

The Victorian Man: Re-defining and Re-negotiating Masculinity in Brontë and Gaskell

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, George, who has encouraged and supported me throughout the years both emotionally and financially, and has always been there to hold my hand, pick me up and boost my morale when low. I could not have completed this without his strength and support.

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Abstract

The subject of this thesis is to investigate the representation of contrasting patterns of strong versus weak masculinity during Britain's Industrial Revolution in three Victorian novels by women writers, specifically Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1848), Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854). Charlotte Brontë identifies and tames the masculinity in her Byronic hero in favor of a Victorian man who is gentler in nature and whose characteristics still possess masculinity and manliness as viewed by social conventions, but who also considers his wife an equal. Brontë challenges the traditional masculine and dominant ideologies which existed within society, whilst remaining within the boundaries of Victorian perception. Furthermore, Emily Brontë refuses to support traditional male Victorian conventions, and exposes and eradicates her Byronic brute hero in favor of a Victorian male whose masculinity represents the fortitude of kindness and compassion. Finally, she shows the realignment of power between men from different social classes within Britain. Elizabeth Gaskell exposes the conflicts and issues of masculinity within the southern and northern England class divide in the Victorian era. Gaskell stresses the importance of the emergence of the new self-made middle class man and his masculinity. This study shows that the Brontë sisters and Gaskell recognized the emergence of new styles of masculinity, brought on in part by the socio-economic problems and unrest caused by the

rapid acceleration of Britain's Industrial Revolution, which led to the rise of the middle-class and the decline of the upper-class. These women writers have a unique perspective on the masculinity issue, as they were progressive women who lived within a patriarchal society and were not afraid to voice their opinions through the construction of their male protagonists and their masculinity.

Introduction

In recent decades, the analysis of masculinity and men within gender studies has increased rapidly, which is evident in the abundance of scholarly research available. Critics such as John Tosh and Robin Gilmour have examined and considered the representation of masculinity within the fictional works of Victorian male authors such as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Thomas Hardy. However, comparatively little, such as the definition of the gentleman versus the man, and the challenges and problems men faced with their masculinity from different social classes, has been researched concerning representation of the masculine within the fictional works of Victorian female authors, being the Brontës and Gaskell.

Most feminist critics, for instance, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Patsy Stoneman and Stevie Davies, tend to focus upon the heroine and have well argued the relationship between the hero and heroine in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1848), Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *North and South* (1854). Although these earlier critics acknowledged the topics of class, gender, and relationships, the challenges and problems men from different social classes faced with their masculinity in these novels has not been thoroughly discussed.

Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, and Elizabeth Gaskell challenge the strict ideal of the Victorian male in their novels which are set in the early 1800's in England. These

authors trace the decline in power and the influence of the aristocrat who became a gentleman merely by right of birth, being gradually replaced with that of the burgeoning prosperity of the industrial merchants. I will argue that through these authors' use of contrasting patterns of strong versus weak masculinity in their male fictional characters, they re-define and re-negotiate the standard of masculinity which evolved during the rapid acceleration of the British Industrial Revolution between 1800-1860. I will attest that these Victorian female authors through their bold and ambitious critique of masculinity construct the dawning of the new self-made Victorian man who rises and advances in life based on merit rather than by birth alone.

Jane Eyre, *Wuthering Heights*, and *North and South*, are written by remarkable women authors who infuse within their texts the genuine concerns they felt for the escalating socio-economic problems occurring within Britain. They wrote their novels during the height of Britain's Industrial Revolution but based the stories upon the earlier decades of the Victorian period that they themselves had lived in. This era of Britain's Industrial Revolution is synonymous with the rise in status of the working and middle class and the waning in power of the aristocratic class. As such, their novels are not just fictitious stories based upon imaginary life, but they reflect the burgeoning unrest which existed within Victorian society.

Works I have found particularly useful for my research are *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (2005) by John Tosh, considered to be a definitive study of the subject of manliness and masculinities in nineteenth century Britain; *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (1981) by Robin Gilmour, which concentrates on the idea of the Victorian

gentleman from the beginning of the eighteenth century through to the mid 1800's. Additionally, Herbert Sussman's *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (1995) provides a historical account detailing the differences in masculinity between Victorian and late twentieth century and American masculinities by male Victorian authors. Finally Andrew Elfenbein's *Byron and the Victorians* (1995) and James Eli Adams's *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (1995) both contain valuable support for my thesis in rethinking the notion of Victorian masculinity. These works, in addition to the numerous others cited in this manuscript, aided me in the creation of my thesis statement and provided supporting evidence for my conclusions.

This manuscript testifies to the changing styles and construction of masculinity within the Brontës' and Gaskell's novels. It examines how the British Industrial Revolution during the 1800-1860s changed the way society viewed the Victorian man, by examining the diversity of masculinity as illustrated in their novels. This thesis is significant as it builds upon the current Victorian conversation by offering a detailed analysis of the challenges the Victorian man faced within a rapidly changing society and class system within Britain.

Turbulent Times During 1800-1860

From the 1800s to 1860s, Britain was fraught with rapid social transformations. The country was in a turbulent state as the foundation of the political and social frameworks, which had been in existence for decades, was being shaken by the development of Britain's Industrial Revolution. By the mid nineteenth century, a new generation of society, class, and man emerged and brought with it a new style of masculinity.

The working and middle class male began to question the ascendancy of the powerful entrenched domain which had allowed the male aristocrat to thrive for generations. The ideology that class hierarchy represented power within social classes became altered. Britain's government, which had always been maintained by the aristocracy, was now experiencing its own revolution, "where the subordinate do not remain in their places," and who could no longer be ignored (Cory 6).

To appease public pressure for social reform, the government passed a multitude of Acts. Of significance was the 1832 Reform Act, which increased electorate votes for men from the working and middle classes by about 50 percent (Henderson 1059). This bill also recognized the significance of the emerging industrial towns, such as Manchester and Birmingham, which were allocated additional political seats within the government. The allocation of seats ensured middle class industrialists had representation within

government, which not only had never occurred within Britain before, but also signaled a rise in strength and power of middle class merchants. These industrial northern towns encompassed the heart of Britain's manufacturing. The Reform Act, together with the subsequent new Corn Law Act of 1846 which protected, to some extent, the lives of the working class through lowering extortionate tax levied upon corn, helped to establish rights for the proletariat (Bloy 1).

The ensuing Factory Acts, such as the 1833 Factory Act¹, followed by the 1847 10 Hour Factory Act², enforced owners and masters to adhere to the improved working conditions for their workers (Henderson 1060). Through these Acts, the working class male gained a "cross-class" voice, which had previously been controlled by the middle and upper classes. Middle class masters and owners also benefited from the Factory Acts in the construction of "wider alliances" with the aristocracy (Gray 8). Furthermore, as Robert Gray suggests, "working-class adult men were [also] enabled to position themselves as political protagonists" (26), and the new sense of power the working man felt was considered a "sign of masculinity" (32). However, even though the passing of these Acts assured the working-class man better working conditions, they also introduced a new dynamic, the battle of masculine identity and social power.

The social milieu which surrounded the passing of these Acts infused within society a feeling of change in attitude of the Victorian proletariat towards the upper class, and, in turn, to that of the idea of the Victorian man. The middle classes were growing in wealth, and the class divide was becoming diminished. The Brontës and Gaskell wrote during this time period, and even with a casual reading of their novels, it is plainly

¹ This Act was an attempt to limit the number of hours children could work in factories.

² This Act limited the work day to 10 hours per day.

obvious that they felt and experienced concerns towards the unrest and confusion regarding the social classes during Britain's Industrial Revolution.

However, it is not just hierarchal issues and class power which the Brontës and Gaskell expose in their novels. These female authors also shake cultural and societal norms within Victorian society with their honest undertakings and socially critical narration of society's ideal standards for masculinity. Their novels were not just about the adventures of the heroines and their relationships with the male protagonists in their stories. They also demonstrate the battle of the Victorian male to define and negotiate his manliness and masculinity in a rapidly changing society within Britain.

A central concern of these novels is "the tension between autonomy and dependency that liberal male subjects experience" and their exploration of the social and moral conditions men adhered to (Morrison 272). Consequently notions of the gentleman and man and his manliness, became less dependent upon class designations as the division of classes became blurred. The dawn of a new voice was emerging in England during the era of Britain's Industrial Revolution.

Masculinity, the Victorian Gentleman and the Man

Even though the shift in the concept of manliness was brought on in part by the rapid expansion of industrialization within Britain, where the working and middle class man began to challenge the authority of the established ruling upper class gentleman, class status in the nineteenth century became a preoccupation (Gilmour 8). Tosh contends that "as the middle class expanded, people became more and more preoccupied with their precise standing within it...intensified by denominational distinctions" (*A Man's Place* 23). Therefore, the authority of the Victorian aristocratic gentleman, along with his masculinity, was now in direct contention with the rising working and middle class man's.

These differences between gentlemanliness and manliness are mainly defined within Tosh's book, *Manliness and Masculinities*. He states that the days of "gentlemanliness [being a] refinement which marked the boy out as one of a social elite" was waning, as "manliness represented the common aspiration of men in all walks of life" (98). Thus, gentlemen had to alter their claims to superiority that were based purely upon hierarchy, birth, class and education, to those of "moral values" which were shared throughout society. The attributes that distinguished the type of gentleman, such as the "officer and gentleman; the scholar and the gentleman; the Christian gentleman and the gentleman sportsman" (Mason 13), were being questioned and redefined by society.

The Brontës' and Gaskell's novels I have chosen to support my argument contain anti-hierarchical plots, as their male protagonists deal with the realignment of power between men within society in Britain. While many novels written during the Victorian era show hierarchies in place and adhere to social conventions, these particular novels epitomize the change which was occurring in redefining the gentleman and his relative masculinity to that of the working and middle-class man.

Their male characters and the story lines they proffer represent "the attitudes and actions of [society in] the 1840's" (Cory 6). Not all battles of masculinity are arduous, even though Morrison suggests that when men are under most duress is when they are able to access significant power and authority (272). A subtler battle is represented in the Brontës' and Gaskell's male fictional characters between the new self-made man and the waning gentleman.

As Tosh claims, manliness emphasized "self-control, hard work and independence" and was geared to the working and middle class man (34). It "upheld the work ethic," whereas, "gentlemanliness had a distinctly ambivalent relationship to it" (93). He suggests that Victorian manliness was an achievable entity which "had to be earned," whereas one was born into gentlemanliness (86). An upper class gentleman's work ethic was "measured in rents rather than profits" (98); in other words, a gentleman did not work in a physical job to earn a living compared to that of a man. However, with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the aristocratic males found their dominant structures of power both disrupted and reconfigured (Cory 1), like the working and middle class; they too now needed to work to earn a living and to prove their masculinity.

The working and middle-class man preferred the moral qualities of work as a sign

of a "truly manly character," whereas the aristocratic gentleman continued to play upon his "refinement and sociability" (Tosh 86). As a result, with the growth in industrialization, the work ethic within Britain was also being redefined by the growing middle class merchants and industrialists. These new middle class industrialist men however, could not claim to be gentlemen, as they were not born members of the aristocracy. This "new entrepreneurial class" of men, who sought to be judged by their manliness alone and not compared to a gentleman (Tosh 86) were not deterred. This distinction alone shows how influential the working and middle class men were becoming within society and is also made evident in the Brontës' and Gaskell's novels.

From the aristocratic gentleman to the working-class man, the differences in masculinity and their manliness occurred throughout the strata of social classes. The working class male "made much heavier toils on their physical strength," compared to middle class men (Tosh 95). They were manual laborers who worked in mills, factories or toiled the land. On the other hand jobs for middle class men were less physical in nature, such as managers of estates owned by the gentry, shopkeepers, and office clerks (Tosh 37).

Due to the growth in the economy aided by the Industrial Revolution, manliness was beginning to cut across class divides, and became blurred within classes. Yet, even with this apparent blurring there were still three distinguishing points that society considered gentlemen to possess compared to that of working and middle-class men. Politeness, refinement, and a good education were major points that distinguished a gentleman from a man during the Victorian era, and are ones which a gentleman strove to achieve (Tosh 86). As Tosh confirms, politeness and refinement "distinguishes manliness

from gentlemanliness: [by their] frank straightforwardness, not only in action...but also in speech" (Tosh 87). These considerations are nurtured, developed, criticized and even discreetly ridiculed by the Brontës and Gaskell in their novels.

For a man to be considered a gentleman, he needed to be in possession of a good education. This feat alone was difficult for a working-class man to achieve due to lack of proper schools in Britain. The working-class boy did not receive an education, simply because there were no schools for him to attend. During the early part of the 1800s, there were only "seven public schools [which] catered to the aristocracy," which left the masses uneducated (Tosh 111-112). In contrast, a middle-class boy who came from a wealthier middle class family was able to become a gentleman by attending a public school (*A Man's Place* 117). So much emphasis was based on becoming a gentleman that Philip Mason asserts these public schools influenced "the desire to be a gentleman...inspired the lesser landed gentry as well as the professional and middle classes to give their children an upbringing of which the object was to make them ladies and gentlemen" (161-174).

However, gentlemanliness within these schools was not acquired through intellectual ability, but rather by "athletic prowess" (*Manliness and Masculinities* 112). In contrast, the working class man's manliness and athletic abilities were confined to the streets and factories. *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *North and South* expose the social difficulties men faced with their manliness and masculinity during the 1800s, and how hard it was for the middle-class Victorian man to achieve gentlemanly status. The Industrial Revolution, Reform Bills and Factory Acts may have aided middle-class businessmen to grow in wealth and success, but the ruling aristocracy, who were still

resistant or even fearful of change opposed middle class mobility (Henderson 1052).

Thus, paradoxically, the new self-made, middle-class male enjoyed a position of new found wealth, but still did not possess the necessary qualifications of a gentleman.

The Brontës' and Gaskell's novels demonstrate the effect that the Industrial Revolution had upon the status of the working, middle, and upper class-man, and the manifestation and shift in masculinity which occurred in Britain.

Vulcan and Apollo: Two Types of Masculinity in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

Apollo: tall, fair, blue-eyed, and with a Grecian profile. Vulcan: a real blacksmith, brown, broad-shouldered: and blind and lame" *Jane Eyre*.

Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847), is considered to be a masterpiece, and her ideas represent and explain why the Victorian male behaved in such a patriarchal and dominant way. Her novel is an excellent example for an analysis of the distinct types of masculinity that existed during the Victorian era. During the course of the story the heroine, Jane Eyre, is confronted with two proposals of marriage. The first is from Brontë's character, Edward Fairfax Rochester, who is a Byronic aristocratic gentleman and Jane's employer. Originated from Lord Byron, the term Byronic hero was associated with a romantic hero, mysterious, sinister, sexually dominant and arrogant (Elfenbein 9). As a landed aristocrat, he is traditional by convention, but his mannerisms and behavior towards Jane also make him a somewhat unconventional male with whom Jane must cope. The second proposal is from a middle class man, St. John Rivers, who is a pious, emotionless clergyman, and Jane's cousin. He is considered by society to be a gentleman by profession, not by birth. Jane's decision regarding which man to choose as a husband allows Brontë to emphasize that her heroine also has to decide between two different types of masculinity: the Byronic strength of Rochester or the weaker masculinity of St. John Rivers. The problems Rochester and St. John Rivers each face with their own masculine patriarchal behavior when wooing the eponymous heroine emphasize Brontë's challenge to the

Victorian concept of manliness and masculinity. I will attest she contrasts the Byronic strength of Rochester with the weak masculinity of St. John Rivers in order to ridicule the concept of the traditional Victorian male that existed within society. I will show through her construction of strong versus weak masculinity in the novel, she both criticizes society's tolerance of patriarchal control, and demonstrates the problems men face with their representation of masculinity; namely, how their conduct is constrained by the social and moral conventions of Victorian society.

Through the characters' progression in the novel, Brontë's vision of what she considers her ideal Victorian male is revealed. Her ideal Victorian man is the reformed Byronic Rochester. His Byronic behavior is prominent at the start of the novel, as he exhibits arrogance, aggressiveness, pride and dominant behavior. His character then develops from a strong dominant bachelor and master of his estate, to a more reformed, weakened, and humbler position as a husband and family man. Even with his unsettled past, he is Jane's choice of husband, and by the time Jane returns to him, he has become a steady, family man at their home called Ferndean. Their marriage will be a partnership and not one of patriarchal control. That marital relationship is in contrast to the one proposed by St. John Rivers, who offers Jane a marriage stifled in devout religious missionary duties, and filled with patriarch control as, "he would coerce [Jane] into obedience" (349). Brontë's representation of Rochester not only shows the waning in power of the aristocratic male, but also illustrates how the masculinity of the upper class male was being redefined during the Industrial Revolution. She, in fact, tames his masculinity and, in doing so, points to a preferable style of masculinity.

While critics, (Susan Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Sarah Wootton, Kristina

Dobrovic, and Andrew Elfenbein, Judith Pike, Robert Kendrick and Sylvia Skaggs, among others) discuss how different Rochester and St. John Rivers are in terms of their Victorian patriarchal status and characteristics within society, only a few of the critical experts in this field argue the differences between them in terms of their masculinity alone. My argument expands upon Susan Gilbert's and Susan Gubar's discussion of Jane's apparent choice between Rochester's, "life of pleasure...marriage of passion" compared to John Rivers', "life of principle...marriage of spirituality" (365). I will also apply and expand Verena-Susannah Nungesser's argument that Brontë, "call[s] up certain expectations and/or destabilizes them" with regards to her character Rochester (215). Additionally, Andrew Elfenbein discusses how Brontë reproduces the Byronic hero, "not solely for desire and admiration, but also for imitation and identification" (65), which is a point I wish to expand upon when identifying Rochester. Sarah Wootton's suggestion that Brontë redefines his Byronic characteristics and traits, so she is "interacting with, revising and determining the future path" of Rochester, is good evidence to support my thesis (229). All of these critics agree that Brontë reforms Rochester's Byronic traits.

As *Jane Eyre* began to gain popularity with readers, Brontë received both favorable and harsh criticism from both male and female reviewers. "For a book more unfeminine...throughout there is a masculine power, breadth and shrewdness, combined with masculine hardness, coarseness," bemoans a reviewer from the *Christian Remembrancer*, as they attacked Charlotte Brontë's "immoral or antichristian" novel (396). The masculinity that the *Christian Remembrancer* referred to was that of Brontë's male aristocratic character, Rochester. Elizabeth Rigby in *The Quarterly Review* criticized Brontë as an author who committed, "inconsistencies and improbabilities, and

chief and foremost that highest moral offense a novel writer can commit, that of making an unworthy character [Rochester] interesting in the eyes of the reader" (89). Rochester's questionable gentlemanliness caused Rigby some consternation as her cascade of acrimony continued, "Mr. Rochester is a man who deliberately and secretly seeks to violate the laws of both God and man" (89). She seemed confounded that the "coarse and brutal" Rochester would "enchant" her lady readers, and was dismayed to, "have thought such a hero had had no chance in the purer taste of the present day"(89). It would seem then that Rochester's Byronic mannerisms and atypical actions caused quite a stir amongst the evangelical and somewhat conventional Victorian readers. Rigby may well have doomed the author of *Jane Eyre* as, "[a woman] who has long forfeited the society of her own sex...[and] is certainly...no artist" (94), but for many of Brontë's readers her words in *Jane Eyre*, "articulated with a raw power the experience of thwarting social and personal circumstance" (Everest 11).

In the patriarchal Victorian England in which Brontë lived, males were deemed capable of reaching the highest point attainable and being masters of their own self-discipline. Females were considered submissive and incapable of governing their own discipline (Loeb 33). The type of marriage that Victorian society approved of was one between a husband and wife originating from the same social class. The expected relationship within the marriage would be one of patriarchal control by the husband, and submissive behavior by the wife. Brontë's description of the Byronic Rochester and pietistic St. John Rivers represents the different types of Victorian masculinity that existed during the 1800s. Their manner towards Jane confirms the notion that Victorian gendered binaries were very apparent, and is reinforced by John Ruskin's statement, "You

may chisel a boy into shape...But you cannot hammer a girl into anything" (108). As "the first historian of the private consciousness," Brontë collectively challenges, through her characters Rochester and St. John Rivers, the concept of the Victorian male and his masculinity and refuses to accept female subservience (Burt 222).

In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë proffers two distinct styles of masculinity, by contrasting Rochester's and St. John Rivers's masculine appearances, and their manner and behavior towards Jane. Their differing mannerisms and conduct were expected by Victorian society from a gentleman of the gentry and a middle class gentleman by profession. Jane's description of Rochester's appearance and her depiction of his manner are notably Byronic. Brontë's character, Rochester, possesses Byronic dominant masculinity, sexual passion, and strength, and is considered to be the ultimate Byronic hero. Rochester is a member of the gentry and "has a gentleman's tastes and habits," and by definition, is a gentleman by birth (89). His sexual passion, and "friendly frankness, as correct as cordial," draws Jane to him, and is in direct conflict with Victorian conventions (125).

The Byronic Rochester never remains long at his home called Thornfield, as "for ten long years [he] roved about [from]...Paris...Rome...Naples and Florence" as he sought "the companionship of mistresses" (265). Jane's first encounter with her patriarchal master is rather unconventional by Victorian standards, to say the least. His masculinity takes a severe tumble when he falls from his horse on some ice. Brontë ensures that Rochester's manliness and masculinity is bruised, as he lands at Jane's feet and suffers from a sprained ankle. Rochester attempts to regain his patriarchal status and composure in front of Jane, but realizes he has to bow to the inevitable as he proposes, "you may help me a little yourself, if you will be so kind" (98). In an attempt to cover up his own

weakened state, he asks Jane to seize hold of his spirited horse's bridle. He laughs patronizingly at Jane's failed attempt to capture his horse, whilst allegorizing Francis Bacon's proverb: "I see...the mountain will never be brought to Mahomet, so all you can do is to aid Mahomet to go to the mountain...I must beg of you to come here." (98). Through Jane's failure to secure his steed, Rochester's manliness is once again restored, albeit reestablished in a rather sly way and reminiscent of Byronic behavior.

At first, Jane considers the Byronic Rochester's appearance as somewhat ugly, and his manner pretentious:

[His] stern...gloomy...self-indulgent...frigid and rigid temper...he looked preciously grim...his massive head...granite-hewn features...great dark eyes....not without a certain change in their depths sometimes...sable waves of hair..his brow...showed a solid enough mass of intellectual organs...abrupt deficiency where the suave sign of benevolence should have risen...unconscious pride in his port...much ease in his demeanour...complete indifference to his own external appearance...haughty, a reliance on the power of other qualities, intrinsic or adventitious. (111-113)

Rochester arrogantly asks Jane whether she finds him attractive, "You examine me, Miss Eyre," said he: "do you think me handsome?" She boldly answers, "No, sir" (129). The confident Byronic male aristocrat would have expected nothing less than a positive and agreeable reply from his governess. The very fact that Jane voiced her opinion honestly not only exposes Brontë's desire for a strong minded heroine, but also shows a waning in Rochester's patriarchal power. It also reminds Brontë's readers of the social and personal distinction between men and women at that time. The men, regardless of social class,

were patriarchal and dominant, and the women were submissive to them. According to societal standards, Jane, as a young, employed woman, is inferior to the patriarch. His patriarchal status should indicate his superiority to Jane, especially as Jane is his employee and younger than he. However, his idiosyncratic behavior at times lacks male dominance, respectability, and honesty, and hints that he is capable of reform.

As Jane spends more time with the aristocratic Rochester, his masculine appearance alters in her eyes so that while she once considered him ugly, she now sees him as handsome. She falls in love with his, "dark face with stern features" (96), "great dark eyes" (111), and his Byronic "proud, sardonic, harsh...moody...morose.." character (125). She thrives on his "manly energy" (255), and "strong...fury" (248). Jane now describes his strong Byronic personality and manner, together with his manly, rugged, and "olive face, square, massive brow, broad and jetty eyebrows, deep eyes, strong features, firm, grim mouth,—all energy, decision, will, were more than beautiful to me," as being, "full of an interest, an influence that quite mastered me,—that took my feelings from my own power and fettered them in his" (149). Jane admits that she had, "not intended to love him," and so smitten was Jane that she declared to her readers, "He made me love him without looking at me" (149).

Rochester's unconventional manner towards Jane, in allowing her to talk freely, puts her at ease and "freed her from painful restraint," caused by the social conventions imposed upon men and women (125). Her feelings towards Rochester intensify when she realizes that she feels equal to him, especially during their discussions: "I was honoured by a cordiality of reception that made me feel I really possessed the power to amuse him, and that these evening conferences were sought as much for his pleasure as for my

benefit" (125). Jane's confidence in her replies sparks an interest in Rochester, and he senses the start of a battle of wits between them, which shows that his competitive Byronic masculinity is softening. He humorlessly asks Jane, "And so you were waiting...for the men in green: it was a proper moonlight evening for them...that you spread that dam ice on the causeway?" (104). Her response is not one of feminine propriety or Victorian norms as she too equally and humorlessly replies, "The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago" (104). Later, during another conversation, Rochester forgets his patriarchal status, as he confesses "I was your equal at eighteen—quite your equal" (116). This point is important as it shows Brontë's views of feminine equality to men. It also exposes her views that not only can a female be intelligent enough to hold a conversation with a man, but also that a member of the gentry can consider himself equal to a member of the proletariat. Brontë wants her heroine to be an equal to Rochester and begins to soften his dominant masculinity towards Jane.

Another example of this perceived equality occurs when Rochester asks Jane a slew of mundane questions during their first discussions, "How long were you at [Lowood school?]..."where do you brothers and sisters live? (104) "Have you seen much society? (105), "You have lived a life of a nun...drilled in religious forms?" (105). Of course, this could be seen as Rochester being engaged in merely asking his employee pertinent questions. However, even in his patriarchal stature, he begins to view Jane as a worthy adversary, as she confidently answers him. More importantly, is how Brontë shows and re-defines the traditional Victorian gentleman. She wants a new man, one who will push aside his superior masculinity and prominence and engage in a conversation

with a woman.

Gradually, Rochester's cavalier masculine manner and aloofness towards Jane starts to change. Jane comments, "when he would sometimes pass [me] haughtily and coldly, just acknowledging [my] presence by a distant nod or a cool glance, and sometimes bow and smile with gentlemanlike affability" (110). Jane gushes, " I never seemed in his way... the encounter seemed welcome; he had always a word and sometimes a smile for me" (125). Through Rochester's softening actions and mannerisms towards Jane he exposes the fragility of his own patriarchal masculinity identity. Brontë unveils the flaws that exist in Victorian society within the enforced patriarchal customs, power, traits, and "fits of chilling hauteur," which are so evident between men and women of different social classes in Victorian society (125). James Eli Adams claims social customs "works through as well as against the fragility of masculine identities" (3). Rochester possesses the social power to be able to dominate Jane as society has granted him such a status, but, instead, he chooses to engage with her, and reserved conversation or cool indifference does not apply between them.

The Byronic Rochester's morals and social class constraints are tested when he finds himself alone in his bedroom with Jane dressed only in her night clothes. His masculinity is once again weakened as Jane saves his life from a fire in his bedroom, just as she helped him up in the horse accident earlier. The fire had been started by his insane wife who he has locked in the attic. His manly desires surface as Jane stands before him, wet and cold from the water she put the fire out with:

He paused; gazed at me: words almost visible trembled on his lips,—but his voice was checked...I knew...you would do me good in some way...I saw it in your eyes when I first beheld you...their expression and smile did not...strike delight to my very inmost heart so for nothing...Strange energy was in his voice, strange fire in his look..What! you *will* go? (129)

From this, we can see how Brontë starts to dismantle Rochester's masculinity, to show his vulnerability, and to re-construct his Byronic personality. She ensures that his masculinity takes a tumble again as Jane saves his life from fire, and successfully reverses the usual damsel in distress scenario, which is totally unconventional within a patriarchal dominant Victorian society. She also shows the confusion Rochester feels when the woman he loves resists his desires and leaves his bedroom. He may be master and control of his home, but it is Jane who is in control of the somewhat risqué situation she finds herself in.

Brontë ensures that Rochester's vulnerabilities are exposed because, for Jane to be equal to him, his manliness needs to be tamed. When faced with the strong minded middle class heroine, the aristocratic Rochester is both puzzled and uncertain of how to act towards her, especially as he starts to fall in love with her, "Good-night, my—" He stopped, bit his lip, and abruptly left me," states Jane (154). True to his Byronic personality, he gets carried away with his emotions, and Jane describes him sexually as a "wild beast" and full of "passion"(217-367). Gilbert and Gubar suggest that, "he...will initiate her into the mysteries of the flesh" as his feelings towards Jane intensify (355). Jane draws strength from his vulnerable uncertainty, but is also cautious because she realizes he has a Byronic passion fueled with a desire to consume her.

Rochester's marriage proposal to Jane is equally intense, and full of manly sexual passion. He descends upon Jane, "enclosing [her] in his arms. Gathering [her] to his breast, pressing his lips on [her] lips" (216). His masculinity both dominates and begs: "I entreat to accept me as a husband" (217). Brontë lowers Rochester's patriarchal superiority to Jane as he pleads for her acceptance to be his wife. His proposal is a patriarchal demand as he grapples to preserve his aristocratic demeanor and control, but it is also a request, as the upper class Rochester appeals to his employee to marry him "You, Jane, I must have you for my own—entirely my own" (217). He wants to "own" her "entirely," but also agrees with Jane's assertion that they are equal: "As we are!" (216). This equality between Jane and Rochester is also an assertion Gilbert and Gubar consider when they suggest that "Brontë's prince and Cinderella [Rochester and Jane] are democratically equal" (354). As Brontë lived in Victorian England she must have realized it would be considered inappropriate and outside of societal conventions for a member of the aristocracy to propose to his employed governess. Gilbert and Gubar draw upon class status when they describe, "both Jane and Rochester are...conscious of the barrier," the barrier being the stigma of the class divide within Britain (355). For Brontë to illustrate Rochester in this context exposes her challenge to the idiosyncratic traits and mannerisms society expected men and women from different social classes to adhere to. Brontë visibly rejects the idea that a woman has to marry a man just because he may belong to the appropriate class and be considered a suitable fit by society. Brontë wants a new Victorian man who her heroine can be an equal to rather than subordinate to. She wants a man who loves her heroine unequivocally, and she re-defines Rochester into such a man.

So why did Brontë let her heroine fall in love with the Byronic hero, who portrays to the reader a sense of not only fascination but intrigue and mystery? Sara Wootton argues that Brontë was greatly influenced from a young age by her "intimate knowledge of Byron's poetry," and that in turn influenced her portrayal of Rochester (229). She suggests that Rochester is undoubtedly Byronic, but he is not merely a product of Byronism. I would also suggest that Brontë redefines the masculine Byronic characteristics of Rochester in order to make him a more suitable and equal partner for Jane to marry. The choices that Jane makes in her men, help to reveal the issues that men had with the perception of their masculinity during the Victorian era. I believe through Brontë's description of Rochester she subconsciously describes the man she most admires. Even though later in the novel she punishes and reduces his masculine-status through an accident, Jane still continues to describe him as "manly" (378).

As we have seen, Bronte shows that when he is near Jane, Rochester seems to reveal his desire to lose some of his Byronic traits. But his marriage proposal is based on lies, which reveals his continuing Byronic persona. Jane is attracted to Rochester's Byronic influence and charm in some instances, but in others he crosses the line, which is shown by his dishonesty and flaws in his character. Rochester's aristocratic behavior is at times far from gentlemanly, as he commits the ultimate of sins and attempts to marry Jane when he is already married! Gilmour suggests that, "All aristocrats are gentlemen, but not all gentlemen are aristocrats" (5), thus perhaps Rochester is far from the proper gentleman Jane perceives him to be. He lies to Jane, does not tell her he is already married, and keeps his insane wife locked in the attic of his Thornfield home. Tosh's assertion that the "code of honor was in decline" by the 1840s, reflects upon Rochester's

lack of honor towards Jane (*Manliness and Masculinities* 74). "Mr. Rochester was not to me what he had been; for he was not what I had thought him"(252), bemoans Jane. But even when Jane is faced with Rochester's despicable deception, she forgives him and regards Rochester's manliness in a positive way: "Reader, I forgave him...the deep remorse in his eye, such true pity in his tone, such manly energy in his manner" (255). Jane does leave Rochester and does not return to him until later in the novel. It would appear that Brontë has crushed his masculine Victorian pride male, but still wants her heroine to stay in love with him.

With her stoic discipline, Jane shuns Rochester's masculine advances, even though she loves him deeply, and Rochester deeply loves her. She draws upon her moral conscience, and "saw laid out for me...Conscience, turned tyrant, held Passion by the throat" (254). Given the evangelical England that Brontë resided within, it is without question that Brontë would have studied the scriptures. This is apparent when Jane parallels her fate to Matthew: 5.29, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell" (*English Standard Version Bible*). Brontë does not wish her heroine to succumb to Rochester's manliness or love, at least not on the grounds he proposes, which would leave Jane as nothing more than a bigamist's mistress. Jane states, "you shall tear yourself away...you shall yourself pluck out your right eye; yourself cut off your right hand: your heart shall be the victim, and you the priest to transfix it" (254). Rochester may be masterful, and he may be a Byronic hero, but the decline in his Byronic masculine chivalry and honor is evident, (and unconventional to say the least) but very typical to that of a Byronic hero. To describe Rochester in this manner, Brontë is able to

show the flaws in his aristocratic character and manliness, which are so often obscured from society, and she also shows the discipline that a proletariat Victorian woman, Jane, possesses in order for her to flee from her master, lover, and friend. Rochester is left alone to battle his demons and his injured pride, his weakened manliness, and marred masculinity.

Jane's harrowing journey is fraught with destitution and rejection, as for a Victorian woman to be alone and without a chaperone whilst wandering in the countryside would have been considered inappropriate by society. It is only by chance that she ends up at the home of her cousin the pious St. John Rivers. He is middle class, and a clergyman, an occupation recognized and accepted by Victorian society as worthy of the title of gentleman (Gilmour 3). Jane's first encounter with St. John Rivers is the opposite of her initial encounter with Rochester. Whereas Rochester's masculinity hits a low when he falls from his horse and lands at Jane's feet, St. John Rivers' masculinity is patriarchal and dominant as he stands above the homeless and distraught Jane whilst she cowers huddled on his doorstep. His patriarchal dominance is an expected norm, as a man regardless of whether he is middle or lower class held power and control over women (Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities* 51). With Jane at the footstep of his home, his authority and masculinity ruled. Tosh contends, "Masculinity... was essentially about being master of one's own house, about exercising authority over...wife and servants" (*A Man's Place* 89). St. John Rivers does not have a wife, but he does have two sisters who live with him, and whom he exercises his patriarchal powers over. He is also in a position of patriarchal dominance and power over Jane. However, he also shows her kindness by allowing her to stay and live with him and his sisters. Brontë introduces the masculinity

of the middle-class clergyman, St. John Rivers, to be somewhat superior and stronger than that of the aristocratic master and Byronic hero, Rochester. In so doing, she is able to show the weakening of the power of the upper class compared to the strengthening of the middle class, or at least as a viable alternative of potential shift in power.

Jane's description of Rochester's characteristics and mannerisms contrasts starkly with how she describes St. John Rivers' appearance and demeanor. The contrast could not be more apparent:

[St. John Rivers]sitting as still as one of the dusty pictures on the walls...tall, slender; his face riveted the eye; it was like a Greek face, very pure in outline: quite a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin...His eyes were large and blue, with brown lashes; his high forehead, colourless as ivory, was partially streaked over by careless locks of fair hair. (294)

St. John Rivers' appearance is far from Byronic compared to that of Rochester's, and he appears more angelic rather than manly. However, Jane also notices that beneath his angelic appearance and "gentle delineation," a "hard, colder and sterner" manner looms, and his "eyes [were] difficult to fathom" (294-295). It is as though Brontë offers Jane a man whose exterior character represents good wholesome Christian values, but whose interior spirit smoulders and constricts all joy or warmth.

After showing his kindness towards Jane by inviting her to live in his house, St. John Rivers' behavior becomes callous as he believes that she should dutifully obey him, which is typical of a man during the Victorian era. He has no warmth about him, and is cold towards her. He arrogantly informs Jane: "I feel my inclination to put you in the way

of keeping yourself" (297). Jane states, "He did not appear to enjoy that mental serenity, that inward content, which should be the reward of every sincere Christian and practical philanthropist" (299). It would seem St. John Rivers lives more in "gloom than pleasure in the tone and words" (299). He considers his sole purpose in life is to be a dutiful man to God and wants to become a missionary. Jane recognizes that his religious sermons are filled with, "a strange bitterness; an absence of consolatory gentleness; stern allusions to Calvinistic doctrines," and realizes his passion lies only within his religious endeavors (300). Any love he feels for Jane is restricted by convention and his duty to his religious convictions. St. John Rivers represents the stable, practical, evangelical, balanced, if not dull, form of a middle-class male in Victorian society.

Whist in his house, Jane spends little time in St. John Rivers's company, and interaction between them is far more stilted when compared to her conversations with the more talkative Rochester. It is as though St. John Rivers fears that his masculinity and manliness will become weakened if he engages in conversation with her. Jane considers him "incommunicative" and thinks that "he seemed of a reserved, an abstracted, and even of a brooding nature" (299-300). He preaches at Jane, "let me frankly tell you... 'Rise, follow Me!'" as though he was giving a sermon, rather than talking to her (301). Brontë constructs St. John Rivers's display of manliness as arrogant as he refuses to listen or engage in debate with Jane. Through his mannerisms towards Jane, Brontë exposes the patriarchal and dismissive attitude Victorian men had towards women.

There is not to be any intimacy between St. John Rivers and Jane, compared to that of Rochester, as his "barrier to friendship" is forever constrained (299). He is so caught up in his ministerial life and his devotion to "visiting the sick and the poor," that

any form of manliness he may possess is pushed aside in the name of God (299). Jane describes him as honest, practical and "zealous in his ministerial labours, blameless in his life and habits" (299). Whilst Jane recognizes his "reserved, abstracted, [and] brooding nature," she also admires his "pure-lived, conscientious, zealous" life. But even with his respectability she does not love him (299-300). She finds little joy in their conversations and believes that St. John Rivers prefers "salutary solace" (331). Even when he tells Jane that she has come into a great fortune and is "an heiress" (325), he is unexcited and presumes she will be unable to comprehend "the importance of twenty thousand pounds" (330). Jane feels as though St. John Rivers "took away [her] liberty" of speech, and she could "no longer talk or laugh freely" (339). He was a true Victorian patriarchal master, "forbearing and exacting," and unlike Rochester, who granted her independence and freedom (339). St. John Rivers's masculinity and manliness is constrained in respectability and modesty and Jane feels weakened by his superiority and pious character.

His mannerisms are far more patriarchal and traditionalist in nature than those of the reforming upper class, Rochester. He is a devout religious man and lacks passion and any form of emotion. Jane describes St. John Rivers's disposition as, "martyr-like" (313), "polished, calm" (376), and "cold as an iceberg" (378), which is in stark contrast to Rochester. Gilbert and Gubar suggest that Brontë's naming her character St. John Rivers is "blatantly patriarchal" and indicates "masculine abstraction of the gospel according to St. John" (64). His fortitude lies within his devout religious beliefs; however, this could also be seen as his downfall. His behavior towards Jane is reserved and unbending: "It is not personal, but mental endowments they have given you: you are formed for labour, not

for love" (343). With such tunneled vision, St. John Rivers overlooks the possibility of sensual, manly and earthly love with Jane.

The only spark of carnal desire and manly passion he has for a woman is shown by his interest in the "earthly angel" called Rosamond Oliver (309). She is the daughter of a wealthy merchant who is the patron of the school where Jane teaches. Even though St. John Rivers confesses to Jane his love for Rosamond: "so wildly-with all the intensity...of...a first passion" (318), he constrains his manly advances based purely upon his narrow-minded devotion and arrogance. In fact, he goes so far as to state: "I scorn the weakness...a mere fever of the flesh: not...a convulsion of the soul" (319). He divulges to Jane that after a year of being married to Rosamond, he would certainly regret the union. His "rapture would succeed a lifetime of regret," and she would not make a suitable missionary's wife (318). Brontë clearly shows her readers that St. John Rivers is patriarchal in his manner towards women and considers women nothing more than a commodity that may useful to him in his service to society and God.

As a clergyman and budding missionary, St. John Rivers's sexual passion or intimacy with a woman may well be at the bottom of his priority list. It may be the reason why he restrains his carnal attraction. According to Adams "the priest [attained] a masculine role exempted from...traditional masculine identity, such as sexual prowess" (26). Perhaps Brontë did not wish to portray the religious St. John Rivers as a gentleman who oozed sexuality and masculinity. Perhaps she was trying to show society that extremes in masculinity are bad - too much heat from Rochester and too little from St. John Rivers - or perhaps she wished to show Victorian society what happens when a patriarchal man feels that his masculinity is being challenged by a female. Either way, St.

John Rivers remains pious and condescending towards Jane, and as a clergyman, whose occupation is to listen and be attentive towards people, his lack of interest, emotion, or feeling towards Jane is too apparent, and constitutes a major flaw in his character.

Accordingly, St. John Rivers's marriage proposal, like Rochester's, is also flawed for Jane. His proposal lacks any form of emotion and desire. His words are entwined within the "powerful legacy of the Evangelical movement" (Tosh *A Man's Place* 54). His marriage proposal is nothing more than for a marriage of convenience since he clearly loves Rosamond Oliver. His words contain no mention of love or endearment as he says, "Jane, come with me to India: come as my helpmeet and fellow-labourer," (342). According to Lauren Owsley, "[St. John Rivers is] the embodiment of religious and patriarchal oppression" (60). He considers Jane more as a commodity to be of use to him as a missionary's wife, and as Jane laments, "He will never love me...he asks me to be his wife, and has no more of a husband's heart for me than...a rock...He prizes me as a soldier would a good weapon; and that is all" (345). Unlike Rochester's plea for her hand in marriage, St. John Rivers's proposal displays his patriarchal and confident manner, "I want a wife: the sole helpmeet I can influence efficiently in life, and retain absolutely till death" (346). He assumes that Jane will submit to him, and using the guise of godly religious intent, he finds justification for his domineering manner.

As outlined earlier, St. John Rivers is considered to be a practical man who would be considered by Victorian society an ideal husband for a woman. Later in the novel, Jane sings his praises to Rochester and considers him a "truly able" man (375). With such praise why then does Brontë paint St. John Rivers in such a pietistic light, and not consider him to be her ideal Victorian male? To consider this question, one needs to

examine the era Brontë wrote within. In Victorian society, woman's sole purpose in life was to marry and be a dutiful wife. Women bowed to societal conventions so that they would, regardless of whether they were in love or not, marry a man deemed a suitable fit by both families and society as a whole (Tosh *A Man's Place* 54-62). Consider both marriage proposals offered to Jane. St. John Rivers admires Jane for her work ethic, but not as a wife: "God and nature intended you for a missionary's wife... You shall be mine: I claim you—not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service" (343). Rochester wants to "own" her "entirely," but also offers Jane his "hand... heart, and a share of all my possessions" (216). Both of these marriage proposals to Jane are, to say the least, patriarchal in manner. St. John Rivers "claims" her, even if he does justify his request in the name of God, and Rochester wants to "own" her "entirely." Their proposals are more of a demand than a request. However, St. John Rivers's proposal is unbending and unyielding, whereas Rochester's is endearing. By contrasting these proposals, Brontë emphasizes Rochester's passion, sexual attraction, and manliness towards Jane, as opposed to St. John Rivers's impassive, frigid, masculine aloofness.

Gilbert and Gubar suggest that Jane's choice of husband is a decision between choosing a "divine Master or [her] master at Thornfield" (365), or, in other words, between God and Rochester. Through the dominant expression of their marriage proposals, Brontë demonstrates to her readers that these men believe their masculine superiority is unquestionable. They both believe Jane would dutifully obey their demand. St. John Rivers may be a respectable man, but his lack of feeling, warmth and love towards Jane would make him unsuitable as a husband. To Jane, he is not the ideal male she wishes to spend her married life with.

Brontë does not give him the chance to change his arrogant and patriarchal ways in the novel. He is confident with his social standing as he is, after all, considered a gentleman by society. St. John Rivers does not consider Jane his equal. Furthermore, his overall weakness is that he is unable to deal with any sign of his own weakness in his masculinity, which is why he constrains his manliness towards Jane and Rosamond. He is weak because he does not wish to lose the patriarchal control he has over Jane. A marriage to St. John Rivers would have left Jane emotionally barren, unfulfilled and restrained within the confines of a patriarchal union. Her impassioned, "If I were to marry you, you would kill me. You are killing me now" statement stuns St. John Rivers (351). In his unbending patriarchal manner, he considers Jane's words "are such as ought not to be used: violent, unfeminine, and untrue" (351). His arrogance and loveless feelings towards Jane reveal Brontë's preference to the more sensuous type of masculinity found in the Byronic gentleman Rochester, especially once Rochester's sexuality is tempered by Jane's moral values. A preferable style of masculinity never materializes for St. John Rivers as Jane realizes his strengths lie solely in his commitment to God, and not towards her.

Brontë presents, then, two men who are different in class status, mannerisms and character, and similar in their patriarchal approach. She constructs, dismantles and re-constructs Rochester, and leaves St. John Rivers's patriarchal manner, disposition, and characteristics unchanged. Both male characters are "representative of patriarchy" (Kendrick 246) which exists within society at that time. Both were expected to behave in a certain way and to conform to a certain standard of masculinity. However, as the Industrial Revolution took hold, those expected male standards became blended and

began to shift between social classes, which caused confusion in the Victorian male.

Brontë unmasks both Rochester's and St. John Rivers's foibles, reveals their weaknesses, and exposes their strengths.

Brontë's narrative of Rochester and St. John Rivers can be seen as a reflection of the social changes which were occurring around her. Her novel shows how "victims of conventions" within the English class system can invoke so much misery and subservience to the social and cultural demands within society (Parsons 719). In the preface to *Jane Eyre*, Brontë states, "Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion...Men too often confound them" (1). The challenges the Victorian man faced, were inherent within their subconscious use of their masculinity, evidenced by Brontë's exposure of Rochester's and St. John Rivers's masculinity, and the challenge Jane posed to each of them.

Critics, such as Dobrovic, Kendrick and Gilbert and Gubar, have argued that Brontë reduces Rochester's masculine power in order for Jane to be able to be equal to him. This may be so, but I would argue Brontë does not reduce his masculinity; rather, she re-defines it. When Jane returns and finds him at his other home (called Ferndean) he is in a diminished masculine state "helpless...blind and a cripple" (365). Rochester's injuries are the result of his attempt to save his mad wife from a fire she sets; she burns Thornfield to the ground and kills herself in the process. Rochester's masculinity is severely injured, but his Byronic pride is more than justified in his attempt to save her. His Ferndean home lacks the size and grandeur of Thornfield, which also reflects upon the loss in his aristocratic excess. Rochester's aggression and independence may have been shattered, but the reader is left with a feeling that Rochester still possesses manly

attributes. Jane herself states, "his form was of the same strong and stalwart contour. He may well be, "quite broken down" (366), but I believe that Brontë did not want Jane to be left with an invalid to nurse-maid. Instead, she wanted Jane to be left with a man and husband who respects her as an equal, whilst still remaining within the confines of traditional "Victorian attributes of domesticity" (Tosh *A Man's Place* 170).

Rochester is a different kind of man at Ferndean than when he resided at Thornfield. He is still Byronic but far more humble and reliant upon Jane. Verena-Susannah Nungesser asserts that Rochester is domesticated by the end of the novel and is "no longer proud and unruly but a purified widower" (221). She attests that his purification and liberation are brought on in part by the destruction of Thornfield and the death of his wife, Bertha (220). However, I believe Rochester's purification, especially with regard to his masculinity, begins much earlier in the novel - long before the fire at Thornfield. His masculinity starts to be reformed the moment his pride takes a tumble, as he falls from his horse and lands at Jane's feet.

Rochester's arrogance and pride may have been diminished but not erased. Brontë reduces his masculine Byronic strength but ensures that his gentlemanliness remains. With Jane now becoming the matriarch of their union, she tenderly listens to Rochester as he bemoans the vivid description of St. John Rivers she herself supplied to him: "The picture you have just drawn is suggestive of a rather too overwhelming contrast. Your words have delineated very prettily a graceful Apollo: he is present to your imagination,—tall, fair, blue-eyed, and with a Grecian profile. Your eyes dwell on a Vulcan,—a real blacksmith, brown, broad-shouldered: and blind and lame into the bargain" (376). Rochester's depiction of St. John Rivers as the Greek god, Apollo, and

himself as the Roman god, Vulcan, symbolizes the utter contrast between them as men, and are representative of two very distinct types of masculinity. On the one hand, there is Apollo, who is the god of prophecy, music, and intellectual pursuits, and, on the other hand, Vulcan the god of destructive fire. Jane has made her choice in the type of man and masculinity she wants. St. John Rivers may possess graceful intellect, but she desires the tamed fire and fervor which rages still within Rochester. He may be the fallen hero of the novel, and he may have fallen in masculinity and stature, but he becomes a more rounded and softer male. He is a male that Jane is now able to live with in harmony. Brontë's comparison between St. John Rivers and Rochester as that of a "graceful Apollo" and a "Vulcan blacksmith," evokes an image of waif-like beauty and fragility over the thunderous Roman god of fire. Even in Rochester's humbled state, Brontë ensures that his manliness and power dominates over the weaker St. John Rivers.

Through her construction of the strong, masterful and unconventional Rochester at the beginning of the novel, to the decline in his masculinity, but not manliness, and his later dependency and reliance upon Jane, Brontë redefines the standard of Victorian masculinity. She conveys to the reader her ideal Victorian male, a man whose characteristics still possess masculinity and manliness through social conventions but who also considers his woman an equal. Jane is left with a man and husband who is still traditional in manner, but is also kind and not overly aggressive. According to Dobrovic, "the Victorian woman's issues with masculinity are answered in Rochester" (13), as he is unconventional in his manner and treats her more as an equal rather than in a patriarchal dominating manner. Given Rochester's reformation, it is no wonder Jane happily declares in the final chapter: "Reader, I married him" (382). Nungesser suggests

that Jane's and Rochester's marriage is a "happy bond for life...and... free from fears" (221). Of course, one can only hypothesize if Jane will be happy for life in her marriage to Rochester, but what one can be sure of is Jane's choice of manliness in taking the reformed Rochester as her husband has that potential unlike the union with the unchanged St. John Rivers.

Jane Eyre is more than just a love story between a Byronic master and the governess he employed. I believe Brontë wished to challenge the male-dominated masculine conventions that existed in Victorian society, and to open society's eyes to the flaws conferred upon men from different social classes. She re-defines and re-negotiates the standard of masculinity through her portrayal of Rochester and St. John Rivers. Both are patriarchal in their manner, and sure of their own masculinity within their own domain, however, as the Industrial Revolution took grip within Britain, men from all classes battled with their individual manliness (Tosh). Charlotte Brontë invented her new Victorian man staying within the boundaries of conventions and a traditional Victorian marriage, whilst giving Jane the possibility to live happily ever after.

The Wrath of Hercules - Masculinity in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

With Rochester, Charlotte Brontë invented a new Victorian man whilst pushing at the limits of Victorian social conventions. However, her sister Emily's approach, when she created her Byronic untamed gypsy character, Heathcliff, in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), was far more atypical and unconventional. Emily and Charlotte may be sisters, but their perception and conception of the Victorian male and his masculinity in their novels differ immensely. Whereas Charlotte was happy to chart Rochester's increasingly changed and tamed Byronic manliness and ultimately chose to depict him within the confines of traditional Victorian etiquette, Emily's bold interpretation of her male brute, Heathcliff, has little to do with adhering to conventions of any sort, and shocked and appalled Victorian readers, arguably even more so than Charlotte's Rochester. Charlotte found Emily's compelling illustration of Heathcliff's Byronic masculinity rather objectionable. Two years after her sister's death, she states in her editor's Preface of the posthumous new edition of *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey* (1850): "Whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is...Having formed these beings, she did not know what she had done" (*xxiii & xxi*).

Emily's brutish portrayal of Heathcliff left critics, such as E. P. Whipple, to conclude that Heathcliff was, "a combination of animal...tiger, wolf, cur and wild-cat" (358), rather than a human being. The ferocity of Emily's masculine writing is hidden under the guise

of a male pseudonym. Emily and Charlotte both wrote under male pseudonyms of Ellis and Currer Bell, respectively. The need to disguise their female identity was paramount in order for their works to be accepted and published by male publishers. They lived within a male dominated and patriarchal society, where Victorian women were "considered...so weak that they must be entirely subjected to the superior faculties of men" (Mary Wollstonecraft 42). Whipple refers to Brontë as "his" and "He," in the following quotation, as he, along with other readers, were led to believe by the Brontës and their publisher that Emily and Charlotte were men:

[Emily] When left altogether to his own imaginations, seems to take a morose satisfaction in developing a full and complete science of human brutality...in the hope of framing out...a suitable brute-demon to serve as the hero of this novel. (Whipple 358)

The masculine tone of Emily's writing combined with her graphic use of class hypocrisy, atrocities and cruelty between her characters, helped to substantiate the reasoning that the author was male. Whipple, and other readers of *Wuthering Heights*, considered that only the "mind of the author" of *Wuthering Heights* could write and produce such a "passion[ate], hot,[and] emphatic...masculine tone," as used within *Jane Eyre* (356-357). Accordingly, it would seem Emily's subversive strength in manner of writing took credit for Charlotte's steamier scenes in *Jane Eyre* whose writing, "is not without evidences of considerable power" (*The Examiner* 21).

Emily, like Charlotte in *Jane Eyre*, contrasts two distinct styles of masculinity within her characters, Heathcliff and Edgar Linton. Little is known about Heathcliff's origin, and he is raised as a working-class man, while Edgar Linton is an aristocratic

gentleman. Emily's power in her writing is to be found within a plot filled with love, passion, marriage, and conventions. She compares the "passionate, ruthlessly ambitious, destructive," (Mansfield 35) strong, emerging force of the Byronic masculinity of the working-class, Heathcliff, with the decorous, "effete or weaker," (Mansfield 40) masculinity and waning power of the aristocratic Linton. Just as Charlotte's heroine, Jane Eyre, had a choice between Rochester and St. John Rivers, Emily's Catherine Earnshaw has a choice of marriage between a lower-class one filled with the devotion and love she feels towards the Byronic Heathcliff, or her desire to better her social standing in a marriage to the aristocratic Linton, whom she does not love but who is a respectable gentleman within society. Both Heathcliff and Linton are rivals for Catherine's affection.

Throughout their progression in the novel, Emily constructs and deconstructs their masculinity. Unlike Charlotte, however, in her preference for the reformed masculinity in her Byronic hero Rochester, Emily remains critical of the fact that Heathcliff's masculinity doesn't really change- he remains Byronic. With Heathcliff's Byronic working-class masculinity remaining unchanged, his rise toward becoming a gentleman, and being accepted as a gentleman by society, is fraught with problems. Heathcliff may gain the necessary education and wealth to be considered a gentleman, but he lacks refinement and manner, and he refuses to conform to Victorian societal conventions which are considered worthy of a gentleman. Brontë moves towards the future in her search for her ideal, more modern, Victorian male, as she reconstructs the masculinity she prefers within a second generation male, Hareton Earnshaw. He is Catherine's nephew, and Brontë's solution to Heathcliff's and Linton's dichotomy of class, power and manliness, as his masculinity represents the fortitude of kindness and compassion. He is

on his way to becoming a gentleman, as he is being educated and taught how to read by Cathy Heathcliff, who is Catherine's daughter. I will argue that, through Brontë's interpretation of Heathcliff and Linton, she redefines and renegotiates the strong and weak masculinity present during the rapid acceleration of the British Industrial Revolution between 1800 and 1860. I will attest that through her artful use of Heathcliff and Linton, Brontë shows her awareness, fear and genuine concern towards the problems Victorian society was experiencing within the changing cultural and socio-economic conditions with England. I will show how Brontë's bold and ambitious critique of masculinity in *Wuthering Heights* constructs the dawning of the new, more modern, Victorian man, who rises and advances based on merit rather than on birthright alone.

The context of *Wuthering Heights* has been discussed, analyzed, and criticized in abundance by critics and scholars (Sandra Gubar, Susan Gubar and David Cole to name a few), yet still little has been discussed regarding the comparison of masculinity between Heathcliff and Linton. Many critics, such as David Cole, Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar, and Jamie S. Crouse, discuss Heathcliff's cultural position, moral concerns, power struggles, social class status, and the dominant masculinity in male protagonists; however, few argue the difference in masculinity between Heathcliff and Linton alone. My argument expands upon Cole's discussion of Edgar Linton and Heathcliff. He compares the patterns of gracefulness and genteelness of Linton to that of the tall and athletic Heathcliff. His suggestion that Linton is "no Olympic [Milo] champion" and Heathcliff clearly represents Milo supports my argument that Brontë appears to favor a stronger type of masculinity rather than an effeminate type although up to a point. The Milo Cole referred to is the Milo of Crotona, who was an honored 6th century Olympic

Greek champion wrestler and a celebrated strong man. Cole has a point comparing Heathcliff to Milo, however, Brontë, becomes uncomfortable when Heathcliff's working-class manliness and aggression is exposed (25). I will also build upon Gilbert and Gubar's suggestion that as Linton is often described effeminately and that his masculinity and "patriarchal nature of his feelings toward Heathcliff may not be immediately evident" as much of Linton's masculinity is absorbed with reading books rather than physical fighting (280). I will show that through Linton's aristocratic status his masculinity and his patriarchal control is noticeable, but it is forever restrained by his adherence to social proprieties and conventions. I will also expand upon some of Crouse's points in relation to the control and masculine destructiveness that Heathcliff exerts upon others within *Wuthering Heights*. Many of Crouse's points are associated with gender roles, specifically the ideology of masculine superiority (181). His argument that Catherine and Heathcliff are restrained by their traditional gender roles with neither gaining the power they are seeking, helps me to emphasize the role of traditional Victorian conventions within social classes.

Several critics, such as Cristina Ceron, Paul Cheetham and Andrew Elfenbein, have similar views and debate the extent to which Heathcliff should be considered a Byronic Hero. Andrew Elfenbein says, "The Byronic Hero...was supposed to represent Byron, the man," which could explain why Brontë depicts Heathcliff as mysterious, dominant, and arrogant (10). Heathcliff is the epitome of the Byronic hero, as by definition alone, the Byronic hero is dark, flawed and enigmatic, and the scoundrel whom women adore. Heathcliff certainly is Byronic, as he is handsome, an outcast, exudes sexuality, and his masculinity represents that of a Byronic male.

Brontë's description of her fictional character Heathcliff acknowledges the growth of the working class and self-made man but also raises concerns about his rise within the social classes. Brontë came from a middle-class family and may have been wary of the rising power of the working class. She wrote her novel during the height of Britain's Industrial Revolution in 1847 but based her story in the early 1800s. This is when the rise in power of the working and middle classes, along with the waning of the aristocracy class occurs, and when social classes became more blended. Brontë may have experienced the turmoil that the rapid acceleration of the British Industrial Revolution created among the social classes and the associated changes that began to redefine gentlemen. She illustrates these changes in her characterization of Heathcliff's manliness and Linton's gentlemanliness. Whereas a gentleman had been associated with aristocratic birthright or one of the chosen professions (Gilmour 3-5), one could now acquire the traits of a gentleman by means, or in the case of Heathcliff, by money, coercion and intimidation. Brontë most probably would have witnessed the changes occurring within England's class system, and it seems reasonable that she would express those anxieties by not reforming Heathcliff's Byronic masculinity, and by sending him to a doom filled death.

The novel opens by establishing a mystery around Heathcliff's origins. Nelly Dean, however, the Earnshaw's servant and the story's main narrator, guesses that he "came from the devil," as he was so dark (29). Catherine's father returns home from a trip to Liverpool, having picked up a "dirty, ragged...gypsy brat" off the streets (29). The Earnshaws name the street urchin, Heathcliff, after their dead son. He is portrayed by Heathcliff's tenant, Mr. Lockwood, as:

a dark-skinned gipsy [*sic*] in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure; and rather morose...some people might suspect him of a degree of under-bred pride...He'll love and hate equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again.

(5)

Throughout the novel, references are made to how dark Heathcliff is. He has a "dark face and hair," and his "cheeks were sallow, and half covered with black whiskers; the brows lowering, the eyes deep-set and singular" (73). Abbie Cory suggests that Heathcliff's dark skin and features "operate as markers of the lower class" (8), and I would further suggest that Heathcliff's manliness and complexion hinders his progression to that of a gentleman later in the novel, as dark skin or slovenly appearance were traits associated with the lower class. As a gypsy brat, Heathcliff would be considered by Victorian society to be of low origin and working class, and at an immediate disadvantage in social status. He would have difficulty rising within the ranks of the social class system simply because he did not belong to anyone. However, because Mr. Earnshaw is a middle-class, affluent farmer who takes Heathcliff in as a member of his family, it ensures Heathcliff a better standing and opportunity to be recognized within society. His standing as Mr. Earnshaw's adopted favored son is short lived, as his step-brother, Hindley Earnshaw, reduces his status to a working-class servant after Mr. Earnshaw's death. Heathcliff's progression in the novel deteriorates as he moves from one Byronic dastardly deed to the next, while seeking revenge upon the Lintons and the Earnshaws.

In contrast to Heathcliff's unknown origins, Edgar Linton is a recognized member of the aristocracy, and thus, by birth alone, he is considered a gentleman. His mannerisms reflect that of a member of the gentry as he is somewhat pampered and genteel in nature. He is wealthy and does not have to work for a living. Linton has "light hair and a fair skin...blue eyes and an even forehead"(45). The contrast in his appearance to Heathcliff's dark complexion could not be made more apparent by Brontë. Catherine notices the difference between Linton's manner and complexion and Heathcliff's, as she watches one boy leave and the other enter the room:

the contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country for a beautiful fertile valley; and his voice and greeting were as opposite as his aspect.[Linton] had a sweet, low manner of speaking, and pronounced his words as you do: that's less gruff than we talk here, and softer. (55)

Linton is often first described as "soft" (57), and is considered initially by Catherine as "handsome, young, cheerful and rich" (61). Later, she describes him as someone who is "sulky" and who "utters pettish, silly speeches" (77). Catherine states that he "always contrives to be sick at the least cross! I gave a few sentences of commendation to Heathcliff, and he, either for a headache or a pang of envy, began to cry" (77). Brontë appears to be somewhat cynical towards the masculinity of Linton. Throughout the novel, Linton's fragility and lack of courage and strength is often derided by Catherine and Heathcliff. Nevertheless, Linton's status as a gentleman and member of the landed gentry is respected by Victorian society, and the marriage that he can offer Catherine is considered superior to that offered by Heathcliff.

Heathcliff's childhood ends abruptly the day his malevolent step-brother, Hindley Earnshaw, returns to take control of his deceased father's estate. Heathcliff is no longer the favored adopted son, and his status tumbles to that of a servant, as he is relegated to the kitchen by Hindley. Heathcliff also receives beatings from Hindley, and is robbed of opportunity:

[He] lost the benefit of his early education...his childhood's sense of superiority, instilled into him by the favours of old Mr. Earnshaw, was faded away... and there was no prevailing on him to take a step in the way of moving upward, when he found he must, necessarily, sink beneath his former level. (53)

The gentrified male dominance Hindley exerts over Heathcliff only strengthens Heathcliff's "defensive masculine identity" (Chodorow 1) as he rebels against patriarchal control. Jamie S. Crouse points out that, "Boys learn early on to differentiate between 'me' and 'not me'...[which] clearly relates to Heathcliff who, as an orphan...learns early on to see himself in opposition to those around him" (181). Thus, it is important for Heathcliff to establish his masculinity and define his own identity as distinct from that of a working-class servant if he is to be considered a gentleman by society. This is a point which Brontë is conscious of as she shakes the cultural and societal norms within Victorian society by depicting Heathcliff as a gypsy who rises against the gentry.

Heathcliff's dislike towards the authority and superiority of the gentry not only stems from the treatment he receives from Hindley, but is also bolstered by the admiration and affection his beloved step-sister, Catherine, bestows upon his rival, Linton. Nelly reiterates to Mr. Lockwood that Catherine "was much too fond of

Heathcliff" (33) and had after all, "promised fair to grow up as rude as savages" with him (36), and in Heathcliff's mind Catherine belonged to him and no-one else. Heathcliff first sees Linton and his sister, Isabella, whilst looking through the drawing room window of Linton's home, Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff watches the young Linton, "[standing] on the hearth weeping silently" (38). Linton is crying because he has argued with his sister Isabella about who should play with a puppy they own. From Heathcliff's first sight of Linton and Isabella, he calls them "idiots" and "despises them," and has no respect for Linton's superiority as a member of the gentry (38). The contrast between Linton's weeping and feeble boyish masculinity and Heathcliff's boyish sullen and brazen manliness allows Brontë to show the physical and emotional preconceived notions of behavior that society expected between classes.

Brontë establishes an odd connection between these foil characters by showing that Linton, too, can be brutal. In a barbaric act of behavior, Linton and his sister have nearly pulled their puppy's legs apart. Here we see Linton's inherent act of barbarism, and how cruel he can be towards objects weaker than he is. According to Tosh, the society believed that the working class "resorted to violence," and was considered inferior and uncivilized by the gentry (76). However, Linton is upper class, and Brontë's representation of his behavior is far from civilized. Linton's boyish, masculine, brutal behavior shows just how coarse and boorish the gentry could be. The only difference between Linton's gentrified act of brutality and Heathcliff's working class acts of brutality is that Linton committed his act out of sight and within the confines of his home. Brontë exposes here the social facades the gentry presented to society through Linton's bawdy and savage act. Perhaps she wanted to expose how, even at a young age, a future

gentleman's manner was so constrained by class conventions, that underneath his social façade lay an inherent furnace ready to erupt.

When Heathcliff is an adolescent, his manliness and pride are ruffled by Linton's masculine superiority. Heathcliff knows he is at a social disadvantage in his class status compared to that of the upper class Linton, and consequently Linton's masculinity, even as a boy, is deemed by Victorian society to dominate over working-class boys such as Heathcliff. Warfare, for it should be called that, between Heathcliff and Linton, begins the day Heathcliff "seized a tureen of hot apple-sauce...and dashed it full against [Linton's] face and neck" (46). Heathcliff's attack on Linton and youthful manliness affirms his dislike towards the weaker, upper class Linton, and also shows his contempt towards a member of the aristocracy.

As the novel progresses, Heathcliff and Linton mature, and Cathy's marriage decision intensifies the feud between them. Whereas Charlotte's Jane chooses a marriage based upon love, Cathy's choice is more superficial. Heathcliff and Linton both love Catherine, and they both wish to marry her. Heathcliff commits endless aggressive and revengeful acts, but even with all his faults, Catherine still loves him. Her love for him borders on obsessive delusion as she declares to her maid, "Nelly I *am* Heathcliff!" (64). Catherine is aware of Heathcliff's social class status and Linton's aristocratic status, and even though she desires Heathcliff more than Linton, she prefers the lifestyle Linton can offer her. Unbeknownst to her, Heathcliff hears her say to Nelly, "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff," which is more than Heathcliff can bear, and as Catherine chooses to abandon him, he chooses to abandon Catherine, and "steal[s] out noiselessly" into the night and he disappears for three years (63). According to Andrew Elfenbein in his book

Byron and the Victorians, "[Catherine's] decision depends on social relations beyond her control" (159). She recognizes the importance that her position within society will afford her if she marries Linton, as she laments to her maid Nelly Dean, "I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood" (61). Catherine realizes that she must marry Linton if she desires the comforts that his status will afford her; she must choose status over the love she feels for the Byronic Heathcliff. Elfenbein states, "The real winner...is Edgar's money" (159), which leaves Heathcliff in a no-win situation. It would appear that Catherine and her older brother consider her marriage as nothing more than one of social ascension, which Nelly Dean reiterates when she talks of Hindley to Mr. Lockwood, "he wished earnestly to see her bring honour to the family by an alliance with the Lintons" (70). Brontë shows the social conventions Victorian women had to adhere to in their choice of husband, which favors male position, class, and power over true love.

In one of the most poignant scenes in *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë once again contrasts Heathcliff's masculinity and manner to Linton's gentrified lightness in manner and gentlemanliness when Heathcliff returns from his three year exile. Nelly Dean notices the stark differences in appearance between the two men. Heathcliff has evolved from a scrawny urchin servant to a "tall, athletic, well-formed man" with "an upright carriage" whose "countenance was much older in expression and decision of feature than Mr. Linton's" (75). In contrast, Linton looks "slender and youth-like" (75). Brontë emphasizes that Heathcliff is more of a gentleman - but not quite one - as still hidden within him is a "half-civilized ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire" (75). He still retains his Byronic qualities and his working-class masculinity. Brontë also ensures that Heathcliff gains some of the qualities associated with that of a

gentleman, as he has acquired an education and now "looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation"(75). Through this evolution, Brontë is able to show how the working-class Heathcliff gets stronger than Linton in appearance and also in his manner, and reiterates how Heathcliff has advanced based upon merit than merely by birth.

Education is fundamental to Emily's understanding of a gentleman. Brontë reveals how important she feels that education is in order for a man to advance to the status of a gentleman within society. A gentleman must be able to read and become well educated according to Brontë. Initially, Heathcliff's education only consisted of basic religious instruction from the Earnshaw's curate, and he was unable to gain a formal school education as state schools for the working class did not exist in the early 1800s (Gillard 1). The enacting of the Reform Act uncovered shocking paucity of education and reading amongst the proletariat (Gillard 1). When Heathcliff left Wuthering Heights, he was young and uneducated. Later, he returns as an older, educated man, albeit still coarse in manner and given to destructive Byronic actions. Where did Heathcliff go? How did he gain his wealth? How did he acquire an education? The mystery surrounding where Heathcliff was during the time he spent away, and the fact that Brontë does not expand upon how he gains his wealth remains a mystery for the reader to surmise but also explains the unease she has with his acquired masculinity. The choice to leave it as a mystery can be seen as Brontë's recognition of the lack of education for the working class in society around her. Brontë's awareness regarding how the gentry view the uneducated working class is shown via Heathcliff's tenant, Mr. Lockwood. He reveals his narrow-minded reaction to whether Heathcliff becomes a gentleman or not by stating, "Did he

finish his education...come back a Gentleman...or make a fortune?" (71-72). Here, Brontë exposes the lack of understanding and hostility the gentry had towards the uneducated proletariat.

Brontë ensures that the idiosyncrasies of social class conventions, the power of the aristocracy, and the rising power of the new self-made man, all collide when Heathcliff and Linton first encounter one another following Heathcliff's absence. During Heathcliff's absence, Catherine marries Linton despite her feelings for Heathcliff. Linton's gaiety and elation overflows as "he believed himself the happiest man alive" (70). However, unlike Charlotte's serene conclusion that includes a unified, equal marriage filled with happiness between Rochester and Jane, such an occurrence does not happen for Linton and Catherine, or between Heathcliff and Catherine. Catherine is filled "with intensity of...delight" (74) upon Heathcliff's return. As Mrs. Linton, she insists that Heathcliff join her and Linton in the parlor, to which Linton is "vexed, and suggested the kitchen as a more suitable place for him" (75). Linton's comment would not have been considered out of place within society because, to Linton, Heathcliff is a servant and should remain with the other servants in the kitchen. Brontë shows here that Linton considers himself far superior to that of the working-class Heathcliff, as he is a member of the aristocracy. She also shows how important Victorian conventions, manners, and respectability were within the household, by Linton's insisting that Catherine control her emotions, and not be so "absurd" in letting, "the whole household... witness the sight of your welcoming a runaway servant as a brother" (75).

Linton's manners and masculinity are forever constrained in upper-class respectability, as he gives in to Catherine when she insists that Heathcliff cannot dine

with the servants, "I cannot sit in the kitchen. Set two tables here, Ellen: one for your master and Miss Isabella, being gentry; the other for Heathcliff and myself, being of the lower orders" (75). Linton's inability to stand up to Catherine could be construed as a sign of weakness, but I think it has more to do with Linton's social upbringing. He is, after all, an aristocratic gentleman and, as such, would wish to be courteous to his wife, and whoever her friends maybe. Catherine is married to Linton, but she still considers herself beneath him in social status. Her disrespect and immodesty towards Linton is suggested by Kevin Morrison to "directly assault the notions of propriety," which Linton dutifully adheres to as a member of the gentry (276). Brontë successfully shows Victorian society how piteous and disturbing their social conventions could be.

Brontë's illustration of Linton's weak masculinity disrupts the dominant social structure and power of Victorian aristocracy. She shows how Linton's patriarchal aristocratic status is challenged by Heathcliff. Linton's position of master of the house and authority heeds little respect from Heathcliff, as he contemptuously remarks to Catherine in front of Linton:

I heard of your marriage, Cathy, not long since; and, while waiting in the yard below, I meditated this plan—just to have one glimpse of your face, a stare of surprise, perhaps, and pretended pleasure; afterwards settle my score with Hindley...you'll not drive me off again...I've fought through a bitter life since I last heard your voice; and you must forgive me, for I struggled only for you! (76)

For Heathcliff to be so assertive in his manliness and bold in his tone and manner of conversation towards Catherine whilst in Linton's presence, is not only ungentlemanly,

but it also re-sets the stage for the animosity between Heathcliff's and Linton's masculinity, and the battle between a man and a gentleman. Through Heathcliff's dominant speech Emily shows that Heathcliff not only has the physical strength to overpower Linton, but now possesses the intellect and the means.

Later, Brontë exposes Linton's lack of masculinity and courage when he has to finally deal with Heathcliff's presence in his home. He exhibits a spark of masculine anger when he finds out that Catherine has been arguing with Heathcliff about Isabella, "Call me two men out of the hall, Ellen. Catherine shall linger no longer to argue with the low ruffian—I have humoured her enough" (89). But even here, he summons men to assist with his fight with Heathcliff, rather than confronting Heathcliff alone. Gilbert and Gubar point to the fact that Brontë "demonstrates that the power of [Linton's] patriarch...is contained within books...[and] paraphernalia," rather than manly fights (281). Gilbert and Gubar's argument makes sense considering Linton's "studies occupy him rather more than they ought: he is continually among his books" (94). He does, however, manage to give a hefty blow to Heathcliff's throat, which "would have levelled a slighter man" (91), and leaves Heathcliff somewhat stunned. Here, Brontë wishes to expose that the gentrified upbringing of Linton does contain at least some pride, dignity and courage, but it is inadequate and futile compared to Heathcliff's working class brute strength.

Brontë both ridicules gentry such as Linton, whilst at the same time, exposes the bewilderment that gentlemen felt while conforming to the esoteric conventional standards that society expected of them. James Eli Adams further explains that the "Victorian gentleman...exhibit[s] such coolness in his discipline and manners, that he merges into

one as a "Victorian gentleman, a dandy and a priest" (18). Obviously, Linton is not a priest, but as Brontë illustrates through Linton's foppish dandy-like behavior the power of the aristocracy is waning. Linton is stilted in manner, hesitant and repressed, and his behavior is a direct result of conforming to the rigid expectations of the correct code of etiquette placed upon gentlemen. His masculinity is vulnerable, and any anxieties he felt are forever restrained and masked from public display because of the class he belonged to. David Cole compares Linton's "graceful, cultivated and restrained" masculine tendencies, to that of the "robust, impetuous and natural Heathcliff" (24). As stated earlier, Cole refers to the Milo of Crotona when he compares Linton to Heathcliff, and alludes to the fact that Linton is "no Olympic [Milo] champion," and Heathcliff clearly represents Milo. Legend has it that Milo meets a grim fate when he attempts to pull a tree apart with his bare hands. His hands become stuck, and he is torn apart by wolves (Cole 25). Linton attempts to separate Catherine from Heathcliff, and even though he does not meet such a fate as Milo, he encounters the wrath of Catherine.

Brontë also rejects Linton's masculinity as that of the ideal Victorian gentleman and all the traditional conventional values associated with a gentleman. Linton begins to doubt his physical strength when faced with the ferine force of Heathcliff. His gentlemanliness and demeanor begin to decline when he has to compete with Heathcliff's new style of working-class-gentlemanliness and masculinity in a more modern world. Linton simply cannot grasp the changes occurring within social classes, as he is forever constrained within his aristocratic conservative Victorian conventions, especially towards Catherine. Conventions which Linton applies to himself, such as living with "a due sense of his position among his fellows...attention to reputation [and] integrity," were becoming

lost amongst the blended social classes (Mason 16). Brontë's representation of Linton not only shows the contrast in masculinity and behaviorisms between different social classes, but also between Linton and Heathcliff. Furthermore, Linton's lack of vigor shows the waning in aristocratic power because, as the story unfolds, Heathcliff's animalistic masculinity and strength engulf Linton's masculinity and upper-class status. Emily Brontë plays upon the exceptionality of Heathcliff's brute masculinity and character more than Charlotte Brontë did in her representation of Rochester. Charlotte's Rochester is exceptional in so much as he is Byronic but he is also tamable; whereas, Heathcliff arguably remains Byronic throughout.

Heathcliff may have returned seemingly more of a gentleman; however one can quickly see evidence to the contrary. He is never able to completely rid himself of the markers of his lower-class masculinity and origins. Emily's linkage of the notion of gentlemanliness associated with education helps us to see that Heathcliff never quite measures up to the standards of a gentleman. According to Kevin Morrison, Heathcliff fits "into neither of the two classes represented in the novel, the traditional yeomanry and the landed gentry," as he still lacks the gentility expected of a gentleman (275). Unlike Charlotte's Rochester, who is born a gentleman and whose masculine identity is already established, Emily's construction of Heathcliff is an enigma, whose identity is unknown, as she first introduces him as a working-class boy, who progresses to a self-made man, and aspires to become a gentleman. Matthew Beaumont argues that Emily "constructs Heathcliff as a 'Montaignean' cannibal, whose behavior serves to expose the latent barbarity of civilized society (140). Beaumont may well be illustrating the masculine strength and behavior in Brontë's character, but I would argue that Brontë also shows

how Heathcliff's blazing passion and fury disrupts the prevalent structure of civilized society, and shows that he also lacks the cordial deference for the aristocratic Linton which society expects one to show. Instead, Heathcliff expresses abhorrence towards Linton. Consequently, Emily's construction of Heathcliff appears to be more progressive and modern than Charlotte's construction of Rochester.

As described earlier, a Victorian gentleman and his masculinity in Britain could be best described as being honorable, loyal, and morally upright (Gilmour 1-6). He would be genteel in nature, have good manners, be well educated, and refined (Tosh). He would consider himself patriarchal and dominant towards women, would be the financial provider for his home, and would be the patriarch of the house (Gilmour 9). Heathcliff may have acquired an education, but he lacks refinement, and is coarse, and has abominable manners. According to Kevin Morrison "Heathcliff's mastery...accumulation and possession [of wealth] reflects a new historical reality as a self-made man" (275). However, the reality is that even though Heathcliff has gained wealth and power, the respect, chivalry, refinement, and good manners, which are all considered attributes needed to be a Victorian gentleman are amiss within Heathcliff (Gilmour 10-11). He does not strive to receive respect from his peers, nor be accepted by society. He is certainly not chivalrous, and has little interest in protecting his family. Emily does not describe Heathcliff as honorable, and his very presence is considered by Linton as a "moral poison" (90). Based upon Heathcliff's tone towards Catherine, Linton and other characters in the novel, he considers himself superior to them all. He has returned home a wealthy man by means unknown, (Nelly reiterates to Mr. Lockwood, "I didn't know how he gained his money" (72)), and a gentleman's fortune is normally a given, meaning

family money, or gained through one of the chosen professions. Heathcliff obtains his home, Wuthering Heights, through his gambling and exploitation of Hindley, and he establishes his dominance and strength over the gentry through power and coercion. Thus, Heathcliff is now patriarch of his home and financially solvent, but it is *how* he establishes himself in the position of a gentleman that Brontë challenges. Cory says, "[the] dominant modes of power are disparaged" within *Wuthering Heights*, which reflects upon Brontë's awareness to the changes in social class dynamics (6). Further, Cory states, "[Heathcliff] behaves tyrannously to those who are now beneath him on the class and gender ladder" (8), which is exemplified by the reversal in money and power. Heathcliff wields his power over the crumbling aristocracy, but he does it with trickery and in a manipulative way, which is not in keeping with the manners of a gentleman and are exposed by Brontë

The Victorian gentleman was expected to adhere to an array of codes of conduct. From the code of honor where rank, marital status and honor presided over men, to the code of conduct book, and code of etiquette, where manners and politeness were paramount (Tosh 74-83). With these varied expectations it is no wonder that Linton's "inner man...represented...struggle with the world and its expectations" (Tosh 74). By showing Linton's repressed masculinity, and aristocratic dandy like behavior and weak manner, Brontë seems to imply that he may not be the most appropriate male for society to consider as the ideal Victorian gentleman. For instance, Linton's lack of courage when confronting the brute force of Heathcliff, suggests his total ambivalence towards the behavior of men not in keeping with that of a gentleman. He simply is unable to comprehend Heathcliff's non-gentlemanly, fighting mentality. For Linton to act in this

manner is understandable. Tosh points out that "[during this era] the period of the traditional manifestations of the code of honour was in decline" (74). The contrasts between the two men show that, as a power vacuum opens up, the self-made man is ready to step in and fill it. As Heathcliff does not adhere to the gentleman's code of honor, the aristocratic Linton is left to deal with a problem he has not faced before.

So why does Brontë portray Linton in such an ineffectual manner? Emily Brontë does so because she simply finds the traditional masculinity in a gentleman like Linton to be dull, dreary, stale and tedious. His masculinity is becoming increasingly ineffectual and irrelevant compared to the masculine intensity of Heathcliff. After all, Emily's own personality is described as being "a peculiar mixture of timidity and Spartan-like courage...painfully shy but physically brave. She loved few persons, but those few with a passion of self-sacrificing, tenderness and devotion" (Eva Hope 168). Like Charlotte's St. John Rivers, whose manner towards Jane was callous, cold, and who lacked any form of passion, Linton too lacked any form of carnal passion and desire for Catherine. He may love Catherine but, as Catherine explains to him "your cold blood cannot be worked into a fever: your veins are full of ice-water; but mine are boiling, and the sight of such chillness makes them dance" (92). Thus, Linton through his refined, aloof and indifferent manner exhibits all the necessary characteristics and traits that Victorian society expected in a gentleman. Edgar Linton is definitely what Victorian society considered a gentleman should be.

Heathcliff is not only an unconventional gentleman; he really is not a gentleman at all, and Emily ensures that his masculinity, manners and deportment towards women represent nothing society expects from a gentleman. The Victorian gentleman was

supposed to treat women with utmost respect, and fervently follow a correct code of conduct. Heathcliff not only manhandles and mentally abuses Catherine, but Isabella as well. Catherine describes him to Isabella as "an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation...a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man" (80). Isabella is under the misguided belief that Heathcliff loves her, when in fact he scorns her: "he stared hard at the object of discourse [Isabella], as one might do at a strange repulsive animal" (83). Linton shows great concern for the fascination Isabella has towards Heathcliff's masculinity, and rightly so. Linton is aware that Heathcliff's appearance may have been altered to that of a gentleman, but the reality is that Heathcliff's intentions are far from honorable. Linton fears "the degradation of an alliance with a nameless man, and the possible fact that his property, in default of heirs male, might pass into such a one's power" (79). Heathcliff's contempt towards women leaves little to be desired. His disdain towards Isabella, whom he later marries, is unforgivable. Later, Isabella questions whether Heathcliff is in fact "a man?...if not is he a devil?" (106). He savagely states to Nelly that Isabella, "pictur[es] in me a hero of romance, and expecting unlimited indulgences from my chivalrous devotion" (118). For Heathcliff to presume Isabella thinks of him as "hero of romance" is beyond comprehension, as he is far too seductive and cunning than romantic. Heathcliff does not just commit atrocious wrongdoings against Isabella, but he physically and mentally abuses the Earnshaws and Lintons, violates a grave, commits extortion, and mistreats animals to name just a few of his misdeeds. He is far from distressed about his actions, and, in fact, appears to thrive on the challenges and chaos he causes.

Furthermore, Heathcliff positively relishes and takes delight in his belligerent

nature towards Isabella, as he enthuses to Nelly, "I had actually succeeded in making her hate me! A positive labour of Hercules, I assure you! If it be achieved, I have cause to return thanks" (118). Brontë's allusion to the Roman divine hero, Hercules, in order to represent Heathcliff's superiority and great masculine strength, is both intriguing and ironic. Not only does Brontë compare Heathcliff's dark Byronic strength to that of the divine hero and Gatekeeper of Olympus, Hercules, she does so in such a way as to draw pity from her readers (118). To imply that the "brute-beast" masculinity of Heathcliff is on a par with Hercules, who is the epitome of divine strength, pride and masculinity, must have taken Emily courage, considering that she lived within a male dominated and patriarchal society (133). According to Greek mythology and legend, Hercules was the son of the great god, Zeus, and he was considered the strongest and most powerful of living mortals. However, he was also considered to "lack intelligence, and wisdom..and [have] strong emotions" and when, "he took up grudges...never forgot them" (Greek Mythology). Heathcliff may have acquired an education, but lacked intelligence, or at least the wisdom to view his actions as indecent. His emotions are not only strong, but are fueled with a burning heat. Heathcliff certainly has not forgotten the grievances that Linton, Hindley and Catherine bestowed upon him, which is why he seeks his revenge.

Brontë seems skeptical that Heathcliff and his masculinity will succeed as a gentleman, as she portrays him as a cunning man who lacks the refinement of a Victorian gentleman, such as Linton. In this contrast, Brontë wishes to show society that despite how hard "a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway" such as Heathcliff attempts to become a gentleman and alter his appearance, society still rejects him an outcast (40). Heathcliff is too presumptuous and ambitious and wishes to exert his new

found class status upon society too quickly. Consequently, Brontë fears Heathcliff's rapid rise as it is apparent from his character, manliness, conduct, and mannerisms that he is definitely not a gentleman. His Byronic manliness and allure remains visible through his ornery audacity towards social class hierarchy and traditional class conventions. Unlike Charlotte's Rochester, Heathcliff does not doubt the strength of his masculinity, and he remains Byronic until his death.

Compared to Charlotte's Byronic, Rochester, and the taming of his masculinity into a reformed gentleman, Emily's Byronic Heathcliff does not experience any such tameness and is not reformed. It is as though Emily Brontë recognizes that the strength in Heathcliff's working-class masculinity and power, will forever be belittled by his working-class status. Emily Brontë is unable to conceive of a working-class man becoming a fully refined gentleman. Charlotte had no trouble in reforming Rochester as he was already a gentleman by birth, and his Byronism needed to be softened in order for Jane to be an equal to him. Heathcliff, on the other hand, came from humble beginnings, and Brontë ensures that the powerful beast that lingers within Heathcliff shows its ugly head far more often than that of a gentleman. The diversity in manly and masculine characteristics, manner, and Byronic temperament between Emily Brontë's Heathcliff and Linton is startling and profound. She offsets Linton as Heathcliff's foil in order to bring some sort of civility and calm to the turmoil that Heathcliff causes. Linton is the steady, composed and uncomplicated gentleman, but his refinement is dull, weak, and lacks fervor.

Linton's death signifies closure on the old aristocratic ways, and makes way for the new compassionate and gentler generation of Earnshaws and Lintons, such as

Hareton Earnshaw, who is aristocratic but whose masculinity will not only be strong, but also forthright. Symbolically, Linton's illness emphasizes the waning of the aristocracy as he succumbs to sickness and dies from weakness. His weakened masculinity and illness are matched to that of Heathcliff's strengthening masculinity. Daniela Garofalo states, "Edgar [Linton] learns to close his doors to Heathcliff to attempt...to safeguard his property" (835). Garofalo considers the "property" in this instance to include Linton's house, land and family. Linton's masculinity obviously failed to safeguard his property, and Linton's already weakened health becomes more frail following his wife's death (835).

There is a significant reason as to why Brontë kills off her other main characters, Heathcliff and Catherine, which points to the tragic decision in Catherine's choice of marriage. Catherine writhes upon her sick bed in a deranged and convulsive manner, until she dies in despair for Heathcliff's unobtainable love. It is as though Heathcliff's passion and masculinity emotionally causes Catherine's death, as his parting words to her on her death bed are, "*Why did you despise me? Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy?...You deserve this. You have killed yourself...You loved me—then what right had you to leave me? What right—answer me—for the poor fancy you felt for Linton?*" (126). Still here, even at his beloved's death bed, his violent masculinity remains a contrast to Linton's timid masculinity. Soon after Catherine's death, Heathcliff dies in delusional madness and pain over his love of Catherine. Brontë wishes to illustrate the tragic consequence of Catherine's choice of man and marriage, which eventually drives both she and Heathcliff insane in their anguish for one another. If Catherine had been able to consider a marriage with Heathcliff based solely upon love rather than one to

Linton, which fulfilled nothing more than class expectations, their fate may have been a happier one. Apart from the consequences of a tragic marriage decision, Brontë may also have been hesitant to portray a working-class gypsy, such as Heathcliff, as one able to become a gentleman, especially given the turmoil the British Industrial Revolution was causing amongst social classes. By introducing a second generation of Lintons and Earnshaws in *Wuthering Heights*, she is able to move forward in a construction of her preferred male and his masculinity; these are the qualities found within Hareton Earnshaw.

Hareton's manliness is gritty and brusque, and he is illiterate and uncouth. He is in some ways very similar to Heathcliff as a boy, which is hardly surprising as he is raised by Heathcliff, experiences great misfortune, and leads a working class life as Heathcliff's servant and menial. Brontë reiterates the importance of education in Hareton, who although is kept uneducated by Heathcliff, is on his way to becoming a gentleman in being taught how to read by Catherine's daughter, Cathy. Entrenched within Hareton's working-class masculinity is a desire to improve his education and status. Hareton already possesses gentlemanly roots, thus validity of his gentlemanly masculinity would be more accepted by society, and also by Brontë. Although uncouth, he already is structured by Brontë to aspire to a gentlemanly status; earning it by merit (education) only confirms it. As Nelly Dean relates to Mr. Lockwood:

[Hareton's] honest, warm, and intelligent nature shook off rapidly the clouds of ignorance and degradation in which it had been bred...His brightening mind brightened his features, and added spirit and nobility to their aspect. (246)

Unlike Heathcliff's violent masculinity, Hareton's masculinity "appears to break the cycles of violence, thereby ushering in an era of purported domestic tranquility that Brontë was helping to fashion" (Morrison 289). Hareton is moving toward becoming a gentleman in a gentle manner, unlike Heathcliff who forced his rise too fast upon society. Cathy "offers [Hareton] both emotional nourishment and tutorials in literacy," and offers him the ability to become a gentleman (Morrison 289).

Brontë's illustration of Heathcliff and Linton represents the realignment of power between men within society in Britain. The redefining of Heathcliff's working-class manliness to that of a self-made man, and the waning power of the superiority of Linton's "gentleman by birth" status epitomize the changes occurring within the Victorian social classes. Emily's progression in constructing her preferred future Victorian male is found in Hareton. In the earlier generation, Brontë exposes both forms of masculinity as having their faults, and the way she illustrates Heathcliff's Byronic masculinity compared to Linton's masculinity shows that Brontë may have preferred a more manly man. However, unlike Charlotte's Rochester, Heathcliff's manliness and brute strength is never tamed. The boorish and savage character Brontë bestows upon Heathcliff, versus the weak, almost effeminate, aspects of Linton, are her perceived foils of masculinity. Although she ridicules these foils she also exposes and challenges the concept of masculinity and the idiosyncrasies of the Victorian English class system. In doing so, she demonstrates the differences between a gentleman's masculinity and a man's manliness within Victorian society.

To examine the construction and development of masculinity and the male fictional characters of Heathcliff and Linton is to uncover *Wuthering Heights* as written

by a remarkable woman author who breaks down and critiques the archetypical Victorian male existing during this era. Brontë wrote her novel during the height of Britain's Industrial Revolution but based the story in the earlier decades of the Victorian period she lived. Her novel is not just a fictitious story based upon an imaginary life, but also a representation of the burgeoning unrest that the Victorian gentleman faced during the 1800s. She extends the focus and social discourse both in literature and within Victorian society, where men assumed patriarchal domination and women lived subserviently. Andrew Elfenbein asserts that, "[Brontë's] *Wuthering Heights* produces the marginal voice not as one that supports convention but as one that refuses it" (149). I agree with Elfenbein that Brontë writes within a male-dominated era; however, I would also add that Brontë not only refuses to support traditional Victorian conventions, but she also re-defines the standard of masculinity applicable to the Victorian male. In doing so, Emily Brontë constructs her new modern Victorian gentleman in Hareton, and ensures that future generations of Victorian men may follow the example of Hareton's masculinity and that the Earnshaws will continue to enter under the "carving lavished over the front door [of *Wuthering Heights*] above which...the date '1500,' and the name 'Hareton Earnshaw" appears (4).

The Gentleman and the Man - Two Types of Masculinity in Elizabeth Gaskell's

North and South

While Emily Brontë looks ahead to the rise of the middle-class man in her portrayal of Heathcliff, her examination of contrasting patterns of masculinity, like Charlotte's, are set in pre-Victorian, mostly rural, England. Elizabeth Gaskell's novel, *North and South* (1855), however, is set in the mid-century industrialized northern city of Milton and features a rugged northern middle-class mill owner and industrialist, John Thornton. Thornton's masculinity is compared to that of the haughty southern lawyer and gentleman, Henry Lennox. Like Emily and Charlotte Brontë, Gaskell lived within a patriarchal society, and one of the ways she could voice her opinions was through her writing. She successfully incorporates a multitude of social issues within her novel, whilst subtly leading readers through a story filled with action, drama and sexual passion. Her work is considered a condition-of-England novel as it "addressed the social problems arising from industrialization, urbanization, and unregulated laissez-faire capitalism, primarily in the north of England" (Henry 157). Through her construction of Thornton and Lennox, Gaskell shows how the apparent division between north and south and between social classes reflects upon the perception and projection of manliness, masculinity, and social and moral attitudes. I will argue that, through Gaskell's interpretation of Thornton's and Lennox's masculinity, she defines the way forward for

the English gentleman through Thornton's middle-class sincerity, frankness, productive work ethic, and humility towards others, compared to the antiquated, boastful arrogance of the traditional England gentleman. I will show that Gaskell contrasts these two characters especially through a discussion of the important differences between the key terms, "gentleman" and "man." While the gentlemen in the Brontës' novels are still very influential, the same cannot be said in Gaskell's novel. I will show through the heroine's choice of the man, Thornton, over the gentleman, Lennox, Gaskell places the strength in Thornton's middle-class masculinity and manhood, over the weakness of Lennox's. In doing so, she re-defines Thornton as the new-self made Victorian gentleman who will progress forward. I will also attest that through Gaskell's distinct types of masculinity within Thornton and Lennox, she shows the contrast that existed in class status and social and the cultural differences between northern and southern English men and gentlemen, as well as the problems that Victorian society was experiencing during the dawn of Britain's Industrial Revolution.

In addition to a condition of England novel focusing on the social problems between masters and workers, *North and South* contains a love story centered around the heroine, Margaret Hale. Margaret is the lens through which we view the development of Gaskell's male characters. Margaret is raised in the south of England in a hamlet called Helstone, and she moves to live in the industrial town called Milton in the north of England. Gaskell's metaphorical use of the fictional town, Milton, represents England's industrial town of Manchester, which was experiencing a re-birth due to the repeal of the Corn Laws during Britain's Industrial Revolution, (and which I discussed in the previous chapter titled Turbulent Times During 1800-1860). Like Charlotte Brontë's heroine, Jane,

who receives two offers of marriage, Margaret, too, receives three offers of marriage, one from Lennox, and one from Thornton, rejects them both, and later accepts Thornton's second marriage request. Margaret is unsure how to deal with Thornton's middle-class manliness and his brooding masculinity. Living in the south of England, Margaret has not encountered a prosperous northern tradesman or his type of brusque masculinity before, and she dislikes "shoppy people"(19). Thornton is a "shoppy" (19) person as he owns Marlborough mills in Milton-Northern. Margaret's ingrained middle-class southern snobbery provides the basis for an internal battle with her social and moral etiquette as she begins to realize, through her interactions with Thornton, that a gentleman may not only be from one of the "three learned professions" (Gaskell 19). Whereas Emily Brontë's masculinity in Heathcliff remains unchanged and he is never accepted as a gentleman, Gaskell's Thornton is considered, by his workers, family, and Milton society, as a worthy aspirant gentleman. However, as his profession and class do not fit into the traditional conventions of a Victorian gentleman, firmly engrained in situ since before the Industrial Revolution, he is not recognized or accepted as a gentleman by southern society.

As the story unfolds, Margaret notices the contrast between the masculinity of Lennox and Thornton, and her confusion regarding the definition of a gentleman grows. Unlike the Brontë sisters, who re-construct the masculinity they prefer within Rochester and Hareton, Gaskell constructs Thornton's masculinity in a more positive way from the onset. His masculinity represents gentleness, integrity, compassion, and the future, even though he is somewhat stubborn at times. Like Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester, who is saved by Jane when she comes into a fortune (which she bestows upon Rochester when she marries him), Margaret saves Thornton; his business is struggling because of a

worker strike, and he has run out of cash. The similarities between Jane's money and Margaret's wealth, which is left to her by her godfather, could be comparable. However, Gaskell goes one step further than Brontë and ensures that Margaret, in effect, *loans* her money to Thornton which is "unused in the bank" (394) to save his mill from closing, rather than Jane, who, when she marries Rochester, relinquishes her property rights by "law of coverture" (Tosh 157). Thornton's masculinity remains intact as Margaret, for all sense and purposes, offers Thornton a business proposition which Thornton accepts, whilst he offers her marriage on far more equal terms. He is still the patriarchal mill owner but with the addition of a woman who accepts his second marriage proposal, and who is equal to him and even holds the purse strings in their marriage. His masculinity and gentlemanliness represent Gaskell's way forward for men in Victorian society, and is more forward thinking than Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester, or Emily Brontë's, Heathcliff.

Much has been discussed and criticized concerning Gaskell's heroine, Margaret; after all, Gaskell initially named her novel, *Margaret Hale*, which her editor Charles Dickens suggested that she change to *North and South* (Brodetsky 53). Margaret's interaction with Thornton, and her somewhat masculine approach within a patriarchal society, have been argued and debated at length. Furthermore, discussions have focused heavily on Gaskell's condition-of-England novel and the social and cultural issues which run throughout her novel. However, little focus has been given to the masculinity of Thornton and Lennox. Even less has been discussed regarding the comparisons of their masculinity. Critics such as Nancy Henry, Doris Williams Elliott, and Lynette Felber discuss Gaskell's concern with women's agency, social and moral issues, and class issues in *North and South*. Henry discusses "new capitalists and social transformation" (156),

and Gaskell's empowerment of Margaret with a better understanding of the economy and knowledge, thus ensuring "more powerful women gradually emerge" (159). I will continue her argument by showing how Thornton, being the new-age gentleman, accepts Margaret as his equal. Elliott discusses how the marriage between Thornton and Margaret is "Gaskell's metaphor for the newly constructed social sphere" (49), with emphasis being given to Margaret's intervention with Thornton and his workers. She discusses women's social spheres and their interaction between social classes, and indicates that "Gaskell's social vision" (31) is based upon how Margaret interacts with men and women from both classes. I will expand upon Elliott's view of Thornton's masculinity and how his manliness evokes so much confusion for Margaret. Felber argues that Margaret is consumed with her prejudice towards the people in the north of England, and that the "marriage between Thornton and Margaret embodies the future" (66), as Thornton and Margaret are able to fuse the "values traditionally associated with the agrarian past into the industrial society" (66). I will further Felber's argument by suggesting that Margaret fuses her values with Thornton's due to the love she feels for Thornton's genuine masculinity and new gentlemanliness. They represent the future because they combine Margaret's sympathy, money, and interest in public issues with Thornton's sincerity, energy, and work ethic. Thornton's masculinity and pride is infused within what he produces as an industrialist; Lennox, as a lawyer, doesn't produce anything.

Henry Lennox's masculinity is shrouded within old fashioned middle-class gentlemanliness, manners, and respectability. He resides in the south of England in London, where he is considered a gentleman, and where being a gentleman is epitomized by tradition, history, prestige, the power of parliament, and affluent gentlemanly

professions (Gilmour 5). Like Charlotte Brontë's, St. John Rivers, whose profession as a clergyman entitles him to be a gentleman, Lennox has gained his gentlemanly position through his occupation as a lawyer, one of the chosen professions (Gilmour 5). While the novel links London with the established professions and the south more generally with old traditions and agriculture, the northern city of Milton is associated with new customs and industry. Lennox's gentlemanly-like conduct and masculinity are representative of Victorian conservative ideals and conventions. He is not a member of the aristocracy or upper-class, but middle-class. He has a high regard for himself, and appears to consider ladies inferior. Margaret notices he is a proud gentleman who displays prejudice, aloofness, and is "slightly sarcastic" whilst observing his surroundings (15). Similar to Charlotte Brontë's description of Rochester as unattractive, Gaskell describes Lennox as "the plain one in a singularly good-looking family; but his face was intelligent, keen, and mobile" (15). Gaskell ensures in her description of him that his intelligence is noted; as stated earlier, an education and intelligence is paramount for a gentleman (Tosh 86).

Lennox's proud masculinity and blatant gentlemanly disregard towards Margaret as a woman possessing intelligence and charisma is due, in part, to his personality, but also due to the social upheaval and changes that were occurring within the rigid confines of Victorian society. Britain's Industrial Revolution was expanding during the 1800s; social classes were beginning to blend, and hierarchal male conflicts were apparent. Margaret moves from the southern village of Helstone to Harley Street, London, at age nine to live with her affluent aunt. She spends ten years in London conforming to the "grandeur circumstances" (10) that society offered compared to her more humble home parish. She, therefore, comprises a blend of country simplicity and an adopted social

etiquette, necessary for a woman, when "clinging to a social order—that of Harley Street and Helstone—in which the value of speech is not dependent on her cash value" (Lansbury 107). Like Charlotte Brontë's representation of Rochester, who is baffled by Jane's apparent indifference to materialistic needs, Gaskell portrays Lennox as equally confused by Margaret's reaction when he asks her, "how would you have a wedding arranged?" (13). Margaret downplays the stately pomp and circumstance which surrounds her cousin Edith's traditional Victorian marriage, as she does not care for such frivolity. She "does not need the forms and ceremonies of the idle well-to-do" (Easson 91). Lennox fails to appreciate that Margaret is a woman whose appearance and etiquette represent a refined middle-class daughter of a gentleman. Her father is a pastor, and as such, is employed in one of the chosen professions that defines a gentleman. However, she has also grown up in relative financial hardship and seclusion. He fails to see Margaret as a "deeper, more interesting [woman]...with depth to her character" (Brodetsky 56). He is charmed by her attractiveness but does not see that she possesses seriousness and intelligence. He is a gentleman who is not accustomed to holding an intelligent conversation with a woman, and is in keeping with that of a gentleman who possesses patriarchal attitude, prejudice, and dominant masculinity.

Furthermore, Lennox's superior attitude and snobbery hides behind the societal veil that regards him as a gentleman, where his masculinity rules over women. It is not just Margaret whom he considers himself superior to, but to all women. That is not to say that Lennox is an unreasonable or an inconsiderate man. He, like Emily Brontë's Linton, and Charlotte Brontë's Rochester and St. John Rivers, is a male protagonist who has been conditioned his whole life to adhere to masculine code of conducts. It is clear from

Lennox's remark that he considers himself a patriarchal gentleman whose superior masculinity is dominant over women: "I suppose you are all in the depths of business—ladies' business, I mean. Very different to my business, which is the real true law business. Playing with shawls is very different work to drawing up settlements" (12). He expects little more than for women to play with trifles such as Edith's shawls that Margaret, her aunt and friends are admiring. Lennox would not consider women within the middle-class society he immersed himself in, capable of holding intelligent and professional conversations. This is evident in how he questions how Margaret fills her time: "Archery parties—pic-nics—race-balls—hunt-balls" (14). I agree with Dorice Elliott's assertion that Lennox is "clearly the representative professional man in *North and South*" and is the "male character most insistent on...keeping women securely within the home and out of social space" (37)

Lennox nurtures his gentlemanly masculinity within a class system which measures him by his manly ability to make money and become wealthy within a gentlemanly profession. His appearance is based around wealth, and he wishes he had more money to showcase his success. This is in direct contrast to Thornton, who is wealthier than Lennox and works for progress. In fact, Lennox's masculinity is very much immersed within money, power and profession. According to Bonaparte, Gaskell shows how "money is male...and... also power" (192), which she shows not only through Lennox but Thornton, whom, I will discuss later as well. Lennox looks towards material possessions as a sign of class status, wealth and prosperity. He visits Margaret in her humble vicarage and is both puzzled and disappointed when he looks around the parlor, noting that "the colours within seem poor and faded. The carpet was far from new; the

chintz had been often washed; the whole apartment was smaller and shabbier than he had expected, as back-ground and frame-work for Margaret, herself so queenly" (23). He sighs and says, "The living is evidently as small as she said. It seems strange, for the Beresfords belong to a good family" (23). The Beresford's Lennox refers to is Margaret's mother who is the daughter of Lord and Lady Beresford. Lennox likes the upper-class connection Margaret has, and therefore presumed that Margaret would be an independent woman of means. He considers his gentlemanly status and masculinity to be well suited to a wife such as Margaret.

Lennox's marriage proposal is embedded in gentlemanly masculinity, manners, and respectability. It is far from romantic and lacks manliness and emotional passion simply because he cannot express the feelings he has towards Margaret. He is constrained by expectations of gentlemanly conduct. That is not to say that Lennox is an unreasonable man; he simply is more "suited to be Margaret's friend, though not her husband" (Easson 91). His visit to Margaret's home is to offer her his hand in marriage; however, Margaret "felt as if a thin cold cloud had come between her and the sun" (24). Lennox may love Margaret, but he is so tongue-tied that his proposal consists of:

Margaret, I wish you did not like Helstone so much—did not seem so perfectly calm and happy here. I have been hoping for these three months past to find you regretting London—and London friends, a little—enough to make you listen more kindly...one who has not much to offer, it is true—nothing but prospects in the future—but who does love you, Margaret, almost in spite of himself. Margaret, have I startled you too much? Speak! (28)

When Margaret rejects him, insisting she thought of him only as a friend, he bemoans his proposition: "You should make allowances for the mortification, not only of a lover, Margaret, but of a man not given to romance in general...who has been carried out of his usual habits by the force of a passion" (29). Lennox feels rejected but also amazed that Margaret has refused his gentlemanly offer as he states: "I shall have to console myself with scorning my own folly. A struggling barrister to think of matrimony!" (29). Unlike Emily Brontë's heroine, Catherine, who chooses a marriage of convenience and social status over love in her marriage to the aristocratic Linton, Margaret rejects Lennox's proposal because she likes him but is not in love with him. She feels stifled by Lennox's gentlemanly masculinity, properness, and gentlemanly mannerisms. His masculinity represents the past, as he is from gentry and holds an acceptable position within the law. She is bored with the gentlemanlike proprieties that Lennox offers, and does not wish to marry him simply because society considers it to be a suitable union. Lennox's masculinity and pride is hurt by Margaret's rejection. Similar to Charlotte Brontë's, St. John Rivers, who considered Jane a suitable missionary's wife, Lennox considers himself a good catch for Margaret and deems her a suitable wife for a barrister. He, like St. John Rivers with Jane, gives Margaret time to reconsider and pleads with Margaret: "Don't despise me; I have a heart, notwithstanding all this good-for-nothing way of talking. As a proof of it, I believe I love you more than ever—if I do not hate you—for the disdain with which you have listened to me during this last half-hour" (30). Margaret still rejects Lennox and according to Jessie Reeder, he is "the man who penetrates her character against her will" (7).

However, Margaret's rejection of Lennox's marriage proposal is not entirely

because she considers him only as a friend. It is also because she does not want to have to conform dutifully to the Victorian expectations and ideals of what a wife should be and how she should act. Gaskell, like Charlotte Brontë's portrayal of Jane's strength and independence, shows that her heroine possesses a stronger character than, for example, her cousin Edith. Edith does not mind being ruled by a man and his masculinity, as Gaskell shows her "too careless and idle to have a very strong will of her own" (8). As Patsy Stoneman observes, "Edith's lazy life as an army wife" (123) is not a life Margaret wants. Felicia Bonaparte suggests that, "what Gaskell wants is to find a way for Margaret to live her life as a male" (170). I argue, however, that Gaskell does not want a male or masculine heroine. Rather, Gaskell wants to adjust, re-construct and re-define the masculinity and maleness within her male protagonists to supply her heroine with a forward thinking, unbiased, more modern Victorian male and partner. She creates a male character who desires and appreciates strong, if not manly, women. Margaret could have easily accepted and married Lennox, but she rejects what he represents. Easson suggests that "her rejection of him emphasizes that dissatisfaction with London" (91). In other words, Margaret is dissatisfied with London society and what marriage to Lennox would mean for her. Lennox presumes that Margaret would accept, as in Victorian society daughters are expected to become wives; however, for herself Margaret seeks more as "her instinct had made anything but a refusal impossible...she could have loved him if he had but been different" (31); the difference she seeks she eventually finds within John Thornton.

In this novel, John Thornton's manliness, class status, and position within society contrasts directly with that of Lennox. Thornton's class status has already been unjustly

decided upon by Margaret's prejudice. Her father moves the Hale family from south of England to Milton-Northern where Thornton lives. Mr. Hale takes a position as a private tutor and even before Margaret encounters Thornton, she arrogantly says to her father, "A private tutor!...What in the world do manufacturers want with the classics, or literature, or the accomplishments of a Gentleman?" (37). Gaskell shows here the biases inherent of class that are so apparent within Victorian society. Thornton's position as a middle-class mill owner and master represents something of a quandary for Victorian society, as he does not fit into the existing norms. He is one of the most rich and influential men in his town, and the people in Milton-northern respect him and consider Thornton to be a gentleman. At the same time, southern society still adhered to the traditional conventions and societal norms that considered his profession as a merchant to be unacceptable for a gentleman. Thornton represents a member of the rising middle-class and comes from new money and falls neatly into John Tosh's example of the "new entrepreneurial class" (89). Thornton sought to be judged by his manliness and hard work as a manufacturer alone and not to be perceived as an idle gentleman. Thornton is adamant when he states his belief to Mr. Hale that, "It is one of the great beauties of our system, that a working-man may raise himself into the power and position of a master by his own exertions and behaviour" (78). Thornton, however, appears somewhat naive in thinking that Britain's age old class system will merely accept his gentlemanly status based upon his prosperity. In the south, Mr. Hale is considered to hold a higher class position than Thornton; but in the north, however, Thornton, who earns more money, is the superior.

Furthermore, Thornton's gentlemanliness and manliness complicate the blending of social classes as he is not only a middle-class master but he has risen out of working-

class poverty. Similar in some instances to Emily Brontë's, Heathcliff, who as a boy experiences working-class life as a gypsy and a servant, Thornton, as a boy, experiences working-class life as a draper's assistant in a shop. He, like Heathcliff, experiences poverty and rises within the ranks. Unlike Heathcliff, however, he "is likeable. He is good. In some respects, he is an idealist" (Bonaparte 168). His likeability and genuine wish to progress in his life stems from his humble and unfortunate beginnings as a boy. His manliness is forced upon him at a young age to pay off his father's debts:

[M]y father died under very miserable circumstances. I was taken from school, and had to become a man (as well as I could) in a few days...I got employment in a draper's shop ...Week by week our income came to fifteen shillings, out of which three people had to be kept. My mother managed so that I put by three out of these fifteen shillings regularly. This made the beginning. (78)

Gaskell does not elaborate upon Lennox's boyhood; however, with a brother who is a Captain, which is another one of the chosen professions, and Lennox himself a lawyer, it would not be too presumptuous to imply that Lennox would have come from a wealthy family and would not have an understanding of what it is like to be poor.

Moreover, Thornton's northern manliness and tradesman's directness in manner is in contrast with Lennox's southern gentlemanly conduct. Margaret's description of Thornton to her mother insinuates the difference in a man and a gentleman: He is "tall, broad-shouldered man...about thirty" with "a face that is neither exactly plain, nor yet handsome, nothing remarkable—not quite a gentleman; but that was hardly to be expected...altogether a man who seems made for his niche, mamma; sagacious, and

strong, as becomes a great tradesman" (60). Thornton's appearance compares with Lennox's plain appearance, which can be seen to represent strength compared to weakness. At least, Margaret confirms that Thornton is a "great tradesman," which is in contrast to her lack of description for Lennox's profession. Thornton has a low opinion of a southern gentleman and his idleness as he states, "I would rather be a man toiling, suffering—nay, failing and unsuccessful—here, than lead a dull prosperous life in the old worn grooves of what you call more aristocratic society down in the South" (75). A northern tradesman with a personality such as Thornton's is described by Robert Gray as being "redeemed by its energy and moral virtues of directness, independence, and mutual, and if sometimes antagonistic, respect" (158), and differs from Lennox's stilted and detached gentlemanliness. Thornton's manliness and tradesman's directness is evident in his speech towards Margaret and Mr. Hale but it does not lack in his respect for Mr. Hale's "gentlemanly courteousness" (59).

Like Charlotte and Emily Brontë, who reiterate the necessity for a gentleman to have an education and intelligence, Gaskell, too, ensures that Thornton acquires the traits necessary to be considered a gentleman by society, as he is tutored by Mr. Hale to educate him in the classics. However, his reasoning for learning the classics is not merely to impress society. His education was cut short when he was a boy and in a rather meaningful speech to Mr. Hale and Margaret, he says, "I was too busy to think about any dead people, with the living pressing alongside of me, neck to neck, in the struggle for bread. Now that I have my mother safe in the quiet peace that becomes her age, and duly rewards her former exertions, I can turn to all that old narration and thoroughly enjoy it" (78). Thornton wishes to read the classics for his own pleasure because he enjoys it and

not for the superficial reason that a gentleman should obtain a good education from a reputable public school (Gilmour 8). Thornton's remark may not be in keeping with gentlemanly qualities, but it is a poignant example of how a former working-class boy, and now middle-class, man views the idleness of the upper class. Margaret's father, who is a gentleman by profession, more readily accepts northern manufacturers, which is unusual given his class status. He considers Thornton a gentleman as he says northern men are "fine fellows, conscious of their own deficiencies, which is more than many a man at Oxford is" and he considers Thornton, "a very intelligent man" (37), compared to Margaret's rather arrogant opinion. For Gaskell to illustrate Oxonians in this manner, with all the male traditions and masculine values associated with Oxford's heritage and education, is very progressive as she was writing within a predominantly patriarchal society where most men would have been recognized as Etonians and Oxonians. Her portrayal of Thornton's boyhood and being forced to leave school early to become a man is similar to the boyhood of her editor, Charles Dickens. He, too, had to leave school early and work in a factory after his father was unable to pay his debts and was sent to prison. It is also of interest to note that Mr. Hale's opinion of Thornton may well stem from the fact that Mr. Hale had not been born into wealth. He had married the daughter of Lady Beresford as a "poor country clergyman" (21); thus, he was more aware of the blending within social circles and somewhat more open to change than Margaret initially seems. Thornton, on one hand, mocks the snootiness of the upper-class and the dignity they give to education, whilst at the same time he wishes to educate himself; thus, in the eyes of society he would be perceived as a gentleman in spite of his own intentions. Here Gaskell shows a man whose masculinity is fueled by stoicism and a desire to learn to

improve his acceptability as a gentleman.

Like Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester, Thornton's manly pride and authoritative masculinity takes a tumble when he first encounters Margaret. Her very presence and her "straight, fearless, dignified... countenance" (57-58) causes Thornton's stumble. He has not encountered a southern middle-class girl before, especially a daughter of a southern gentleman, and much to his annoyance one who "assume[s] some kind of rule over him at once" (58). Unlike Lennox's fall, which was due to Margaret's rejection of him as a husband, Margaret unbalances Thornton's nerves and manliness as he becomes, "more awkward and self-conscious in every limb than he had ever done in all his life before" (59). Like Lennox and Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester, Thornton is used to being the authoritative figure who is in control, as he is not only a master but Milton's magistrate as well, who "controls the police and army who protect his own class interest" (Stoneman 124). Margaret is not condescending towards Thornton; it is just that "she had...the habits of society" (57) instilled within her from London, and those habits discern that she should "treat him with a full measure of civility" (57), regardless if she considered him a tradesman or from an inferior class. Thornton is unaccustomed to her southern society manner and becomes annoyed and irritated with his own representation of manliness and masculinity, as Margaret's presumed snooty look of "proud indifference" made him feel like a "great rough fellow, with not a grace or a refinement about him" (59). He mentions to his mother that "she treated me with a haughty civility which had a strong flavour of contempt in it. She held herself aloof from me as if she had been a queen, and I her humble, unwashed vassal" (72). Gaskell here shows a patriarch of his realm, and a master who until that day was very much in control of his emotions and disposition, and who

now begins to doubt his masculinity as being inappropriate and unaccepted as that of a gentleman.

If Thornton is troubled by his apparent lack of refinement as a gentleman in the eyes of Margaret, he certainly does not show it during their intense discussion on the differences between men and gentlemen an important scene that allows Gaskell to implicitly contrast Lennox and Thornton. For Thornton to discuss with Margaret what constitutes a man and a gentleman is significant in the first instance, as he not only wants Margaret to understand and begin to appreciate the difference between northern men and southern men, but he is also interested in her opinion. By seeking her opinion he not only takes "the seriousness Margaret felt so lacking in Henry Lennox" (Easson 95) but he also treats her more as an equal, rather than the Angel in the House, that Lennox prefers. Margaret asks Thornton whether one of his guests at a dinner party is a gentleman or not, to which Thornton replies:

I don't quite understand your application of the word. But I should say that this Morison is no true man...A man is to me a higher and a completer being than a gentleman...'I take it that "gentleman" is a term that only describes a person in his relation to others; but when we speak of him as "a man," we consider him not merely with regard to his fellow-men, but in relation to himself,—to life—to time—to eternity. (150)

Consequently, Thornton's concept of a gentleman undermines Margaret's understanding of class status. For Thornton is aware that even though he is a wealthy man, wealthier, in fact, than Lennox and Mr. Hale, he is still considered by society to be a middle-class industrialist and, as such, not a gentleman. John Tosh asserts, "for John Thornton,

gentlemanliness...is caught up in considerations of status and appearance, whereas manliness has to do with interiority and authenticity" (85), which is in direct contrast to Lennox's sarcasm and insincerity. Thornton appears to think little of the social recognition of a gentleman, which he considers distorted and "exaggerated" (150), and he is "rather weary of this word 'gentlemanly,' which seems to me to be often inappropriately used" (150). Thornton, "applauds" (Tosh 85) the "full simplicity of the noun 'man'" (150); to him, the 'man' is more powerful than the gentleman, which confuses Margaret as she recognizes her gentleman as being that of the aristocratic, genteel and pre-industrial era. Using Thornton's speeches, Gaskell successfully shows how the middle-class, Thornton, rejects class based purely on gentlemanliness and manliness. In doing so, Gaskell exposes Thornton to be her idealistic self-made man of the future.

Gaskell reveals the class barriers between north and south, and between working tradesman and gentlemen in Margaret's initially low opinion of Thornton's class status and his northern town, Milton. However, Thornton's proud and forceful mother idolizes her son and is proud of her home town. Mrs. Thornton's class consciousness and her disrespect towards the masculinity in southern gentlemen, such as Lennox, is shown in her powerful monologue to Mr. Hale and Margaret:

To hold and maintain a high, honourable place among the merchants of his country—the men of his town. Such a place my son has earned for himself. Go where you will—I don't say in England only, but in Europe—the name of John Thornton of Milton is known and respected amongst all men of business. Of course, it is unknown in the fashionable circles...

Idle gentlemen and ladies are not likely to know much of a Milton
manufacturer, unless he gets into parliament, or marries a lord's daughter.

(105)

In Mrs. Thornton's speech, the contrast is clear between northern men associated with hard work and the enterprising spirit of industrialized England and the idle southern men. She shows the social and cultural differences between northern manliness and southern masculinity in England, and the points of morality and conventions men and women were expected to adhere to within society. On the other hand, it is as though Thornton's respectability within Milton, coupled with his manliness and non-gentlemanly behavior, confuses Margaret, and she is "blinded by pride and prejudice" (Bonaparte 184). No wonder that Margaret "laughed outright" at Mrs. Thornton's assumption that she has an interest in marrying her son: "I beg your pardon, madam. But I really am very much obliged to you for exonerating me from making any plans on Mr. Thornton's heart" (106).

Thornton's manly heart and masculine pride plummets both inwardly and outwardly when Margaret steps in to protect Thornton from his men during a climactic riot scene. His masculine dominance as a master over his workers, and as a patriarchal man over Margaret is both shamed and ridiculed. Margaret shames Thornton into going down to confront the rioters who are protesting at his mill, "Go down this instant, if you are not a coward. Go down and face them like a man...speak to your workmen as if they were human beings. Speak to them kindly...If you have any courage or noble quality in you, go out and speak to them, man to man" (161). What Margaret fails to realize in her moment of heated passion is just how dangerous the situation is that she has sent Thornton into. He descends the stairs as the master of his mill, whose working-class

manliness and pride are enraged with animalistic fervor. "He stood with his arms folded; still as a statue; his face pale with repressed excitement. They were trying to intimidate him—to make him flinch; each was urging the other on to some immediate act of personal violence" (162).

Thornton's middle-class manliness, masterful dominance and strength in character as power are exposed to his mill workers in a both violent and compassionate scene. The mill workers are rioting and threaten Thornton and his family. Thornton needs to prove and show to Margaret that he is not only a powerful man, but a gentleman and a master. He also needs to prove to his workers that he is the authoritative power. Like Charlotte's heroine Jane, who saves Rochester from a burning fire, Margaret flies downstairs and uses her body to shield Thornton from the rebellious crowd in order to somehow save him. His dominant masculinity and manhood dissolve in front of the workers' eyes. Thornton, the Victorian patriarch, the master of his mill, is being protected by a girl. Like Charlotte Brontë's, Jane, who finds her maidenly dignity in rather a precarious situation as she finds herself alone in her master's bedroom, Margaret has thrown aside her dignity and honor which are so precious amongst the conventions bestowed upon women in Victorian society, as she "threw her arms around him" (163) in front of hundreds of people. Thornton is both confused by Margaret's sudden display of affection and embarrassed by it. When she is hit by a pebble thrown by one in the crowd, he lays her to one side, and the ferocity of his manly pride arouses a masculinity as he masterfully walks into the middle of the rabble. His strength is vindicated as he states, "Now kill me, if it is your brutal will. There is no woman to shield me here." He stood amongst them, with his arms folded, in precisely the same attitude as he had been in on the steps" (164).

Like Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester, who realizes he loves Jane in the instant she saves his life from the fire, Thornton, too, realizes he is deeply in love with Margaret.

Thornton's gentlemanliness, manners, and respectability are evident when he realizes that out of a sense of honor towards Margaret, he must ask her to marry him. He feels that Margaret truly loves him why else would she relinquish her dignity and commit such a public display of affection? Compared to Lennox's confined and calm marriage proposal, Thornton's proposal is steeped in intensity and passion: "I do not want to be relieved from any obligation...I love, as I do not believe man ever loved woman before... I have never loved any woman before: my life has been too busy, my thoughts too much absorbed with other things. Now I love, and will love" (176-8). He loves Margaret and feels rejected when she turns him down, and his masculinity and pride sink further still after the riot scene. Margaret rejects his proposal based on her conjecture that Thornton only feels obligated to marry her, even though he professes his love to her. She feels offended by Thornton's proposal:

You seem to fancy that my conduct of yesterday...was a personal act between you and me; and that you may come and thank me for it, instead of perceiving, as a gentleman would—yes! a gentleman...that any woman, worthy of the name of woman, would come forward to shield, with her revered helplessness, a man in danger from the violence of numbers.

(177)

If, as Lynette Felber attests, a "marriage between Thornton and Margaret embodies the future" (66), Margaret needs to appreciate that Thornton is now put in a very public ungentlemanly position by her rejection of him. Stoneman agrees that the "publicity in

her relationship with Thornton deepens the shame to the level of nightmare" (129), which may seem harsh, but consideration has to be given to the strict moral and social codes of conduct which existed within Victorian England. Thornton's gruff reply to Margaret's rejection shows a mix of manly indignation and patriarchal attitude as he says, "the gentleman thus rescued is forbidden the relief of thanks!...I am a man. I claim the right of expressing my feelings" (177). Thornton needs to relinquish his patriarchal attitude and appreciate Margaret on more equal terms, similar to Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester and his acceptance of Jane.

As the novel progresses, Thornton and his wounded manly pride avoids Margaret as much as possible, as he retreats into "manly self-control" (Stoneman 135), but a gentleness and politeness in his middle-class character and manner become more apparent. He hears how near to death Margaret's mother is and even though he is known to have "no general benevolence...he went straight to the first fruit-shop in Milton" (197) to purchase the best of fruit which he personally delivers to Mrs. Hale on many occasions. Mrs. Hale considers that Thornton "is really getting quite polished in his manners" (217) and it seems as though Thornton's boorish manly attributes and manner begin to soften as he becomes closer to the Hales. If, as I stated earlier, to be a gentleman was to have refinement, politeness and good manners, then, it would seem that Thornton was beginning to attain the necessary attributes to be considered a gentleman within society. As Tosh asserts, "pleasant or intimating moral worth, politeness was the hallmark of the gentleman" (86).

Additionally, class distinction between the masculinity of a gentleman versus the manliness of a tradesman is brought up by Margaret's brother, Frederick. Frederick

secretly returns to England to visit his dying mother. He had been involved in a mutiny within the Navy and is in fear of being found and court-martialed. He mentions to Margaret that he sees "a great powerful fellow" (235) in their home who turns out to be Mr. Thornton. Margaret is taken aback as she did not know that Thornton had visited and states, "I fancied you meant some one of a different class, not a gentleman; somebody come on an errand" (235). To which Frederick carelessly replies, "He looked like some one of that kind...took him for a shopman, and he turns out a manufacturer" (235). Frederick's prejudice is reminiscent of Margaret's opinion of shop people when she first moved to Milton. It is also when she realizes that she loves Thornton as she becomes annoyed by Frederick's throwaway remark. Her reaction shows that Margaret "gradually comes to respect...the inhabitants of Milton" (Brodetsky 61). Frederick is a gentleman, at least he used to be as an officer in the Navy, so Frederick considers that a manufacturer like Thornton is nothing more than a shopman and certainly not a gentleman. Once again, Gaskell highlights the arrogance of southern middle-class gentleman and the distinction between class ideologies.

Frederick may consider himself a gentleman and of being a higher status than Thornton, but it is Thornton's manly patriarchal authority which saves Margaret's reputation when she is seen in Frederick's company late at night and far from home. As a gentleman with gentlemanly manners, Frederick should have known better than to allow his sister to accompany him alone at night to a railway station. Victorians adhered to a stringent set of rules which focused upon traditional male and female codes of conduct and certainly did not include non-chaperoned females. Thornton sees Margaret with Frederick, whom he mistakenly considers to be her lover. Frederick's snooty attitude

continues as he considers Thornton "an unprepossessing-looking fellow. What a scowl he has!" (241), a statement that Margaret rebuffs. Whilst at the railway station, Frederick is recognized as a mutineer, a scuffle ensues, and Frederick knocks the man onto the rail tracks. The man later dies, and Margaret is left to face the police inquiry alone, and for a daughter of a Lady to be put in such an inappropriate position reflects sorely upon Frederick's manners. It is only when Thornton, in his position as Milton's magistrate, steps in to halt the police inquiry that Margaret's reputation is saved. He does so out of the love he has for Margaret and is unaware that Frederick is her brother. Thornton's manly pride, gentlemanly conduct, and masculinity dominates over men such as Frederick, and marks the way forward in the development of Gaskell's new Victorian man.

Unlike the reformed masculinity found in Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester, who changes for the better whilst being separated from Jane following his proposal, the masculinity in Gaskell's, Lennox, remains very much the same in his patriarchal attitude towards Margaret. It is at about this time that Lennox appears back in Margaret's life. The masculine power Lennox associates with wealth and his materialistic attitude associated with being a gentleman have not changed over their three years of separation. Margaret's father has died, and she has returned to live in London with Captain Lennox and Edith. Margaret calls upon Lennox's services as a lawyer to assist in Frederick's exculpation. Later, he becomes Margaret's legal advisor and assists her in the management of the inheritance her godfather left her. A large part of her inheritance consists of property owned in Milton, including the mill that Thornton rents. Lennox realizes that he still loves her, but he also is an ambitious man who loves her more for the newfound wealth she can now offer him. Margaret, however, is very much in love with Thornton. Unlike

Thornton, who loves Margaret with a passion for the woman she is, and similar to Charlotte Brontë's, St. John Rivers, who looks upon Jane merely as a suitable missionary's wife, Lennox looks upon Margaret as a suitable wife for a rising barrister, especially with her new wealth. In Lennox's ponderings, Gaskell shows how important the prestige of wealth and money are to a gentleman:

He looked upon her fortune only as a part of the complete and superb character of herself and her position: yet he was fully aware of the rise which it would immediately enable him, the poor barrister, to take. Eventually he would earn such success, and such honours, as would enable him to pay her back, with interest, that first advance in wealth which he should owe to her. (376)

Lennox may love Margaret, but his gentlemanly façade leaves little room for the manly passion Margaret has seen in Thornton.

Moreover, there is no flexibility within Lennox's aloof masculinity as he wishes to control Margaret as a patriarchal husband in Victorian society would. He cannot see Margaret as his equal like Thornton can. Like Emily Brontë's, Linton, who wished to control Catherine as a patriarchal husband, Lennox wishes Margaret to be totally dependent upon him. His manner has not changed from the time of his previous proposal "he saw the latent sweep of her mind, which could easily (he thought) be led to embrace all the objects on which he had set his heart" (376). Lennox loves Margaret, but similar to Charlotte Brontë's, St. John Rivers, who was happiest when he tutored Jane, Lennox "was never so happy as when teaching her of what all these mysteries of the law were the signs and type" (374). Lennox is a good man, but his manliness and masculinity is old

fashioned in his patriarchal attitude towards Margaret. The masculinity Margaret yearns for is not the staid gentlemanly conduct of Lennox, but the raw, new manly-gentlemanly energy and passion that Thornton can offer her. Lennox's eyes may well have "brightened with exultation" (392) when Margaret asks for his help, and he may well be overjoyed that "she was learning to depend upon him!"(392). However, his patriarchal certainty in his presumption that Margaret loves him simply due to her requiring his assistance is poorly ascertained.

Compared to Lennox's materialistic masculinity, Thornton's masculine power can be seen as partly constructed through his wealth gained as a manufacturer, and partly shown by an innate strength and integrity of character. In fact, he needs all his masculine power to overcome the adversity which has befallen him. His wealth has diminished and he is forced to close his mill and relinquish his lease. His candor and masculine propriety prevent him from entering into a risky speculation which could save his business and make him a profitable man. Instead, he tells his mother, "As I stand now, my creditors, money is safe—every farthing of it; but I don't know where to find my own—it may be all gone, and I penniless at this moment. Therefore, it is my creditors' money that I should risk" (384). How can the reader not help but fall in love with this genuine, noble and philosophical man? Thornton, his good name, and everything he stands for as a man and as a gentleman leave his "peace of conscience" intact, as he did not "run the risk of ruining many for my own paltry aggrandisement" (384). To Thornton, his masculine vulnerability lies not in how much money he owns or loses but in the integrity associated with his good name and in "his pride in the commercial character which he had established for himself" (380); unlike Lennox, who sees money as a means to success

with little thought given to his eponym. Gaskell's portrayal of Thornton's manliness and his powerful masculine integrity and the genuine concern he has for other people, such as the Hales, his creditors and his men, is in stark contrast to the description of him by one of his men: "Thornton's as dour as a door-nail; an obstinate chap, every inch on him,—th' oud bulldog!" (124). Gaskell subtly digs at the southern upper and middle-class society and the significance they place upon monetary value compared to that of the middle-class industrialist.

Furthermore, Lennox's gentlemanly masculinity, pomposity, and insincerity are offset by Thornton's genuine, manly and gentlemanly nature when Margaret's two suitors finally meet one another in London. As Margaret is now Thornton's landlord and owner of his mill, Thornton needs to conduct his business affairs associated with his lease through Lennox, as Margaret's legal advisor. Lennox feels confident, privileged and secure in his position and status as a rising gentleman of the law, and he is insincere when he says to Margaret, "I thought you would like to have some attention shown him: and one would be particularly scrupulous in paying every respect to "a man who is going down in the world" (388). Yet, Margaret notices how Thornton retains his "noble composure...which impressed those who had just been hearing of his changed position, with a sense of inherent dignity and manly strength" (389), even when he is relegated to a lower status. Thornton may be down on his luck, but to him, his integrity, which is still unscathed, is far more important than materialistic needs or money could provide. Through Thornton's candor, Gaskell exposes the new self-made Victorian man she prefers over the bygone ideal of the gentlemen that Lennox represents.

Later, Lennox's gentlemanly superiority and manner over Thornton's position as a

man down on his luck continue to push the barriers of gentlemanly conduct. He "was in good humour, and brought out his dry caustic wit admirably" (389). Gaskell ensures that Lennox's rather ungentlemanly manner does not relent as he smugly stresses to Margaret:

I really think Edith owes me thanks for my contribution to her party.

You've no idea what an agreeable, sensible fellow this tenant of yours is.

He has been the very man to give Colthurst all the facts he wanted coaching in. I can't conceive how he contrived to mismanage his affairs.

(390)

Unluckily for Lennox, every ill fed contentious word against Thornton grates upon Margaret. Lennox, surrounded by his masculine social façades, is appalled when he overhears Thornton ardently talking about his diminishing situation to Mr. Colthurst, who is a member of parliament. He abruptly intervenes in their conversation, convinced that, as a gentleman, Thornton would not want "the mortification of acknowledging his want of success and consequent change of position" (390). However, Thornton's working and middle-class masculinity is indifferent to the social etiquette a gentleman was expected to follow in conversation, and Thornton resumes his conversation with Colthurst. Yet, Thornton's honesty when he tells Colthurst, "I have been unsuccessful in business, and have had to give up my position as a master" (390) is respected by Colthurst. Gaskell, once again, exposes the distinct types of masculinity found in Lennox and Thornton and the social and cultural differences which exist between northern and southern England, and ultimately points to the characteristics she favors in her new Victorian man.

Moreover, Thornton's forthrightness and confidence in his masculinity and manner can be associated with that of a man who feels himself an equal amongst men,

regardless of class. But it is not just men he feels he is equal to as he highly values Margaret's opinion and judgment, which is in direct contrast to Lennox. Margaret's virtue and credibility in Thornton's eyes returns when he finds out that the presumed lover he had seen her with was her brother. Margaret is unaware that he knows this and is quiet towards him. Why else, then, does Thornton, in the heat of conversation with Colthurst, turn to Margaret and say, "Miss Hale, I had a round-robin from some of my men—I suspect in Higgins' handwriting—stating their wish to work for me, if ever I was in a position to employ men again on my own behalf. That was good, wasn't it?" (392). He sought her opinion and approval and to convey to Margaret that all is well between them. When Margaret answers, "Yes. Just right. I am glad of it," Thornton sighs and states, "I knew you would like it" (392). Like Charlotte Brontë's, Rochester, whose masculinity is softened as he sought Jane's approval in the things that he did, and even to some extent like Emily Brontë's, Heathcliff, whose dark manliness sought Catherine's approval, Thornton seeks Margaret's endorsement in things he did as he respects her as a woman and as an equal to him.

On the other hand, Lennox's gentlemanly pride and masculinity plummet once again when he presumes Margaret will soon be his wife. Lennox's love for Margaret is based upon her dependency upon him. However, Margaret is far from being "merged in obedience to authority" (Stoneman 137). It comes as a great shock to him when Margaret asks him to draw out a business proposal and formally arrange a business agreement between her and Thornton. Thus ends any hope of his rise to power and success based on Margaret's money. His derogatory remarks to Edith's question as to whether he will be Margaret's future husband, are implicative of his gentlemanly class status and relates the

hurt to his manly pride, "I will try, when I marry, to look out for a young lady who has a knowledge of the management of children" (393). He continues with his assumption that Edith, as a woman, "would not understand: investments, and leases, and value of land" (393). Gaskell shows here how patriarchal a gentleman within society considers himself to be as a dominant male. He draws up the necessary papers for Margaret but, in an ungentlemanly unprofessional move, he leaves Margaret alone to confront Thornton with her business proposal.

Thornton's masculinity and manliness are confronted then not by Lennox but by Margaret. She is left alone in the room with Thornton to fumble her way through her business proposal. In her embarrassment of Lennox's non-appearance, she states that Lennox thinks things will improve for Thornton. Thornton's words are reminiscent of Rochester's anguish after he loses everything that he owns in a fire, and when he is confronted with Jane's comparison of him to St. John Rivers:

Happy and fortunate in all a man cares for, he does not understand what it is to find oneself no longer young—yet thrown back to the starting-point which requires the hopeful energy of youth—to feel one half of life gone, and nothing done—nothing remaining of wasted opportunity, but the bitter recollection that it has been. (393)

His words may be full of humility, but within Thornton's eyes is a smoldering intensity.

Margaret reacts:

[Her] very heart-pulse was arrested by the tone in which Mr. Thornton spoke. His voice was hoarse, and trembling with tender passion...He knelt by her side, to bring his face to a level with her ear; and whispered-panted

out the words..Take care.—If you do not speak—I shall claim you as my own in some strange presumptuous way.—Send me away at once, if I must go. (394)

Thus, Thornton proposes a second time to Margaret with the intensity and passion that was absent in Lennox's proposal. This time, it is on far more equal terms, and she accepts. His masculinity remains intact, and as Felber asserts, "north and south meet when Margaret and Thornton reconcile their ideological and class differences through marriage" (56). I would also add that Thornton not only reconciles his ideology and their class differences through marriage with Margaret, but his masculinity is representative of the new self-made Victorian man that Gaskell proposes, and as Easson states, "[Margaret's] legacy indeed is convenient; yet it helps Thornton, not to start, but to continue" (90). Thornton will continue in business as a master, but he will do so with a softened masculinity and he will be more forward thinking than Lennox, Jane's Rochester, or Catherine's, Heathcliff.

Like the Brontës' interpretation of their male protagonists, Gaskell's description of the unique strength and character in Thornton's masculinity and manliness challenges the traditional values of Victorian culture in the 1800s. Perhaps this is why she ensures that Thornton considers himself of "Teutonic blood" (304). The Teutonic reference is to an ancient Germanic tribe known for "their great Teuton power [who know the] value of organization, of order, and of method" (Hayens 114 & 120). Thornton boasts to Mr. Hale that northern industrialists such as he, "retain more of their spirit...action...exertion...and inward strength" (304) compared to the gentlemen in the south who resembled "Greeks, to whom beauty was everything [living] a life of leisure and serene enjoyment, much of

which entered in through their outward senses" (304). Mr. Hale replies to Thornton's somewhat critical analogy by saying that "Milton people did not reverence the past. You are regular worshippers of Thor" (304). Mr. Hale's comparison of Thornton to the Norse god of thunder, storms, strength, and protection of the human race, emphasizes that Thornton and Milton's industrialists are "worshippers of power" (304).

Recognizing Thornton as a mill owner and master, coupled with his middle-class mannerisms, stresses the importance of the emergence of the new self-made man within Victorian society. According to Mansfield, "the men in the Brontë and Gaskell novels...Thornton, Heathcliff, Hindley, and Rochester are embedded imaginatively as stereotypically northern men" (38), which shows the divide between southern men, such as Lennox. Mansfield uses the term "imaginatively;" however, Gaskell's description of Thornton and his masculinity reflects more than her imagination. It is Gaskell's attempt to criticize the established class rules prevalent within society, and exposes the idiosyncrasies that men and women adhered to. Gaskell's riveting and exquisite style of writing skillfully draws attention to the class struggle happening within England. Nancy Henry states, "Gaskell's idealized man of the future, like [Charlotte] Brontë's, embraces the social transformations of capitalism" (158). Gaskell's interpretation of Thornton's masculinity, together with his middle-class manhood and work ethic, defines the way forward for her new-self made Victorian gentleman, and exposes the conflicts and issues of masculinity within the Victorian era.

Conclusion

In *Women Constructing Men*, Sarah Frantz and Katharina Rennhak remark that "women novelists not only deconstruct patriarchal structures...but also participate in the reconstruction of ideal masculinity" (2). Certainly, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, and Elizabeth Gaskell are three remarkable female Victorian authors who not only re-define and re-construct the standard of masculinity through their innovative and artful use of the fictional characters in their novels, but who also break down and critique the Victorian male and his masculinity existing in the early to mid 1800s. These authors, through their bold and ambitious critique of the masculinity construct, re-define and re-negotiate the dawning of a new, self-made Victorian man.

In *Edward Rochester*, Charlotte Brontë mollifies his strong and masterful masculinity by softening his flaws and recreates a man who still retains his manliness but who also is unbiased towards Jane. In doing so, she reveals her ideal Victorian male and redefines the standard of Victorian masculinity. In *Hareton Earnshaw*, Emily Brontë, shows Victorian society her preferred future Victorian male, as she exposes the masculine faults of both Heathcliff and Linton and the realignment of power between classes and men occurring during the British Industrial Revolution. She ridicules, exposes, and challenges the concept of masculinity, and the idiosyncrasies of the Victorian English class system. In *John Thornton*, Gaskell exposes the conflicts and

issues of masculinity associated with class status. Her interpretation of Thornton's masculinity, together with his middle-class manhood and work ethic, defines the way forward for her new self-made Victorian gentleman.

Charlotte and Emily Brontë are both forward thinking female authors who set the standard for future authors via their approach to masculine protagonists. Charlotte's concept of masculinity still stays within the confines of traditional society and respectability but pushes at established boundaries. Emily's approach is somewhat more risqué than Charlotte's as she goads and provokes class masculinity. Both were progressive women living within a patriarchal society, this is why they both thought it wise to publish their works initially under male pseudonyms in order to get printed. Gaskell's description of the unique strength and character in Thornton's masculinity and manliness challenges traditional Victorian cultures, and invokes realism within society.

Charlotte and Emily Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell are well known for their conception of strong female heroines and much criticism has been discussed regarding their portrayal of male protagonists. But the deconstruction, re-defining, and subsequent construction of the masculinity within their male characters has often been neglected by critics. There is ample scope for future work in the study of male protagonists and their masculinity within Victorian literature. If my thesis permitted further expansion, I would consider an analysis of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, Ann Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*. The novels not only further strengthen and support my existing argument that these female authors successfully construct their new self-made Victorian man, but the project can be expanded yet further with an exploration of the proponents which make up the

construction of men and their masculinity along with discussions of men's rights within society. I hope my thesis will kindle the literary world to reconsider the importance of masculinity within their works. These are three strong female authors who re-define their ideal male whilst living and writing within the constraints of a patriarchal society.

Victorian readers were most likely prejudiced against these women and their novels merely as a result of ingrained masculine representations within society. The fact that the Brontë's novels, in particular, caused such a stir within Victorian society shows the power that these female authors had in bringing into actuality their vision of their ideal new Victorian male.

Examining the construction and development of masculinity and the male fictional characters within these novels means acknowledging that *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *North and South* are written by truly remarkable women authors. Their novels support and focus upon the re-defining and re-negotiating of the standard of masculinity within Victorian society, and open the eyes of Victorian society, as well as our own. In 1899, Doctor John Walter Wayland wrote:

The True Gentleman is the man whose conduct proceeds from good will and an acute sense of propriety and whose self-control is equal to all emergencies; who does not make the poor man conscious of his poverty, the obscure man of his obscurity, or any man of his inferiority or deformity; who is himself humbled if necessity compels him to humble another; who does not flatter wealth, cringe before power, or boast of his own possessions or achievements; who speaks with frankness but always with sincerity and sympathy; whose deed follows his word; who thinks of

the rights and feelings of others rather than his own; and who appears well in any company; a man with whom honor is sacred and virtue safe. (1).

It is as though Wayland, some fifty years later, has taken the narrative from the Brontës' and Gaskell's novels and immersed it within his text. It seems as though Thornton's poignant speech to Margaret concerning his definition of a "true man" (Brontë 150) versus a gentleman, embodies Wayland's definition. Rochester's humbling Vulcan and Apollo speech concerning his manliness towards Jane is in keeping with the progression of the Victorian male and his masculinity. Emily's portrayal of the barbaric masculinity in Heathcliff and her dismissal of him as a gentleman is contained within Wayland's text half a century later. Perhaps we, too, more than a century and a half later, will take into consideration their version of masculinity as we progress forward in our search for the ideal male and his masculinity.

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