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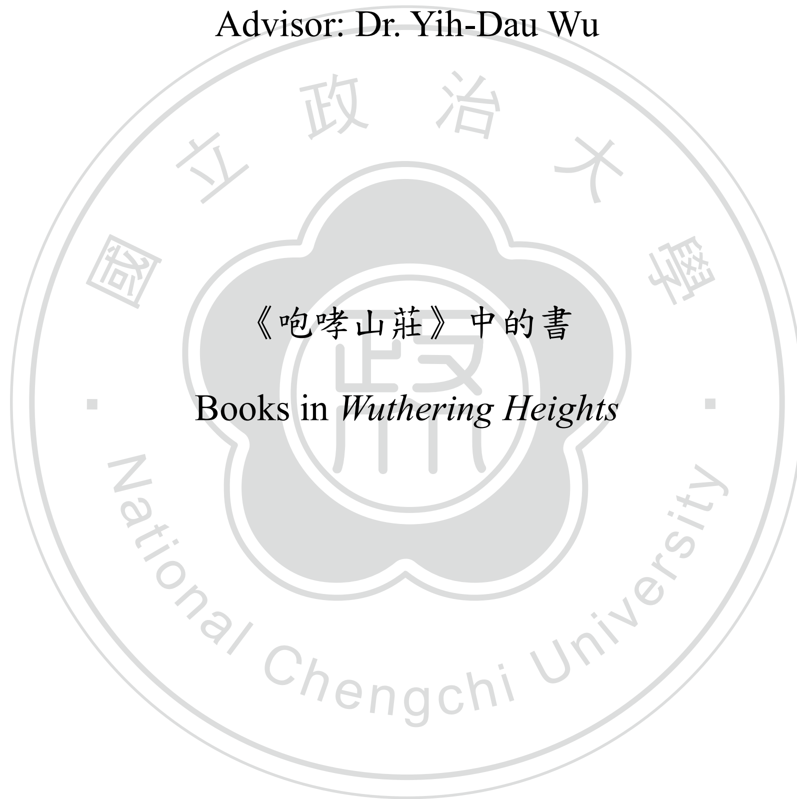

國立政治大學

National Chengchi University

《咆哮山莊》中的書

Books in *Wuthering Heights*

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BOOKS IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班

碩士論文提要

論文名稱:《咆哮山莊》中的書

指導教授:吳易道 先生

研究生:鄭茗方

論文提要內容:

在英國十九世紀小說家,艾蜜莉·伯朗特的作品《咆哮山莊》中,除了少數可知書名的宗教性書籍之外,其餘的書由於書名未知,大多缺乏可以明確推知其影響的細節。乍看之下,「書」此一主題似乎缺乏深入討論的空間,因此以往與此相關的研究通常著重於有書名者,未知書名者鮮少被討論。

然而,思及書在《咆哮山莊》中的用途,筆者認為書在小說的情節推演中扮演了重要的角色。在《咆哮山莊》一書中,書不僅被閱讀,也在教育與表達情緒方面,占有一席之地。不但書的頁緣空白處有書寫的痕跡,書也被用以分享、交換並作為與他人交流的媒介。雖然伯朗特在小說中並沒有詳細描述這些書的內容,但這些使用方式強調了書在小說情節中所發揮的影響,同時反映出角色們如何藉由書來處理與其他角色之間的衝突。

本論文分為三個部分,旨在探討《咆哮山莊》中的書的物質意義與象徵意義在衝突中所扮演的角色。首先,筆者將書本身視為一個空間,檢視小說女主角凱瑟琳·恩肖在書中寫下的日記,分析她文字的所在之處、日記內容與其讀者洛克伍德的反應,如何傳達書在此小說中的重要性。接著在第二部分中,筆者分析書做為物體,被伊莎貝拉與艾德加·林頓用作拒絕交談與溝通的工具;此外,凱瑟琳·林頓被迫遷移至咆哮山莊後,藉著閱讀拒絕與人互動並忘記其周遭令她不快的事物。在第三部分中,筆者將約瑟夫強迫凱瑟琳·恩肖與希斯克里夫閱讀的宗教小冊與維多利亞時代的基督教福音派在英國國境內分發的宗教小冊連結。宗教小冊做為傳福音之用,其中最重要的福音,亦即上帝原諒人的原罪,同時也要求

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基督徒原諒他人。其實，被分送免費宗教小冊的接受者大多並未好好閱讀這些書，也因此沒有習得原諒的美德。希斯克里夫拒絕閱讀宗教小冊，日後的復仇恰反映出他無法原諒對其不義者。宗教小冊做為道德說教的工具，非但未能成功消弭咆哮山莊中的衝突，卻是造成衝突的原因之一。然而，在哈里頓接受凱瑟琳・林頓的贈書與道歉時，此一書名與內容皆未知的書成為哈里頓原諒凱瑟琳的關鍵。藉由《咆哮山莊》中角色們的這些用書方式，伯朗特強調了書與人際衝突的緊密關聯。

關鍵字：艾蜜莉・伯朗特、《咆哮山莊》、書、書的歷史、衝突、人際關係、閱讀

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Abstract

With the exception of a few religious texts, most books in *Wuthering Heights* appear untitled. It is therefore difficult to know their influence on the fictional characters. Therefore, studies on books in *Wuthering Heights* tend to be limited to those books with a specific title.

This dissertation argues that, with or without a title, books play a significant role in *Wuthering Heights*. One measure of this significance is that they are used for various purposes. In this novel, people read books, willingly or not. They scribble on books, treat them violently when they are upset, or give them to others as a gift. In this novel, a book both is a material object and carries symbolic meanings. I argue in this dissertation that both dimensions are closely related to how people in *Wuthering Heights* deal with conflicts.

This dissertation is divided into three parts. In the first part, I see a book as a space and examine Catherine Earnshaw's diary written in the book margins. I consider how on the space of her writing, the contents of her diary, and the response of her reader, Lockwood, reveal the importance of books in this novel. In the second part, I discuss how Isabella and Edgar use books as a means to block communication. When Catherine Linton is forced to move to Wuthering Heights, she reads not only to avoid interpersonal interaction but also to escape from unpleasant reality. In the third part, I associate the religious tracts that Joseph forces Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff to read with the religious tracts distributed by Brontë's contemporary evangelical missions. Although forgiveness, a key Christian virtue, is a prominent theme in these tracts, they do not always succeed in convincing their readers of the importance of practicing this virtue. Brontë hints at this fact by showing that Heathcliff, a vindictive man who never forgives his trespassers, was a reader of

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religious texts in his childhood. As a didactic tool, religious tracts do not succeed in settling conflicts but create conflicts. Peace is however reestablished when Hareton receives from Catherine Linton her apology and a book whose title and contents are unknown. By the characters' various uses of books, Brontë highlights the close connection between books and interpersonal conflicts.

Keywords: Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, books, book history, conflicts, interpersonal relationship, reading

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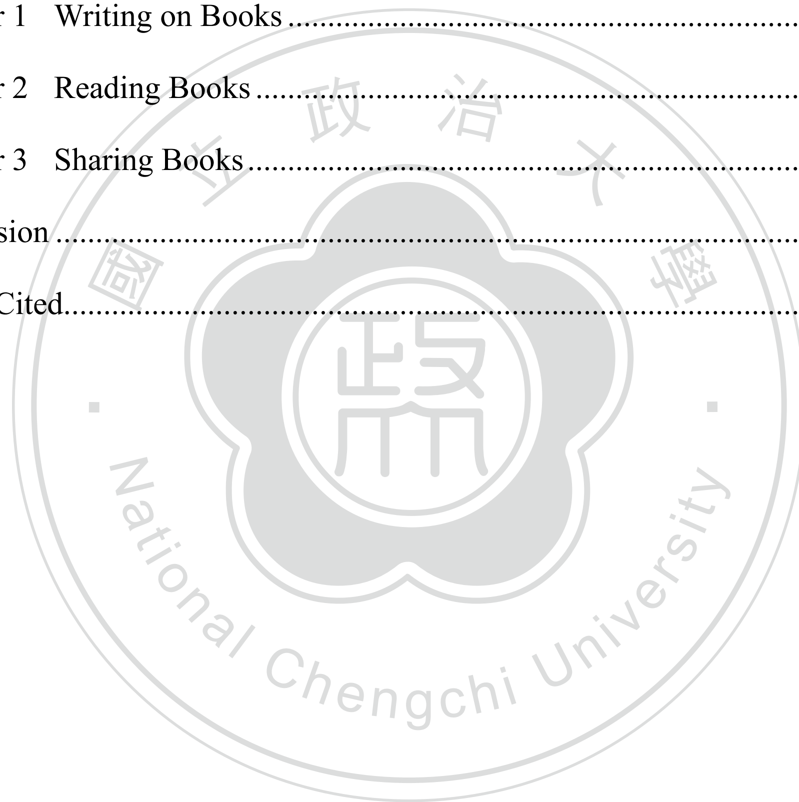

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Introduction

In Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847), books play at best a marginal, at worst a negligible role. There are two episodes in the novel where books stand out to demand attention. In the first, Lockwood, the principal narrator of this novel, finds some books of Catherine Earnshaw and reads it with interest. In the second, Catherine Linton sends Hareton Earnshaw a book as a gift, in order to apologize for her misdemeanor.[1] But apart from these two examples, there are no other memorable scenes where books feature prominently. In addition, with a small number of exceptions, Brontë never cares to show her readers the titles and the contents of books in *Wuthering Heights*. This withholding of information tends to frustrate readers' attempt to understand the significance of books in this novel. After all, one way to unravel this significance is to investigate exactly what books are included in this text and what they are about.

But a few Brontë scholars refuse to be daunted by the interpretive difficulty that Brontë seems to set up for them. They manage to explain why books in *Wuthering Heights* is a topic deserving critical attention. For example, in "The Image of the Book in *Wuthering Heights*" (1960), Robert C. McKibben discusses books in the novel as an image which brings about "the theme of reconciliation" (160). As McKibben points out, in Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff verbally and physically abuses books, and in Thrushcross Grange, Edgar makes books his shelter, thereby using them "to sustain a shallow view of the world" (163). Books are thus "misused" by both camps: in the Heights, misusing books represents "a subordination to [indomitable] will," and in the Grange it represents "a denial of aggressive will" (McKibben 163, 161, 162). Books

[1] There are two Catherines in *Wuthering Heights*. For the sake of clarity, throughout this dissertation, I will use Catherine I to refer to Catherine Earnshaw and Catherine II to refer to Catherine I's daughter, Catherine Linton.

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cannot be well-used until Hareton furiously burns books he stole from Catherine II in the fire. McKibben associates this "conflagration" with the burial fire in Brontë's short essay, "The Butterfly": "both [the creatures of God and their pain] will expire on the funeral pyre of a universal flame, and will leave their former victims to an eternal realm of happiness and glory" (Brontë qtd. in McKibben 167). As the "funeral pyre of a universal flame" leads to hope instead of destruction, this association makes Hareton's conflagration different from previous misuses of books by the residents of Wuthering Heights. McKibben suggests that by the fire, "the book fulfills its proper duty": Heathcliff gives up the revenge, and Catherine II and Hareton reconcile and return the book to "its rightful use" by which "the individual is reconciled to himself and to reality" (168, 169).

McKibben's discussion, however, leaves a lot of room for improvement. First of all, in *Wuthering Heights*, there is no hint that justifies relating the fire with which Hareton burns the books to the funeral fire in Brontë's essay "The Butterfly." As a result, the fire in Brontë's essay apparently has nothing to do with Heathcliff's decision to give up his revenge and with Catherine II and Hareton's reconciliation. In addition, the argument of McKibben focuses on Edgar and Heathcliff as the representatives of the two houses and pays little attention to the other characters' treatment of books. Thirdly, the use of "the image of the book" in McKibben's discussion is confusing and does not seem necessary. "The image of the book" amounts to a figure of speech, one that diminishes the materiality of books. It is a book as a material object, not "the image of the book," that bears Catherine I and Heathcliff's ill-treatment and is burned by Hareton (McKibben 167). In other words, discussing books in *Wuthering Heights* simply as an image tends to neglect the complexity of books as objects subject to frequent use and abuse in this novel. Thinking about books as material objects is important, because, as Leah Price argues in her book *How to Do Things with Books in*

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Victorian Britain (2012), the "book-object" is a "material container" which contains a "textual content" by which a person decides whether s/he will read the book or possess it (4). Besides, if the reader or possessor of a book intends to make another person read it, the response of the other then depends on whether s/he is interested in the text of the book. Because McKibben considers books in *Wuthering Heights* simply as an image, he overlooks the fact that books are fundamentally material objects and hence does not explore the role of books in *Wuthering Heights*.

Compared to McKibben's "The Image of the Book in *Wuthering Heights*," the other critics tend to discuss books in *Wuthering Heights* as a minor topic in their essays. The main subject of J. Hillis Miller in *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers* (1975) is the absence of god. Understandably, he uses only three paragraphs to explicate the importance of books in *Wuthering Heights*. Taking into consideration the scene where Catherine I tears the back of her book and Heathcliff kicks his, Miller suggests that books symbolize "the tyranny of the foster-father" against which Catherine I and Heathcliff try to rebel (179). To Catherine II and Hareton, on the contrary, books are the symbol of "their developing love" and "mediated communion" (Miller 205). These symbols of books are connected with the disappearance of God. Miller claims that what "intervene[s]" is "the love affair of Heathcliff and the first Cathy [i.e. Catherine I]," who, through their death, "[liberate] energies from the region of boundless sympathy into this world," and hence the love of the second generation becomes possible (209). In other words, Heathcliff and Catherine I break into "the region of terror and morality" by their sin and thus are destroyed, but meanwhile they bring the destructive power to the world to destroy the symbol of Edgar's weakness and enclosure, that is, books (Miller 209).

The attention of Catherine J. Golden's study in *Images of the Woman Reader in Victorian British and American Fiction* (2003) focuses on the images of the woman

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readers in *Wuthering Heights* and another three novels.[2] Instead of considering books as images or symbols, Golden examines how woman readers use books and "recognize the potency of a book" (51). Catherine I's diary written in the margins of a book represents an act of self-assertion, and because Golden misinterprets the book in question as the Bible, she argues that Catherine I is "express[ing] her voice in the margins of a book that symbolizes male patriarchal power and stability" (72).[3] Catherine II, on the contrary, is "an avid reader" and through dramatizing her reading, Brontë makes reading "a means [not only] to acquire an education and culture but to empower both Catherine . . . and Hareton" (Golden 75, 77).

These critics do not directly discuss books as material objects. McKibben discusses the image of books. Miller explores the symbolism of books. Golden focuses on woman reader more than on books themselves. These studies nonetheless help me to consider the symbolic meaning of books in *Wuthering Heights* and broaden my understanding of the role books play in this novel.

Some other scholars slightly address the material aspect of books in *Wuthering Heights* while they discuss other issues. In *Emily Brontë and the Religious Imagination* (2015), Simon Marsden investigates the importance of *Seventy Times Seven, and the First of the Seventy First*, one of the few titled books in *Wuthering Heights*, and details of Lockwood's relevant dream. This title alludes to "the parable of the unforgiving servant" in Matthew 18:22 (Marsden 105). The Christian lesson of this parable

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2 The other three novels are Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*, and Louisa M. Alcott's *Little Women*.

3 While Golden assumes that Catherine I writes on a bible (72), in *Wuthering Heights* Emily Brontë does not mention the title of the book which Catherine I writes on. The Bible is what Lockwood carelessly burns: "I . . . spread open the injured tome on my knee. It was a Testament" (Brontë 16). After paying attention to the Bible, Lockwood continues to examine the rest of Catherine I's library, but we know little about the titles of the books he looks at, including the one on which Catherine I writes her diary: "I shut it, and took up another, and another, till I had examined all. . . . scarcely one chapter had escaped a pen and ink commentary—at least, the appearance of one—covering every morsel of blank that the printer had left" (Brontë 16). Lockwood here mentions the book with the diary only as "one," which does not seem to refer to "the Testament" he mentions earlier.

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implores its reader to "identify him or herself with the individual forgiven of an unrepayable debt by God (the servant's master in the parable) and thus to offer the same forgiveness freely to other people" (Marsden 105). Lockwood reads this book title and dreams that he goes to listen to Reverend Jabes Branderham's sermon on this parable. In his dream, nevertheless, he and Branderham accuse and refuse to forgive each other. Marsden thus points out that their unforgiving behavior is a result of "legalistic reading" of the Bible (105). They do not understand the Christian teaching of the parable, and this misunderstanding is closely related to the general refusal to forgive others in *Wuthering Heights*.

That refusal to forgive underpins the revenge story of Heathcliff. One major reason why Heathcliff decides to avenge himself on Hindley is that the latter man refuses to see Heathcliff as his social equal and, after the death of the old Mr. Earnshaw, treats Heathcliff cruelly. Conflicts between different social classes, in other words, are an important part of *Wuthering Heights*. And literary critics studying this aspect of the novel have produced some insightful comments. For example, in *Myths of Power* (2005), Terry Eagleton explores the transformation of Heathcliff's social position. When Heathcliff first comes to Wuthering Heights, he is "proletarian in appearance" (Eagleton 102). But Old Earnshaw loves him more than his own children. This strong preference brings about the resentment of Hindley and the antagonism between him and Heathcliff (Eagleton 102-03). After Hindley gains power, Heathcliff is "culturally deprived" and "reduced to the status of farm-labour" who works merely "as a servant rather than a member of the family" (Eagleton 104, 106). Nonetheless, later in the novel, Heathcliff equips himself with "a certain amount of cultural capital," deprives Hareton of his education, and eventually becomes "a pitiless capitalist landlord" (Eagleton 104). In Eagleton's view, Heathcliff's rise and fall in social status have to do with gaining and losing the "cultural capital," i.e. the access to books and education.

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Patrick Brantlinger investigates the interplay in the industrial novels between culture and the working class in his book *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (1998). In this book, he quickly reviews "the battle of the books" in *Wuthering Heights* (119). Brantlinger's discussion mainly focuses on Catherine I's sniffy dismissal of religious tracts and Hareton's destruction of the books originally possessed by Catherine II. Both scenarios qualify as "rebellion against books" (Brantlinger 119). Brantlinger concludes that Hareton's "pathway to literacy and the 'higher pursuits' of culture is also the pathway to love and reconciliation" (119). This battle against books ends with the instruction scene which will lead Hareton eventually out of the position as a laborer into the gentry class.

In *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (2001), H. J. Jackson argues that "Catherine [Earnshaw]'s marginalia illustrate the value of marginalia as a literary device" (21). Catherine I's statement of her "rebellion" in the book margins "introduce[s] a new voice in a particularly direct and personal way" (Jackson, *Marginalia* 21). Moreover, because she writes in a book, her writing in fact competes with the author of the book for the reader's attention. While Lockwood comments that a book is not commonly used for scribbling, Catherine I's diary "secur[es] [Lockwood's] interest for Catherine" (Jackson, *Marginalia* 21).

Eagleton's and Brantlinger's researches reveal the subtle relationship between books and conflicts in *Wuthering Heights*, and Marsden's and Jackson's observations of books as material objects are helpful for my study. Eagleton confirms books' important role in Heathcliff's revenge. Brantlinger emphasizes the battles between rebellious characters, and Jackson discusses Catherine I's scribbles in book margins as a controversial but remarkable use of a book. Marsden considers the characters' misreading of the Bible and analyzes the influence of this misreading. Building on their insight, my research examines the material and symbolic dimensions of books in

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Wuthering Heights. I would like to explore the ways in which characters in this novel use books to deal with the conflicts they are confronted with.

My first chapter, "Writing in Books," considers the importance of the marginal blanks inside a book. These marginal blanks provide a particular space for Catherine I to write in, yet such writing appears improper to Lockwood (Brontë 16). Her writing is particularly problematic because what she puts down in the book margins is her diary rather than her response to the content of the book. While the marginal space of the book in which Catherine I writes confirms her marginal social position, the content of her diary embodies her rebellious spirit. Lockwood's interest in her diary suggests the lasting power of such rebellious spirit.

In Chapter Two, "Reading Books," I examine how the characters block communication with others by reading. As reading demands a reader's full attention, the gesture of reading can be used as a sign of refusing to talk. Isabella reads after her quarrel with Catherine I. After his violent argument with Catherine I, Edgar almost confines himself in his library, hoping that she would come to seek reconciliation. These two examples prove that reading does not bring about peace in the interpersonal relationships. After Catherine II's forced relocation from Thrushcross Grange to Wuthering Heights, reading is a means to both refuse interaction with other residents and escape from bitter reality. In addition to solitary reading, I also consider the importance of reading together. The books, while remaining material objects, become an effective means through which Hareton can show his friendliness.

In Chapter Three, "Sharing Books," I relate the religious tracts Joseph inflicts upon Catherine I and Heathcliff to the religious tracts distributed by the Victorian evangelical missions. The free tracts were not valued by their recipients in Brontë's time and hence failed to get one of the most important Christian virtues, forgiveness, across to their readers. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine I and Heathcliff do not learn to

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forgive from the religious tracts. Heathcliff's revenge proves the failure of the religious books to convince him of the importance of forgiveness. Nevertheless, peace is established when Catherine II sends Hareton a book whose title we do not know. Hareton forgives Catherine II in this scene. Hareton learns the virtue of forgiveness not by reading a religious book but by interacting with Catherine II. As Catherine II and Hareton finally start to read together, Brontë not only singles out education as the primary function of a book, but also makes it a medium through which people exchange their affections.

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Chapter 1

Writing on Books

What is the correct way of using a book? Should it be used for reading only? Can we write notes on a book? Is it appropriate to throw a book when you feel upset? The answers to these questions may vary from person to person. The first narrator of *Wuthering Heights*, Lockwood, responds to these questions implicitly when he first sees the library of Catherine Earnshaw. According to Lockwood, "Catherine's library was select, and its state of dilapidation proved it to have been well used, though not altogether for a legitimate purpose: scarcely one chapter had escaped a pen-and-ink commentary—at least the appearance of one—covering every morsel of blank that the printer had left" (Brontë 16). The phrase "a legitimate purpose" in this passage indicates that Lockwood believes there is a standardized and widely-accepted way of using books and that any departure from it should be frown upon. When we take into consideration what incites Lockwood's disapproval here, i.e. Catherine Earnshaw's scribble, we can see that, for Lockwood, a book is used for reading only, not for scribbling.

Lockwood's comment suggests that he belongs to one particular type of readers in H. J. Jackson's book *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*. According to Jackson, there are two categories of book users: "Annotators" and "Bibliophiles" (Jackson, *Marginalia* 237). They have opposing views about how to use a book properly. Drawing on Fadiman's idea of "'courtly' lovers," Jackson explains that Bibliophiles have "Platonic adoration" of books and that, with this adoration, they want to "conserve forever the state of perfect chastity in which [the book] had left the bookseller" (*Marginalia* 237). Annotators, on the other hand, are those readers who write something on the books in their hands. They do not see the need to keep their books

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spotless. While Annotators want to make use of the blanks in books, Bibliophiles consider their use as "abuse" (Jackson, *Marginalia* 234). Lockwood is certainly a "Bibliophile."

Jackson's "Bibliophiles" refuse to write anything on books because they believe the content of a book is of paramount importance. According to this logic, blank spaces at the margins of a book, where readers are free to write down their thoughts, are negligible. There should be no writing on the book margins when the author of the book speaks in the center of the pages. While bibliophiles revere the author of a book and give him/her an aura of sanctity, "Annotators" believe that readers have a right to respond to the book author and that it is natural for a reader to take notes, put down his/her questions or express his/her (dis)agreement as he/she reads on. In other words, "Annotators" adopt an iconoclastic approach when they take up a book, in the sense that they refuse to sanctify a book author but choose to enter into a critical dialogue with an invisible writer whose words and ideas they are reading. Writing on books, therefore, is not simply an uncontroversial daily activity. Instead, it can imply a rebellious spirit refusing to bow down to well-established authorities. In this chapter I examine how Catherine Earnshaw's scribbles on books embody such spirit and how they affected their unintended reader—Lockwood.

To begin with, I examine where Catherine I chooses to leave her scribbles. Catherine I signs her name on a fly-leaf of the Testament and draws a picture of Joseph on "an extra page" (Brontë 16). Besides, her scrawls "[cover] every morsel of blank that the printer had left"; these scrawls are some "detached sentences" and "a regular diary" (Brontë 16). Jackson has pointed out that there are some spaces in a book that are left intentionally for readers' uses such as "covers, half-titles and title pages, front and back endpapers, and chapter divisions that leave convenient blanks at the bottoms and tops of certain pages" (*Marginalia* 18). These blanks are physically marginal to the

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main text of a book which is laid out in the center. The content of a book, in other words, is literally a central part of a book. Significantly, Catherine I does not scribble over the central text of her books. She only writes or draws on the blank spaces "that the printer had left" (Brontë 16). Those spaces are both literally and metaphorically marginal. Surrounding and framing the central texts these blanks exist in the periphery. And indeed few people ever buy a book simply because of those blank spaces. By writing on those marginal spaces, Catherine Earnshaw apparently registers her powerlessness. We do not know exactly when Catherine Earnshaw starts writing on those blank spaces. But her account, written on book margins, of how Hindley and Joseph mistreat her and Heathcliff suggests that many of her marginalia are written after her father dies and she becomes a victim of her brother's oppression. The book margins where her writings appear parallel to her marginal status in her own family. Just as the central texts of a book supposedly should outweigh its peripheral blanks, the master of Wuthering Heights dominates over the life of his sister.

However, Catherine I's writings on the book margins cannot be reduced to signs of powerlessness alone. The key to discover alternative interpretations lies in what exactly she writes. We see an inscription "Catherine Earnshaw, her book" on the fly-leaf of the Testament (Brontë 16; Jackson, *Marginalia* 19).[1] As "the minimum of annotation," the signature suggests that Catherine I actively declares her possession of her book.[2] According to Jackson, who writes on the book margins is also an important issue when discussing the importance of marginalia. Jackson argues that if the owner of a book writes on the book margins, those writings should be understood as a matter of "property rights and proprietariness" (*Marginalia* 234, 235). In this respect, Catherine I is not a weak woman entirely vulnerable to patriarchal tyranny. By insisting on her right

[1] Catherine I should be the person who declares her possession of the book as its possessor.
[2] Jackson defines "[a]n owner's initials" as "the minimum of annotation" (*Marginalia* 19).

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to own a book, her signature suggests her self-assertion, no matter how unimpressive that may be in the face of her oppressive brother.

While Catherine I's signature is one of the most common kinds of marginalia, the other of Catherine I's writings on books appears entirely out of place (Jackson, *Marginalia* 19). Lockwood finds "[a]t the top of an extra page . . . an excellent caricature of . . . Joseph" and in the book margins some "detached sentences" and her diary account of her rebellion against Joseph's religious doctrines (Brontë 16). Neither the caricature nor the diary account is directly relevant to the book in which they appear. Jackson argues that, because Catherine I's scribbles do not directly respond to the text of the book, they suggest that Catherine I uses her book as "scrap paper" (*Marginalia* 21).[3] Jackson also argues that only "readers with little experience of books" would see book margins as scrap paper (*Marginalia* 21). I would like to point out that Catherine I's disrespectful attitude toward books is intentional. According to A. Stuart Daley's "A Chronology of *Wuthering Heights*" (2013), Catherine I is then twelve years old and has learned with the curate (358; Brontë 36; Golden 72). As she has been educated, she should know she is not using book margins in a conventional way. Her age and education suggest that she deliberately refuses to abide by a traditional way of using books. Catherine I turns a blind eye to the content of a book, as if printed words therein are far less significant than her own writing. By such use of her book, Catherine I shows little respect to her book and its author. Her use of the blanks in the books as scrap paper illustrates her rebellious nature. She chooses not to be submissive in the face of

[3] Before making this argument, Jackson mentions two examples of similarly dismissive attitude towards book. Both occurred in the late eighteenth century. At that time, books could be used to write "a list of prices of household goods" (*Marginalia* 20). A sermon collection could be used to write "a list of names" of the owner's family (*Marginalia* 20). Colclough and Vincent also report similar use of the book that in the early nineteenth century, "more than three-quarters of homes . . . had a book in the house, most frequently a Bible or prayer book" which "was more often owned than used . . . for maintaining a private record of births and deaths" (298). Using the blanks in books as scrap papers, hence, appeared usual in the time of Brontë.

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authority.[4]

Catherine I's rebellious nature assumes a more glaring form in the diary she keeps in the book margins. The time of the diary is "an awful Sunday," when Hindley disciplines Catherine I and Heathcliff by religious practice (Brontë 16). According to Catherine I's own account, Hindley makes them listen to Joseph's sermon in the cold garret while he "bask[s] downstairs before a comfortable fire—doing anything but reading . . . bibles" (Brontë 16).When Catherine I and Heathcliff refuse to comply with this religious discipline, they are scolded and treated with violence: Frances pulls Heathcliff's hair because he makes noises with his fingers, and Joseph slaps Catherine I (Brontë 17). When Joseph insists on imposing religious tracts on them, they both damage the books put in their hands. Catherine I writes in her diary: "I could not bear this employment. I took my dingy volume by the scroop, and hurled it into the dog-kennel, vowing I hated a good book. / Heathcliff kicked his to the same place" (Brontë 17). Stevie Davies notices that Brontë chooses the word choice "hurled" rather than "thrown" (103). While both "hurl" and "throw" imply an object that is driven by a force to move in a space, "hurl," compared to "throw," "implies a powerful and forceful driving as in throwing a massive weight" ("Hurl" 410). The book's weight and its movement from Catherine I's hand to the dog kennel suggest she gets rid of Joseph's influence both physically and symbolically. On that occasion she further declares her hatred for "a good book" (Brontë 17). Significantly, this real-life scenario was written down in the margins of "a series of religious texts," further ensuring that Catherine I's rebellion against patriarchal and religious authority is not transient. (Marsden 79).[5] Becoming a record, it can last for a long time.

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[4] Catherine I's daughter, Catherine Linton, shows a similar disrespect of books and their authority. Like her mother, she treats books as if they were scrap papers. She says to Lockwood, who asks her to reply Nelly's letter: "I have no materials for writing, not even a book from which I might tear a leaf" (Brontë 229).

[5] Joseph's obsession with theology and his influence over Old Earnshaw as well as Hindley imply he may have persuaded them to purchase religious books for Catherine I.

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A number of scholars have pointed out the assertive power of Catherine I's writing. Patrick Brantlinger considers Catherine I's diary written in the book margins as "turn[ing] reading and writing into acts of self-assertion" (118). Golden further investigates the connection between the scribbles and the book. The religious books are the device with which Hindley aims to control her and Heathcliff. Hence, they symbolize the "patriarchal power" of him as a foster-father, and Catherine I's writing about her rebellion "expresses her voice" against such power and the stability it wants to maintain (Golden 72). Treating books disrespectfully, Catherine I firmly rejects the book and the authority that it stands for.

I wish to point out that the timing of Catherine I's writing is also important. When she later is kept in the back-kitchen as a punishment for her disobedience, she refuses to merely stay there. While Heathcliff is still impatient with the confinement and urges Catherine I to leave with him, she flees to the book margins where she can write anything at will. Catherine I finds the book that Lockwood will read many years later and, instead of reading it, writes down her resistance to her brother's unkind treatment. The act of writing suggests that as she can master the blanks in the book, she is capable of resisting and defying Hindley and becoming the master of her life.

Catherine Golden has pointed out the connection between Catherine I's diary written on the book margins and the various names written on the window ledge in her childhood bedroom (Brontë 15-16).[6] She suggests that both reflect Catherine I's "marginal position" (73). The window ledge facing the outside of the house is on the margin of the bedroom which, thanks to an "odd notion" of Heathcliff, is marginalized to its residents as it becomes a forbidden, unknown, and almost deserted place (Brontë 15). Likewise, no one, not even Heathcliff, seems to have noticed and cared about

[6] These names include her maiden name "Catherine Earnshaw," the married name "Catherine Linton," and "Catherine Heathcliff," which she wants to but never becomes (Brontë 15-16).

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Catherine I's marginalia, until they are discovered by Lockwood. While this comparison is accurate, I wish to point out that Catherine I's marginalia differ from the names she wrote on the window ledge in one significant respect. The latter exist in a verbal vacuum. No other words compete with them for attention. By contrast, the former jostle with the central text of books for attention.

Writings in book margins, including "hostile or discordant printed glosses" supplementing the main text in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, are in "battle" with the main text "for authority" (Evelyn E. Tribble qtd. in Jackson, *Marginalia* 52). This "battle for authority" grants the marginal words, hand-written or printed, a position which is at once related to but independent of the text. In *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (2005), Jackson comments that even readers who annotate the text in book margins "may easily come to conceive of themselves as equal or superior to the author" rather than merely "contributors or editors" (302). While Jackson usefully underlines the competition between the author and the annotator of a book, Emily Brontë further dramatizes this competition, not least by introducing a third party—the reader who can choose to pay attention to either the author or the annotator of a book.

Remarkably, when Lockwood opens Catherine I's books, he only notices Catherine I's scrawls on them. The scribbles attract Lockwood much more than the main text of a book. This is an extraordinary phenomenon, if we consider that, as I mention earlier in this chapter, Lockwood is a traditional book lover who disapproves of writing on the book margins. Lockwood's neglect of the main text of a book and his interest in Catherine I's scribbles in the book margins suggest that Catherine I has successfully undermined the authority of the text of a book.

The power of Catherine I's marginalia carries social implications. Jackson points out that this remarkable attention of Lockwood to Catherine I's writings

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"indicat[es] the distance between them" (*Marginalia* 21). By "distance," Jackson means the gap separating the socially respectable Lockwood and the recalcitrant Catherine I refusing to obey social expectations (Jackson, *Marginalia* 21). Jackson's view suggests that Lockwood's dismissal of Catherine I's scribble as an "illegitimate" use of books can be read in terms of the tension between different social classes (Brontë 16). In *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain*, Leah Price discusses the tension between social classes brought about by book margins. In the Victorian era, servants had "'no business to open' books" (Price 193). As a privilege of the middle class, reading books is not permitted for servants, possibly because servants' working hands may dirty their masters' books (Price, ch. 6 *passim*). Since fouling books is associated with disrespect to masters (Price 186-88), stained blanks in books, thus, "[become] staging grounds for the tension" between upper and lower classes (Price 175). Price's argument suggests that unwanted marks in a book can reveal power struggle in the Victorian era. Catherine I's marginalia certainly represent such undesirable marks in a book, as Lockwood's disapproval makes clear. But Brontë does not stop short at registering the power struggle between the genteel book lover and the disrespectful girl. By dramatizing how the former's attention is gripped by the latter's scribble, so much so that he almost turns a blind eye to the main text of a book, Brontë demonstrates the triumph of Catherine I's rebellion. The disobedient Catherine Earnshaw has already passed away when Lockwood takes up her book. However, due to her marginalia, her story and feisty spirit survive the trial of time, affecting a visitor to Wuthering Heights significantly. As Simon Marsden has rightly maintained, while the ghost-Catherine has been "[m]arginalized by death and time, excluded from participation in the present," she "exists at the margins of Wuthering Heights, intruding into presence and into the present by an act of *textual* incursion" (Marsden 54; my emphasis).

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Catherine I's scribbles on book margins not only parallel her peripheral status in the house of Wuthering Heights after her father passes away but also register her successful attempt to resist and rebel against patriarchal oppression. If Catherine I's marginalia and its power suggest that reading a book for the knowledge contained in its main text is not a major reason why books are present in *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë further strengthens this argument by showing that, even when characters in this novel take up a book without being distracted by marginalia, the purpose of perusing the main text is still far away from their minds. I will discuss this phenomenon in the next chapter.

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Chapter 2

Reading Books

Reading books can be a solitary experience. Usually requiring a quiet space in which the reader can concentrate on the book in his/her hand, the experience of reading tends to evoke a peaceful atmosphere that is very different from the noise and heated passion that interpersonal conflicts often produce. In other words, reading a book and engaging in interpersonal conflicts seem two opposite experiences. Lockwood's reading of Catherine I's diary provides a case in point. It is important to notice that Lockwood takes up Catherine I's book after his host Heathcliff treats him unkindly. Heathcliff shows little sympathy when he sees that his dogs attack Lockwood. And Heathcliff appears unconcerned when Lockwood worries that he may not be able to find his way back to Thrushcross Grange due to bad weather. By placing Lockwood's reading experience after his clashes with his host, Brontë apparently wishes to draw a line between these two different experiences. Indeed, while Lockwood's confrontation with Heathcliff is brutal, his reading restores his peace of mind, albeit temporarily. Is reading books an effective way to solve the problem of interpersonal conflicts or to alleviate its negative impact in *Wuthering Heights*? I would argue that the answer is no. Reading books does not help to resolve conflicts in *Wuthering Heights*, because characters in this novel use reading as a way to block interpersonal communication.

For example, Isabella Linton reads to avoid conversing with Catherine I and Nelly, who stay with her in the same room after a dispute. On the previous day, Isabella could no longer conceal her feelings for Heathcliff. Catherine I and Nelly had difficulty in convincing Isabella that Heathcliff will marry her for depriving her of her fortune and making her suffer (Brontë 81). But Isabella insists that she "[will] not listen to [their] slanders" (Brontë 82). The bad feeling produced by this bickering did not

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disappear quickly. The unspoken enmity remained until the next day when Isabella, Catherine I, and Nelly are in the library of Thrushcross Grange:

> Catherine and Isabella were sitting in the library, on hostile terms, but silent. The latter, alarmed at her recent indiscretion, and the disclosure she had made of her secret feelings in a transient fit of passion; the former, on mature consideration, really offended with her companion; and, if she laughed again at her pertness, inclined to make it no laughing matter to *her*.
>
> She did laugh as she saw Heathcliff pass the window. I was sweeping the hearth, and I noticed a mischievous smile on her lips. Isabella, absorbed in her meditations, or a book, remained till the door opened, and it was too late to attempt an escape, which she would gladly have done had it been practicable. (Brontë 82)

Isabella appears to be reading on this occasion. There is a book in her hand. The fact that Nelly feels unsure whether Isabelle is reading a book or simply meditating is suggestive. It suggests that the posture of reading a book is very similar to the posture of meditation. Both involve deep attention to a particular subject. By channeling our attention to the interchangeability of reading and meditating, and by not specifying what exactly Isabella is reading/thinking about, Nelly's account suggests that Isabella holds a book in her hand emphatically not for the sake of gaining knowledge from the content of this book.

So why does Isabella choose to take up a book without the intention of perusing its content? I would argue that reading, or the appearance of reading, provides Isabella with an excuse for not talking to her sister-in-law, Catherine I. With this book, she does not only refuse communication, generally understood as an effective way of resolving conflicts, but also ignores what happens in her surroundings. Isabella apparently devotes her attention fully to the book, not noticing that Nelly observes her and that

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Catherine I plans to embarrass her when Heathcliff calls. Reading a book may temporarily shield Isabella from interpersonal conflicts, as it allows her to avoid talking to the woman whom she sees as her rival. But it contributes little to eliminating the hostility between Isabella and Catherine I. As the plot unfolds, we see that Catherine I humiliates Isabella in front of Heathcliff, thereby further exacerbating the bad feeling between her and Isabella.

Edgar Linton is another character in *Wuthering Heights* who uses books to avoid interpersonal communication. Edgar learns from Nelly that Heathcliff, his arch enemy, courts his sister Isabella, and this information aggravates the antagonism between him and Heathcliff. To prevent Heathcliff from visiting Thrushcross Grange, Edgar asks Catherine I to make an absolute choice between him and Heathcliff. Catherine I has been upset greatly by Heathcliff, who would not leave her "secure and tranquil," so she refuses to make a choice as Edgar demands (Brontë 89). Under this circumstance, both Edgar and Catherine I are extremely angry and would not be reconciled with each other. When Catherine I rushes into her private room, Edgar "spen[ds] his time in the library" in the three days that follow (Brontë 93).

Nelly tells us that:

> [Edgar] shut himself up among books that he never opened—wearying, I guessed, with a continual vague expectation that Catherine, repenting her conduct, would come of her own accord to ask pardon, and seek a reconciliation—and while she fasted pertinaciously, under the idea, probably, that at every meal, Edgar was ready to choke for her absence, and pride alone held him from running to cast himself at her feet. (Brontë 94)

In this passage, Brontë shows us the paradoxical powers of books both to create a tranquil environment and to undermine this tranquility. By retreating to his library, Edgar manages to avoid more confrontations with his wife. As silent companions,

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Edgar's books represent a sharp contrast to his life-long partner who refuses to be quietly submissive. If Edgar's decision to hide himself in his library after a fierce quarrel with his wife suggests that he prefers a quiet partner to a clamorous one, very curiously, he does not open any book in his library, let alone read it. Books in his library certainly satisfy his yearning for peace after a domestic hurricane, but they cannot satisfy a deeper yearning for reconciliation with his wife. That is why, even though Edgar stays in a quiet room, his mind is far from peaceful. He is "ready to choke for [Catherine I's] absence." Such a reconciliation requires sympathetic conversations between husband and wife. But books alone are incapable of effecting such communication. Instead, their quietness only makes the lack of dialogue more conspicuous, so much so that Edgar can only imagines that such a dialogue takes place: "Catherine, repenting her conduct, would come of her own accord to ask pardon, and seek a reconciliation." In this respect, the presence of books defeats Edgar's original intention to seek comfort in the peaceful environment of his library.

Precisely because Edgar's mental struggle in his library is not perceived by Catherine I, his decision to retreat to his library after angrily arguing with her appears cold-hearted and cruel to her. When Edgar stays with his piles of books, Catherine I passes her time miserably and suffers from hallucination. She does not eat anything and cannot close her eyes, thinking she had been "tormented" and "haunted" at nights (Brontë 95). After suffering like this for three days, the information that Edgar is "continually among his books" is unbearable for Catherine I (Brontë 94). She assumes that, when she passes the "awful" time, he is "tolerably well" and unconcerned with her (Brontë 95, 94). Deeply offended and hurt, Catherine I allows her imagination to go in this way:

> Edgar standing solemnly by to see [my life] over; then offering prayers of thanks to God for restoring peace to his house, and going back to his *books*!

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What, in the name of all that feels, has he to do with *books*, when I am dying? (Brontë 95)

This picture of Edgar as an unfeeling husband congratulating himself on the death of his wife is unjust, especially when we consider how shocked Edgar is when he sees Catherine I's ill looks, how carefully he nurses his sick wife and how devastated he is after Catherine I dies. Books play a significant role in engineering this unjust representation of Edgar. It is because Edgar appears engrossed by his books when Catherine I is seriously ill that she believes that Edgar is indifferent to her suffering. She wrongly believes that books are capable of comforting Edgar. She betrays such an erroneous assumption when she says: "I don't want you, Edgar. I'm past wanting you. Return to your books. I'm glad you possess a consolation, for all you had in me is gone" (Brontë 100). But Brontë takes care to stress that Edgar is *not* interested in books when Catherine I shuts herself up in a room. We are told that "[Edgar] shut himself up among books that he never opened" (Brontë 94). Books, therefore, are the source of a major misunderstanding in *Wuthering Heights*. Standing between Edgar and Catherine I, they prevent both from seeking a dialogue with each other.

The examples of Isabella, Edgar and Catherine I demonstrate that reading books and the appearance of it are quite powerless in resolving interpersonal conflicts in *Wuthering Heights*. Instead, they serve as a huge block in interpersonal communications. This fact becomes ever more obvious in Brontë's description of Catherine Linton Heathcliff. When Brontë first introduces this character to readers of *Wuthering Heights*, she emphasizes that Catherine Linton Heathcliff likes to read books. For example, When Lockwood asks her for instructions on how to return to Thrushcross Grange, Catherine II is "ensconcing herself in a chair, with a candle, and the long book open before her" (Brontë 13). Indeed, she apparently has spent too much time on a book, so much so that her father-in-law, Heathcliff, finds it necessary to stop

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her. Complaining about Catherine II's idleness, Heathcliff reprimands her in this way: "The rest of them [Hareton, Joseph, and Zillah] do earn their bread—you live on my charity! Put your trash [i.e. book] away, and find something to do" (Brontë 25). Why is Catherine II so fond of reading?

The answer to this question, I argue, can be inferred from one passage in the novel, in which Catherine II concentrates on reading a book:

> Mrs. Heathcliff, kneeling on the hearth, read[] a book by the aid of the blaze.
>
> She held her hand interposed between the furnace-heat and her eyes, and seemed absorbed in her occupation; desisting from it only to chide the servant for covering her with sparks, or to push away a dog, now and then, that snoozled its nose over-forwardly into her face. I was surprised to see Heathcliff there also. He stood by the fire, his back towards me, just finishing a stormy scene with poor Zillah; who ever and anon interrupted her labour to pluck up the corner of her apron, and heave an indignant groan. (Brontë 24)

This passage demonstrates vividly how preoccupied with her book Catherine II is. When reading, she immerses herself in the world of a book and cares nothing about what happen around her. She shows little interest in the other people in the same room. Heathcliff has just angrily chided his servant Zillah. And Zillah, feeling that she is unjustly treated, expresses her unhappiness with "an indignant groan." But Heathcliff's anger and Zillah's displeasure are all lost to Catherine II, who only pays attention to the book in her hand. Catherine II stops reading only when something, such as "sparks" or a dog's "nose," threatens to stand in the way between her eyes and her book. For Catherine II, reading a book seems an effective way of forgetting unpleasant things around her. After being transported from her beloved Thrushcross Grange to Wuthering Heights, Catherine II experiences a lot of unhappiness. No one helps her to nurse her dying husband Linton Heathcliff. From her point of view, every resident in Wuthering

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Heights is her enemy. It is natural and understandable that she would like to escape or to forget this universal unkindness, no matter how temporarily. Reading a book becomes a convenient method to achieve that aim. Once again, books do not seem to be very helpful for resolving interpersonal conflicts that have hurt so many characters in this novel. And once again, the reason why books fail to produce social harmony is that, as quiet material objects, they cannot themselves facilitate sympathetic communications necessary for resolving disputes and dissipating hostility.

By the end of *Wuthering Heights*, things start to change for the better. Solitary reading still does not help to resolve interpersonal conflicts, but it paves the way for social regeneration. One passage, in which Brontë describes the interaction between Catherine II and Hareton Earnshaw, is a case in point.

> "Having sat till she was warm, [Catherine II] began to look round, and discovered a number of books in the dresser; she was instantly upon her feet again, stretching to reach them, but they were too high up.
>
> "Her cousin, after watching her endeavours a while, at last summoned courage to help her; she held her frock, and he filled it with the first that came to hand.
>
> "She didn't thank him; still, he felt gratified that she had accepted his assistance, and ventured to stand behind as she examined [the books], and even to stoop and point out what struck his fancy in certain old pictures which they contained; nor was he daunted by the saucy style in which she jerked the page from his finger; he contented himself with going a bit farther back, and looking at her instead of the book . . . . (Brontë 226)

In this passage, books are still associated with anti-social behavior. Caring only about reading a book, Catherine II "didn't thank" Hareton for helping her to get the book in the first place. Wishing to concentrate on her book undisturbed, she rudely repulses

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Hareton's friendly gestures and turns a blind eye to his apparent intention to join her reading. However, alongside such anti-social behavior there lies some positive signs. For instance, on this occasion, Hareton remains undaunted even though Catherine II does not reciprocate his friendliness. Although Catherine II appears ungrateful, he is satisfied by the fact that "she had accepted his assistance." Although Catherine II forcibly removes "the page from his finger," he finds happiness in "going a bit farther back, and looking at her." Later, Hareton even expresses his wish to hear Catherine II reading a book aloud because, he says: "I'm stalled of doing naught; and I do like—I could like to hear her!" (Brontë 226). The book in the hands of Catherine II remains a quiet material object. But it gives Hareton a rare chance to express his affection for Catherine II and to dissolve the enmity between her and everyone in Wuthering Heights.

As the novel draws to its satisfactory ending, in which all misery and resentment disappear in the face of the happy friendship of Hareton and Catherine II, even such an inanimate object as a book starts to participate in this textual drive toward peaceful reconciliation. Hareton's attempt to share a book here foreshadows the change in the meaning of reading books: his friendly gesture turns a book from a device for blocking communication to a means of facilitating communication. In the next chapter, I will discuss the specific ways in which books help to bring about the famously happy ending of this otherwise bleak novel.

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Chapter 3

Sharing Books

While most of the book titles are not given in *Wuthering Heights*, all the titled books are religious. These titled books include: the Bible/Testament, Prayer-books, "The Helmet of Salvation," "Broad Way to Destruction," and *A Pious Discourse delivered by the Reverend Jabes Branderham*. Through a few more details, Brontë deliberately suggests that books in Wuthering Heights are largely religious in nature. For example, the long-serving servant of Wuthering Heights, Joseph, has a "store of theology" (Brontë 229). In addition, when Catherine I and Heathcliff were children, they appeared to read nothing except for the religious books imposed on them by Joseph and Hindley. Why is it that so many religious books congregate in Wuthering Heights? To answer this question properly we need to examine the history of religion-related publications first.

Since the early eighteenth century, British evangelical organizations had been distributing religious books. They did so because they wished to acquaint British people with the words and messages of God. Understandably, the Bible was the book most frequently distributed. But because the laboring class was the major target of these religious missions and because and the language of the Bible might be too difficult for them, religious tracts were thence produced instead of the Bible itself (Fyfe 27). The religious tracts were made as "short pamphlets" of no more than sixteen pages carrying "a clear religious message" (Price 150; Fyfe 27, 32-33). Their format "aped" chapbooks, which were a kind of frequently seen publication in the homes of the laboring class (Price 150).[1] The mechanization of book production[2] and the exemption

[1] Chapbooks were small-sized pamphlets "measuring three and a half by six inches" and had been "the primary reading matter . . . for the poorer classes" since the mid-seventeenth century (Lam). Religious tracts imitated chapbooks' style and the "simple bold-faced texts and woodcut illustrations" since such

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from taxes on knowledge[3] made the cost of publishing these religious books low enough for the evangelical organizations to afford (Price 38; Fyfe 45). If measured by their claimed issues, Price suggests, the Victorian era was an age of tracts (150).[4]

A large number of religious materials, however, does not necessarily guarantee that the messages contained therein successfully reach the mind of their intended audience. Although more than half of the homes in Britain owned a religious book during 1830-48, it "was more often owned than used" (Colclough and Vincent 298). Some people used the Bible mainly for "maintaining a private record of births and deaths," and others used or sold it as if they were scrap papers (Colclough and Vincent 298; Price 158; Jackson 20). Such "inappropriate" uses of the Bible suggest that, although the evangelical organizations succeeded in distributing religious books widely, whether or not these books were read is another matter. Price points out: "Distributors of tracts and bibles faced a double bind, as worried that recipients would value the book for the wrong reasons as that they would refuse to value it at all" (156).

There are a large number of religious books in the house of Wuthering Heights, possibly because, for Emily Brontë, a Victorian writer, a religious book is a familiar object in her daily life. Religious books in Wuthering Heights do not only reflect their

imitation was agreeable to their readers (Lam; Price 150).

[2] The manufacture of paper and books were mechanized respectively by the Fourdrinier brothers' paper-making machine in 1807 (Fyfe 56) and the steam-driven high-speed printing press of Koenig and Bauer in 1812 (Landow; "Printing Yesterday and Today"). The advance in these technologies and the mechanization of book-binding since 1827 enabled the mass production of books (Raven 147).

[3] The "taxes on knowledge" were an extension of the stamp duty imposed on all paper for publication by the 1712 Stamp Act, which demanded that the politics-related printed matters "had to be printed on stamped paper to demonstrate that [the publishers] had to pay the tax" (Fyfe 45; Price 141, 225; Unwin et al.). This act levied the stamp tax on all publications though its aim was "to make newspapers sufficiently expensive to restrict their circulation to only the well off and avoid the perils of mass circulation" ("Key Moments"; "A Brief Timeline"). Concerned with the influence of the French Revolution on the British laboring-class, the Parliament increased the stamp tax in 1797 to prevent the radicals from spreading politically-dangerous messages such as blasphemy and sedition (Fyfe 45; "A Brief Timeline"). The government began to reduce these taxes in 1836 and ultimately abolished it in 1861 (Price 141, 220; Fyfe 53).

[4] For instance, the largest evangelical publisher by 1850 was the Religious Tract Society (1799) (Fyfe 32). The Religious Tract Society claimed that "[b]y the mid-1820s, [it] had already issued no fewer than 44.5 million copies of 280 different tracts. By 1850, it had issued over 450 million copies of 5,300 different publications. Over 19 million of those issues, and almost 200 of the new publications, had been in the previous year alone" (Fyfe 35).

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growing numbers in Victorian Britain. Through the drama surrounding religious books in her novel, Brontë skillfully demonstrates her worry that few people really practice what those books intend to teach their audience. If, as Price points out, "[d]istributors of tracts and bibles . . . worried that recipients would . . . refuse to value [those tracts and bibles] at all," so does Brontë. This worry can be inferred from the extent to which characters in *Wuthering Heights* turn a blind eye to one central Christian message: forgiveness.

Forgiveness, an important Christian virtue, is very likely to be a familiar presence in the religious tracts moving around Victorian Britain. As Richard Hughes Gibson has pointed out in his book, *Forgiveness in Victorian Literature* (2015), forgiveness is a topic that permeates nearly-all genres of Victorian literature (1). Since forgiveness is an "inescapably religious issue for Victorian writers" (Gibson 4), we can safely assume that it is one of the most common messages present in religious books and tracts in Victorian Britain. One detail of *Wuthering Heights* supports this assumption. One of the religious books that attracts Lockwood's attention is titled "Seventy Times Seven, and the First of the Seventy First. A pious Discourse delivered by the Reverend Jabes Branderham" (Brontë 18). The title of this book alludes to "the parable of the unmerciful servant" in the Bible ("Matthew 18:21-35").[5] In this parable, Jesus tells Peter that he should forgive his brother until "seventy times seven" and acknowledges forgiveness as a requirement for going to heaven. The lesson of this parable is that "God will forgive us our sins if we forgive out neighbors' sins, but that he will punish us according to our deserts if we act without pity towards our neighbors" (Miller 188). One sign that Brontë is playing with this Christian lesson of forgiveness is that she does not only use "Seventy Times Seven" as the title of a religious book in

[5] "The parable of the unmerciful servant" is the title given to Matthew 18:21-35 in the New International Version of the Bible. The King James Version I use here does not have a title, so I use the one of NIV to indicate the passage to which "Seventy Times Seven" alludes.

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Wuthering Heights. By adding “the First of the Seventy First” to “Seventy Times Seven,” Brontë deliberately undermines the Christian virtue of forgiveness. While Jesus teaches his disciples always to forgive their enemies, the numbers in his words serving only to emphasize a Christian’s unlimited capacity for forgiveness, Brontë insists on taking the numbers literally, suggesting that we can forgive our enemies only for a limited number of times (“Seventy Times Seven”) and that, once that quota are used up (“the First of the Seventy First”), we can retaliate as we please.

Indeed, Lockwood’s first dream bears this point out. In this dream, Lockwood and Joseph go to a chapel to listen to “the famous Jabes Branderham preaches from the text—‘Seventy Times Seven’” (Brontë 18). While the sermon seems to revolve around the Christian virtue of forgiveness, the congregation ironically chooses not to forgive. After Lockwood stands up to accuse the preacher of delivering a tediously long speech, he finds himself attacked by his fellow audience who have very recently been taught the importance of forgiveness. Their unwillingness to bear with other people’s weakness demonstrates “legalistic, literalist readings of the Bible have reverted to a distorting insistence upon vengeance under the guise of Christian forgiveness” (Marsden 81). Their readiness to attack their enemy is the polar opposite of the “perpetual and unconditional forgiveness” which the Bible wishes us to practice (81). The failure of this religious congregation to practice the virtue of forgiveness reveals Brontë’s awareness that even though the Christian message of forgiveness is present in a lot of books and tracts in Victorian Britain, not everyone is willing or able to live up to this ideal. The fact that Joseph, arguably the most religious man in *Wuthering Heights*, is unkind to disobedient children and always “fling[s] the curses on his neighbours,” further exposes the gap between the multitude of religious books about forgiveness and the multitude of forgiving individuals (Brontë 33).

The religious books in *Wuthering Heights* themselves do not bring peace, even

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though forgiveness may well be a dominant message in them. In fact, considering that much of this novel revolves around hatred and revenge in the face of injustice, characters in this novel tend to "recognize that a God conceived in the image of human judgment can offer little hope of redemption or transformation of the human predicament" (Marsden 110-11). Heathcliff is a case in point. After his benefactor, the Old Earnshaw, passes away, Hindley bullies Heathcliff and insists on treating him like a servant. Unable to fight back, Heathcliff feels resentment against Hindley and plans to revenge. He tells Nelly about this plan: "'I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!'" (Brontë 48). Upon hearing this, Nelly tries to change his mind by invoking the Christian message of forgiveness, one that Heathcliff supposedly knows very well from (his reluctant) reading with Joseph: "'It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive'" (Brontë 48). But Nelly fails spectacularly. Heathcliff declares that he has no intention to practice this Christian virtue: "'No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall'" (Brontë 48). In addition, he carries out his vengeful plan ruthlessly. He never forgives Hindley throughout his life. Heathcliff's lasting hatred once again testifies to how ineffective religious books can be in instilling the Christian message of forgiveness into the mind of their readers. If that is the case, does Brontë wish to show that books are irrelevant to the happy ending of *Wuthering Heights*, in which forgiveness and reconciliation play a central part?

I would argue that the answer is no and that when a book ceases to be only an object of religious didacticism, its power of bridging the cultural gap between two individuals is unleashed. When *Wuthering Heights* draws to an end, Brontë engineers a complex scene of forgiveness and reconciliation. The two major players in this scene are Catherine II and Hareton Earnshaw. Earlier in the novel, Catherine II shows little sympathy and respect for Hareton's attempt to learn to read. In a fit of anger, Hareton

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slaps Catherine II's face. This incident apparently creates bad feelings in their hearts toward each other. But Catherine II, probably guilty of her unkind behavior, decides to make amends. Significantly, she decides to give a book to Hareton as a gift. What follows is a meaningful passage that I believe is worth being quoted in its entirety.

> Catherine employed herself in wrapping a handsome book neatly in white paper; and having tied it with a bit of riband, and addressed it to "Mr. Hareton Earnshaw," she desired me to be her ambassadress, and convey the present to its destined recipient.
>
> "And tell him, if he'll take it, I'll come and teach him to read it right," she said, "and, if he refuse [sic] it, I'll go upstairs, and never tease him again."
>
> I carried it, and repeated the message, anxiously watched by my employer. Hareton would not open his fingers, so I laid it on his knee. He did not strike it off either. I returned to my work. Catherine leaned her head and arms on the table, till she heard the slight rustle of the covering being removed; then she stole away, and quietly seated herself beside her cousin. He trembled, and his face glowed. All his rudeness and all his surly harshness had deserted him—he could not summon courage, at first, to utter a syllable, in reply to her questioning look, and her murmured petition.
>
> "Say you forgive me, Hareton, do. You can make me so happy by speaking that little word."
>
> He muttered something inaudible.
>
> "And you'll be my friend?" added Catherine, interrogatively.
>
> "Nay, you'll be ashamed of me every day of your life," he answered; "and the more ashamed, the more you know me; and I cannot bide it."
>
> "So you won't be my friend?" she said, smiling as sweet as honey, and creeping close up.

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> I overheard no further distinguishable talk, but, on looking round again, I perceived two such radiant countenances bent over the page of the accepted book, that I did not doubt the treaty had been ratified on both sides; and the enemies were, thenceforth, sworn allies. (Brontë 240)

The book in this passage ceases to be a material object containing the Christian message of forgiveness. It is a useful medium through which such a message can get across. Hareton does not explicitly says that he forgives Catherine II. He only "mutter[s] something inaudible." However, the fact that he accepts the gift from Catherine II suggests that he is ready to bury the hatchet and befriend his enemy. The fact that he is willing to read a book with Catherine II further confirms that they have left their mutual hostility behind. As Nelly tells us: "the treaty had been ratified on both sides; and the enemies were, thenceforth, sworn allies." A book used to be the source of Hareton's humiliation. His inability fluently to pronounce the sentences in a book not only reminds him of his ignorance but also invites the mockery of Catherine II. But in this passage, a book has become the source of Hareton's intense happiness. It reminds him that he is no longer alone in his pursuit for knowledge and that he need not feel ashamed of his cultural inferiority any more.

It is important to notice that Brontë does not tell readers about the title and the content of this gift book. We only know that a book has the power to bring about a happy reconciliation between Hareton and Catherine II. But we never know what exactly this book is about. This vagueness about books at the end of *Wutheirng Heights* is remarkable, because it contrasts sharply with Brontë's decision, early in this novel, to underline the religious nature of books in Wuthering Heights. When those religious books and their specific titles appear in the novel, they are associated with interpersonal conflicts. Lockwood's first dream best exemplifies this point. Interestingly, when books in *Wuthering Heights* shed their explicitly religious

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qualities, they are capable of eliminating interpersonal conflicts that have damaged so many relationships in this novel. I contend that this conspicuous contrast reveals Emily Brontë's attitude toward those books about forgiveness in Victorian Britain. She believes that those books, though kindly-meant, risk confining the Christian virtue to a strict doctrine and limiting the function of books to gaining a lesson. She envisions a happier scenario in which a book is not used only for learning a lesson and in which forgiveness is not only a matter of religious doctrine.

This vision manifests itself in a scene where Catherine II teaches Hareton how to pronounce a word correctly through a book.

Cathy and Hareton's reading together depicts the intimacy growing between them after the reconciliation. Lockwood passes by them and happens to witness their close interaction when they read together.

> "Con-trary!" said a voice [of Catherine II], as sweet as a silver bell—"That for the third time, you dunce! I'm not going to tell you, again—Recollect, or I pull your hair!"
>
> "Contrary, then," answered another [voice of Hareton], in deep, but softened tones. "And now, kiss me, for minding so well."
>
> "No, read it over first correctly, without a single mistake." (Brontë 234)

This passage once again demonstrates that Hareton has already forgiven Catherine II for her cruel insult. But there is no sign suggesting that Hareton does so by remembering any of the religious books or tracts about forgiveness. Gibson has rightly pointed out that forgiveness is not only a matter of words but also a matter of action. To forgive is to "embrace" the other party, either the offender or offended, creating a sympathetic bond between people and "the possibility of an enlarged community" (Volf qtd. in Gibson 31). While Hareton was raised in Wuthering Heights, which represents nature, Catherine II grew up in Thrushcross Grange, which stands for culture. When

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they first met, the illiterate Hareton contrasts sharply with the well-learned Catherine II. But when Hareton repeats the word "contrary" after Catherine II, they are no longer enemies. Hareton practices the Christian virtue of forgiveness without tying himself up to a religious book. In so doing, he releases this virtue from the confines of religious books and suggests that it is more important to live up to this ideal with actions than to talk about it.

In addition, in the passage above, freeing the Christian message of forgiveness from religious texts parallels broadening the functions of a book. Gaining knowledge is one of the most important reasons why people take up a book. And indeed Hareton here is learning how to read the word "contrary." But the book in front of Hareton and Catherine II is more than an educational tool benefiting one individual. Helping to bring Hareton and Catherine II closer both physically and emotionally, the book is a social tool, one that has the power to bring about interpersonal harmony.

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Conclusion

Books have traditionally been understood as a material object whose primary purpose is to enlighten their readers. Because people open a book usually for the sake of gaining knowledge and broadening his/her horizons, few people would deny that books stand for intellectual and cultural authority. This dissertation has argued that Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* throws these conventional assumptions into disarray. In this novel, characters use books for a variety of purposes other than improving their existing knowledge. Catherine I scribbles on her book. Lockwood focuses more on the scribbles on the book margins than on the content of a book. Isabella and Edgar go to a book in order to shun interpersonal communications. Catherine II uses a book as a gift, before reading it with Hareton.

By disassociating the presence of a book from the purpose of gaining knowledge, Emily Brontë shows that, in her fictional world, books play a significant role in dealing with interpersonal conflicts. Emily Brontë's novel moves from dramatizing intense interpersonal conflicts to defusing them. Books participate in both stages. At the beginning of the novel, we see that the marginal spaces inside a book provide Catherine I with a chance to rebel against the patriarchs of her family. As the plot develops, we see Isabella's and Edgar's books provide them with a temporary shelter from unpleasant incidents in their life. At the center of the novel's famous scene of reconciliation sits another book. Catherine II relies on a book to befriend Hareton. Even though Brontë declines to let readers know the title and content of most of the books in *Wuthering Heights*, this does not mean that books are unimportant in this novel. Brontë reveals the importance of those books, not least by showing how deeply embedded they are in the novel's prevailing drama of interpersonal conflicts.

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