts a poststructural awareness of the fluidity of meaning.

Derrida's deconstructive approach applies the notion that meaning is not located within words (or other signs) but in the difference between them. Meaning is therefore always deferred, located within other parts of the text. The idea that there is some transcendental signified, a pre-existing ground within which the meaning of the text can be explained, is an illusion. Kermode (1975, p.40) describes this illusion as a 'promise of something else to come'. It is summed-up in Derrida's famous assertion that there is nothing outside the text.

Miller (1982) gives what may be identified as a deconstructive reading of Brontë's novel, in asserting that 'The secret truth about *Wuthering Heights*… is that there is

no secret truth' (p.51). He seeks to foreground the novel's contradictory elements, while at the same time asserting the impossibility of reconciling them. He finds that 'Each passage stands for another passage' (p.67), a condition which finds critical correspondence with Derrida's principle of infinite deferral. Jacobs (1979, cited in Stoneman 1998, p.73-4) discusses the layered or concentric arrangement of narrative frames in *Wuthering Heights*, which are strongly suggestive of hierarchy, creating a sense of an inside and an outside to the fictive world. The assertion of such a hierarchy is untenable, as all aspects of the texts are equally 'fictional' and 'textual'. The notion rests on an assumed system of value emanating from binary oppositions such as that of centre and margin.

Matthews (1985) explores how the framing tendency in *Wuthering Heights* invites the perception of dichotomies within the layers of narrative and also within other elements of the text. He overturns the opposition of figure and ground, in which the setting of the story is categorically separate from the sequence of events which comprise the story. Brontë's novel 'broods both at its centre and its margins on the problem of articulation' (p.54). The un-articulated inner-lives of the characters must be supplemented and supported by that of the fictive narrator, Nelly Dean. In turn, the reader is invited to contemplate their own articulation of meaning upon the frame (or structure) suggested by the novel.

Parker (1987), while adopting a deconstructive approach, resists the rejection of critical perspectives which seek to interpret the text. The rejection of a contextual basis for interpretation does not entail a rejection of interpretation *per se*. She advocates a transcendence of the notional opposition between formalist approaches, which focus on the narrative structure of the novel, and sociological approaches which, in the case of Marxist criticism, emphasise the meaning attached to property. The application of this transcendence results in an apprehension of the disunity of *Wuthering Heights*, as a literary text. Its meaning can be found in the surrounding 'texts' of the post-Enlightenment. These meanings re-surface, 'spectre-like', within the discourses of poststructuralist critical theory. The novel is therefore 'forever inhabited by its own ghosts' (Parker, 1987, p.198).

Early psychoanalytic approaches to *Wuthering Heights* inevitably apply Freudian concepts in order to draw out an understanding of the author, such as that of Romer

Wilson (1928) who sees in the Brontë's novels evidence of paternal oppression, and Emilie and Georges Romieu (1931, cited in Stoneman 1998, p.85), who see their writing as an outlet for repressed sexual desires. By 1963, Wade Thomson applies Freudianism to the characters within the *Wuthering Heights*, exploring themes of cruelty, violence and infanticide necessitating a struggle for survival on the part of Catherine, resulting in an enforced masculinity and a consequential, 'abnormal' gender development. Moser (1962) interprets *Wuthering Heights* as a proto-Freudian dramatization of the id, the characteristics of which 'apply perfectly to Heathcliff: the source of psychic energy; the seat of the instincts (particularly sex and death); the essence of dreams; the archaic foundation of personality – selfish, asocial, impulsive' (p.4).

Goetz (1982) draws on an analysis by Lévi-Strauss (1970) of the dichotomy between the raw and the cooked, corresponding to the barbaric and the civilised. This dichotomy is identified with the two households: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The fundamental dynamic that drives their interrelation is 'the renunciation of incest' (1982, p.373).

Later psychoanalytic criticism uses Lacanian theory, which sees maternal separation as a universal, rather than pathological condition, accompanied by the formation of language in the creation of the 'other. The precondition for language development is the 'mirror-phase', the recognition of separate identity. Language fills the gap left by this separation and the individual, who later searches for a sense of self in the reflection from others. Bersani (1976) sees *Wuthering Heights* as signifying the formation of identity within the family. The arrival of Heathcliff, whose identity is ultimately unknown, constitutes the disruption of this formation, violating the mirror phase of identity development within the family. 'Heathcliff is so radically the other that he is almost the beastly or even the inanimate… *Wuthering Heights* dramatizes the potential eeriness, the dehumanization, of a closeness to the land or to nature' (p.210).

Homans (1983) extends the Lacanian approach to examine the identification of the literal, the natural and the feminine in *Wuthering Heights.* The inherently symbolic, or metaphorical condition of language nevertheless continually defers towards an implied, but never reached, literal condition in which the signifier is identical to the

signified. The literal lies outside the text and constitutes nature. This in turn is identified with the feminine (which is that from which the self is originally separated in the form of the mother). In Romanticism, the objectification of nature and therefore the feminine demands a resistance towards the loss of and death of the self: 'the Gothic literalization of subjective states and the circumstances of childbearing…are associated with dire and ambiguous events, and both represent particularly feminine concerns' (p.258).

For Clayton (1987) Catherine's declaration of love ('Nelly, I am Heathcliff'[14]) exemplifies the paradoxical creation of desire in the act of separation. The figurative language that accompanies this speech in describing her love enacts this separation: 'The very words that bind the figures together – "like" and "resemble" and "as" – reveal the pressure on the terms to spring apart' (p.83). However, Clayton ultimately rejects a Lacanian approach which would domesticize Heathcliff's character by locating it within an account of human development. He asserts that this misses Brontë's vision of 'the potentially apocalyptic force of otherness…the other has no "place" in the human at all; it is the trace of a power that points beyond the human entirely' (p.90).

Kettle (1951) gives a perspective on *Wuthering Heights* that is implicitly, but not explicitly Marxian. He views it as a slice of social history. Its meaning is not to be understood in abstraction or universalism, but in terms of the material facts of its precise historical context and its geographical and social setting: '*Wuthering Heights* is about England in 1847. The people it reveals live not in a never-never land but in Yorkshire' (p.139). Heathcliff turns the tables on the Earnshaws and Lintons 'by the classic methods of the ruling class, expropriation and property deals' (p.149).

Eagleton (1975) offers perhaps the most influential Marxist analysis of *Wuthering Heights.* He foregrounds its depiction of the family structure and its ideological role in naturalising the possession of power and property. Heathcliff exists outside this, as an oppressed party. The childhood freedom he and (the also dispossessed) Catherine experience in nature – cavorting on the moors – is really the flip-side of their oppression. This reflects a central truth of capitalist society in Victorian England: there is no freedom inside or outside its domain. 'Throughout *Wuthering Heights,*

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[14] WH, p.73.

labour and culture, bondage and freedom, Nature and artifice appear at once as each other's dialectic negations' (p.122). Genteel society, represented by the Lintons in their 'crimson-carpeted drawing-room' (p.122) represents the apotheosis of bourgeois culture, which separates itself from the labour it exploits. However, Heathcliff's 'intense communion with Catherine is an uncompromising rejection of the Linton world' (p.124).

Musselwhite (1987), following Macherey's *Theory of Literary Production* (1966) offers an account of *Wuthering Heights* which sidesteps what he sees as the conscious reflection of dominant ideology in the narrative, opting instead to focus on the apparently marginal aspects of the text which reveal the its ideological mechanisms. He assert that Brontë's inspiration for Heathcliff derives from reading accounts of the lives of two revolutionary leaders: Cromwell and Mirabeau. Musselwhite sees the disguising and suppression of this inspiration as a regrettable weakness in *Wuthering Heights*, a case of artistic submission in the face of ideological forces.

Gilbert and Gubar's 1979 work *The Madwoman in the Attic*, although it references Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, is influential in its appraisal of *Wuthering Heights* and the position of its author, as a woman, in relation to mainstream patriarchal culture. In Emily's novel, they identify anti-patriarchal sentiment and in particular a proto-feminist inversion of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which Heaven and Hell correspond with a series of polarities within the novel: Edgar and Heathcliff, the civilised and the bestial (echoing Lévi-Strauss's exploration of these opposites in *The Raw and the Cooked*).

For Jacobs (1986) *Wuthering Heights* documents the abusive power relations that are promoted within private patriarchal family structures. In foregrounding the violence inherent within the domestic sphere, Brontë subverts and undermines it. She disguises the subversive nature of her novel through its masculine structures (for example, its narrative framing through Lockwood) providing herself with 'an authorial strategy for dealing with the unacceptability of the subject matter' (p.206).

Davies (1988) sees *Wuthering Heights* as ultimately a tonally 'joyous' work (p.89), ultimately outside masculine influence. She continues Gilbert and Gubar's Miltonic

theme, while attributing to Brontë a favouring of the immanent, natural and feminine over the transcendent, spiritual and masculine.

Pykett (1989) also attributes feminism to Emily Brontë. She claims that Brontë challenges generic expectations by combining the codes of Domestic and Gothic fiction. These, combined with the novel's 'disrupted chronology… its dislocated narrative structure' and the nature of its central characters 'work together to keep other versions of domestic life before the reader: the domestic space as prison, the family as a site of primitive passions, violence struggle and control' (p.85).

Heywood (1987) identifies evidence of the presence of slaves on Yorkshire farms in the eighteenth century as possibly inspirational in the Brontës' juvenilia, and speculates upon its influence on *Wuthering Heights*. Dworkin (1987) sees Brontë's descriptions of Heathcliff as clearly racial indicative, and the true love between him and Catherine 'is destroyed by the divisive imperatives of a racist hierarchy that values white, fair, rich and despises dark, poor' (p.35).

Nancy Armstrong (1992) sees the presence of colonialism as internal to the nation. It is that of the centre over the margin, in which the region of Yorkshire is framed by the gaze of one from the Southern metropolis.

In speculating that Heathcliff is a starving Irish child (as depicted in *The Illustrated London News* in 1845 Eagleton (1995) sees *Wuthering Heights* as expressive of differences between English and Irish cultural understandings of the rural. For the English, nature is pastoral and bountiful under the control of its technocratic landlords; however, Brontë's novel, like Irish culture, depicts it 'as harsh, niggardly, mean-spirited, and so as peasant rather than aristocrat' (p.17). Thus, Eagleton entwines postcolonial critique with a Marxist inflection.

Von Sneidern (1995) also sees in *Wuthering Heights* the relocation of colonial slavery to the Yorkshire moors. The novel focusses a sense of widespread Victorian social anxiety caused by a paradoxical belief that Britain's outlawing of slavery emanates from an innate British moral superiority.

Meyer (1996) perceives in *Wuthering Heights* an imperialist nightmare, or anti-imperialist fantasy, in which the triumph of the dark-skinned Heathcliff over his

erstwhile masters symbolically represents the uprising of colonised people over their white oppressors. Heathcliff himself becomes an oppressor and subjugator of those around him, especially the women. Heathcliff's absence, after which he turns the tables, coincides with the American Revolution. He is thus closely associated with the forces of revolution.

My own study derives inspiration from Marxian, feminist and postcolonial approaches to *Wuthering Heights*. I look at the presence of hierarchy within the text, applying this to questions of rurality, rather than class, gender or ethnicity. In doing so, I draw on a Derrida's understanding of the how meaning is located in the text, and of the construction of binary opposition. I resist the temptation to attribute authorial intention to Brontë herself and focus upon her novel as a location within which the meaning of rurality is both created, recreated and endlessly deferred. Critics have not extensively explored the meaning of rurality, in comparison to questions of class, gender and ethnicity. I suggest that a rural reading of Wuthering Heights might be applied productively to other cultural artefacts.

Chapter 5: Nature, rurality and *Wuthering Heights*

Introduction

This chapter extends discussion of the othering of rurality through its association with nature, begun in Chapter 3 and considers *Wuthering Heights* in the light of these concepts. The idea of nature is approached in relation to its constructed opposite: the civilised. The civilisation/nature binary is aligned by association with that of the urban/rural. In addition, consideration is given to the connection between this and colonial ideas of the ascendancy of Western civilisation over the savage other. Interpretations are made concerning Western ideologies of domination through the application of Bakhtinian notions of the grotesque in order to provide a new perspective on the idyllic and anti-idyllic features of the rural which emerge from *Wuthering Heights*.

These ideas will be drawn out through focusing on two main themes: firstly, explorations of externalised nature through an examination of the presence of animals in the novel, and secondly explorations of internalised nature, or human nature, especially with respect to ideas of selfhood. Consideration will be given to the apparently contrasting Romantic and Enlightenment conceptions of nature within the text, and to the distinct notions of human nature, drawing on spiritual and materialistic perspectives found within *Wuthering Heights*.

In discussing nature, there is necessarily overlap with other chapters. In Chapter 5, proximity to nature is understood as part of the constructed explanation for the peculiarity of rural behaviour. Chapter 7 includes discussion of the 'natural' meaning of rural space, including aspects of weather and topography. The overlap is a consequence of the centrality of the concept of nature in the construction of rurality, and also of the associative fluidity of the concept and its constellation of meanings.

Wuthering Heights and the rural grotesque

The concept of nature, as Chapter 1 suggests, is strongly associated with the construction of rurality. This chapter uses a Bakhtininan perspective in order to

explore the place of nature within Western culture, and uses Bakhtin's concept of grotesque realism as a way of understanding how this impinges upon the construction of rurality within its binary opposition to the urban. The Bakhtinian approach reveals what might be considered an ideological, perhaps metaphysical struggle for ownership of nature (or at least for claiming authority to construct a discourse of nature) between Enlightenment and Romantic ideals. This ideological tension can be seen as the backdrop for discourses of nature during the nineteenth century and provides a basis with which to approach an analysis of nature within *Wuthering Heights*. This opposition is not so much a conflict between opposing factions, but a source of internal contradiction, where the material and the sublime aspects of nature are simultaneously present within the novel. It is worth extending discussion of the manner in which grotesque realism is relevant to the construction of rurality, before going on to present an analysis of *Wuthering Heights* that takes this as its reference point.

Grotesque realism is an expression of the materiality of existence, 'Repudiating the asceticism and other-worldly spirituality of mediaevalism' (Gardiner, 1992, p.46). The mediaeval conception of reality placed a value on the spiritual and the ethereal, that which lacks material or corporeal existence. This can be regarded as part of the theological view which sees opposition between the spiritual and the material, placing a high value on the former, while denigrating the latter. The spiritual essence of humanity, the soul, is eternal, indivisible and complete. It is pure and incorruptible. It is close to God and is that which has ultimate reality. It is closely related to the classical notion of the psyche – the soul/mind/intellect interface, and is that which contains the essence of humanity and the seat of being. It is that which is above: the mind at the top of the body, but also the sky, which is mythologically where Heaven resides. It is the seat of the Gods – the sky gods, perhaps, the Olympians, but also, popularly, the Judeo-Christian God. It is strongly associated therefore, with a patriarchal theology. On the other hand, the material body is transient and ephemeral and imperfect. It is in a constant state of flux, endlessly transcending its boundaries, always in contact with the ever-present other – the material world, of which it is a part. It is impure, and not only is it corruptible, but it is corruption itself. It is that which directs humanity away from God; we slavishly and mindlessly follow its demands, even if they lead us away from the approved path. We struggle against its

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demands, pitting mind over matter, the intellectual and godly in opposition to the material and the Satanic. It is illusion, blinding us to the eternal heavenly reality. The body is that which is below, identified with the ground, with the Earth, or theologically, the Earth Mother: the 'Low, hidden, earthly, dark, material, immanent, visceral' (Russo, 1994, p.1). In *Wuthering Heights* this is articulated in the positioning of the characters, whose earthly connections and spiritual dislocations are redolent of their rurality. In her delirious dream Catherine says:

> heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out, into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy (WH, p. 71).

The grotesque body emphasises and celebrates its corporeality and its denigrated aspects. The grotesque body transcends its boundaries and presents the self as an aspect of the material world. It is therefore a repudiation of a form of mediaeval theology which never truly went away, but retains a strong presence throughout its sphere of influence. This mediaevalism is present in all forms of authority and social control which seek to restrict the grotesque body. Rules of behaviour and propriety resolve themselves into a range of social norms pertaining to the natural and material presence of the body. This is undermined by the grotesque as a subversive discourse: 'Accordingly, acts of defecation, birth, eating and conception play a major symbolic role in folkloric texts and practices' (Gardiner, 1992, p.48). The points at which the body exceeds its boundaries are the points at which its materiality is revealed. This must not be permitted to enter the conscious mind and certainly must not be permitted to enter social discourse. It is therefore treated as taboo.

The Enlightenment project, the basis of a scientific and material conception of nature, implicitly rejects all notions of the mediaeval world view. Within this rational and empirical approach, the material is the only reality, for it is the only aspect of the world which can be observed and measured. The Enlightenment might seem to represent the beginning of an overturning of the dominant, spiritual view, and an elevation of the corporeal self in all its transgressive glory. However, Bakhtin argues that the monologic, unifying principle of the mediaeval view is not displaced. The promotion of a single dominant discourse is 'encouraged by the "cult of unified and

exclusive reason"' (Gardiner, 1992, pp.26-7). In addition, the materialism of the Enlightenment is less a celebration of the material, than a removal of its value. It seeks to interpret the world as objective, neutral and value-free and therefore presents a view of the world that is unreachable, unknowable and inhuman: the other.

This conception of nature, arising out of the Enlightenment, runs through the rural, which is also constructed from Enlightenment sensibilities. If nature is radically other, unknowable, and set apart from humanity, then so is the rural. Landscape and spatial environment are fundamental components of the urban/rural binary construction. The urban landscape is a man-made environment. It is defined by buildings, roads and walls; it has emerged upon the pre-existing rural landscape as a result of human endeavour. The endeavour itself has always been, by definition, artificial; but this artificiality reaches its apogee with the industrial production of artificial things.

The lifestyle led in the city is civilised, artificial and constructed to meet human needs through ingenious innovation and civilised practices. The rural landscape is imagined to be composed of the natural land. Its underlying shape, its undulations and topography are identified with nature (notwithstanding the artificiality of agricultural rural landscape). Rural endeavour and lifestyle are conditioned by farming and agriculture – a variety of production which pre-dates industry and is therefore felt to be closer to the natural activity of the human being. Rural life means working and acting according to the dictates of the weather, the climate the seasons, the rising and setting of the sun, as opposed to the ticking of the clock or the sound of the factory whistle. Agriculture, moreover, involves working with natural processes: life, growth, reproduction, bodily processes and death. Rural people are accustomed to encountering existence as a cycle, in which waste and death feed the land to provide, and make way for, further life, and on it goes. Rurality therefore requires or entails an acquaintance with the grotesque materiality of the body, of those aspects of the body where it transgresses its own boundaries, and where even the sense of an enduring self is erased as it becomes connected with the otherness of the material world.

The tension between the idealised and grotesque aspects of rurality is observed by Landry in the poetry of Bloomfield, who, 'As late as 1800 … could praise "The rich manure that drenching winter made, /Which pil'd near home, grows green with many a weed" because the dungheap offered "A promis'd nutriment for Autumn's seed"' (The Farmer's Boy, 'Spring', ll. 188-90). However, the acceptance of this sees a shift through the encroachment of urban sensibilities: 'Once the heyday of georgic verse had ended, by about 1789, a good dungheap, though it remained the pillar of early modern husbandry, was less likely to figure on the list of tourists' preferred sights.' (Landry, 2001, p.17). That the dungheap has endured as a symbol of cultural division ever since the georgic 'heyday' is demonstrated by its presence in Seamus Heaney's description of a child observing farm-drowned kittens in his poem 'The Early Purges' (first published in 1963):

> Sure, isn't it better for them now?' Dan said.
> Like wet gloves they bobbed and shone till he sluiced
> Them out on the dunghill, glossy and dead.
>
> Suddenly frightened, for days I sadly hung
> Round the yard, watching the three sogged remains
> Turn mealy and crisp as old summer dung

The dungheap is a grotesque reminder of the gulf in sensibilities and perceptions between town and country. For urbanites, it signifies all that is degraded and obscene; for the farmers, it fertilises the land. The kittens are not children's pets; they are reduced to their material value in a way that is unpalatable to dominant urban values:

> 'Prevention of cruelty' talk cuts ice in town
> Where they consider death unnatural
> But on well-run farms pests have to be kept down[15].

The indignant tone reveals a bitter recognition of urban hostility towards rural 'realities', a hostility which is likely to be shared by the reader. The reader of

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[15] Heaney (1969, p.23)

Heaney's poem must take a position in relation to these values, just as readers of *Wuthering Heights* have been divided by its grotesque cruelties.

In giving a personal account of her encounter with Brontë artefacts during a visit to the Haworth Parsonage library, Stevie Davies gives a curiously grotesque depiction of seven pairs of stockings, plus an odd one, belonging to the Brontë sisters. The odd one is Emily's. She is disquieted by the realisation that 'these intimate garments bear stains' and 'throw us back on questions of the wholesomeness of our curiosity; and upon the utter deadness of the Brontës' (Davies, 1998, p.1). The retelling of this incident prefaces a questioning of the public's preoccupation with biography. However, it also raises questions about conceptions of the real, the imaginary, the material and the ephemeral. The stockings, these 'yellowing revelations' with their human stains, are a material reminder of the transience of life, and of the body's tendency to transgress its own boundaries.

After this encounter, Davies recalls, 'when I opened a book, the living spoke to me' (p.1). In contrast to the body, the author's work is apparently unchanging and eternal, like the human soul. Where spiritual belief is challenged by the encroaching orthodoxy of scientific materialism, the 'worship' of text in the form of *Brontëmania,* represents a yearning for something eternal with which to replace it. Conflicted understandings of the eternal-unified and the material-transitory, can be encountered in the visceral content of *Wuthering Heights*. This conflict is located within the construction of rurality that emerges.

 One aspect of this viscerality is, as Beaumont (2010) suggests, the presence of cannibalism in the text. Cannibalism is profoundly grotesque, in that it radically asserts the corporeality of the body, denigrating humanity to the status of animals locked in predator-prey relationship, and feeding off each other for the material promulgation of the individual. Beaumont sees Heathcliff as signifying a suppressed nineteenth-century horror of cannibalism. This emanates from a colonialist ideology, which would rather conceal its effectively 'cannibalistic' practices, consisting of the enslavement and slaughter of the colonised, behind highly ritualised and codified symbols. Heathcliff's mysterious origins and 'swarthy' appearance, leave an openness with regard to his racial and ethnic identity. This feeds into fears of decolonisation which threatens the Imperial centre:

With his cryptic and apparently compound racial composition, Heathcliff, who might of course be genetically related to refugees from across the Irish Sea in the 1840s, is the premonitory representative of this Black Ireland (Beaumont, 2010, p.143).

The notion of cannibalism as a feature of the savagery which takes hold in the absence of civilised values, held a special fascination in the nineteenth century and provided a justification for colonial domination and a strong notion around which racial and cultural othering could take place. Beaumont finds evidence of Heathcliff's cannibalism in a number of 'cannibalistic *doubles entendres*'. Heathcliff says of Edgar Linton that 'I would have torn his heart out, and drank his blood' (WH, p.146). In confronting Hindley through the window of Wuthering Heights 'His hair and clothes were whitened with snow, and his sharp cannibal teeth, revealed by cold and wrath, gleamed through the dark' (WH, p.176).

The cannibalistic references within *Wuthering Heights* also attach themselves to notions of rurality. This rural location, like the savage, foreign lands of the nineteenth-century imagination is remote from the values and social controls of civilisation. The Hobbesian notion of a state of nature which justifies colonial domination can also be applied to the far flung rural savagery of the British Isles. Heathcliff may well be identified with a mysterious ethnic other; however, he is also strongly identified with the context of Wuthering Heights itself, carrying this construction of rurality with him into the realm of the other, and by implication and association, all constructions of rurality.

Grotesque creatures in Wuthering Heights

The presence of animals in *Wuthering Heights* reveal suppressed, unpalatable truths about the nature of life and death: that it is really about birth, survival, reproduction and death. The first real beast in the novel is encountered in the kitchen of Wuthering Heights, 'a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer'. Its colour is a vivid echo of the meat hanging in the kitchen, which undermines any comfortable delineation between animals and the foy provide for humans. This is significant since the nineteenth century saw the emergence of pet-keeping as a particularly bourgeois

and urban practice, becoming 'a quintessential embodiment of English identity and a national self-image founded on an idealized vision of home' (Kreilkamp, 2005, p.87).

At Wuthering Heights, animals are not pets, the dogs no more so than the livestock. To an urban reader, this provides a further distance between the culture represented in *Wuthering Heights* and that of their own. The behaviour of the animals within this novel reflects that of the human inhabitants. The animals Lockwood encounters at Wuthering Heights consistently fail to occupy their expected places in his urban-bourgeois conceptual framework. He wrongly assumes the dogs he encounters will be civilised according to the norms he expects. He is mistaken. Heathcliff explains that Juno, 'her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering', is 'not accustomed to be spoiled – not kept for a pet'. This explanation is provided in the face of Lockwood's farcical and comic attempts to interact with both Juno and 'a pair of grim shaggy sheep-dogs, who [share] with her a jealous guardianship over all [his] movements' (WH, p. 4). He indulges in ill-advised 'winking and making faces at the trio.' Lockwood's politely-chattering disposition has already contrasted with the taciturnity of Heathcliff; now, he shows an inability to stop his idle banter, even with the animals, which results in their hostility. These are no lap-dogs; they are semi-feral. Like their human counterparts, as Heathcliff soon reminds him, they are suspicious of strangers and follow their natural instincts rather than trained behaviour.

In Lockwood's second meeting with 'the villain Juno', the dog begrudges its friendship, deigning 'to move the extreme tip of her tail, in token of owning [his] acquaintance'. Here again, he reveals his expectation that the dogs are pets: He asks Cathy, 'Do you intend parting with the little ones, madam?' Her answer is dismissive, demonstrating a lack of sentimentality towards the creatures, conditioned by her stay at Wuthering Heights. This contrasts starkly with her attitude to animals while young and still living at Thrushcross Grange. This underlines the apparent cultural difference between the two households. As discussed in Chapter 6, the Grange is a representative of the modern, civilised bourgeois culture with its origins in the city. Wuthering Heights is ruled by nature and its creatures are wild.

Life, birth and reproduction are present at Wuthering Heights. The fecundity to be found in this part of the world is demonstrated by the 'swarm of squealing puppies' which surround the bitch, together with the 'Innumerable' dogs which 'haunt' the

recesses of the kitchen (WH, p.3). There is an implication that the sexual licentiousness which gave rise to this profusion is not restricted to the animals. In the same scene, Lockwood mistakes a heap of dead rabbits for a cushion full of cats. The experience unearths the readers' discomfort as the boundaries between life and death, of pet and prey, of animal and meat are transgressed. This type of transgression is stereotypically embedded in the psyche of rural people, who are closer to nature and understand its processes. The darker side of this is that they engage in cruelty, bestiality and incest, as discussed in relation to the anti-idyll in Chapter 3.

Whereas urbanites might encounter domestic animals as pets to be pampered and stroked, the stereotypical rural dweller values them in terms of their practical worth. As noted already, the concept of keeping animals as pets, upon which emotional attachments can be formed, has its origins in the urban bourgeois culture of the nineteenth-century. At the genteel Thrushcross Grange, in contrast to Wuthering Heights, dogs may be treated as pets. The young Edgar and Isabella are contemptible 'petted things', who are observed by Heathcliff and Catherine to quarrel over a little dog sitting on their table. To Heathcliff, the object of their struggle is nothing more than 'a heap of warm hair' (WH, p.42). This attitude, a lack of sympathy for animals, allows him to hang Isabella's Springer spaniel by the neck. The younger Catherine also sees the animals at Thrushcross Grange as playmates. In her game 'a large hound and a couple of pointers' help her to become 'an Arabian merchant, going to cross the desert with his caravan' (WH, p.169). Hareton shows an awareness of the Thrushcross Grange attitude to dogs, and attempts to use this to his advantage. At their first meeting, he attempts to give Catherine 'a fine crooked-legged terrier whelp' (WH, p.173) as a gift, in an attempt to placate her genteel distress. Whereas she might potentially regard such an animal as a thing to be petted and loved, to him, the animal is merely a token of exchange and a means-to-an-end.

Rural animals can be a source of fear in themselves, as already discussed. In *Wuthering Heights* dogs are used to threaten outsiders and to guard property ferociously. They are agents of the suspicions, jealousies and violent tendencies of their masters. At Wuthering Heights, Lockwood is set-upon by 'two hairy monsters'

(WH, p.13), and the infant Hareton threatens to set a dog onto Nelly Dean. Even Thrushcross Grange, despite seeming to be a more civilised, less rustic household than Wuthering Heights, has its threatening beasts. Their names, 'Gnasher', 'Throttler', 'Skulker' and 'Wolf', are strongly suggestive of the violent purpose to which they have been assigned. Catherine is attacked by the Linton's bull-dog, 'his huge, purple tongue hanging half a foot out of his mouth, and his pendent lips streaming with bloody slaver' (WH, p.43. Significantly, the genteel Lintons, remain aloof from these actions; this dog seems to be closely associated with the brutal sounding 'beast of a servant' that chokes him off. As discussed in Chapter 6, episodes such as this may suggest an undermining of the dichotomy between the two households.

Unsentimental or even cruel treatment of animals is a familiar feature of the construction of rurality: 'The rural has become the space where much of the subjugation of animals on behalf of modern society takes place' (Jones, 2006, p.195). There are many depictions and insinuations of cruelty and violence towards animals in *Wuthering Heights*. In some cases this violence is casual and is meted out to human and animal alike. Throttler's endeavour to avoid Hindley was unsuccessful 'as I guessed by a scutter down stairs, and a prolonged, piteous yelping' (WH, p.127). This description is matched by that of Heathcliff, holding the door open for his son to pass; and the latter achieved his exit 'exactly as a spaniel might, which suspected the person who attended on it of designing a spiteful squeeze' (WH, p.241).

The rural attachment to hunting is mentioned several times in this novel. We learn from Linton that Heathcliff 'goes on to the moors frequently, [when] the shooting season [commences]' (WH, p.210). He has obviously enjoyed this activity for many years, given his insulting gift to Lockwood of 'a brace of grouse—the last of the season' (WH, p.80). The controversy over blood sports is familiar in twenty-first century Britain; attitudes towards these activities are seen as indicative of a gulf between rural and urban sensibilities. The lisping Isabella reveals that she regards game birds as additional pets: she believes that the young Heathcliff looks 'exactly like the son of the fortune-teller that stole [her] tame pheasant' (WH, p.43). While young, and still at Thrushcross Grange, Cathy Linton states, 'I know where I wish to

go; where a colony of moor game are settled: I want to see whether they have made their nests yet' (WH, p.187). Her attitude is that of a birdwatcher, rather than a hunter. She protests that rather than being a poacher or egg thief, she merely 'wished to see the eggs' (WH, p.188).

On other occasions the cruelty is more calculated. Heathcliff is responsible for quite extreme cruelty to Isabella's springer; he suspends it by its throat, using a handkerchief. It is discovered 'nearly at its last gasp' (WH, p.114). It has been claimed that Heathcliff's spite against this innocent creature derives from his suppressed inner rage. However, Nelly's description of the perpetrator is 'mischievous' (WH, p.114), which seems a somewhat mild judgement, and indicates in Nelly a relative lack of concern for the creature; although Heathcliff's actions are unpleasant, she does not appear to find them shocking. In his own account of the incident, Heathcliff accuses Isabella herself of being unsympathetic to the plight of the creature: 'But no brutality disgusted her: I suppose she has an innate admiration of it, if only her precious person were secure from injury!' (WH, p.133). Again, this undermines suggestions that civilised appearances at the Grange are anything more than skin-deep.

Kreilkamp (2005) connects the problematizing of animal cruelty in *Wuthering Heights* to changes in nineteenth-century English attitudes towards animals, in particular the keeping of pets as part of 'an idealized vision of home' (p.87). He sees the forming of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals in 1824 and the 1874 Cruelty to Animals Act as evidence of this cultural shift. Kreilkamp draws on Derridean explorations of carno-phallogocentrism as a particular kind of speciesism, which seeks to delineate between the conquered and dominated and the innocent and protected.

> Victorian culture, at the point that it has apparently achieved domination through industry and technology over the forces of nature redefines itself through its protection of a category of 'innocent' animals, animals associated with pastoral qualities who become the victim as of unenlightened English people (Kreilkamp, 2008, p.93).

The industry and technology which have led to the creation of an innocent subspecies, the pet, are aspects of the same forces which have created the separate spheres of urban and rural. If the urban is the source of opposition to animal cruelty and the place where pet-keeping originates, then the rural continues in a pre-enlightened state of cruelty. This seems at odds with Kete's view that the nineteenth century cultural trope of the lost dog 'is a signifier of the dangerousness and cruelty of urban life and of modernity itself' (cited in Kreilkamp 2008, p.99). However, if the urban sphere is the origin of anti-cruelty, then it seems unlikely that the accusatory gaze will ignore urban cruelties, which are the closest. For example, the anti-vivisection debate (as Kreilkamp outlines) was an attack on a particular kind of scientific enquiry. The anti-cruelty voice has a bourgeois and urban origin.

The rural is strongly implicated in the category of 'unenlightened people' mentioned above. Animal cruelty becomes the focus for a conflict over values, in which nature is dominated and re-categorised by a progressive urbanised culture which finds it difficult to accept the consequences of that progress, and through whose gaze the rural sphere is regarded as accepting of cruelty. Brontë's novel, by this measure, is seen by Kreilkamp as embodying the new culture as '*Wuthering Heights* defines the humane reading subject as he or she who can most strongly feel the pain of the animal' (2008, p.106).

Surridge (1999) offers a view which contradicts this, identifying *Wuthering Heights* as novel which undermines discourse which elevates so-called 'civilised values' above the brutal and cruel, by revealing this to be a form of domination and control: 'the central ethos of Victorian pet-keeping' is that 'human domination over nature is disguised by the tendency to sentimentalize and anthropomorphise the animal' (p.165). Surridge also sees the setting of *Wuthering Heights* as 'on the cusp of this shift in human-animal relations' (p.166). She locates this transformation in the changing social reactions caused by the shift from the yeoman farming culture and the emergence of the Victorian class consciousness.

This is also constitutes the emergence of opposing constructions of the urban and the rural. For Surridge, the categorisation by status of different animals within *Wuthering Heights* – pets, prey, working beasts – is not so much a delineation which justifies cruelty, as something which 'underscores the differences in class and

property between the two households. Whereas Wuthering Heights sees open brutality subject to challenge, Thrushcross Grange conducts its own brutality efficiently and covertly. This is signified by the separation of leisure space (the parlour) from the working space, allowing a hypocritical ignorance of the cruel reality of working life to flourish within a broad representation of nineteenth-century gentility.

The reading of *Wuthering Heights* as both promoting and antagonistic towards nineteenth-century urban values is indicative of the openness of the text to interpretation. It provides an arena in which those forces can be observed to align themselves with a growing sense of a separation between urban and rural cultures. Thrushcross Grange may be associated with the city, but its cruelties are more hidden from the reader than those of Wuthering Heights. Where its cruelties are recognised, the Grange can be re-categorised by the reader as rural: it exists after all in the rural sphere. Thrushcross Grange is therefore both rural and urban. Whatever the positioning of *Wuthering Heights*, its effect is to associate cruelty with rural as a necessary aspect of its structure.

It is finally worth observing the blurring of distinctions between animal and human which pervades *Wuthering Heights.* The animals Lockwood observes can be disgustingly close to their rural masters, as in the case of that which 'snoozled its nose overforwardly into Catherine's face'. At other times, the demarcation between animals and humans is blurred. Heathcliff is often referred to as a 'beast' or a 'wolf'. Both Hindley and Heathcliff are described in bestial and lupine terms in the novel, as their unreconstructed rurality fails to elevate them far from such beastly, lower class associations. The use of the neutral pronoun to refer to human beings is also common: When Heathcliff is brought as a boy to the Earnshaw home, Mrs. Earnshaw's first reaction is to 'fling it out of doors' (WH, p.31). That night even the fairly kind-hearted Nelly Dean puts 'it' on the landing in the hope that 'it might be gone on the morrow' (WH, p.32). Later, old Mr. Linton apprehends 'it' prowling about with Catherine near Thrushcross Grange and immediately proclaims, 'It is but a boy' (WH, p.43).

Human nature

The notion of human nature is a particularly contentious aspect of the more general concept of nature. It is constructed from an array of religious, philosophical and scientific understandings which sit together for reasons of history, rather than congruence. Human nature is a culturally produced dynamic artefact; its shape and substance conditioned by cultural influence. Perhaps the central idea around which versions of human nature contest is that of the self. Burkitt (2008) traces the construction of the Western conception of the self from Greco-Roman society, drawing on Mauss's identification of the Roman development of the concept of 'persona' as a political concept positing individualism as a political identity connected with the necessity of citizenship within Roman culture, and linked to the Greek notion of the *psyche* as a psychological and spiritual basis. Individual focus became the drive for 'a tradition of forming a "narrative of self" that is still familiar today' (Burkitt, 2008, p.5). This concept of the self is developed through the ideas of St Augustine and finds its recognisably modern form in the writings of Descartes (encapsulated in the *cogito*[16]) and Kant, whose *Critique of Pure Reason* sought to reconcile the rationalist and empiricist dichotomy which emerged from the dualistic conception. Most interestingly, Burkitt sees the writings of economist Adam Smith as a crucial extension of the philosophical ideas of the self, emanating from the Enlightenment, as he sought to assess their implications upon the development of capitalist economic systems. The relationships between self-interested individuals play themselves out in the context of an economic system of market forces. Thus, a relationship between the conception of the self and the development of new social relations within the commercial nexus reveal that the self is revealed to be constructed through cultural change and cannot be assumed to pre-exist in some natural form.

Catherine's identification with Heathcliff presents a troubling conception of selfhood in *Wuthering Heights*. She contrasts her love for him with that for Edgar Linton:

> My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees—my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath—a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I

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[16] Descartes' famous assertion '*cogito ergo sum*' ('I think therefore I am').

am Heathcliff—he's always, always in my mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself—but, as my own being (WH, p.73).

This is a direct violation of the Western concept of subjective individuality, in which human, fleshy, material bodies are whole and complete, and home to only one resident self. With one body and one self, each body exists separately and individually. Heathcliff is part of Catherine's being, part of, or a component of herself. She means this as more than mere metaphor, even though she appears to use a simile to illustrate this unification with Heathcliff. However, her choice of elements of nature in constructing her simile, work to make her meaning literal. The eternal rocks serve as an indication of the underlying 'natural' reality of their intermingled selves, contrasting with the 'natural' reality of her ephemeral love for Linton.

Catherine's naturalisation of this construction of selfhood contradicts the naturalisation of the construction of selfhood in wider culture. This is not only an alternative version of the self; it also suggests the malleability and changeability of the self. Catherine and Heathcliff were not born with conjoined selves, but become joined through their environment. Implicated in Catherine's constructed self, is the very landscape upon which she and Heathcliff formed their bond, running free upon the moors as children.

Catherine's non-conformist presentation of self is further problematized through the subsequent fracturing of her identity and loss of bodily identification. In her state of delirium, she is unable to recognise herself in the mirror:

"Don't *you* see that face?" she enquired, gazing earnestly at the mirror.

And say what I could, I was incapable of making her comprehend it to be her own (WH, p.109).

This fracturing or fragmenting of the self on Catherine's part is the opposite of her unification of self with Heathcliff. It is presented as pathological, part of her continued decline and eventual death. Perhaps the ascription of pathology to this fractured state indicates the favouring of a unified understanding of the self within *Wuthering Heights*. On the other hand, that Catherine's decline can be inferred to originate with her (self) enforced separation from the other aspect of herself (Heathcliff), suggests that the novel favours the possibility of alternative constructions of the self.

Human nature and its formulation in the concept of the self may be encountered in *Wuthering Heights*. Readings of *Wuthering Heights* may be informed by conceptions of self. The assumption of a naturalised self can be problematic. Carroll (2008) invokes Darwinian evolutionary theory to provide a framework for understanding the concept of human nature in *Wuthering Heights*, seeing convergence with what he believes to be Brontë's 'folk concept' of human nature[17]. Before addressing the foundational point, it is worth focussing on the normative impulse that he reads in the text (p.243). On the one hand 'Brontë shares with her projected audience a need to affirm the common sympathies that propel the novel toward a resolution in romantic comedy' (p.245). On the other hand, 'her figurations also embody impulses of emotional violence that reflect disturbed forms of social and sexual development' (p.243). This is embodied in the eventual marriage in prospect for Hareton and Cathy, which Carroll argues follows generic forms of comedy. This generic positioning is juxtaposed with an undercurrent of violent conflict, explicable through a biological understanding of human nature.

This approach requires the 'identification of human nature as a central point of reference (Carroll, 2008, p.246). The Conflicts which play out in *Wuthering Heights* are explained as an inevitable and endemic aspect of human nature. This is relevant to the complex family relationships within this novel, which are consequences of the Darwinian notion of 'the survival of the fittest', even within kinship. Carroll explains that this principle, theorised by scientific enquiry, is manifested in folk psychology, an unconscious awareness of the importance of kinship loyalty and genetic self-interest. This explains how Brontë manages to be Darwinian before Darwin.

Kinship is a narrative shaping theme within *Wuthering Heights.* Inherited characteristics and temperaments are highly visible and notable. Heathcliff and Isabella Linton are both strong. Heathcliff is obviously so; Isabella's conflict with him and her escape from Wuthering Heights through the snow demonstrate her own strength. However, their son Linton Heathcliff is 'a pale, delicate, effeminate boy' (WH, p.155). Catherine is physically robust and determined, while Edgar Linton is

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[17] Darwinian approaches to literary studies seek to understand texts by placing them within a scientific framework and taking evolutionary theory as a foundational explanation for cultural and literary phenomena. This involves making interpretations and analyses based on understandings of human nature derived from a knowledge of genetics and adaptation. A suitable anthology of Darwinian approaches is provided by Boyd, B., Carroll, J. and Gottschall, J. (eds) (2010).

weak and 'wanted spirit', as Nelly Dean attests (WH, p.54). Their daughter, the younger Cathy is 'soft and mild as a dove'. However, an awareness of inherited dispositions on the part of Emily Brontë need not be explained through folk psychology motivated by an unconscious biological impulse: a simpler explanation is that such an awareness comes from observational association. The explanation for this does not require the invocation of an underlying human nature. Furthermore, the patterns of inheritance seem most unlike patterns: offspring fail to follow their parents in characteristics in any kind of predictable way. This perhaps accords with lived experience, but does not need to be supported by a theory in order to justify its presence in *Wuthering Heights.*

Kinship loyalties within the novel are weak, which seems at odds with the principle of the favouring of close kin. Heathcliff, for example, evidently feels no urge to promote his genes through his sickly son, whom he, perhaps gleefully, predicts will 'not win twenty!' (WH, p.186).

Carroll's reading of *Wuthering Heights* assumes a biological conception of the self which depends upon a biological and genetic, and therefore material conception of the self. Both dualistic and materialistic conceptions of the self can be seen as contradictory elements of Western constructions of the self which are present in *Wuthering Heights.*

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of grotesque realism and its expression in the grotesque body is its undermining of the stability of the self. The idea of unity of the self and the atomisation of society into indivisible individual beings is a central strand of Western culture and thought. It is expressed in Descartes' *cogito.* The Cartesian view of the self as 'the unextended', the polar opposite of the extended material world, underpins the rational approach to discussion of the self, and allows the continued conceptual existence of the soul within rational thought. Cartesian dualism, as a rational attempt to find an axiomatic basis for justifying the belief in God is part of the tradition which extends at least as far back as classical antiquity. It finds tension with the materiality of empiricism which only sees reality in that which can be measured. The material self is quite capable of being divided. Far from being eternal and unchanging, it ends at death; it is subject to change and is therefore unstable.

In *Wuthering Heights*, the instability of the self is present in Catherine's expression of her love for Heathcliff. It is not love in the conventional sense, in which there is a desire on the part of the self for another. Catherine identifies Heathcliff with herself: 'he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.' (WH, p.71). It is as if Catherine's self is divided between two material bodies: she and Heathcliff possess the same soul. Her use of the word 'soul' is illustrative of the intellectual tension between the dualistic tendency of Western thought and the inescapable imperative of empirical materialism. Reference to the soul makes the instability of identity more culturally palatable, since it is couched in pseudo-theological terms. Furthermore, the indivisibility of the souls is re-asserted in her oneness with Heathcliff. Nonetheless, it does represent the slip of identity, and an uncertainty surrounding Catherine's selfhood. Her love for Heathcliff is really a self-love, which gives her no pleasure, since it is merely the default state of her existence, rather than the interaction with a desired other.

A related aspect of the Western conception of self which is present in *Wuthering Heights* is the supernatural and its relation to rational concepts of the self. Lockwood's dream encounter with Catherine's ghost can be explained rationally as a consequence of his troubled sleep in her former room at Wuthering Heights. 'But' Nelly Dean tells Lockwood

> 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 – Idle tales, you'll say, and so say I. Yet that old man by the kitchen fire affirms he has seen two on 'em, looking out of his chamber window, on every rainy night since his death (WH, p.299).

In addition, Nelly has encountered a shepherd boy who, along with his sheep, will not pass the spot where he too has seen the apparitions. Nelly states her belief that

> He probably raised the phantoms from thinking, as he traversed the moors alone, on the nonsense he had heard his parents and companions repeat (WH, p.299).

The equivocality of the text over the existence of the supernatural is demonstrated in this episode, and could be seen as an expression of conflicted notions with regard to the uncanny in the face of the rational. Nelly Dean is sceptical, yet disquieted. She looks to rational explanation: the man is 'old' and, it is implied, may not be endowed with mental clarity and so could be mistaken. His senses have failed to recreate a mental model that accords with the real, objective world. The boy is a victim of his imagination, which together with the influence of 'Idle tales' and the loneliness of the moors, had affected him psychologically. Whether the spectres can be explained away is left unresolved. The supernatural is at odds with the rational, and yet a stated adherence to the latter is insufficient to dismiss it entirely. A belief in the existence of an individual's eternal soul, and a spiritual realm cannot sit happily with a materialistic world-view. However, both of these positions are implied by a Western and Enlightenment view of human nature in relation to the self.

It is also significant that the 'Idle tales' emanate from 'country folk', from whom, at the moment she relates this episode, Nelly Dean distances herself. They are superstitious, seeming less conflicted by considerations of the rational, and less likely to be governed by the life of the mind than the direct information from their senses, upon which they cannot ably reflect and which they cannot readily question. The overbearing social influence of his parents and peers and their 'storytelling, suggests that the shepherd boy is less individuated than rational people, who make their own educated choice about what to believe. Their rurality positions them as possessive of an uncomplicated irrationality. Their simple thoughts and beliefs allow them to readily admit to the reality of a supernatural world. The sophisticated urbanite however, takes the complexity and contradictory world view as a sign of awareness of the unfathomable complexity of creation, derived from education and understanding.

Conclusion

A reading of *Wuthering Heights* which focusses on nature as a category of rural othering reveals some interesting connections. *Wuthering Heights* deals with the rural and nature can be seen as a significant aspect of the construction of rurality. Within the construction of nature, the adoption of the Bakhtinian concept of the grotesque is very productive. *Wuthering Heights* describes a range of grotesque practices and events. The descriptions of nature, and especially of animals within the text, gives opportunity to observe bodily transgression. Such transgression, as a carnivalesque overturning of dominant modes of thought which coordinate a system of Western values, is at odds with a belief in the spiritual, or of the existence of an eternal soul. An attack on these beliefs is worryingly (for Victorians) at odds with a belief in Christian spirituality and with a Romantic view of nature as sublime. At the same time, it confirms the belief in a materialistic world view implied by a growing rationalistic and scientific hegemony.

A simultaneous belief in both the spiritually Romantic and the scientifically material may seem contradictory, or be difficult to reconcile, resulting in a cultural disquiet. The application of the Bakhtinian concept of grotesque realism to Emily Brontë's novel reveals the presence of these two apparently contradictory understandings of nature. On the one hand, the rationalist sensibility associated with the Enlightenment and the forces for social change producing industry, capitalism and urbanisation. On the other hand, the antagonistic presence of Romantic ideas which seek to elevate nature to the sublime.

The relationship between these opposing ideas and their orientation towards the urban/rural binary is complex. The rationalist-materialist position regards nature as implacable material fact, outside of the realm of humanity or human value. It is available for dominion and control through human interaction. Within this view nature is radically other. This, implies a denial of traditional views of human and natural essence as being stable and unified and posits the ephemerality of humanity, which is merely the fluid configuration and reconfiguration of matter, endlessly transgressing the boundaries of self. It seems to chime with the grotesque body, while challenging the traditional, spiritual view.

The Romantic position, which is a reaction against the rationalist position, also asserts the implacability of nature, but also imbues it with values and presents it as a unified, eternal whole with shades of spiritual meaning; humanity is unwise to seek dominion over it. In both cases, nature is viewed as the other of civilization and of conscious and rational thought and human agency. There are implications for the construction of rurality in *Wuthering Heights*. In its binary alignment with the natural, the rural can be seen as an embodiment of scientific and materialist explanations of nature. Thus, the rural is closely involved with cycles of life and death. It embodies the material reality of life as transient and ephemeral (as opposed to eternal). *Wuthering Heights,* dramatises both ideologies. In the visceral presence of its animalia and the mingling rotten flesh of Catherine and Heathcliff, nature is here as material fact. In the awesome bleakness of the moors which connect with Catherine and Heathcliff's beings on a profoundly spiritual level, and in the suggestion of their eternal ghostly presence it finds a Romantic opposition. *Wuthering Heights* others the rural on both counts.

At the same time, 'country folk' are beholden to an unreconstructed, pre-rational, superstitious belief in the supernatural which puts them at odds with the progressive, modern world. Nelly Dean's hypocritical denigration of these beliefs demonstrates that they are a projection of an urban and educated unease with these conflicted notions. Nonetheless, the rural is cast as the other, both in terms of social practice and belief.

Chapter 6: Deviance, rurality and *Wuthering Heights*

Introduction

This chapter continues to explore a central theme of Chapter 3, namely the othering of the rural by means of the attribution of a separate set of values and social norms. The implications of this for a reading of *Wuthering Heights* are explored. As already discussed throughout this thesis, urban and rural separation is conditioned by forces associated with the Enlightenment, industrialisation and the rise of capitalism. Social changes associated with these conditions have their origin in hegemonic power structures, which can be labelled bourgeois, and are associated with urban centres. The growth of such urban centres is posited as a factor which embeds the new social norms within patterns of social class. New social norms are associated with these social structures. Constructed rurality is distinguished by its failure to adopt such norms, and so to deviate from them.

Consideration is given to the expression of revulsion towards *Wuthering Heights* among the Victorian readership, if not to the novel as a literary work then to the nature of its subject matter: the depiction of behaviours and practices which transgress Victorian norms and values. This revulsion gives rise to a revealing defence, or explanation by Emily's sister Charlotte Brontë. This leads onto an examination of the construction of the author herself, as a 'literary' character.

Wuthering Heights is explored as a text which presents rural social transgression in relation to emergent social norms related to social hierarchies. These are a number of ways in which such transgressions are apparent in this novel, for example in the way domestic refinements manifest themselves differently at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Rather than survey these comprehensively, I have chosen in the latter half of the chapter to focus on the presence of deviance in the linguistic features of the novel, especially the representation of dialect and speech patterns among the characters. This is because the presentation of 'authentic' dialect acts as a marker, not only of social hierarchies, but as an aspect of the performativity of rural separation from urban culture: it creates and makes plain the connection between changing cultural values, social class and geographical location.

According to Lady Eastlake, writing in *The Quarterly Review* in 1848, *Wuthering Heights* is quite unlike *Jane Eyre* in that finding

> the aspect of the Jane and Rochester animals in their native state, as
> Catherine and Heathfield [sic], is too odiously and abominably pagan to be
> palatable even to the most vitiated class of English readers. With all the
> unscrupulousness of the French school it combines that repulsive vulgarity in
> the choice of its vice which supplies its own antidote. (Lady Eastlake, cited in
> O'Neill, 1968, p.49).

This is an aggressively damning judgement which indicates how she felt Emily's novel to be unacceptable. Exactly what was it about *Wuthering Heights* that led Lady Eastlake to condemn it so roundly? The phrase 'odiously and abominably', can be taken as a set of emotional intensifiers, but why 'pagan'? Furthermore, her assessment of the novel as unpalatable is directed at the questionable taste of those who would enjoy it, and an indication of their debasement, as well as perhaps, a fear that the novel might actively corrupt. Finally, she implies that the level of unscrupulous vulgarity required to produce such a work might be expected of the French, but in England it is unacceptable. *Wuthering Heights* betrays the construction of rurality in mid-Victorian England as a repository for national essence 'in a sentimental version of the nature idyll' (Bunce, 1994, p.41).

The term 'pagan' seems to suggest that the novel lies outside the values of Christian society, operating within a different moral framework, unobservant of Christian norms, and is therefore uncivilized and in a primordial state, untouched by progress. Perhaps Lady Eastwood is thinking less of the pagans of the classical world than of the pre-Christian Britons. The unscrupulousness to which she refers is the use of shock and sensation, exciting human prurience and exploiting base instincts. This practice is identified with the other – the French. Subsumed within this is an identification of the novel's events with foreign otherness, and therefore an identification of the rural with the other.

As an indication of the popular reception of *Wuthering Heights* on its initial publication, it is worth turning attention to Charlotte Brontë's preface to the 1850 edition.

I have just read over 'Wuthering Heights', and for the first time, have obtained a clear glimpse of what are termed (and perhaps, really are) its faults; have gained a definite notion of how it appears to other people – to strangers who know nothing of the author; who are unacquainted with the locality where the scenes of the story are laid; to whom the inhabitants, the customs, the natural characteristics of the outlying hills and hamlets in the West-Riding of Yorkshire are things alien and unfamiliar (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman, 1998, p.17).

Charlotte's preface is at once an acknowledgement of the difficulties the novel will present, a defence against criticism that may ensue as a result, and a construction of her sister's persona. It offers a version of Emily Brontë that is firmly planted within an assumption of rural otherness. Charlotte acknowledges the otherness of the world of *Wuthering Heights*, imagining how it might be received by 'strangers' (an interesting choice of word since, as discussed in Chapter 3, rural people are often depicted as being hostile towards, or unused to, strangers). These 'strangers would have made their judgements because they 'knew nothing of the author' and were 'unacquainted' with the locality in which the story takes place. To them, 'the inhabitants, the customs, the natural characteristics of the outlying hills and hamlets in the West Riding of Yorkshire are things alien and unfamiliar.' The readers of *Wuthering Heights* are not the rural people of Yorkshire. Charlotte's reference to 'customs' and 'natural characteristics' is revealing. The perceived faults of the novel, as reported to her by the strangers, are not its depictions of shocking violence, cruelty or implied necrophilia, but alternative modes of living, or the violation of everyday behavioural norms. It could be assumed that Charlotte is using characteristic understatement, but she continues:

To all such, *Wuthering Heights* must appear a rude and strange production. The wild moors of the north of England can for them have no interest; the language, the manners, the very dwellings and the household customs of the scattered inhabitants of those districts, must be to such readers in a great measure unintelligible, and – where intelligible – repulsive (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998 pp. 17-18).

Like Lady Eastwood, Charlotte appears to blur the distinction between the rural culture of Yorkshire, the version of that culture constructed in *Wuthering Heights* and the novel itself as a cultural product. The rudeness of its contents make the novel itself a rude product, an uncivilized piece of art. It was 'hewn in a wild workshop. With simple tools, out of homely materials' (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998, p. 20). Charlotte invokes Emily's muse in the form of a sculptor, who has carved it from a moorland crag. Its head is 'savage, swart, sinister… wrought with a rude chisel', a mixture of power 'colossal, dark, and, frowning, half-statue, half rock' emerging from beauty, 'mellow grey, and moorland moss…blooming bells and balmy fragrance' (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998, p. 20)

She also conflates the wildness of the moors, with the behaviours of the 'scattered inhabitants' in a way that is demonstrates the intrinsic involvement of landscape within the construction of rurality (as discussed in Chapter 7). That readers are likely to find the novel 'unintelligible', indicates that they are entirely removed from the rural as lived experience. Repulsion can be taken as a symptom of conformity which arises when encountering unfamiliar values and behaviours.

Charlotte sees the novel's rusticity as a 'charge' which she must 'admit' on her sister's behalf. 'It is moorish, and wild, an knotty as a root of heath.' This is because Emily was 'a native and nursling of the moors.' Here again is the conflation of landscape and cultural mores within the notion of rurality. In addition, the individual is a product of the environment. For Emily,

> her native hills were far more to her than a spectacle; they were what she lived in, and by, as much as the wild birds, their tenants, or as the heather, their produce. Her descriptions of the scenery, then, of natural scenery, are what they should be, and all they should be (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998, p. 18).

Charlotte suggests that Emily's own rusticity was beyond her control: she is a part of nature, rather than one who acts upon it. The landscape acted as her muse: perhaps the town would not have provided her with any inspiration. This indicates that Charlotte assumes an abiding romantic association between rurality and the artistic spirit. The urban is the place of everyday life (and of humanity) unsuitable for

inspiration (at least of this kind): 'Doubtless, had her lot been cast in a town, her writings, if she had written at all, would have possessed another character' (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998, p. 18). Perhaps she is asserting a denial of the commerciality of artistic production, especially of novel writing. Her presentation of Emily as unworldly is itself the expression of a wish to attach her sister to the sublime and to disassociate her from vulgar concerns:

> Had Ellis Bell been a lady or a gentleman accustomed to what is called 'the world', her view of a remote and unclaimed region, as well as of the dwellers therein, would have differed greatly from that actually taken by the home-bred country girl. Doubtless it would have been wider – more comprehensive (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998, p.18).

It is interesting that 'the world' is identified with the culture of the town (not even London, but any town), and that this culture is comprehensive and wide: it provides a full understanding of life and establishes the world within a 'true' contextual framework. In contrast, the rural perspective possessed by Emily, within her 'remote and unclaimed region' gives only a partial or fragmented understanding of totality.

Emily herself is further removed in that although she closely observes the rural people scattered in the landscape around her, she is untainted by any actual involvement with them: '

> she knew them, knew their ways, their language, their family histories; she could hear of them with interest, and talk of them with detail, minute, graphic, and accurate; but *with* them, she rarely exchanged a word (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998, p. 18)

It is perfectly possible that this accurately represents Charlotte's perception of her sister's life. However, a doubt remains: is Charlotte trying to remove from her sister any taint that might accompany close contact, friendship or cultural interaction with the locals? Readers who are repulsed by the content of the novel, might find it unacceptable that the novelist herself arose from the same culture.

Emily then, is a child of rural nature and landscape, but she remains outside of its human and cultural side, the ways, language and histories of its people. What is so

wrong with them? The sensibilities against which Charlotte defends Emily are manifestly those of the largely urban-dwelling middle classes, the readership of *Wuthering Heights* whose ways, language and histories have been normalised under their own circumstances. As Eagleton (1976) points out, Catherine's relationship with Heathcliff takes her 'outside the family and society into an opposing realm which can be adequately imaged only as "Nature"' (p.121). Nature is classless; people are not. This is perhaps why Emily must be naturally but not culturally rural.

It is important to discuss the role of social stratification and its effect on determining the values assigned to *Wuthering Heights* and the behaviour of its characters. Certainly, the outward behaviour of individuals in the nineteenth century was a strong marker of social class. The standard view is that the emergence of the industrial bourgeoisie was the driving factor which led to manners and etiquette in all their forms to be crucial in establishing, and demonstrating social class.

The retreat of feudal ritual, the increase in social mobility and the anonymity of urban life made it all the more necessary to read the outward signs of social class, in order to establish which direction respect should flow. It must be noted that there is a relationship between norms which act as markers of social hierarchies and those which are markers of differences between urban and rural cultures. The importance of land ownership as a marker of social status was diminished: 'In 1712 in *The Spectator*, Joseph Addison had proposed that it was not the possession of broad acres that set one apart from the vulgar mass, but rather the ability to take pleasure in the consumption of landscape as an aesthetic object' (Landry 2001, p.15). Social relations informed by a feudal mentality 'were most likely to be practiced where older, less socially polarised patterns of behaviour held out against urbanized modernity' (Landry, 2001, p.11).

 So called 'polite culture' as a marker of status emanated from the growing prosperity of provincial towns, which became centres of leisure and culture. This extended to 'members of the aristocracy as well as many wealthier gentry and farmers' (Landry, 2001, p.2). Landry recounts how 'In *The Farmer's Boy* of 1800, the farm worker and shoemaker-turned-poet, Robert Bloomfield, lamented the coming of 'Refinement', which had polarised rural culture along class lines, dividing the plebeian from the polite' (Landry, 2001, p.2). This divide can be seen in the way that Wuthering

Heights fails to observe a strict demarcation between the classes, for example in the 'shared family sitting-room' at the Heights, 'which includes kitchen and parlour' (WH, p.2). This contrasts with

> The delicate, spiritless Lintons in their crimson-carpetted drawing-room are radically severed from the labour which sustains them; gentility grows from the production of others, detaches itself from that work (as the Grange is separate from the Heights), and then comes to dominate the labour upon which it is parasitic' (Eagleton, 1976, p.122).

Wuthering Height is open to interpretations which see it as satirising or criticising genteel culture as a hypocritical suppression of the realities of domination through production: 'the genteel culture of the Lintons, surviving as it does on the basis of material conditions it simultaneously conceals' (Eagleton, 1976, p.124). This suggests that, beneath the surface, the Grange is really as rural as the Heights.

Changing social relations through industrialisation determine that such distinctions were necessary. Gunn (2007) notes that

> As part of this picture [of rapid nineteenth-century industrialisation] the cities were seen as the birthplace and home of a new breed of self-made industrialists who came to form the core of an authentic British "middle class" during the course of the nineteenth century…Their influence meant that Britain could be termed a "middle-class" society by 1850 (p.10).

However, the consensus on this within social history has been undermined by a questioning of the validity of its assumptions: that the pace of industrialisation has been exaggerated, that the nature of British industrial decline has been misunderstood, that the role of gender in social formation has been underplayed and that the notion of the importance of class as a form of identity must be subjected to greater scepticism. Such a lack of consensus can be seen as the presence of competing narratives over the construction of historical discourse.

'The cities developed as regional as well as industrial capitals' Exchanges and cloth halls symbolised this. 'In Lancashire, manufacturers were divided between "town" and "country". Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester had provinces, but even they

were challenged by Bradford and Sheffield' (Gunn, 2007, p.12). Within such a process, the inhabitants of these cities, while retaining their own separate identities, will have developed an analogous sense of connection, that they were significantly similar to each other, while being different from the lives led outside of themselves. This represents the emergence of a sense of the urban as a unified category, against which a unified rurality could emerge. Travel and education would ensure that a shared middle class culture, with its roots in the urban centres, would emerge, further homogenising middle-class identities, and therefore urban identities. Further down the social scale, the uniqueness of each urban identity would have been more keenly felt, thus, cultural regionalism is seen as a marker of inferior status. The Earnshaws as a 'self-consciously ancient and respectable family' (Eagleton, 1976, 2006, p.121) are aloof from these new identities. The continuance of their respectability, if Lockwood's reactions to them are anything to go by, is questionable.

Misanthropy

Bourgeois culture was characterised partly by what Gunn describes as 'the cult of the home'; in addition there were 'the burgeoning networks of voluntary associations, fostering sociability and cultural improvements' (Gunn, 2007, p.27). On both counts, the individuals described in *Wuthering Heights* are aberrations. The isolation of Wuthering Heights is very striking to Lockwood early in the novel. He refers to Heathcliff as 'The solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with' (WH p.1). 'Solitary' implies 'only', but also 'remote' and even 'lonely'. It is characteristic of Lockwood's comments with respect to his new location that the positive is mixed with the negative, and his apparent admiration is simultaneously undermined. He asserts that

> This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's heaven (WH, p.1).

The idea that the region would be perfect for those who would shun human company, carries with it the expectation that it is indeed populated by misanthropists, hostile to outsiders. Lockwood's admiration for the landscape is belied by his assertion that 'Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation

between us' (WH, p.1). Heathcliff's initial (and continued) reserve is characteristic of rural misanthropes: Lockwood relates that Heathcliff

> little imagined how my heart warmed to him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat (WH, p.1).

Lockwood initially believes that he and Heathcliff are kindred spirits in their misanthropy. However, Lockwood's misanthropy is relative, perhaps to some extent its assumption is ironic. In any case, it is soon put into perspective by his experiences at Wuthering Heights: 'I'm now quite cured of seeking pleasure in society, be it country or town. A sensible man ought to find sufficient company in himself' (WH, p.23). However, Lockwood does not, perhaps cannot, follow through with this, since he spends much of his time in Yorkshire in the company of Nelly Dean, undermining his claim that 'I, who had determined to hold myself independent of all social intercourse, and thanked my stars that, at length, I had lighted on a spot where it was next to impracticable' (WH, p.28).

Lockwood even encounters misanthropy and xenophobia in the non-humans:

> I took a seat at the end of the hearthstone opposite that towards which my landlord advanced, and filled up an interval of silence by attempting to caress the canine mother, who had left her nursery, and was sneaking wolfishly to the back of my legs, her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering for a snatch.
>
> My caress provoked a long, guttural snarl (WH, p.4).

Like its human counterparts, this dog is suspicious of strangers and lacks 'manners'; it follows its natural instinct for self-preservation, rather than trained social behaviour. In Chapter 5, the presence of animals is discussed in more depth. It is worth noting once again that the status of animals as pets was developed by nineteenth-century urban bourgeois culture. Lockwood protests that his host 'might as well leave a stranger with a brood of tigers!' (WH, p.5). Heathcliff explains that 'Guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know

how to receive them' (WH, p.5). This makes the link between animal and human explicitly clear. The hostility of each is caused by the isolation from the influence of other humans and a failure to practice and hone suitable attitudes and behaviours, other than fear and violent hostility. Lockwood's offence of 'staling t' lanthern!' is met by the release of 'Gnasher' and 'Wolf'. These 'two hairy monsters flew at my throat, bearing me down' (WH, p.13). Heathcliff later gives the fact that they are unchained in the yard as a reason for Lockwood to avoid that space (WH, p.23). The animals themselves are agents of social control, enforcing the norms of Wuthering Heights within the boundaries of its jurisdiction. The nature of these norms and of their enforcement is something with which the stranger Lockwood is unfamiliar, allowing him to fall foul of them as if they are a trap. The Grange also uses dogs in this way: they are 'brought to the defence of civility' (Eagleton, 2005, p.124).To civilised culture, misanthropy is acceptable as long as it is meted out upon those of an inferior disposition, such as robbers, or gipsies, which Catherine and Heathcliff are assumed to be when apprehended at the Grange.

Heathcliff himself seems dimly aware of how cultivation exacerbates 'natural' conflict, as we see in his scornful account of the Linton children's squabbling; cultivation by pampering and swaddling natural drives, at once represses serious physical violence and breeds a neurasthenic sensitivity which allows selfish impulse free reign. "Natural aggression is nurtured both by an excess and an absence of culture – a paradox demonstrated by Catherine Earnshaw, who is at once wild and pettish, savage and spoilt' (Eagleton, 2005, p.124).

'I don't keep accommodations for visitors', Heathcliff states. This is certainly true, and not merely in the sense that there is no suitable bed for Lockwood. Wuthering Heights is not set up to receive guests or outsiders, but exists for the practical use of its dwellers. It is a physical manifestation of xenophobia. Heathcliff's distrust of outsiders transcends considerations of social class, and instead asserts, in effect, the urban/rural dichotomy. '"No, no! A stranger is a stranger, be he rich or poor: it will not suit me to permit any one the range of the place while I am off guard!" said the unmannerly wretch' (WH, p.13). The failure to recognise bourgeois hierarchies is a mark of the other; despite having the status at this point of a land-owning gentleman

farmer, Heathcliff sits outside Lockwood's bourgeois norms and firmly within the territory of 'the other' in such a way that his otherness adheres to his rurality.

Deviance in dialect

In his *Philological Essays* of 1859, Richard Garnett asserts that '…all agree in calling our standard form of speech the English language, and all provincial variations from it – at least all that assume a specific character – dialects.' (Chapman, 1994, p. 14). Rural dialects are either incidentally subject to the influence of these changes, or else they remain untouched and are recast as archaic. Passivity and archaism are defining characteristics of constructions of rurality.

Knowles (1997) describes a direct link between the sheer population of cities and the emergence of a distinctly urban dialect. He takes the example of Liverpool, which in 1700 had a population of around five thousand, growing to half a million by the time of the 1841 census. From the 1840s, he argues, a Liverpool dialect unlike that of the surrounding region had developed. The influx of migrants, especially from Ireland, had strongly influenced this change. This idea is a restating of the doctrine that cities are the location of activity, of change, of new dynamics which are the driving force behind the development of the modern. Knowles describes the spread of urban dialects 'to neighbouring small towns and then along local communication networks over the surrounding countryside' (Knowles, 1997, p. 144). The nature of the discourse used in this account presents a categorical link between small towns and the central hubs of the expanding cities, as if they are necessarily connected by the category 'urban'. The small towns are nodes on 'communication networks' made up of new infrastructure: roads, canals and railways, which carry the new dialects towards them. This activity bypasses the local areas of Lancashire, excluding the surrounding countryside. However, the rural 'medium' through which all this activity passes is only incidentally affected; it is a passive recipient of linguistic infection. The spread of this urban dialect eastwards is only limited by the presence of another conurbation, namely Manchester. Urban centres generate forces that have the power to interact with and repel each other.

Knowles also describes the emergence and spread of regional urban accents as 'a *de facto* challenge to the national supremacy of 'polite' London English' (p. 145).

This is a conflict between different versions of urban dialects. Rurality does not participate in this linguistic change but is irrelevant in the face of the linguistic forces of urbanisation.

In his *Course of Lectures in Elocution* (1762), Sheridan gives an account of the basis upon which the standardisation of English was to occur:

> Nay in the very metropolis two different modes of pronunciation prevail, by which the inhabitants of one part of town are distinguished from those of the other. One is current in the city, and is called the cockney; the other at the court-end, and is called the polite pronunciation. As amongst these various dialects, one must have the preference, and become fashionable, it will of course fall to the lot of that which prevails at court, the source of fashions of all kinds. All other dialects, are sure marks, either of a provincial, rustic, pedantic, or mechanic education; and therefore have some degree of disgrace annexed to them (Mugglestone, 2007, p. 155).

The prestigious dialect of the court became the standard version of English described and prescribed within the pages of eighteenth and nineteenth-century dictionaries and grammar-guides. Sheridan's narrative suggests an urban origin for the prestige dialect that continued to emerge. Blake (1996) gives a typical account of the origins of the Standard English dialect within the culture of the London elite, describing how the role of speech within social stratification began much earlier than the nineteenth-century. Blake sees the origins of the concept of the normalisation of one of the dialects of English in the period following the restoration of Charles II, which saw a succession of monarchs who were largely foreign, hardly spoke the language, or were not particularly influential (Charles, his successor James II, William of Orange, Queen Anne and the Hanoverians). The effect of this was to make the parliamentary class more influential than the monarchy in determining what was correct in terms of language. Furthermore, a backlash against the resulting promotion of foreign (especially French) concepts and practices, including linguistic ones, involved the rejection of any rigid centralised prescriptivism of English. Instead, the form of the English language grew naturally out of custom and usage. However it was the custom and usage of the influential class of property owning men: 'polite society'. Consequently, 'the gap between what was acceptable usage, that is polite,

and what was vulgar became more entrenched and pronounced at this time.' (Blake, 1996, p. 236).The lack of a centralised authority meant that correctness was not located within anything as arbitrary as an 'Academie' but exuded from the very fabric of what it meant to be English. This gave more weight to the process of normalisation than it would otherwise have had. Blake's argument that the parliamentary class was largely responsible for the emergence of Standard English adds weight to the narrative which associates it with the emergence of the bourgeoisie.

In the nineteenth-century the codification of Standard English (SE) and the development of Received Pronunciation (RP) became fully realised and widely accepted. The chief conduits for the transmission of SE and RP were family and school. The former ensured that the link between class and speech was reinforced. The latter played a significant role in allowing the emergent wealthy middle-class to achieve social status and rise up the social scale less impeded. 'Standard English is the dialect of education.' (Trudgill, 1983, p. 57). The link between education and dialect was firmly established during the nineteenth-century. The Anglican National Society (established in 1811) and the non-conformist British Society had both set out to educate the poor. Perhaps their work was seen as necessary to help offset social unrest and to help provide a workforce with the skills required for a rapidly growing industrial sector. Governmental recognition of the need for education followed, in the shape of the 1832 Reform Act, the first state education grant in 1833, the 1868 Reform Act and The Education Act of 1870.

'To anybody observing working-class speech through the eyes of middle-class Victorian England it must have seemed perfectly obvious that the common people had failed to learn English properly.' (Knowles, 1997, p. 121). The lack of a SE among the lower classes was seen as a demonstration of their lack of moral worth. 'An illiterate serf of the 1460s was someone who had not learned to read. An illiterate child of the 1860s had failed to learn to read.' (Knowles, 1997, p. 146). So rural dialect, which escapes the influence of the spread of linguistic change can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, the non-adoption of SE in rural locations leads to an association between rural and lower-class traits. The weakness of codes which demarcate social

strata puts rural culture out of step with urbane practices and is fundamental in the perception of rural otherness.

The importance of social class in the nineteenth-century was seemingly reflected in all aspects of life. It is generally accepted that the proletarianisation of the rural workforce in the previous century meant that the labour relations had long been based on the cash nexus and that old feudal hierarchies had been losing their basis in economic reality even before industrialisation took off (see, for example, Hobsbawm, 2001). However, feudal assumptions still manifested themselves, or perhaps it is truer to say that the urban bourgeois world had yet to deploy its inevitable cultural stamp. In a culturally feudal society, status is established through rank, which is itself determined by birth. As Wallech (1986) points out, 'Eighteenth-century concepts of status based on the language of "rank" associated a person's social position with a calculus of property, privilege, dress, education, honor, obligation, occupation [and] friendship' (p. 409). It follows that in a rural community in which the population is low enough for everyone to know an individual's birth status, any alteration in that status, upwards or downwards, is unlikely. For a growing population congregating in urban centres in which anonymous interaction was a reality and social mobility a greater possibility, outward appearance became crucial in proving status. The way an individual speaks is fairly reliable as an indicator of social status, since it is not easy to be successful in adopting unfamiliar speech patterns. Attempts to do so could lead to hypercorrection, especially of the aspirated 'h'. As Chapman notes (1994, p. 19) many Victorian authors, including Dickens, mock such attempts at social climbing. Speech is immediate in that it can be demonstrated by an utterance and also obvious in that varieties of speech are easily discerned by the listener. Therefore speech patterns became one of the most crucial outward signs of status during the nineteenth-century.

Smart's 1836 revision of *Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary* advises that '…the common standard dialect is that in which all marks of a particular place of birth and residence are lost and nothing appears to indicate any other habits of intercourse than with the well-bred and well-informed, wherever they may be found' (Chapman, 1994, p. 13). So by the time *Wuthering Heights* was published, accent and dialect indicative of regionality were already also indicative of low status. The term

'Received Pronunciation' was not coined until 1869 (by A. J. Ellis in *Early English Pronunciation*, according to Chapman, p.14). However, the normalisation of the accent of the metropolitan educated classes was, as Richard Garnet demonstrates in his *Philological Essays* of 1859, accepted much earlier: '…all agree in calling our standard form of speech the English language, and all provincial variations from it – at least all that assume a specific character – dialects.' (Chapman, 1994, p. 14).

Dialogue in the novel reveals character and relationships. All dialogue is artificial, even in novels which attempt 'realism'. Speech is made uniform for the printed page and variations in accent and dialect are tacitly ignored unless there is a specific purpose in their being represented. Standard spelling neutralises accent. The author must take deliberate steps to point out variations in speech, in order to point to differences in class, education and regionality. Deviant spellings and punctuation, contrasting with 'normal' English, in the form of RP and SE are very much in evidence in *Wuthering Heights.*

The reader of a novel brings personal experiences and expectations to bear in interpreting it. These include not only "lived" experience, but the experience of having read other novels and being versed in the codes therein. 'Fiction was generally expected to be "true to life" and could be unfavourably reviewed if it strained credulity too far.' (Chapman, 1994, p. 6) What does it take to convince the reader of reality? They must believe that what they are reading represents real life accurately, including the representation of dialogue. In the earlier part of the century, those who brought read novels were drawn from the class of people who had money, education and leisure. This still excluded those of a lower social class until later in the century. In In the journal *Nineteenth Century*, in January 1879, Trollope is led to comment that 'The number of those who read novels have become millions in England during the last twenty-five years, with our artisans, behind our counters, in third-class railway carriages, in our kitchens and stables, novels are now read unceasingly.' (cited in Chapman, 1994, p. 8). If Trollop is a reliable guide, this is a trend which began in the mid-1850s – after the publication of *Wuthering Heights*.

Brontë makes her readers aware of the gulf between themselves and the denizens of rural North Yorkshire through the representation of their speech. Their strange and mysterious local dialect is foregrounded. The reader is made aware of their accents

by the use of non-standard spelling. They use a register which is taciturn. They constantly use peculiar imagery based in nature and agriculture. In exploring the use of dialect and accent in the othering of rurality in *Wuthering Heights*, it is important to contextualise this by understanding the associations between language, social class, education and regionality in the nineteenth-century.

Many of the characters in *Wuthering Heights* speak a non-standard form of English. They use a regional, Yorkshire accent, dialect, colloquialisms and slang. In common with much other nineteenth-century literature, non-standard English is represented by non-standard spelling. Accent and pronunciation is also represented by non-standard spelling.

The degree to which pronunciation is represented by non-standard spellings correlates with the social position of the characters. Generally, the speech belonging to characters of a high social standing is represented with standard spelling. Standard spelling represents speech which would be straightforward to understand, since it is straightforward to read. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Joseph's speech is represented by spelling that deviates from standard spelling to such a degree that it suggests his pronunciation is equally incomprehensible.

Standard dialect and standard pronunciation, that is, the dialect and accent of the metropolitan elite is equated with high status and also with the variety of English possessed by the reader. Regional dialect and pronunciation are associated with the lower classes and in the case of characters such as Joseph and Hareton, with a lack of civilisation bordering on debasement. For the Victorians, it was not only the rural regional accent which suffered such scorn. The cockney accent was almost universally reviled by middle class commentators.[18] However, this excess of scorn for cockney was heightened by its very familiarity, and a sense of mild outrage that exposure to their betters had not somehow rubbed off on working class Londoners.[19] The language of these Londoners was reviled like that of an internal oppressed minority. The language of the Yorkshire characters in *Wuthering Heights*, by

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[18] The cockney accent is famously reviled in the novels of Gissing: he describes it as 'the bestial jargon which on the lips of the London vulgar passes for English' (*Born in Exile*, 1892, VII, Chapter 3).
[19] Gissing again: 'Mrs Yule's speech was seldom ungrammatical, and her intonation was not flagrantly vulgar, but the accent of the London poor, which brands as with hereditary baseness, still clung to her words, rendering futile such propriety of phrase as she owed to years of association with educated people' (*New Grub Street*, 1891, Chapter 7)

contrast, is alien, otherworldly. Not so much a source of class revulsion, as a source of curiosity and incomprehension.

Lockwood's character is frequently described as a 'framing' device for the novel. *Wuthering Heights* is his account of events. All other narrative voices, including that of Nelly Dean, are recorded through him. His narration takes the form of a memoir, a convention that is signalled in the very first sentence of the novel which begins with the date – '1801'. However, since this is a convention for storytelling, no issue is made over the distinction between written and spoken language. Lockwood provides a representation of the speech of the other characters which demonstrates his own linguistic assumptions and norms; the degree to which their accents and dialects diverge from his own is indicated through deviant spelling and sometimes conscious reflection. Implicit in the novel is an assumption that the reader will share Lockwood's Standard English dialect. They may not share his metropolitan origin, but as has been discussed, the influence of this form of speech had already had been widely adopted, or at least recognised, by the middle classes (the novel's primary readership) even in the regions.

As well as being represented without deviant spelling, Lockwood's speeches are composed almost entirely of words in their standard use. As Wiltshire (2005) explains, he eschews slang in favour of Latinate words. Wiltshire uses two examples: instead of 'Wuthering', Lockwood uses the phrase 'atmospheric tumult'. To describe Catherine's written account of crying, he reports that 'she waxed lachrymose'. Wiltshire makes the point that this demonstrates Lockwood's abstraction and detachment as an outsider to the region (WH, p. 19). However, it also demonstrates his relatively high level of education. Knowledge of Latinate words indicates a large learnt vocabulary, but also implies a familiarity with Latin, the language of elite education. Thus, Lockwood's speech is an indication of his education and social class as well as his urbanity and lack of regionality.

Lockwood's diction is characteristically verbose and observant of etiquette, in stark contrast to that he encounters on his first visit to *Wuthering Heights*.

> Mr. Lockwood, your new tenant, sir – I do myself the honour of calling
> as soon as possible after my arrival, to express the hope that I have not

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inconvenienced you by my perseverance in soliciting the occupation of Thrushcross Grange: I heard yesterday you had had some thoughts – (WH, p.1).

Lockwood's meandering politeness is met without reciprocation: Heathcliff replies, 'I should not allow any one to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it—walk in!' (p.1). Urban verbosity is in opposition to rural taciturnity. In response to Lockwood's initial greeting, Heathcliff answers with 'A nod' (WH, p.1).

Not only is Lockwood more verbose than his rural interlocutors, he is also conscious of and reflective upon this difference:

> The "walk in" was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, "Go to the Deuce!"… I felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than myself (WH, p.1).

Lockwood senses that the deficiencies in the use of language at Wuthering Heights form a continuity with those of its physical topography and built environment: 'even the gate over which [Heathcliff] leant manifested no sympathising movement to [my] words; and I think that circumstance determined me to accept the invitation' (WH, p.1). This theme is continued as Lockwood is aware that there is no introductory lobby at Wuthering Heights; the building dispenses with a spatial introduction to its interior: 'One stop brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here "the house" pre- eminently' (WH, p. 2). Language is firmly identified with the material reality of its use and context in this rural location.

Hostility to Lockwood's verbosity manifests itself even with the animals inside the house, comprising of

> the ruffianly bitch and a pair of grim shaggy sheep-dogs, who shared with her a jealous guardianship over all my movements.
> Not anxious to come in contact with their fangs, I sat still—but , imagining they would scarcely understand tacit insults, I unfortunately indulged in winking and making faces at the trio, and some turn of my physiognomy so irritated madam, that she suddenly broke into a fury, and leapt on my knees (WH, p.4).

Taciturnity is not confined to Heathcliff. Its manifestation in other characters demonstrates that it is a cultural, rather than individual trait. Catherine, like her father-in-law, lacks small-talk, appears poor at communicating and lacks the verbal etiquette Lockwood expects:

> She looked at me, leaning back in her chair, and remained motionless and mute.
> "Rough weather!" I remarked. "I'm afraid, Mrs. Heathcliff, the floor must bear the consequence of your servants' leisure attendance: I had hard work to make them hear me!"
> She never opened her mouth. I stared – she stared also. At any rate, she kept her eyes on me, in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable (WH, p.7).

In fact, this seems to be accepted behaviour at Wuthering Heights ('The business of eating being concluded, and no one uttering a word of sociable conversation' p.11), and by implication, a characteristic of those beyond the reach of urban influence.

The Lintons, occupying Thrushcross Grange, represent modern, bourgeois sensibilities in line with those of Lockwood and the reader. The Lintons are educated and mobile, members of the middle-class network. Their speech transcends region, lacks any trace of accent or dialect and is employed in a way that observes verbal decorum.

Mrs Linton expresses disgust at the young Heathcliff's cursing after he and Cathy are caught while spying on the Lintons through the window of Thrushcross Grange:

> A wicked boy, at all events… and quite unfit for a decent house! Did you notice his language, Linton? I'm shocked that my children should have heard it (WH, p.44).

Even Robert, the Linton's 'beast of a servant', addresses Heathcliff as a 'foul mouthed thief' (WH, p.13).

Use of profanity is endemic at Wuthering Heights, as Nelly Dean finds out on encountering the infant Hareton, whose 'Devil daddy' (Heathcliff) has taught him 'fine words' such as 'Damn the curate' (WH, p.97).

The young Isabella is described as 'lisping' her words, a description both childlike and effete as she attempts to annunciate accurately: 'Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, papa' (WH, p.125). When she is older and married to Heathcliff, her experience with Joseph at Wuthering Heights is set out in a letter she sends to Nelly Dean.

> It *was* rather a rough mess, I own, when poured into the basins; four had been provided, and a gallon pitcher of new milk was brought from the dairy, which Hareton seized and commenced drinking and spilling from the expansive lip.
>
> I expostulated, and desired that he should have his in a mug; affirming that I could not taste the liquid treated so dirtily. The old cynic chose to be vastly offended at this nicety; assuring me, repeatedly, that "the barn was every bit as gooid" as I, "and every bit as wollsome," and wondering how I could fashion to be so conceited; meanwhile, the infant ruffian continued sucking, and glowered at me defyingly, as he slavered into the jug (WH, p.125).

Her choice of multisyllabic Latinate words at once aligns her culturally and linguistically with Lockwood (and the reader) while separating and distancing her from her surroundings. She uses the verbs *commenced*, *expostulated*, *affirming* and *assuring* along with the adjectives *expansive* and *conceited*. At the same time her use of deviant spelling of Joseph's *wollsome* is identical to the method Lockwood uses in transcribing Nelly Dean's verbal accounts of dialogue, thus reinforcing a cultural and linguistic association between Isabella, Lockwood, Brontë and the reader.

Joseph's scornful ridiculing of Isabella's own accent may seem to turn the tables:

> "I shall have my supper in another room," I said. "Have you no place you call a parlour?"

"*Parlour*!" he echoed sneeringly, "*parlour*! Nay, we've noa *parlours*. If yah dunnut loike wer company, there's maister's; un' if yah dunnut loike maister, they's us" (p.125).

On showing her to her room, he continues

"Here's a rahm,"' he said, at last, flinging back a cranky board on hinges. "It's weel eneugh tuh ate a few porridge in. They's a pack o' corn i' t' corner, thear, meeterly clane; if yah're feared uh muckying yer grand silk cloes, spread yer hankerchir ut t' top on't".

The "rahm" was a kind of lumber-hole smelling strong of malt and grain; various sacks of which articles were piled around, leaving a wide, bare space in the middle.

"Why, man!" I exclaimed, facing him angrily, "this is not a place to sleep in. I wish to see my bed-room."

"*Bed-rume*!' he repeated, in a tone of mockery. "Yah's see all t' *bed-rumes* thear is – yon's mine." (WH, p.126)

Joseph obviously regards Isabella's accent as the one that is deviant, and the reader (who shares her accent) perhaps experiences a sudden sense of becoming 'othered'. However, this serves only to increase reader sympathy with Isabella's plight, rather than to cause any permanent shift in perspective, since Joseph's accent is represented with spelling that is deviant to the point of virtual incomprehensibility, or even to the point where it becomes comic: 'his perception of events can seldom, if ever, be shared by the reader' (Wiltshire 2005, p.27).

The presence of characters with accents such as that of Joseph is difficult enough for the reader of *Wuthering Heights*, a point which Charlotte Brontë is at pains to ameliorate in her preface to the 1850 edition of the novel. If Nelly Dean, the chief source of the story as told to Lockwood, was also represented with a deviant accent, *Wuthering Heights* would have been perhaps too challenging for the middle-class Victorian reader to attempt. Lockwood observes that 'Excepting a few provincialisms of slight consequence, you have no marks of the manners that I am habituated to consider as peculiar to your class' (WH, p.55). For example, Nelly explains that 'Joseph and I generally go to chapel on Sundays; the kirk, you know, has no minister now' (WH, p.280).

Other lower class characters exhibit varying degrees of dialect. A hostler informs Lockwood 'Yon's frough Gimmerton, nah! They're allas three wick after other folk wi' ther harvest.' (WH, p.271). His speech shows that the strangeness of the accent is not peculiar to Joseph. The Linton's servants seem to speak without regional dialect, as befits their employment in a genteel household. Robert the 'beast of a servant' supposes that Heathcliff and Cathy are being used by a robber gang, who 'were for putting them through the window, to open the doors to the gang after all were asleep, that they might murder us at their ease' (WH, p.43). A direct contrast can be drawn between Robert and Joseph, who in a parallel circumstance sets dogs on Lockwood: '"Maister, maister, he's staling t' lanthern!" shouted the ancient, pursuing my retreat. "Hey, Gnasher! Hey, dog! Hey Wolf, holld him, holld him!"' (WH, p.13).

Nelly is part-character and part-narrative device. How then to explain her lack of a regional accent and dialect, given her social status? The fact that Nelly Dean is a servant and of a low social class and yet does not speak with an accent requiring deviant spelling, or use restricted codes and dialect-derived colloquialisms might be expected to require explanation. Whereas she concedes to Lockwood that her level of education 'is as much as you can expect of a poor man's daughter' (WH, p.55), it is evident that that the circumstance requiring the greater explanation is that she is rural:

> I certainly esteem myself a steady, reasonable kind of body…not exactly from living among the hills and seeing one set of faces, and one series of actions, from year's end to year's end: but I have undergone sharp discipline, which has taught me wisdom; and then, I have read more than you would fancy, Mr Lockwood. You could not open a book in this library that I have not looked into, and got something out of also; unless it be that range of Greek and Latin and that of French—and those I know one from another (WH, p.55).

Reading serves as a handy metonym for education. The presence of the library at Thrushcross Grange again underlines the association between education, politeness, Standard English and urbanity. In Nelly, this bourgeois pursuit has acted as a counterweight to the stifling effects of rural life, with its narrow horizons and intellect-shrinking drudgery. It is interesting that Nelly's self-education has allowed her to spontaneously throw off not only her regional dialect, but also her accent. It is

as if 'correct' pronunciation as used by the elite classes is a corollary of any kind of learning, and will be naturally adopted by those who are no longer ignorant.

The transformative power of education forms an important theme towards the end of the novel. Catherine devotes much time to the education of Hareton, whose development had been wilfully stunted by his former master as an act of revenge on the Earnshaw family line. Hareton's speech is initially full of dialect. His conversations are 'drawled' (WH, p.97) and his accent 'vulgar'. Heathcliff had seen to it that Hareton had been kept illiterate, ignorant and uncivilized, 'reduced to a state of complete dependence on his father's inveterate enemy' (WH, p.166). However, the description of Catherine's and Hareton's 'radiant countenances bent over the page' (WH, p.280), demonstrates the inherent wholesomeness of education and literacy and also its necessity in gaining self-worth and respectability: 'both their minds tending to one point – one loving and desiring to esteem, and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed' (WH, pp.280-281). Hareton's literacy is necessary in order for the couple to form a meaningful relationship. The main objection to their endeavours comes from Joseph, who, as the most rustic and heavily accented character, represents the restrictive ignorance of a rural past in which literacy was unnecessary: 'Ony books ut ya leave, Aw sall tak intuh th' hahse… un it 'ull be mitch if yah find 'em agean; soa, yah mun plase yourseln!' (WH, p.280). With Heathcliff dead, the education of Hareton can continue unabated. When Lockwood overhears their 'lesson', Hareton happens to be in the process of reading out the Latinate word 'Contrary', and is reported to speak in 'deep but softened tones' (WH, p.273). His education has begun to divest him of his accent and dialect. Ultimately, education and literacy symbolise the superiority of the new, urban, bourgeois order, superseding an uneducated and illiterate rural past.

Whereas Nelly's language dispenses with rural dialect and accent, it retains its rusticity in its register. Her speech is peppered with phrases that resemble proverbs. She chastises Heathcliff for 'going to bed with a proud heart and an empty stomach' and follows this with 'Proud people breed sad sorrows for themselves' (WH, p.49). Such language puts Nelly in the role of a transmitter of folk wisdom. This is a stereotypically rural, pre-industrial, pre-scientific mode of knowledge transfer. Proverbial wisdom implies a backward-looking sensibility which locates Nelly firmly

within an archaic rural paradigm. In addition to proverbial speech, Nelly uses colourful similes rooted in rural experience. Heathcliff is described as 'Rough as a saw-edge, and hard as whinstone!' (WH, p.29), a description which alludes to rustic workplaces: the forest and the quarry. She goes on to describe Heathcliff's history using natural imagery: 'It's a cuckoo's, sir… And Hareton has been cast out like an unfledged dunnock!' (WH, p.30). While sick with measles, Heathcliff 'was as uncomplaining as a lamb' (WH, p.33). As a rural dweller Nelly reaches for such imagery unselfconsciously. She is not the only character to use such imagery. Speaking of Edgar Linton, Heathcliff tells Cathy 'this lamb of yours threatens like a bull!' (WH, p.101), and he intends to 'crush his ribs in like a rotten hazel nut' (WH, p.103). This demonstrates that the use of such imagery is not an individual but a cultural trait.

Since he also lived his early life as little more than a servant, Heathcliff himself might be expected to have grown up with an accent requiring representation with deviant spelling. However, all it took to save him from this fate was that 'Cathy taught him what she learnt, and worked or played with him in the fields' (WH, p.40). In addition, Heathcliff's long absence and possible military adventures have exposed him to a world beyond the regional confines of Wuthering Heights. The man whom Edgar Linton describes as 'the gipsy – the ploughboy' (WH, p.83) returns transformed:

> His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army…A half-civilized ferocity lurked… but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified, quite divested of roughness, though too stern for grace (WH, p.84-5).

Being 'half-civilized' and 'divested of roughness' must entail being devoid of a regional accent. The explanations for both Heathcliff's and Nelly Dean's lack of regional accents take some suspension of disbelief in the reader. The fact that Brontë is prepared to use relatively tenuous devices to enable them to speak with something like middle-class accents demonstrates the unacceptability of the regional rural accent.

Mr Earnshaw's and Hindley's dialogue are represented without deviant spelling. However, they frequently use archaic prepositions. Hindley berates Hareton for his

lack of filial affection: 'he deserves flaying alive for not running to welcome me, and for screaming as if I were a goblin. Unnatural cub, come hither!' (WH, p. 65). Also, the pronouns 'thee' and 'thou' are used as archaic forms of address denoting familiarity: '"Nay, Cathy," the old man would say, "I cannot love thee, thou'rt worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God's pardon. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!"' (WH, p.35). As Wiltshire (2005) points out, this 'signifies their lack of modernity' (WH, p.21). However, lack of modernity in this context further signifies their membership of an obsolete and wholly rural social class. Catherine Earnshaw has no trace of this archaism, or any other form of dialect, 'portending her future upward social mobility and attractiveness to the gentrified Edgar Linton' (Wiltshire 2005). The connection between her dialect and her destiny is therefore unrealistically teleological.

Joseph's accent is the most deviant of any character within the novel. Lockwood explains that he finds this a challenge, since 'his jaws worked like those of a cow chewing its cud, and rendered his speech difficult to understand' (WH, p.283). The transcription of phonemes (standard sounds) in the form of graphemes (standard written symbols) cannot be absolutely accurate. Within the nineteenth-century novel 'The speech even of uneducated characters is better structured, richer in vocabulary, than absolute realism would demand.' (Chapman, 1994, p. 3). Victorian novelists did not believe it necessary to represent their characters' regional accent with complete phonological accuracy. It was enough to indicate difference in accent with a modest selection of dialect words and the limited use of deviant spelling. The reader suspends disbelief in approaching such dialogue. Joseph's speech however, is overwrought with deviancy and is almost unreadable:

> Yon lad gets war un' war! ... He's left th' yate ut t' full swing, and miss's pony has trodden dahn two rigs uh corn, un plottered through, raight o'er intuh t' meadow! Hahsomdiver, t' maister 'ull play t' devil to-morn, and he'll do weel. He's patience itsseln wi' sich careless, offald craters - patience itsseln he is! Bud he'll nut be soa allus – yah's see, all on ye! Yah munn'nt drive him aht uf his heead for nowt! (WH, p.74).

Why was it necessary for Brontë to be so 'accurate' in representing Joseph's speech? A clue can be found in the 'Editor's Preface to the New edition of *Wuthering*

Heights', published in 1850, after Emily's death (cited in Stoneman, 1998, pp.17-20). Charlotte Brontë made the point of apologising to the reader for its 'faults'. These faults are partly in relation to the 'manners, dwellings and household customs' therein, but also to the language, which readers will find 'unintelligible, and – where intelligible – repulsive.' (C. Brontë, cited in Stoneman 1998, pp. 17-18).They 'will hardly know what to make of the rough, strong utterance[s]' of 'unlettered moorland hinds'. She also feels it necessary to justify the novel's dispensing with the practice of representing expletives by placing their initial followed by a line in place of the omitted letters. She describes this as 'weak and futile' (WH, p.325). In addition, Charlotte points out that Emily's depiction of the characters was not based on first-hand knowledge of rural people, since 'she had scarcely more practical knowledge of the peasantry amongst whom she lived, than a nun has of the country people who sometimes pass her convent gates' (WH, pp.325-6).

Emily Brontë's depiction of characters such as Joseph makes them alien and other to the reader. The impenetrability of such deviant spelling keeps the reader distanced from this rural culture. The reader experiences it as alien, not because of the social class of those depicted; otherwise the language of all the lower class characters would be presented in the same extreme way. Charlotte suggests that even Emily, embedded in the heart of the 'peasant' world, did not mix with them or speak to them. It could easily be imagined that the rendering of Joseph's speech is a deliberate act on the part of Brontë to represent rural culture as other.

Conclusion

Charlotte Brontë's defence of *Wuthering Heights* clearly demonstrates the transgressive nature of the novel. Her reconstruction of her dead sister Emily's character aims to make such transgression palatable for a wider readership. If readers can accept Emily's naivety, her otherworldliness, they may approach her novel as acceptable for their consumption (and – to echo the reception of another transgressive novel – that of their wives and servants). Whereas Charlotte is happy to admit that Emily's muse resides in the landscape and nature of her locality, she is keen to present he sister as culturally separate from the people of North Yorkshire. This indicates that whereas Romantic influences allow the connection of self with the natural environment, any intimation that Emily could have drawn inspiration for

the repulsive cultural practices and norms depicted in the novel from direct experience, even as a voyeur or detached observer, are to be rebutted. That Charlotte does not seek to dispel the idea that such transgressive practices and behaviours exist among those people indicates the entrenchment of the idea of urban and rural social separation.

The separation of urban and rural cultures and the identification of urbanity as the origin of 'polite culture' is dramatized in *Wuthering Heights* by the duality of the two households: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Whereas Wuthering House can be fully identified with outdated social hierarchies located in rurality, Thrushcross Grange appears to represent the advance of progress into the realm of the rural other. At the same time, Thrushcross Grange is not cocooned from its environment, as it is inextricably bound op in the events of the novel and is itself a component of the construction of rurality within the novel.

The misanthropy of Wuthering Heights is remarked upon by Lockwood, and this quality continues to resurface throughout the novel. *Wuthering Heights* contributes to an understanding of the rural as a sphere in which misanthropy flourishes. At the same time, the barbarities and cruelties at Wuthering Heights are not absent from Thrushcross Grange, but merely suppressed beneath a veneer of outward gentility. This can be regarded as an element of social satire in which gentility is a form of hypocrisy. It can also be seen as the implication of rurality in acts of barbarity, in either overt or hidden forms.

As a mark of social status, the advent of Standard English, providing a normative context for human expression is significant. Its advance is yet another effect of changing social relations, hierarchies and living conditions. It serves as a marker of social class, but also of regionalism. Obvious regionalism of speech is itself recast as a marker of either inferior social class or of outdated social practices. In *Wuthering Heights*, regional speech is denoted with deviant spelling, which in turn denotes its deviance of location. Deviant speech and the spatial otherness of regionalism go hand-in hand.

Standard English is also associated with education and is directly related changes in educational practices among the higher social classes. Therefore an association is

formed between rurality and low levels of education, which is reinforced by associations between the rural and the natural, the non-rational, the uncivilised and the socially inferior. In *Wuthering Heights* these alignments are strongly implied, reinforced and re-created.

Chapter 7: Space, rurality and *Wuthering Heights*

Introduction

This chapter continues to explore the relationship between spatiality and rural othering discussed in Chapter 3. The understanding of the relationship between the spatial and the rural provides a perspective for interpreting *Wuthering Heights*.

Consideration is given to the notion that space itself is a category imbued with otherness. Space is approached as an ideologically imbued construction. The experience of space as abstract void is a form of naturalisation, and, as discussed in Chapter 2 is conditioned by social forces whose origin can be historically situated in the period of industrialisation; there is an exploration of the suggestion that the abstraction of space and the increased importance of time measurement meant that space as a social category became associated with the archaic. The implications of this for rurality are considered and applied to a reading of *Wuthering Heights*.

Wuthering Heights is considered to be a spatially-oriented novel. Jakubowski sees this as tied-in with its strongly visual aspects:

> The employment of spatial dimensions in WH[20] (descriptions of landscapes as well as buildings and interiors) is indeed remarkably visual and its analysis essential for any approach to the novel. (Jakubowski, 2010, p. 53).

This is especially, but not exclusively, linked to the presence of landscape. This chapter explores the relationship between the characters, the landscape and the conditions of social change which are dramatized spatially in *Wuthering Heights*. Connections are made between this and the construction of an urban/rural binary in the novel. From here, rural-spatial themes are explored within the novel, focussing on categories of centrality and marginality, urban rural boundaries and the significance of mapping for the production of spatial meaning. Consideration is given to the meaning readers have attached to the meaning of the landscape in *Wuthering*

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[20] Jakubowski's abbreviation

Heights, in an attempt to connect the imagined landscape of the novel with the directly-experienced and mapped landscape of North Yorkshire.

The otherness of space.

As discussed in Chapter 3, space is not a fixed void. Its modern construction can be traced back to the Enlightenment, when philosophers and scientists, such as Descartes and Boyle introduced universally applicable approaches to understanding, based upon analysis and synthesis.

In abstraction, space is conceived as a surrounding and encompassing structure removed from necessary connection with particular places, or objects (or subjects); it becomes geometrical void. It is measured and delineated, parcelled-up and mapped. The conceptual division of space is exemplified by political borders which often do not correspond to features which can be directly experienced. This is superimposed or mapped onto the landscape. The landscape

> is envisioned as extended space containing features of various kinds. In one sense, landscape is two-dimensional, in that the subject encounters it on a two-dimensional plane. In another sense, it is three-dimensional, in that the subject encounters variations in altitude, in the form of hills, and valleys… The landscape is certainly identified with the ground; in an aeroplane, the subject 'looks down on' the landscape, rather than being 'in' the landscape. 'The bird's-eye view is not ours, unless we climb a tall mountain or fly in an airplane' (Tuan 1977, p.27).

The scientific approaches of the Enlightenment are utilised and vindicated by the progress of industrialisation. Spatial measurement becomes vital in the application of scientific understanding, methods and techniques to industrial processes, the success of which is further vindicated by commercial success. In addition, the new social order arises from the new economic systems; industrial capitalism creates new spaces for its workers, owners and managers. Thus, social order and the spatial conception correspond and are intertwined: The modern system of abstraction… was produced in relation to a complex set of problems which were simultaneously economic, political and administrative' (Poovey, 1995, p.31).

As Halfacree observes, 'the concept "rural" is inherently spatial' (2006, p.44). Landscape is an essential feature of rurality – an integral feature of its construction. The word "landscape" is more frequently attached to the rural. For the urban, another term is used: "cityscape". The rural landscape, unhindered by the artificial cliffs and canyons of the town, is open and able to be observed at a distance. It lacks the folds and crevices that the town contains. It can also appear vast and is considered spectacular, breath-taking and picturesque. Its versions are reproduced in idealised landscape paintings of Constable and others.

The archaism of space in *Wuthering Heights* can be observed in the relationship between landscape and power. As discussed in Chapter 2, the connection between these can be seen as suggestive of a transition from the old, agrarian way of life, with its origins in the feudal system to industrial production which does not depend on acres of land for power or profit. The attachment to the land associates Wuthering Heights, and its rural environment with the outmoded past. Jameson sees Heathcliff as a 'protocapitalist'. His wealth is acquired in his absence from Wuthering Heights, due to the 'alien dynamism of capitalism', which, on his return, 'is reconciled with the immemorial and cyclical time of the agricultural life of a country squiredom' (Jameson, 1981, p.128). Capitalism and its social structures are associated with 'elsewhere'.

Space as landscape, embodied in rural production and social hierarchies represents material access to outmoded social structures. The acres surrounding Wuthering Heights, and the ownership of these acres by Heathcliff give him the power of material control, which he is able to exert on those immediately around him. Real social status, it is strongly implied, can only be conferred by the adoption of the new, genteel, urban, bourgeois values represented by Thrushcross Grange.

Ownership patterns impart a meaning onto private space which differs from that in the town. Ownership in the town is of buildings, or tiny plots of land, but the land is always secondary. Ownership of space is ownership of buildings, which dominate in man-made dimensions: the city is a place of man-made, vertical space. This space cannot be wandered into unobserved or unchallenged. Clear boundaries are set up to mark the edges and the boundaries of what is owned. The physical space

matches the conceptual space of ownership. There is comfort in knowing which spaces are able to be legally occupied by the pedestrian.

The rural is two-dimensional. Ownership occurs over huge tracts. Boundaries between fields do not clearly indicate boundaries of ownership, at least not (crucially) to the outsider. One owner may claim many acres, and reside at a distance from the extent of the land property. Thus in the town, the very landscape ensures a level of privacy. Whereas in the fields, demarcations must be enforced, and spaces carefully zoned. Heathcliff invokes Joeseph's ire by failing to shut a gate, resulting in a pony causing damage:

> "Yon lad gets war un' war!" observed he on re-entering. "He's left th' yate ut t' full swing, and miss's pony has trodden dahn two rigs uh corn, un plottered through, raight o'er intuh t' meadow!" (WH, p. 74).

In the open working space of the field, surveillance can be enacted upon Heathcliff:

> "Und hah isn't that nowt comed in frough th' field, be this time? What is he abaht? girt eedle seeght!" demanded the old man, looking round for Heathcliff (WH, p.73).

Within the agricultural sphere, he must improvise privacy: "'I'll call him," I replied. "He's in the barn, I've no doubt"' (WH, p. 73).

His other option is to escape beyond the confines of the Heights: 'It's surely no great cause of alarm that Heathcliff should take a moonlight saunter on the moors, or even lie too sulky to speak to us in the hay-loft' (WH, p. 74). In Catherine's writings Heathcliff wants her to join him to 'have a scamper on the moors'. The landscape is a source of private pleasure to them, implying nascent sexual freedom (WH, p.17).

Rural space links agricultural practice and the openness of space, meaning that description is imbued with distance. Nelly Dean's describes 'a fine June day', when

> the last of the ancient Earnshaw stock, was born.
> We were busy with the hay in a far away field, when the girl that usually brought our breakfasts, came running an hour too soon, across the meadow and up the lane, calling me as she ran (WH, p. 56).

The 'far away field', 'the meadow' and 'the lane' combine into a single wide pastoral vision. The use of the phrase 'ancient stock', to describe the Earnshaws echoes 'livestock', connecting animal and human within the rural space.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Bell (2006, p.150) identifies three aspects of the idyllic rural landscape: firstly, the pastoral "farmscapes" of artisan agriculture; secondly the "wildscapes" of pre-cultural, pre-human, untamed wilderness; and thirdly the sporting "adventurescape". Each of these categories contains negative, anti-idyll potential in connotation and exaggeration. The categories of rural landscape identified by Bell can be usefully applied to the representation of rural landscape in *Wuthering Heights*: *farmscapes*, *wildscapes* and *adventurescapes*. These constructed versions of rural space are all present in some form in this novel. Their representation highlights the way in which the construction of rural space is associated with a pre-Enlightenment condition. Farmscapes are constructions of the rural which emphasise the agricultural, encapsulating a pastoral and also a georgic sensibility.

Agricultural activity is not foregrounded in this novel, but it is present as a constant feature, occasionally alluded to in various ways. 'Fields' are often mentioned as the location of work, toil and play: 'Cathy taught him [Heathcliff] what she learnt, and worked or played with him in the fields' (WH, p. 40). The fields are only vaguely defined. Where are they? How far away are they? Their location and presence are undefined, like that of the rural itself. At other times the descriptions veer towards the picturesque; the description of 'a young man without coat, and shouldering a pitchfork' (WH, p.7) could almost have been taken from a Constable painting.

Rural dwellers are imagined to be close to landscape, to understand it, to be familiar with every inch of their local topology. They need the landscape which is directly related to agriculture. Crops grow from the soil. They alter and shape the landscape. They are directly affected by it. It is natural or subject to nature and living processes: changing colour and texture with the seasons.

Abstraction of time is less important in the rural setting. In *Wuthering Heights,* time is sometimes expressed in hours, but there is a sense in which time is dictated by productive and social practices. Heathcliff is told that he should be working in the field as 'It is an hour past dinner time' (WH, p. 60). It is the vague 'dinner time' that is

the point of reference, rather than abstract time. Additionally, we are told that 'Joseph is loading lime on the farther side of Pennistow Crag; it will take him till dark, and he'll never know.' (WH, p. 60). The reference point here is the impending darkness which will enfold over the space that will determine Joseph's actions.

Stoneman (1995) asserts that in *Wuthering Heights* 'the landscape does not appear like a background to the events of the novel, but it is more like part of the characterization' (p. xiii). This is a central aspect of this novel's originality as a work of rural othering. Figuratively, space is a means of characterisation. Cathy's face is 'just like a landscape – shadows and sunshine flittering over it, in rapid succession' (WH, p. 234). Catherine warns Isabella that Heathcliff is an 'arid wilderness of furze and whinstone (WH, p.90); while Nelly's opinion is that Linton has no place in the *wildscape* of the moors: 'To see him, I should say, that instead of rambling with his sweetheart on the hills, he ought to be in bed, under the hands of a doctor' (WH, p. 237).

Comparisons between Edgar and Heathcliff are like the English industrial landscape: 'The contrast resembled what you see in exchanging bleak, hilly coal country for a beautiful fertile valley' (WH, p.61). The descriptions of characters echo those of the oppositional forces in the landscape, presenting both idyll and anti-idyll: 'In winter nothing more dreary, in summer nothing more divine, than those glens shut in by hills, and those bluff, bold swells of heath' (WH, p. 271). Catherine's description of the geological connection between herself and Heathcliff have already been discussed in Chapter 5. The boundaries between landscape and the characters blurred, dramatizing the embeddedness of rural identity in the spatial.

Opposition between the two households appear to hold the key to understanding its meaning: 'The spatial dimensions of WH are clearly determined by the structure and symmetry of the setting (Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange), as well as the characters' family tree' (Jakubowski, 2010, p.55). The two properties are described in marked contrast spatially, and in relation to their surroundings the distance between the two houses as requiring an allegorical reading of the social structures that differentiate the Heights and the Grange. The sheer difficulty of traversing that distance demonstrates figuratively their social distance.

The idyllic view from the Grange is not even marred by the sight of the Heights:

> They sat together in a window whose lattice lay back against the wall, and displayed, beyond the garden trees and the wild green park, the valley of Gimmerton, with a long line of mist winding nearly to its top (for very soon after you pass the chapel, as you may have noticed, the sough that runs from the marshes joins a beck which follows the bend of the glen). Wuthering Heights rose above this silvery vapour; but our old house was invisible; it rather dips down on the other side. Both the room and its occupants, and the scene they gazed on, looked wondrously peaceful (WH, p. 83).

Maps

The spatial difference between urban and rural is conceptualised by mapping. The map is imposed upon the the world as a set of meaningful discrete elements.The characters in *Wuthering Heights* can only understand its landscape through familiarity which comes from lived experience. It is unique and cannot be fully abstracted. This contrasts with urban landscapes, which are understood through the relationship between its structuring elements: addresses, street names, house numbers. An understanding of the system gives the city dweller the ability to negotiate the urban landscape. The rural landscape of *Wuthering Heights* has no such system: trees have no numbers, roads have no names or signs. Lockwood gets lost between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The way is unfamiliar, un-signposted. However, he calculates his distance travelled using the rational measurements of time and space:

> The distance from the gate to the Grange is two miles: I believe I managed to make it four; what with losing myself among the trees, and sinking up to the neck in snow, a predicament which only those who have experienced it can appreciate. At any rate, whatever were my wanderings, the clock chimed twelve as I entered the house; and that gave exactly an hour for every mile of the usual way from Wuthering Heights (WH, p.26).

In order to rescue himself from his predicament, Lockwood reaches for the tools of rationality: the application of measurement imposed on abstract time and space. As

a representative of the bourgeois mainstream of society, these are the tools with which he is familiar and which inform the reality of his life and lifestyle.

To make sense of location, meaningful reference points are needed. On more than one occasion, Gimmerton is the point. Linton's servant relates how she has heard that 'a gentleman and lady had stopped to have a horse's shoe fastened at a blacksmith's shop, two miles out of Gimmerton' (WH, p.117). Lockwood can give only a vague description of the location of Wuthering Heights: 'This September I was invited to devastate the moors of a friend in the north'. In being more specific, Gimmerton is used as a reference point with which to map his position: 'I unexpectedly came within fifteen miles of Gimmerton' (WH, p. 271).

As well as revealing his suppressed desire to return to the familiar, Lockwood distinguishes between his own set of knowledge and that of the rural dweller. He appeals to Cathy Heathcliff to 'point out some landmarks by which I may know my way home: I have no more idea how to get there than you would have how to get to London!' (WH, p.12). His own ability to navigate between the Heights and the Grange is akin to that she would encounter in trying to navigate to London. This speech contains an inherent sense of superiority. Although Lockwood can occupy both London and rural Yorkshire, Cathy is restricted to the latter. Getting to and from London with ease is the preserve of the Londoner.

Lockwood's inability to find his way is a failing on the part of his present location – its underdevelopment and lack of civilization, which means that it is difficult for the ordinary person to travel even a few short miles. This is an intrinsically hostile environment. The inhabitants are not in harmony with it but are at its mercy. Wild nature is in close proximity to rural life: the hostile climate and oppressive weather are fore grounded features of the rural setting in *Wuthering Heights*, affecting the characters directly and contributing significantly to the plot. The cold mist Lockwood makes Lockwood want to spend the afternoon 'by my study fire, instead of wading through heath and mud to Wuthering Heights' (WH, p.6). On emerging, he observes that 'On that bleak hill-top the earth was hard with a black frost, and the air made me shiver through every limb' (WH, p.7).

The Heights, itself seems built to withstand the harsh environment:

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 (WH, p.2).

The landscape can be dangerous as well as uncomfortable. Linton fears unnamed perils in the landscape: 'But leave me [on the heath], and I shall be killed!' (WH, p.235), but more often the treacherous weather is to be feared. Lockwood is advised, 'I hope it will be a lesson to you to make no more rash journeys on these hills' (WH, pp.12-13). Cathy believes Lockwood's urban behaviour to be naive to the twin rural dangers of landscape and climate. Stumbling around in the front yard of Wuthering Heights after his disastrous, aborted journey Lockwood remarks, 'It was so dark that I could not see the means of exit' (WH, p.13). He has no signifying systems to which he can refer and so cannot be safe. The visuality of spatial recognition is entirely removed, both by the darkness and the snow:

> My landlord halloed for me to stop ere I reached the bottom of the garden, and offered to accompany me across the moor. It was well he did, for the whole hill-back was one billowy, white ocean; the swells and falls not indicating corresponding rises and depressions in the ground—many pits, at least, were filled to a level; and entire ranges of mounds, the refuse of the quarries, blotted from the chart which my yesterday's walk left pictured in my mind (WH, p.26).

Lockwood has attempted to retain a mental map, which cannot contend with an ever-changing reality.

Bogs and marshes are another ever-present danger, even in the proximity of the sacred:

> We came to the chapel—I have passed it really in my walks, twice or thrice: it lies in a hollow, between two hills—an elevated hollow—near a swamp whose peaty moisture is said to answer all the purposes of embalming on the few corpses deposited there (WH, pp.18-19).

This juxtaposition of the sacred and profane, highlights discussion in Chapter 5, concerning the presence of grotesque nature at work in the rural landscape. The bog

holds the danger of a filthy death, as the victim is sucked down towards the earth. This peril seems to lurk within the folds and crevices of the rural landscape. Even the people who live there can fall prey to it.

> Do you know that you run a risk of being lost in the marshes? People familiar with these moors often miss their road on such evenings; and I can tell you there is no chance of a change at present (WH, p.9).

Lockwood fears 'being discovered dead in a bog or a pit full of snow' (p.12), and Zillah had believed that Nelly might have been 'sunk in the Blackhorse marsh' (WH, p. 246).

In opposition to this, the young Catherine and Heathcliff, more than any other characters, are at home in the landscape, and seem relatively impervious to it. This establishes them as the most wild and the least civilised of characters, because 'it was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day' (WH, p. 40). Even the dreaded marshes only claim their shoes, the trappings of civilisation, leaving them barefooted and beast-like as Heathcliff explains to Nelly that he and Catherine

> ran from the top of the Heights to the park, without stopping – Catherine was completely beaten in the race, because she was barefoot. You'll have to seek for her shoes in the bog to-morrow (WH, p.41).

They are deviant travellers, moving in darkness, creeping unannounced, furtive, like wild animals:

> 'We crept through a broken hedge, groped our way up the path, and planted ourselves on a flower-plot under the drawing-room window. The light came from thence; they had not put up the shutters, and the curtains were only half closed' (WH, p. 41).

The image of the flower-pot underscores the control and dominion over the land at the Grange.

Hindley, however, turns these lurking dangers into his own weapons, claiming that he has

just crammed Kenneth, head-downmost, in the Blackhorse marsh; and two is the same as one – and I want to kill some of you, I shall have no rest till I do! (WH, p.65).

The treachery of the weather and the perils hidden in the landscape combine to reinforce the importance of following the path and the crudely constructed road markers. Again, the theme of mapping, or trying and failing to map out this landscape is here:

> I had remarked on one side of the road, at intervals of six or seven yards, a line of upright stones, continued through the whole length of the barren [an interestingly bleak noun]: these were erected and daubed with lime on purpose to serve as guides in the dark, and also when a fall, like the present, confounded the deep swamps on either hand with the firmer path: but, excepting a dirty dot pointing up here and there, all traces of their existence had vanished; and my companion found it necessary to warn me frequently to steer to the right or left, when I imagined I was following, correctly, the windings of the road (WH, p.26).

The attempt to render the landscape meaningful with man-made markers of significance are liable to failure. Navigating this rural location is outside the skill-set of the ill-equipped urbanite. Lockwood experiences the desire to return to familiar systems of signification. The deadly warning, incorporates a characteristic feature of the rural landscape: a warning on the dangers of straying from a designated path. The path is a meaningful, significant feature, to be found on a map. It is a system, representing human purpose. However, the land can impose itself upon the reality, rendering the map useless. The significance of the path is connected with the presence of the 'signpost' between the two households:

> One time, I passed the old gate, going out of my way, on a journey to Gimmerton. It was about the period that my narrative has reached—a bright, frosty afternoon; the ground bare, and the road hard and dry.
> I came to a stone where the highway branches off on to the moor at your left hand; a rough sand-pillar, with the letters W.H. cut on its north side,

on the east, G., and on the south-west, T.G. It serves as guide-post to the Grange, and Heights, and village (WH, p. 96).

Space in *Wuthering Heights* is under-mapped, and this is matched by the vaguely conceived aspects of time. Nelly Dean remembers 'One fine summer morning – it was the beginning of harvest' (WH, p.30). As a rural dweller, her sense of time is not defined by the ticking of a clock, which would characterise the scientific precision of an industrial world, but by the archaic and imprecise reference to seasons and the necessities of agricultural production.

Centrality and marginality

Rurality is characteristically marginal. It acts as a spatial void, into which the urban emerges as a presence. It is identified by its remoteness from the city – from the centres of power, order and social control. The inability for the forces of social unity to enclose the rural within the normality of the dominant values is dramatized spatially in *Wuthering Heights*, as a kind of spatial anthropomorphism. This is expressed by the wildness and unpredictability of the setting, the dangers of the untamed landscape.

Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange are strangely isolated within the narrative. Characters who leave the environs of the few square miles of land around them are not followed or described. They become 'invisible'. For example, Heathcliff's years in exile and Isabella's life in her new home 'in the south, near London' (WH, p. 161). This helps to create the idea of rural isolation. The novel represents an inversion. The reader is locked firmly within a situation which in reality occupies a place at the margins of society.

Perhaps Lockwood's function is to help the reader's sensibilities: we are not merely voyeurs, but along with him, accidental tourists stumbling across a landscape in which we become embroiled, but from which we always remain apart.

His presence in the elaborate formal structuring of the narrative is significant in terms of the spatial aspects of the novel. The concentric or layered narrative structure corresponds with Lockwood's involvement in the space of Wuthering Heights on his second arrival. More significantly, however, the narrative structure, with Lockwood at

the top level, corresponds with the spatial privileging of the urban over the rural. Lockwood is closest to the implied reader in narrative terms. His is the perspective which is closest to that of the omniscient narrator, or the narrator who could almost be ignored in terms of the conventions of novelistic construction. The fact that Lockwood is also a character works against this to some extent, but not entirely. At times, perhaps most of the time, he disappears from the text entirely, and we are presented with, and aware of, the character of Nelly Dean, who again sometimes 'disappears' while relating the events portraying Heathcliff, Catherine and the other characters.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the rural can be considered a location in which two contradictory aspects of nature are forced together into a single association within their binary pole. On the one hand, it presents the romantic idea of nature as divine, encapsulated by the concept of the sublime. On the other hand, the analytical and scientific conception of nature associated with the Enlightenment and the forces of production. This contradiction is perfectly summed up in Lockwood's description of his initial impression of the location of Wuthering Heights: beautiful, but desolate.

> This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's Heaven – and Mr Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us (WH, p.1).

This desolation is an aspect of the marginality of this location. The centre is crowded, the place where people congregate, interact, go about their business, and engage in commercial activity. The invocation of misanthropy demonstrates an underlying set of values in relation to what is spatially normal. Above all, at the centre people interact and must 'get on' and for practical purposes, live according to harmonious principles. The nature of the space that they occupy influences their conduct in terms of their attitudes towards, and interactions with, each other. Wuthering Heights, by virtue of its 'desolation, its low population density, is a place in which people do not love each other. It is a Godless place, since it eschews the New Testament message to love thy neighbour. At the same time, it underlines the aspect of the rural anti-idyll as a place of insularity and exclusion, hostile to outsiders and strangers.

Lockwood observation of the isolation of Wuthering Heights reflects the values that he, as a city dweller, imposes. His perception of this location is a measure of its distance from urban centres. He remarks to Heathcliff that

> it is strange how custom can mould our tastes and ideas; many could not imagine the existence of happiness in a life of such complete exile from the world as you spend, Mr. Heathcliff (WH, p.9).

Lockwood's description of Heathcliff's as an 'exile from the world' is an extreme articulation of his perception of the otherness of this rural location. 'The world' is the urban centre; this is not part of the world. He attempts to explain Heathcliff's contentment (as Lockwood sees it) with his lot as being the result of home comforts 'surrounded by your family, and with your amiable lady as the presiding genius over your home and heart' (WH, p.9). This description, while it expresses Lockwood's vision of an idealised, bourgeois family, is ludicrously at-odds with Heathcliff's sensibilities.

The isolation of Wuthering Heights is underscored by Lockwood's perusal of the religious tome: 'A Pious Discourse delivered by the Reverend James Branderham', in the comically obscure 'Chapel of Gimmerden Sough' (WH, p.18). The isolation and the desolation are intertwined. Lockwood bemoans the 'bleak winds and bitter northern skies, and impassable roads, and dilatory country surgeons! And, oh, this dearth of the human physiognomy!' (WH, p. 80). Heathcliff muses on the central mystery concerning Lockwood's presence: 'I've wondered more than once what brought you here' (WH, p.269). Why should a man like Lockwood deign to visit such remote parts? The implication is that it is strange that someone should travel from the centre to the margin. When returning to his temporary rural home, Lockwood finds that absence has quickly attenuated this insignificant place within his memory: '"Gimmerton?" I repeated – my residence in that locality had already grown dim and dreamy. "Ah! I know. How far is it from this?"' (WH, p. 271).

This contradictory landscape in *Wuthering Heights* has been explained in a number of ways. Heywood (1998) sees the contradictory landscape as an opposition between the culture of the sublime – the Picturesque movement – and the forces of

industry encapsulated in different types of rural landscape. As evidence, he identifies these landscapes as follows:

> Northwards from Skipton, the mountainous limestone highlands run past Cowan Bridge. The lowlying gritstone moorland runs southward through Haworth to Hathersage. The two landscapes are geologically distinct, but in *Wuthering Heights*, both appear in a single setting (Heywood, 1998, p.13).

The 'real' landscape of Wuthering Heights

Wuthering Heights represents space in such a way as to emphasis the spatial and therefore the visual:

> There are few novels in which the physical and spatial aspects of the world presented would be equally irresistible, visual, fascinating and intrinsic in the novel's meaning as in *Wuthering Heights* (Tempska, 1987, p.205).

This 'fascination' with the novel's spatiality is manifested in the desire, not merely to visualise, but to actually see it. Readers have been prompted to engage in speculative attempts to study the geography of *Wuthering Heights* and to identify the 'real-life' locations referred to in the novel. Flintoff (2006) provides an excellent example. Are Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, modelled on real and specific houses? Do the hills, valleys and becks mentioned in the novel correspond to an existing topography?

> Like so many other novels written by the Brontës, *Wuthering Heights* seems to have constantly invited conjectures as to which houses were in the author's mind as models for her Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights, and in which landscape she set the novel (Flintoff, 2006, p. 37).

For many observers, this might seem like a fruitless exercise, since *Wuthering Heights* is, after all, a work of fiction; the locations, like the characters, exist in the text. In addition, space within literature is problematic, as Lefebvre observes,

> The problem is that any search for space in literary texts will find it everywhere and in every guise: enclosed, described, projected, dreamt of, speculated about' (1974, p.15).

Charlotte Brontë, for example, who wrote to her friend, Ellen Nussey:

> 'Various folks are beginning to come to boring Haworth on the wise errand of seeing the scenery described in Jane Eyre and Shirley'… she seemed to find it ridiculous that they should come… (cited in Barnard, 2002, p.143)

Flintoff's assertion that Wuthering Heights has 'invited' these conjectures appears avoid focussing on the reasons for them. However there are a number of reasons why people feel so compelled. Firstly, commercial considerations must come into play. It is certainly not in the interests of the tourist 'industry' which has grown up around the work of the Brontës to discourage the 'various folks' from coming. The place of Haworth as a tourist hotspot, conditioned by its status as rural idyll depends on people's continued obsession with the 'place-ness' of 'Brontë Country'. This means that in order to fully experience the Brontë novels, they must physically engage with the location. Secondly, landscapes endure. There is an enduring fascination with the author as celebrity. Emily Brontë died in 1848, but 'the death of the author' is ignored. The text becomes a locus for the interaction with the author. The connection with the author is more compelling if it is accompanied by a sense of seeing what they have seen, of directly observing the locations to which the text refers.

Robinson and Anderson describe the effect of literature on some readers:

> As creative people, some writers become great sources of inspiration to their readership, who are nor content merely to read and collect their works, they may also want to visit the writers' homes, in order to connect with the space where 'great' books came into being, to walk where the writers walked, to see what the writers saw (Robinson and Anderson, 2002, p.xiii).

This need to 'connect', to experience the space readers believe is represented in the novel, is portrayed as deluded and fanatical:

> They may go on journeys to follow in the footsteps of the admired writers, perhaps to go where the latter went for inspiration. They may even follow the writers on their lives' journeys to the very end and worship at their graves. (Robinson and Anderson, 2002, p. xii)

As it is, the tourist-readers must try to construct their own answers by searching for clues in the landscape. The landscape, unlike the author, is accessible; it endures. There is then the possibility to search for clues in the landscape, which becomes itself a 'text', perhaps a 'mystery story', which tantalises the reader with its vagueness:

> So far as the average reader of the time was concerned, one, that is, without any detailed knowledge of the dialects of Yorkshire or the surnames to be found in the various parts of the country, the book could be set anywhere between the Peak District and the River Tees (Flintoff, 2006, p.38).

This particular mystery 'genre', the landscape as text, highlights the extent to which the binary of presence and absence participates in the extraction of meaning.

This discussion leads back to the consideration of maps. As discussed in Chapter 1, the presence/absence binary pair gives meaning analogously to a whole constellation of signs. The map identifies presence against a backdrop of absence. This reveals the identification of the rural with absence: the rural is the background of the map, upon which meaning is imposed, as the features of the map, anything which can be identified and labelled. Foremost among such features are settlements, and foremost among settlements are urban places. Where the rural landscape is being scrutinised, the search for meaning is like the creation of the map. This process is evident in attempts, such as Flintoff's, at 'mapping' *Wuthering Heights*. Heywood (1998) also reveals this deep-seated desire to impose an orderly conceptual map onto the seemingly chaotic narrative thread. Nelly Dean's 'descriptive vignettes' (written in a picturesque idiom), include reference to the compass points on the crossroads guidestone. These,

> together with other clues, define the positions of Wuthering Heights hill and its neighbouring hills, and of the farmhouse, beck, cave, glen, village, and Grange'… Reassembled, her clues yield a sustained map of her parish' (Heywood, 1998, p.17).

The notion that a reassembled conceptual map, obtained from clues which must be pieced together by the reader is fascinating. The idea of asserting a correspondence between this and the real landscape of Yorkshire, even more so. It is as if the

'literariness' of the novel is insufficient for a close experience with the landscape it describes. The narrative is inadequate in giving a full comprehension of the space, since narrative is dictated by time, rather than space. Thus, the novel is intrinsically aligned with dominant notions of space and *Wuthering Heights*, as a novel, produces rural othering from its very form.

The narrative, consists of clues pointing to a greater reality: that which can be resolved into a two-dimensional map. This map is then used to view the real landscape, and so experience the 'real' Wuthering Heights. Flintoff's 1986 article (reprinted in 2006) even includes a reconstructed map of the Wuthering Heights landscape, complete with identified features, together with maps of the real, possibly corresponding, areas). Reconstructing the landscape of the novel is led by a desire to experience the literary more closely.

Flintoff's analysis of the correspondence between Wuthering Heights and real-life locations begins with the constellation of features named and described in the novel: its points of presence. Wuthering Heights itself and Thrushcross Grange are extensively discussed, as are a range of topographical features: the town of Gimmerton, Gimmerton Valley (and its side valley) with its stone pillar and Gimmerton Church, the beck, Wuthering Heights Hill, Penistone Crag, quarries and the scattered farmhouses mentioned in the novel, the moors surrounding Wuthering Heights, the boggy ground such as Blackhorse Marsh. In addition to attempting to identify the location of the setting for Wuthering Heights from the topological features mentioned, there is also consideration of wider geographical information: Wuthering heights is sixty miles from Liverpool, three hundred miles from Linton Heathcliff's old home. There is no mention in the novel of other urban centres: Halifax, Leeds, Bradford, Keighley, 'And surely the reason is obvious – that the novelist has no desire for us to pursue the identification any further than the vague outlines which she has suggested' (Flintoff, 2006, p.39).

Conclusion

As a novel strongly identified with location and landscape, *Wuthering Heights* can be considered in relation to the more general category of space. The archaism of space in the period of industrialisation means that space is linked to the rural and its

association with the outmoded cultural practices. Social hierarches based upon space, land ownership and agriculture, are an aspect of the past. The past itself is devalued within a culture which places value on progress, modernity and innovation. In this respect, the depiction of landscape in *Wuthering Heights* and its importance to the shape of the narrative and the identities of its characters signifies the removal of its setting from the new urban values. This is made clear by the inability of Lockwood to find orientation within unfamiliar space which he is unable to subject to abstraction. The presence of the landscape as an aspect of the identity for Catherine and Heathcliff creates not only character as landscape, but also landscape as character, resulting in a literary animism. This removes the rural further from urban civilisation by imbuing it with non-rational, superstitious essence.

With its setting wholly confined to a small area of North Yorkshire, *Wuthering Heights* represents an inversion of the central and marginal. Urban centres are only mentioned in passing and are pushed to the periphery. The setting therefore becomes noticeable to the reader, and this consequently participates in its foregrounding, underpinning the enduring fascination for the landscape of *Wuthering Heights*. The readers' consciousness of the marginality of the setting is retained by the presence of Lockwood, an urban traveller, who, as a stranger in a strange land, occupies the role of reader identification. He is both tourist and coloniser: the narrative unfolds through his dominant gaze. However, his misguided assumptions and struggles with his unfamiliar surroundings serve as a satirical highlighting of urban/rural difference and the sheer otherness of this remote space.

The attribution of both positive and negative qualities to the landscape, beauty and desolation, finds parallel with rational and Romantic conceptions of nature outlined in Chapters 3 and 5. This can be seen as an expression of the idyllic and anti-idyllic notions which combine to other rurality. For the young Catherine and Heathcliff the landscape of the moors holds the promise of sexual freedom. The implied overturning of sexual taboos forms associations between landscape and natural othering discussed in Chapter 5 and the transgression of social norms discussed in Chapter 6.

The desire for readers to identify the 'real' landscape represented in *Wuthering Heights* is significant of rural othering. The seeking of this landscape, through

peering in maps, making deductions and interpreting textual descriptions resembles colonial explorations of 'dark lands'. This real landscape appears to have remained as elusive as the source of the Nile. The colonial analogy reveals that the wish to find Emily Brontë's landscape of desire, with its rational trappings of measurement, triangulation and mapping, implies an othering of the landscape, that which exists in the realm of the other, beyond current knowledge, but awaiting exploration, discovery and, perhaps, domination and control.

Chapter 8: 'Rural' readings and 'urban' texts:

What can a reading of *Wuthering Heights* together with a consideration of the shape of rural construction reveal about either? To answer this question, it is useful to consider the adoption of a particular approach to reading the novel. This approach is derived from an understanding of the rurality as other. The process of rural othering is ideological in form; its presence is readable in the text in, the same way that ideological perspectives on gender or the colonised other can be observed and read. This position gives rise to an exploration of the viability of adopting a reading strategy that focusses on the othering of rurality in the text. Such an approach might require the coining of alternative terminology with which such texts can be interrogated, opening up a fresh set of perspectives and possibilities for interpretation.

Applying such a perspective to *Wuthering Heights* gives an indication of possible avenues for exploration, and shows how the rural themes constructed within and in relation to Emily Brontë's novel can be used to draw out and also integrate various theoretical considerations. Firstly, the canonical and monumental status of *Wuthering Heights* is a significant aspect of both its meaning and power, augmenting its production of rural meaning. This is especially relevant in relation to the time and place of the novel's creation, which is significantly attached to industrialisation, urbanisation, capitalism and the shaping influence of the Enlightenment. Secondly, the participation of *Wuthering Heights* in the naturalisation of rural constructions is discussed, and similarly the presence, or otherwise, of naturalised rurality within the novel. Thirdly, the three overlapping themes carried through this thesis are reconsidered in relation to readings of *Wuthering Heights*: rural space, rurality and social transgression and the intertwining of rurality with nature.

The exploration of attempts to define rurality in this thesis have shown that the concept is unstable, ephemeral, and illusory. However, it has also discussed the 'shape' of rurality, determined by the clusters of associations formed around themes of space, culture and nature. In this thesis, discussion of *Wuthering Heights* as a literary text takes place within the context of explorations of rurality drawn from the

field of rural studies, and specifically from within the branch of rural studies which is informed by critical theory focussing on the construction of rurality.

The idea of constructed rurality is not uncontested within rural studies as Castree and Braun (2006) have discussed. At the same time, as Derrida's famous injunction asserts, any critical approach to literature must be informed by the constructions within the texts themselves, for how can the outside be accessed? Straddling these disciplines provides interesting perspectives on both the literary and the rural.

One of the central threads of this thesis is to explore the idea that texts can be either 'urban' or 'rural', in a way that is analogous to understandings of texts as gendered, or ethnocentric. This approach seeks to reposition current discourse relating to the literary construction of rural identity as sites of ideological assertion and domination. Dominant ideology is understood here to be a collection of ideas expressed by more powerful groups in society. It includes, but is not restricted to the ideological consequences of state action; as Woods (2011) points out:

> The state has the capacity to influence the appearance of the rural landscape, the structure of the rural economy, the pattern of rural settlement, the character of the rural population, the nature of rural education and health care, the presence of fauna and flora, the commodification of the countryside for tourism, and the standard of living of rural people (p.232).

Despite the state's power to shape all aspects of life, dominant ideology does not necessarily have to be viewed as strictly aligned with power wielded at state level. For example, 'State-centred theorists use a Weberian framework to contend that the state has its own interests and agenda apart from the ruling capitalist class' (Bonanno, 2006, p.320). A Marxian approach, which identifies all forms of power as emanating from the bourgeoisie, is perhaps most useful in approaching the nineteenth century context, since it could be argued that economic, social and political power (or class, status and party) were perhaps more intertwined, and the existence of a relatively unified bourgeoisie might be perceived.

Feminist criticism has made the idea of the gendered text familiar. Particular texts are constructed with assumptions of masculine centrality, because they are imbued with the dominant ideology of a patriarchal culture. Feminist criticism of the 1970s

saw a recognition of the existence of 'androtexts' and 'gynotexts' – books written by men and women respectively, which construct the world with gendered perspectives (for discussed, for example, by Showalter, 1999). The same understanding can be used to read texts as ethnocentric, carrying assumptions about the centrality or superiority of a particular ethnicity in relation to another. Typically, in postcolonial criticism, assumptions concerning the centrality of Western culture are undermined. Said, for example explores how the East became othered in that it was used as a repository for the suppressed and unacknowledged aspects of Western culture, such as the 'undifferentiated sexual drive' implicitly attributed to Arabs (Said, 1978, p.311).

Extending this approach to the urban/rural cultural divide can provide new approaches to considerations of literary reading in relation to this aspect of cultural geography. This rests on the casting of the urban and the rural as forms of identity, and raises questions as to the nature of such an identity, how it stands in relation to other aspects of identity and whether indeed it can be considered alongside them. This approach falls foul of certain linguistic constraints. In discussing the relationship between the masculine and feminine, the term 'gender' is used to collect the concepts of masculinity and femininity (while allowing for the possibility of the inclusion of new or alternative gender construction to occur). In discussing the relationship between ethnic identities, the term 'ethnicity' is entirely adequate. Texts that carry gendered assumptions of masculine centrality can be described as 'patriarchal', or labelled 'androtexts'; those that carry assumptions of Western pre-eminence might be termed 'ethnocentric', 'Eurocentric', 'colonialist' or 'orientalist'.

The terms themselves raise objections and may be contested, but that does not prevent them from being useful in discourse and dialogue within their respective realms. In the case of the urban and the rural, such dialogue is hampered by the absence of such terms. 'Urban' and 'rural' exist analogously with 'masculine' and 'feminine', but there is no term like 'gender' with which to encapsulate the two.

It may therefore be necessary to coin such terms, although this is not a straightforward task. Linguistically, 'gender' is expressed as a quality that is possessed by an object; the categories of gender are therefore adjectival. The requirement for a corresponding term to cover urban and rural must therefore correspond. 'Geography' is too wide, as is 'cultural geography'. The question 'What

is the cultural geography of this text?' could receive responses that have nothing to do with considerations of urban and rural. 'Rurality' and 'urbanity', used as adjectives, lack neutrality. Should it be asked 'What is the urbanity of this text?' or 'What is the rurality of this text?' Perhaps the term 'ruralism' could be used by way of analogy to 'feminism'. Just as the latter applies to approaches which make plain, at the same time as undermining, patriarchal tendencies and assumptions, so the former could apply to approaches that make plain and undermine tendencies and assumptions favouring urbanity.

Although the existing terminology is unwieldy and makes discussion clumsy, its consideration may seem to be of minor import. However, the paucity of terminology is a consequence of the fact that the rural and urban orientation of texts remains relatively underexplored. Whereas the politics of identity relating to gender and ethnicity are often at the centre of critical debate, urban and rural identity is rather more marginal, and if critical interest is anything to go by, undervalued. This is a pity, since an awareness of the urban or rural –ness of texts reveals much about cultural assumptions in relation to a whole array of beliefs, values and ideologies which the urban/rural binary conceals.

Wuthering Heights presents a version of rural society already cut adrift from the urban mainstream, but to many readers it is unclear whether this expresses the novel's own sentiments, or whether these new norms are merely under the novelist's gaze: 'While *Wuthering Heights* is a book resisting interpretation, Wuthering Heights is a house barring out trespassers' (Davies, 1998. p.77). Is it in the fictive world of the novel that 'perversity has become the new norm' (Davies, 1998, p.77) or is such perversity promoted by the novel itself, perhaps as an expression of rebellion, non-conformism or merely an alternative sensibility?

The novel's events take place exclusively in a recognisably rural setting. There are allusions to the metropolis of London and the city of Liverpool, and other smaller settlements, such as Gimmerton, but the setting is otherwise entirely rural. The notion of the rural setting is only intelligible in relation to its opposite possible setting: the urban. The question arises as to what it means for a novel to be considered urban or rural. Must *Wuthering Heights* be considered a rural novel by virtue of its geographical setting? Would a novel set in the city be considered an 'urban novel'?

The act of categorising such novels in this way follows the same process as any form of categorisation: particular aspects of its significance are elevated and foregrounded while others may be simultaneously diminished. The act of categorising cannot be seen as the recognition of an essential element within the object. Instead, it is the recognition of the significance of its status within discourse. Therefore, to categorise *Wuthering Heights* as a rural novel is to explore its cultural presence as a rural novel. In other words, if *Wuthering Heights* were to be read in a culture with no conception of urban/rural opposition, it could not be read as a rural novel.

The extent to which *Wuthering Heights* is understood as a rural novel is related to perceptions of urban/rural opposition. This, in turn signifies the shape and structure of the culture in which the perception is made. This argument makes the novel seem passive, subject to interpretation according to its cultural context. However, this is not quite true, for the novel itself contributes to the formation of its own culture: once created, it continues to create meaning by which it is subsequently received. Thus, meaning 'feeds back' from text to culture and back, in a loop. If culture is regarded as a collection of additional texts then this represents a fluid process of meaning production, refraction and transformation, passing from one text to another, and back to the original text. This idea is an acknowledgement of Derrida's much quoted assertion that 'There is nothing outside the text' (Derrida, 1976, p.158).

This 'looping' process can be imagined as happening in four stages. Firstly, pre-existing conditions must exist upon which the novel draws for its creation. Secondly, its ideas are spread through its readership. Thirdly, the ideas are spread beyond its readership by the process of cultural transmission. Fourthly, new readers come to the novel carrying a set of ideas at least partly created by the novel itself. *Wuthering Heights* not only reproduces, but also creates the rural, and in doing so, creates the conditions for its own interpretation.

This process is particularly true for novels like *Wuthering Heights* which are especially famous and influential – in other words, 'monumental'. The extent to which *Wuthering Heights,* as a monumental novel, has helped to create rurality and to lay down the cultural conditions for its own reception for generations of readers must therefore be considered. It is a canonical novel, but this does not mean that its

meaning is somehow frozen in marble as the monumental metaphor might suggest. According to de Man 'such canonisation of authors means to 'bury them in their own texts made into epitaphs and monumental graves' (de Man, 1984. p.121). For Kermode (1975) it is their 'openness to accommodation which keeps [texts] alive under endlessly varying dispositions' (p.44). This is what allows a text to be canonical at all; it can be continually reinterpreted, going beyond the author's original intended meaning: it can be reinterpreted for each new age. However, this ignores the dynamic role of the text itself in the process of creating meaning, and attributes the origin of cultural production to forces outside the text. The canonisation of *Wuthering Heights* can itself be seen as an expression of dominant values and ideas. New readings of *Wuthering Heights* continue to involve a re-creation of attitudes to the rural which have their origins both inside and the novel itself, and outside, within other texts.

Wuthering Heights was created during the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, a time of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. Large cities had come into existence within living memory, and now existed in Britain in abundance, (see Chapter 2). At this point in the century, a sense of difference between the urban and the rural was in effect. *Wuthering Heights* can be read as a novel imbued with an understanding of urban/rural separation, and for which the shape of urban/rural difference is at particular stage of development, as Bunce points out, citing among others, Robert Southey's 1807 description of Birmingham as a place where the 'filth is sickening' and William Cobbett's criticism of London as a 'pestiferous growth' (Bunce, 1994, pp.14-15). It must be added, that historical contexts are themselves textual: a context is really just a text, an interpretation which must be subject to the critical gaze as much as the novel.

As the rural is a changing concept, 'very different from that of a hundred years ago' (Mingay, 1989, p.6), we might expect *Wuthering Heights* to deliver a conception of the rural that is very different from that in the twenty first century. Brontë's novel is set in the past relative to its publication date, with Lockwood's arrival at Wuthering Heights indicated as 1801, and a considerable part of the narrative relates events which are prior to this, and told to Lockwood by Nelly Dean. Thus, if we expect to find a historically-situated sensibility connected to a historical timeframe, we can

consider whether this should be a mid-1850s or a late eighteenth-century (and early nineteenth-century sensibility). Does it make sense to approach *Wuthering Heights* as representative of its age, or of the peculiarities of Emily Brontë's own personality? Such approaches would require an act of triangulation, in which the reader would be required to survey relevant literature in which other texts from the period(s) in question are analysed and compared to each other and to *Wuthering Heights*.

Establishing representativeness of cultural sensibilities is open to the criticism that the writers can only really represent themselves, and that those who write occupy a privileged, rather than a representative position in society. Approaching the text as a product of the author's own personality also requires triangulation using other texts. There are far fewer of these (an example is Charlotte Brontë's preface to the 1850 edition of the novel, mentioned elsewhere in this thesis). In this case, the attempt might be made to reconstruct the author's orientation with regard to the rural using the opinions of others.

This approach to understanding the text is similarly flawed. In addition, attempts to infer authorial intention are subject to the objection that the author is also a constructed entity. The Brontës and Emily herself, exist as fictional characters whose lives have fascinated huge numbers of people; this at least partly explains the substantial industries which have grown up around them. These are attempts to fix the meaning within historical time; however, the text itself changes in meaning along with the reader who encounters it. It is possible to apply a reading of the text in the knowledge that any reading is contingent, unstable and far from universal.

In terms of the meaning of rurality in *Wuthering Heights*, any reading given must be seen as a product of the reader's own culture. What emerges from this is a state of indeterminacy, in which meaning is located between historical context, the context of the present reader, authorial individuality and the individuality of the reader. This perhaps invokes Barthes's assertion that

> a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning… but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture (Barthes, 1977, p.146).

How does *Wuthering Heights* participate in the naturalisation of the urban/rural binary? Does it help to create or disseminate a perception of the essential reality of urban/rural differences? Or, is it possible to see in *Wuthering Heights* an undermining of the binary, a questioning of its reality? If so, is this because the stereotype in its re-iteration becomes self-refuting, identified as a set of clichés, and therefore subjected to parody and mockery, in for example, Gibbons' *Cold Comfort Farm*?

It is relevant to explore how *Wuthering Heights* presents rurality. In terms of the functional denotative definition set out in Chapter 1, as summarised by Cloke (2005, p.20) the novel's setting is 'dominated… by extensive land uses'. Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange are farms; their existence is underpinned by agriculture, rather than industry of any kind. Agricultural details are not fully described or foregrounded in the novel, or presented in any great detail (see Chapter 5). Instead, references to tasks being carried out in fields, tending of livestock and hunting of wild animals are occasionally invoked; it could be said that agriculture is an 'assumption' that accompanies the setting. It is an assumption however, that impinges directly upon the social structures presented in the novel.

At Wuthering Heights, as Eagleton states, the 'yeoman-farmer structure' means that labour and culture, freedom and necessity, nature and society are roughly complementary' (1988, p. 31). Thus, the social structures that are involved in agriculture create a dichotomy, or as Beaumont puts it: 'Conflict between the yeoman farming culture of Wuthering Heights and the agrarian capitalist culture of Thrushcross Grange structures its social relations' (2004, p.138). In this conflict, the forces of the old social order, represented by Wuthering Heights, are ranged against the new regime of represented by Thrushcross Grange. Social order is aligned with ideas of progress and backwardness in agriculture, and with new norms and values (as discussed below).

The second part of this definition is that the rural 'contains small, low order settlements and demonstrates a strong relationship between buildings and extensive landscape'. This is certainly true in *Wuthering Heights*. The Heights and the Grange constitute such settlements and are very much set against the 'wildscape' of the moors. The moors are foregrounded more strongly than agriculture; they occupy a

larger proportion of the described events and they affect the narrative more profoundly. Bell's term 'wildscape' (Bell 2006) is more useful than the more traditional term 'wilderness' in that the use of the suffix 'scape'

> posits the presence of a unifying principle which enables us to consider part of the countryside or sea as a unit and as an individual, but so that this part is perceived to carry the typical properties of the actually undivided whole (Peters, 1948, cited in Cosgrove, 1984, p.13).

Thus 'wildscape' is useful in revealing the unifying nature of the ideological drive behind the construction of rural space. The idea of 'wildness' is bound up with ideas of the self in relation to nature, in which 'wild' is a subjective term. 'The wild' is experienced (in the sense that it is registered and contrasted) with the 'civilised' subject. However, the idea that *Wuthering Heights* presents the moors as wildscape is debateable. Certainly Lockwood, the novel's urban narrator, experiences them as wild, and directly suffers the effects of their wildness. To the young Catherine and Heathcliff, the moors represent the landscape of self, rather than of other.

The third aspect of the rural definition, is more problematic when applied to *Wuthering Heights:* that it engenders 'a way of life characterised by cohesive identity based on respect for the environment and behavioural qualities of living as part of an extensive landscape'. The idea that rurality should involve cohesion of identity corresponds with the ideological cohesion of its 'scape. The cohesiveness of identity denies the rural's dynamism, opposing it to change and fluidity, and keeping it fixed in time. Furthermore, it fetishizes the exclusionary aspect of rural construction. These aspects of rurality are dealt with extensively in Cloke and Little (1997) and in Milbourne (1997).

Although this attribution of cohesiveness seems to imply exclusion from the rural, it is really the ideational exclusion of the rural from a hegemonic Western idealisation of heterogeneity, diversity and freedom to choose identity. *Wuthering Heights* seems not to offer a version of rural cohesion. There is certainly no cohesion, for example between the identities of Heathcliff, a foundling of uncertain origins, and the family with which he is raised at the Heights, let alone with that of the Lintons. This rural society is very much fractured in terms of identity; there exists no pervasive set of norms which govern their 'behavioural qualities'. It may be said that the characters'

identities cohere only insofar as they are kept together by external forces – the landscape, economic bonds and social necessity – rather than any forces which attract them internally. The main obvious exception to this is Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw, whose identities are so entwined that they are inseparable (but are then separated). This lack of cohesion arises because 'cohesive identity' is a form of categorisation; in the case of rural definition, it is really the perspective of the outsider, an illusion based upon perceived differences.

Cohesive identity as a defining characteristic is both positive and negative. It is positive in that it suggests an underpinning set of shared values within a rural community, giving rise to shared norms and a harmonious way of life, unhindered by conflict. However, it also implies stasis; the rural is constructed as static and old-fashioned, a place where change is slow to take hold and events do not impinge upon the social order. It is a place in which nothing happens. Life is simple and unexciting. Conflict is absent because stifling social controls deny individuality; lack of anonymity among rural dwellers means that individuals are constantly under surveillance: the rural panopticon, perhaps. Rurality is therefore homogeneous and exclusive It is also an aspect of rural significance can be seen as an example of the clustering of attributes within the binary. This the simultaneity of idyll and anti-idyll in rural construction, of the positive and negative is a consequence of rural othering. In *Wuthering Heights* the absence of this aspect of rural othering is a necessary aspect of the novel. The lack of cohesive identity is the source of conflict which provides drive to the narrative;

Wuthering Heights presents a setting that is neither idyll nor anti-idyll, but one that in containing both is also othered. *Wuthering Heights,* is a text that others the rural, but does not strictly adhere to a particular version of rurality. The ideas of idyll and anti-idyll applied to rurality are shown to be aspects of a more general process of othering. In terms of clusters of meaning adhering to poles of the binary pair, it can be seen that the text itself creates oppositions. This is dramatized by the opposing of various elements within the text, notably, Wuthering Heights in opposition to Thrushcross Grange. The former is set within desolation; its inhabitants engage in acts of uncontrolled cruelty, they do not observe the bourgeois norms that adhere to social structures. They are therefore old-fashioned and outdated. The latter is a more pastoral vision of the rural. It fits the rural ideal by observing the markers of

bourgeois social structures and only engaging in acts of violence in an organised and controlled manner (such as the use of guard dogs). Because Thrushcross Grange embodies bourgeois values, it may be seen as closer to what most nineteenth-century readers recognised as normal. However, its rural location still makes it an aspect of the other, albeit in an acceptable and largely idealised form.

Reading Wuthering Heights and rural space

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to use the concept of space as a social construct, the shape of which arises out of social practices. Space is seen as ideological in nature. This provides a basis with which to understand the shape of rural space, which is strongly associated with the idea of landscape. This understanding is used to provide a perspective on the construction of rural space in *Wuthering Heights*; bringing such a perspective to an analysis of the text provides insights into both the text and the concept of space.

Wuthering Heights dramatises the post-Enlightenment tensions between alternative conceptions of space. A focus on this dramatization can inform an understanding of the shift in spatial meaning which has shaped the construction of rurality. The alternative conceptions of space are, firstly, that arising from an Enlightenment ideology, which is aligned with the industrial, the urban and the bourgeois, and secondly, that ideology's imagined other, aligned with the agricultural, the rural and pre-capitalistic social relations. Using the concept of Enlightenment ideology may be questioned, and regarded as the imposition of a grand narrative to historical change. However, the common recognition of Enlightenment values, even as a construct, invokes their current use, and demonstrates a significant binary opposition of qualities such as progress and the rational against their opposites. Reading *Wuthering Heights* with this tension in mind reveals the way in which the rural binary is expressed generally within the text.

The Enlightenment conception of space is informed by abstraction. As Poovey (1995) explains, such a conception 'was formalized in the seventeenth century by Robert Boyle and René Descartes among others' (pp.30-31). The abstraction of space – or landscape – by virtue of survey, measurement and quantification allows precision in its use and in its packaging as a commodity, resulting in greater control and dominion, or a 'framework of power' (Poovey, 1995, p.25). This control of space

is accompanied by the emergence of industrial methods of production, 'in such spatially and functionally divided sites as the factory' (Poovey, 1995, p.30) diminishing the importance of the landscape in economic life. Thus, attachment to the landscape, in the form of agricultural production becomes associated with outmoded, or at least 'old-fashioned' practices. In the city, space becomes less important in production than time. Both space and time are abstracted, and neither presents fixed obstacles to production (factories can be built on several stories, machines can operate outside the influence of natural rhythms – day and night, summer and winter).

The agricultural, alternatively is bound in by space, and makes no reference to the abstract. Agricultural space is dictated by natural boundaries: the shape of the landscape dictates production. The topography, the altitude, natural features such as streams and the corresponding restrictions these place on land-use, notwithstanding the wishes and ideals of the farmers mean that abstraction is less relevant. Unlike the city, the shape of the rural is not dictated by human action. This of course, ignores the extent to which humans may be said to have altered and transformed the landscape through time; these qualities are all constructed out of clusters of binary associations and alignments which correspond with ideological practices.

In *Wuthering Heights*, the landscape is foregrounded. It impinges on the actions of individuals and dictates the outcomes of events. Characters are identified with it directly (for example, in the case of Catherine and Heathcliff) or find themselves battling against it (in the case of Lockwood). Landscape reflects culture in the quite obvious alignment of Wuthering Heights with the bleak moorland, and Thrushcross Grange with its more pastoral and managed setting.

The othering of the rural is manifested spatially in *Wuthering Heights* in several ways. Firstly by the foregrounding of landscape and the assertion of space as a significant factor in the direction of the narrative. Secondly, by the representation of space which is conceptualised without reference to abstraction in terms of spatial measurement (such as distance), except in very vague terms which assert the irrelevance of such abstraction to the rural context. In these terms, rural space is wild – the 'wildscape' that Bell identifies as an aspect of modern conceptions of rural space.

Wuthering Heights can be understood in relation to spatial concepts of centrality and marginality. The central/marginal binary relates analogously to urban/rural and sits in alignment with it. With its remote rural setting, *Wuthering Heights* brings the marginal to the centre, leaving the urban and metropolitan as a permanently peripheral presence. Even within this setting, the eponymous dwelling, Wuthering Heights itself occupies the centre in relation to the necessarily marginalised Thrushcross Grange, even though the latter constitutes an in-road for polite, mainstream culture. Lockwood, whose narrative frames the events, is a representative of dominant cultural perspectives, and is closest to the reader in that, formally, his narrative speaks to them directly. He resembles an explorer of colonised lands, encountering strange and threatening natives.

The novel, in common with other art forms, is designated as a site where marginalised culture can be objectified and gazed upon as part of the process of othering. Rural othering does not imply that the rural is ignored, rather that its construction is assimilated and its associated meanings later reproduced in other iterations of stereotypical production, in much the same way as representations of colonised lands create and later confirm the normality and centrality of the colonising culture and its conception of its place within a conceptual space.

That *Wuthering Heights* plays with the boundaries of urban and rural division makes the richness of a rural reading more pronounced. The clash of urban and rural spaces and the merging of space with identity is aligned with other oppositions, identified for example by Frith (1997) and Heywood (1998). The perspective of a rural reading, drawing on an understanding of othering in relation to binary alignments can gather together these polarities to show that their significance maps onto and overlaps rural construction.

The concept of mapping is associated with the Enlightenment's rational engagement with space. Its mathematical measurement, involving the application of abstract quantification allows the maximum efficiency in drawing value from space. In addition, the surveying and mapping of land is a feature of the colonial imperative to impose domination upon the globe. The analogy between colonial and rural mapping is revealed by Woods' description of the production of rural maps:

…maps of the rural landscape initially produced by state cartographic agencies for military purposes, or to assist with the process of governing, are put to new use by tourists who utilize them to access the countryside for leisure and recreation (2011, p. 231).

As with colonialism from the eighteenth century onwards, there is no sharp divide between the overt political domination imposed by the state apparatus and the soft political domination of the tourist. The map thus becomes symbolic of a 'rural colonialism'.

A rural reading of *Wuthering Heights* allows the examination of this mapping tendency in terms of rurality. *Wuthering Heights* problematizes its own mapping on several grounds. Firstly, by offering an alternative to spatial (and for that matter temporal) measurement through the vagueness and imprecision expressed by characters within the novel, and also the inability of Lockwood, the 'outer' narrator, to successfully impose such measurement, to successfully 'map' his surroundings.

Secondly, the text has given rise to paranoid readings which take the novel for a real map. Attempts have been made to establish its 'real-world' location, based on interpretations of the narrative. The narrative is thus imagined as a two- dimensional map and a three-dimension reality. That its landscape has become the object of this desire to survey (perhaps to discover) a real land, of which the novel is a mere representation, demonstrates the lure of the landscape, specifically the rural landscape. The constructed landscape of *Wuthering Heights* induces a desire in readers to experience it in unmediated, material form. The idea of landscape's involvement with desire is alluded to by Crouch (2010) in his interpretation of Lanyon's artistic practice as 'intimacy across body and space through its performativities' (p.10), and is explored extensively by Du Puis (2006)[21].The involvement of body and landscape has special resonance in relation to the rural as understood through the perspective of, paradoxically, grotesque realism (discussed below).

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[21] Du Puis explains the othering of landscape by drawing on the Lacanian notion that the creation of self-identity, and simultaneously other-identity, occurs through the acquisition of language in infancy which delineates these categories. The resulting separation from the mother, and from the rest of the world, is the foundation of all human Desire (the capital initial distinguishes this from the common use of the word). This includes desire that is directed towards particular landscapes, which reflect an individual's state of mind.

An interrogation of mapping also indicates its ideological basis, revealing the values which underlie the features marked upon it. The map indicates the values of its culture by the ascription of presence to some items and the ignoring of others. Thus, the map upholds the essentialist fallacy, naturalising an array of objects: buildings, woodlands, hilltops, features created by humans, features which are useful or which serve as obstacles.

Reading *Wuthering Heights* and Social transgression

This thesis makes use of a conception of cultural change associated with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The cultural change in question is linked to the Enlightenment, colonialism, the rise of capitalism, industrialisation and urbanisation. Together, these major ideas form a framework for an understanding of the arrival of the modern world. Implicit in each concept is the presence of hierarchy and the domination. As Adorno and Horkheimer assert, the 'Enlightenment is totalitarian' (cited in Docherty, 1993, p.5). It encapsulates a narrative of the rise of the rational to become the dominant mode of cultural practice. 'Colonialism' tells of the struggle of European powers to achieve dominance over cultural others. Capitalism is intrinsically characterised as the oppression of one class by another as a means to achieve economic (and therefore total) domination. Industrialisation charts the material progress which capitalism encourages and which allows colonial domination to happen with such potency. Urbanisation is the organisational consequence of these forms of domination, the visible and material way in which the environment has altered, the cultural 'feedback' acting as constant reminder that the world has been re-shaped.

These forces are intertwined, and could be seen as the same set of forces. From a Marxian viewpoint for example, they might all be reduced to expressions of bourgeois oppression, the result of the rise of capitalism. Without committing to a reductionist standpoint and being open to the accusation of applying a grand narrative, it may be enough to say that these concepts are themselves constructions, but by invoking them patterns emerge which at least inform about the presence of hierarchy and domination and its importance or perception. Where such domination lies, the emergence of ideologically-driven norms is associated. These norms are the expression of such domination and radiate out from matters of industrial production

and Enlightenment thought-values to cover a whole set of everyday behaviours. These norms are often considered to be the expression of bourgeois, middle-class nineteenth-century values, which manifest themselves as marks of social distinction: 'Snobbery, as Lionel Trilling remarks, is the vice not of aristocratic society, but of bourgeois democratic societies. It arises from the insecurity of the individual who seeks pride in status but lacks pride in inherited function' (Langford, 2000, p. 261). What is often not considered is that these may also be termed 'urban' norms.

The changing norms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are visible within literature such as *Wuthering Heights*. Whereas much has been written about the effect of these norms on considerations of gender (for example, in Thompson, 1999) and even the colonised-other (for example, Meyer, 1996), less has been explored in terms of the application of norms to the consideration of the rural. In doing so, a reminder of the binary nature of othering is crucial, since it relies on presence of markedness within the text. *Wuthering Heights* depicts scenes and behaviours which bear 'markedness'; their presence within the text leaps out at the reader as abnormal. The foremost example examined in this thesis has been the markedness of non-standard accent and dialect, which is represented using non-standard spelling. This marking, however, is present in whatever features are described. Just as the marking of non-standard speech foregrounds its abnormality, subjecting it to scrutiny and inviting the consideration of its difference on the part of the reader, the same goes for other norm violations. For example, the absence of a parlour at Wuthering Heights is commented on by Lockwood. In fact, whatever Lockwood chooses to comment upon is possibly an aspect of rural norm-violation, otherwise its naturalisation ensures that it is liable to be ignored or to form part of the background of the narrative.

This aspect of markedness, its foregrounding against a naturalised background, allows connection with spatial aspects of mapping. Just as the map is created from defined objects against the blank featurelessness of the page, so the marked aspects of rurality are themselves features on the narrative 'map' of the novel. *Wuthering Heights* can be understood as a map in which the features marked out are aspects of its otherness, of which norm violation forms a part. Thus the markedness of the binary other and the 'marks' made on the map find analogy, or something more than analogy.

Rurality then provides a complex and somewhat contradictory interweaving of the 'big' concepts around which the discourse of the historical creation of the modern world takes place. The commodification of space seems to be a function of the application of capitalist production. This is aligned with the Enlightenment's endeavour to impose abstract rationalisation upon an objectivised and externalised space.

This is especially relevant in the case of the emergent category of rurality, which is defined by its space-ness, its landscape. The landscape is simultaneously pushed to the margins by the concentration of both population and industrial production within the cities, which become new concentrations of meaning. The mapped features of the rural are its obstacles, its difficulties, its restrictive folds, peaks, rivers, crags, whose origin is (or is perceived to be) natural, rather than human, and where human, appear to predate the present need or motivation. These spatial 'difficulties' are like versions of the social difficulties, or norm violations whose origin predates the new politeness of bourgeois gentility. The features of norm violation lie temporally outside of the town, just as the rural lies spatially outside.

However, the marks on the map also comprise features of the urban and the civilised, the useful and the built, in other words, not just the other. The map is therefore a contradictory mixture of features, whose meaning in terms of rural othering demands further study. The link between mapped features and rural othering is more than mere metaphor; it is a manifestation of the clustered analogies of binary opposition which cohere around the urban and the rural. If *Wuthering Heights* is a map composed of features of rural othering, spatially through the landscape and socially through the marking of transgressive features, then the analysis of this map can be regarded as an alternative approach to understanding the text, which does not oppose readings that examine the colonial, the gendered or the stratified, but which can draw on all of these approaches to refocus the rural other. Reading rural othering in its turn can provide new perspectives on the colonial, the gendered and the stratified.

Reading *Wuthering Heights* and rural nature

One way in which this can be done is to provide an alternative reading of nature in connection with the rural, by using a Bakhtinian analysis of the presence of the relationship between nature, culture and social hierarchies.

Nature is conceptually associated with the rural as an aspect of binary clustering. The rural is that which is not the city, but is left to be itself. It is the past – a context into which the achievements of civilisation are born. Nature, both as a scientific concept as well as social concept, is associated with the material and the physical which lies outside of human will, either through or despite human design. The intrinsic materiality of 'nature' is demonstrated in the continued contestation of its construction by rural researchers who have returned to 'the common sense idea that rural areas are more profusely natural than towns and cities' (Castree and Braun, 2006, p.163).

 The rural, close as it is to nature, embodies the notion of the inexorably physical which is at the same time the other of the void – that which is imagined to sit outside of the text. Whereas the city is the 'city of light', the rural is the 'rural of darkness'. Nature is the body, whereas civilisation is the mind. Thus, a new cluster of analogous concepts is revealed. The rural is the physical, a place where the body may transcend its boundaries. It therefore denies or ignores the spiritual, the intellectual and human will. As a place where birth and death are constantly invoked and cannot be ignored, through agricultural cycles and processes, the rural is a place which gives rise to fear and disgust: it is a reminder of death as a physical fact, and intertwines these with the unofficial aspects of bodily reality, explored by Bakhtin in his analysis of Rabelaisian carnival, giving rise to the concept of grotesque realism:

> When infused with grotesque imagery, objects transcend their own "natural" boundaries and become fused or linked with other things. From this is derived their pregnant and two-sided nature, the quality of "unfinished becoming" which is anathema to officialdom (Gardiner, 1992, p.47)

The carnival links natural transgression with social transgression, as the overturning of hierarchies. The introduction of a Bakhtinian analysis to the understanding of rural

othering provides an additional way to interrogate constructions of rurality in terms of a narrative of dominance and helps to delineate the links between an approach to the rural as a category aligned with the suppressed, dominated and objectified. Bringing this understanding of rurality to an analysis of *Wuthering Heights* allows new ways to understand this novel as a product of cultural forces. It allows the novel in its turn to reveal constructions of rurality.

At the same time*, Wuthering Heights*, can be viewed not merely as a product of, or channel for dominant ideologies, but of a site of significance in which cultural forces, dialectical forces perhaps, are contested, interpreted and used to influence further iterations and reproductions of rurality. Thus, rurality, as the product of contested forces, is continually reimagined in new ideological shapes which either conform to or diverge from dominant value systems.

Wuthering Heights itself is revealed as an open text in terms of its orientation towards dominant ideologies. It both confirms and denies the rurality it constructs; it confirms the othering of the rural in relation to the culturally dominant ideologies, while at the same time temporarily transferring rurality from the margin to the centre and infusing the rural characters and situations with a power and complexity that has offended the dominant sensibilities of its own time, rather than presenting a representation of meek, orderly rurality in the form of a pastoral or georgic vision. This version of rurality has compelled and repulsed, but its reproduction and eventual assimilation has resulted in a reconstituted version of rurality which was a step on from previous representations of ruralities. Thus, an understanding of rural construction provides insights into *Wuthering Heights*, while the analysis undertaken provides further understanding of the process of rural othering.

Conclusion

Adopting an alternative reading strategy – a rural reading – is viable in relation to any conceivable art form, and certainly to the novel. This strategy throws up the recognition that there exists no adequate terminology with which to address the issues, and may reveal a lack of wider recognition of rural othering. The application of a rural reading is especially relevant in the case of *Wuthering Heights*, due to its monumental status, its historical origins and its rural themes.

Wuthering Heights participates in the construction of rurality as well as contributing to the creation of the conditions for its own reception as a text which 'represents' the rural. Its emergence at a time of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation puts *Wuthering Heights* in a position such that its relation to these 'forces' needs exploration. The accompanying ideological and normative forces of capitalism and the Enlightenment are further implicated in the novel. The alluring historical position attracts readings which run the risk of backward projection. In order to avoid this, it is necessary to approach the text in a state of indeterminacy which makes no assumptions about the relation between the text, its historical context, its perceived ideological content and the cultural perspective of the reader.

In considering the role of Wuthering heights in the naturalisation of rurality, the themes of space, social transgression and nature prove useful. Spatially, *Wuthering Heights* reveals ideological orientations in terms of the mapping of its landscape and the presence of the abstract and rational as a dominant motivating value. This provides overlap with the construction of rurality through social difference, the importance as transgression as a marker of difference, derived from emergent social practices, and the identification or association between the rural and nature. These concepts are established through the same cultural forces: Enlightenment rationalism, the urban and the industrial.

These considerations can give new insights into contemporary reflections on the rural. Approaching the rural as other provides the possibility for understandings of rural identity as a shifting, unstable and complex construction, implicit in identity, experience and cultural and political dialectics.

Conclusion

Embedding an understanding of rurality in its construction as a binary has proved a useful approach, allowing an exploration of its signification from a linguistic and semiotic perspective. This allows an acknowledgement of the arbitrary, ephemeral, and illusory condition of rurality in the face of everyday experience, which encounters oppositions such as urban/rural as 'naturalised' entities: fixed, static and located in an objective reality. The urban and the rural can therefore be understood as being determined in the same way as other binary oppositions: by cultural values expressed through language.

As rurality is a fluid construction, it is subject to changes in meaning, conditioned by historical and cultural change. Attempts to define rurality have proved elusive because of the vagueness of the concept, the difficulty of applying criteria that can be quantified and the failure to retain rurality as a coherent concept in the face of empirical evidence to the contrary. However, simply rejecting rurality as a category ignores its meaningful use in lay discourse. Rurality can be approached as both imaginary and real, in as much as any linguistic constructs are real. In addition, the idea that, constructivist approaches to rurality have hit a dead-end, ignores the continuing centrality of critical approaches in addressing and interrogating political and cultural assumptions, and ignores the effects of hegemonic assumptions within cultural and literary artefacts.

The idea of binary constructions aligning through the sharing of analogous meaning is a useful tool for understanding the ways in which the meaning of rurality has been constructed and embedded within wider cultural conceptions, revealing connections with landscape and space, femininity and nature, stasis and stability. Derrida's invocation of 'violent hierarchies' into discussion of binaries, suggest a consideration of the hierarchical configuration of urban/rural, with the rural being the marked or inferior term within the pair. This leads to an understanding of the urban and the rural as forming analogous links with ethnic and gendered oppositions. Investigating the urban/rural in the same way as these oppositions has shown that it consistently aligns with the marked or inferior terms of other hierarchies. This has been crucial in

perceiving rurality as subject to cultural othering, and establishes this understanding as a valid approach to conceptions of rurality.

The problems in establishing the historical provenance of beliefs, values and understandings are just about insurmountable. However, this does not mean that the enterprise should be abandoned; instead a shift of emphasis should take place, in which the extrapolating of aspects of culture from textual evidence can only be provisional, and an awareness of the unavoidability of backward projection is retained. In approaching *Wuthering Heights,* an appreciation of conceptions of rurality of that period has been approached by considering the historical context as inseparable from the text itself. The context cannot be elevated as the location of real meaning to which the text is applied, or against which it is measured. Therefore a rural reading of such a text must be accompanied by a recognition of its provisional and contingent nature.

Themes relevant for historical debate collect around the alignment of ideas set against the emergence of the urban/rural binary. Placing an emphasis on the binary construction of rurality leads to the conclusion that its construction is inseparable from that of the urban. This has meant locating this construction within the period of urban expansion in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and a rejection of perspectives which see the origins of rurality in the ancient world. Although pastoral and georgic notions, and Arcadian visions are ancient creations, the understanding they convey is one of a relationship between centre and margin, in which the idyllic periphery is contrasted with a unique metropolitan centre. An acknowledgement of the binary condition of urban/rural reveals that the binary concepts of centre/margin is a term of association with urban/rural, rather than synonymous. To use a linguistic analogy, in pre-industrial times the urban and rural existed more as unique spatial occurrences. This contrasts with the industrial conception, in which they emerged as cultural-spatial categories, in which iterations of the urban, and rural conform to an abstracted conceptual framework.

A refocussing of urban/rural discourse around the themes of social change in the period of industrialisation allows these themes to demonstrate their contribution to urban/rural construction.

Narratives of social change show inextricable links between understandings of industrialisation, social change, the reforming of social hierarchies and the emergence of the rural as a 'category of thought', placing contemporary conceptions of rurality within this tradition. The rural has been reconstructed as a place for consumption as much as for production, situated within the process of industrialisation and urbanisation. In fact, this 'consumption of the rural', coincides with its very creation.

This thesis reverses the notion that idyllic constructions of rurality indicates its construction as an aspirational category. The act of constructing rurality is a form of objectification in itself. Idyllisation, is not so much an elevation of the rural, as a means by which domination and control can be imagined, through objectification and the application of normative judgements. This finds parallels with idealised conceptions of femininity visible within patriarchal cultures. Normative judgements are placed upon the rural as they are upon femininity or ethnicity. The anti-idyll, also a necessary aspect of rural othering, signifies a repository for negative othering, by which urban identity distances itself from the rural at the same time as objectifying it. This thesis therefore sees idyll and anti-idyll not as contradictory, but as combined in rural othering.

In this thesis, the development of an understanding of rurality provided by an analysis of its binary meanings, together with the implications of those meanings, has provided valuable insights. The analysis covers new ground in showing how themes of nature, deviance and space overlap to construct the rural as other. An application of grotesque realism shows how associations with nature are at-odds with hegemonic notions; the attribution of social deviance arises partly, though not entirely, out of rural proximity to nature, while rural space, through its marginality, allows deviance to flourish.

The application of Bakhtin's grotesque realism to understandings of nature can provide new ways to understand and analyse rural meaning. It reveals how the rural is associated with transgressions of bodily unity and stability: cycles of life, the materiality of the body and the ephemerality of life. These notions associate rurality with negative concepts, at odds with the dominant religious and Romantic ideas of the sublime. Although this should mean that it is aligned with Enlightenment ideas of

rational materialism, rurality remains the object upon which the rational can subject its gaze, rather than being the origin itself of rational concepts. This is because the rural, as home to nature, aligns in opposition to civilised rationality.

The marginality of the rural, puts it beyond the reach of social controls, meaning that outdated, illegal and perverse practices can flourish beyond the reach of official authority. The rural substitutes its own controls over an alternative set of values. These values may be informed by the lived experience of rural dwellers in proximity to nature, who exhibit behaviours that may follow natural impulses and understandings, rather than civilised conduct.

The marginality of the rural is also an aspect of the means by which rurality is made other through conceptions of space. The naturalisation of space conceived of as an abstract void, conceals its construction through ideology and practices. The abstraction of space is related to its commodification and is linked to the rational, the capitalistic, and the forces of industrialisation and to urbanisation. It also means that the construction of space is ideological. The relationship of city-space to rural-space is analogous to the relationship of the individual to the world – self and other. The conception of the self is also a product of the socio-political changes of the Enlightenment, industrialisation, the rise of capitalism and urbanisation.

Adopting an alternative reading strategy – a rural reading – is viable in relation to any conceivable art form, and certainly to the novel. This strategy throws up the recognition that there exists no adequate terminology with which to address the issues, and may reveal a lack of wider recognition of rural othering. The application of a rural reading is especially relevant in the case of *Wuthering Heights*, due to its monumental status, its historical origins and its rural themes. *Wuthering Heights* participates in the construction of rurality as well as contributing to the creation of the conditions for its own reception as a text which 'represents' the rural. Its emergence at a time of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation puts *Wuthering Heights* in a position such that its relation to these 'forces' needs exploration. The accompanying ideological and normative forces of capitalism and the Enlightenment are further implicated in the novel. The alluring historical position attracts readings which run the risk of backward projection. In order to avoid this, it is necessary to approach the text in a state of indeterminacy which makes no assumptions about the relation between

the text, its historical context, its perceived ideological content and the cultural perspective of the reader.

The application of a rural reading strategy has allowed new interpretations of *Wuthering Heights* to be drawn. It is difficult to pin *Wuthering Heights* down to a consistent ideological position with regard to rurality. Emily Brontë's novel is revealed occupy an indeterminate position with regard to rural meaning which can be given alternative interpretations. However, the presence of rural othering can be observed to occur within the text, even if it is regularly undermined and problematized.

With regard to conceptions of nature in constructions of rurality, *Wuthering Heights,* dramatizes the dynamic tension between oppositional ideological forces. In the visceral presence of its animals and the mingling rotten flesh of Catherine and Heathcliff, nature is present as material fact, encompassing both the rational and the grotesque. In the awesome bleakness of the moors which connect with Catherine and Heathcliff's beings on a profoundly spiritual level, and in the suggestion of their eternal ghostly presence, it finds an otherworldly and also a Romantic opposition.

The attribution of both positive and negative qualities to the landscape, beauty and desolation, finds parallel with rational and Romantic conceptions of nature. This can be seen as an expression of the idyllic and anti-idyllic notions which combine to other rurality. For the young Catherine and Heathcliff the landscape of the moors holds the promise of nascent sexual freedom.

Charlotte Brontë's defence of *Wuthering Heights* and her reconstruction of her Emily's character appear to be aimed at making the deviance of the novel palatable for a wider readership, and protecting her sister's memory, demonstrating the deviance of the novel on its publication. That Charlotte does not seek to dispel the idea that such transgressive practices and behaviours exist among country folk in general indicates the entrenchment of the idea of urban and rural social separation.

The separation of urban and rural cultures and the identification of urbanity as the origin of 'polite culture' is dramatized in *Wuthering Heights* by the duality of the two households. It is instructive to see the Grange and the Heights as in alignment with the rural idyll and anti-idyll. Whereas Wuthering House can be fully identified with outdated social hierarchies located in rurality, Thrushcross Grange appears to

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represent the advance of progress into the realm of the rural other. However, since Brontë allows the reader to believe that either Thrushcross Grange suppresses its rural barbarities beneath civilised trappings, or that civilisation itself is a mere veneer.

Speech and geography are intertwined in *Wuthering Heights*. The regional speech of Yorkshire is denoted with deviant spelling, which in turn suggests the otherness of the location, acting as a marker of either inferior social class or of outdated social practices. Deviant speech and the spatial otherness of the rural go hand-in hand.

Standard English is also associated with education and is directly related changes in educational practices among the higher social classes. Therefore an association is formed between rurality and low levels of education, which is reinforced by associations between the rural and the natural, the non-rational, the uncivilised and the socially inferior. In *Wuthering Heights* these alignments are strongly implied, reinforced and recreated through the use of deviant spelling, rendering the speech of Joseph almost unreadable, implying its unintelligibility, and the rural otherness of his character.

Wuthering Heights can be considered in relation to the more general category of space. The archaism of space in the period of industrialisation means that space is linked to the rural and its association with the outmoded cultural practices. Social hierarches based upon space, land ownership and agriculture, begin to seem outmoded in the nineteenth century. In this respect, the depiction of landscape in *Wuthering Heights* and its importance to the shape of the narrative and the identities of its characters signifies the removal of its setting from the new urban values. Lockwood's inability to find orientation within unfamiliar space which he is unable to subject to abstraction makes this clear. The presence of the landscape as an aspect of the identity for Catherine and Heathcliff creates not only character as landscape, but also landscape as character, resulting in a literary animism. This removes the rural further from urban civilisation by imbuing it with non-rational, superstitious essence.

Wuthering Heights represents an inversion of the central and marginal. Urban centres are pushed to the edges of the narrative. The setting therefore becomes noticeable to the reader, and this consequently participates in its foregrounding,

underpinning the enduring fascination for the landscape of *Wuthering Heights*, even though descriptions of it are remarkably few. The marginality of the setting is underlined by the presence of Lockwood the narrator, an urban traveller, who, as a stranger in a strange land, occupies the role of reader identification. He is both tourist and coloniser: the narrative unfolds through his dominant gaze. However, his misguided assumptions and struggles with his unfamiliar surroundings serve as a satirical highlighting of urban/rural difference and the sheer otherness of this remote space.

The desire for readers to identify the 'real' landscape represented in *Wuthering Heights* is significant of rural othering. The seeking of this landscape, through peering in maps, making deductions and interpreting textual descriptions resembles colonial explorations of 'dark lands'. The wish to find Emily Brontë's landscape of desire, with its rational trappings of measurement, triangulation and mapping, implies an othering of the landscape, that which exists in the realm of the other, beyond current knowledge, but awaiting exploration, discovery and, perhaps, domination and control.

These considerations can give new insights into contemporary reflections on the rural. Approaching the rural as other provides the possibility for understandings of rural identity as a shifting, unstable and complex construction, implicit in identity, experience and cultural and political dialectics. Using a rural reading strategy could provide interesting and valuable interpretations of various literary, artistic and media forms in the future.

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