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THE GONDAL POEMS OF EMILY BRONTË

AS A FANTASY STRUCTURE

BY

JENNIFER A. DAY B.A.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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material. A rebellion breaks out at the school and the pupils, armed with two cannons and under the leadership of Johnny Lockhart and Princess Victoria, take to the hills.²² The rebellion is brought to a quick end when the four children appear in the guise of *dei ex machinae* to restore order and to bring the dead back to life.²³ This event brings the story of "The Islanders" to a close. Charlotte writes as follows "for a short time thereafter the school prospered as before but we, becoming tired of it sent the children to their own homes and now only fairies dwell in the Island of a dream"²⁴

It is an open question as to how much of the Islander material was Charlotte's, and how much Emily's. It is a stated fact that Charlotte and Emily were collaborating in narratives composed after they had been sent to bed. "Emily's and my bed plays were established December 1, 1827; the others March 1828. Bed plays mean secret plays; they are very nice ones."²⁵

Several nascent Gondalian elements are evident in the play of "The Islanders." Of the two ring leaders in the pupil's rebellion, Johnny Lockhart has already figured in Emily's list of favourites. Princess Victoria had not yet been mentioned in the prose notes, but judging from the autocratic women who were to appear in Emily's later writing it is very probable that this character too was drawn from Emily's list. Judging from the epilogue, it seems that Charlotte had lost interest in the play. Could this have been caused by the fact that the greater majority of the material was Emily's and

²² Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in EB, Gérin, p. 21

²³ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in Ratchford, p. 9

²⁴ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in EB, Gérin, p. 25

²⁵ Charlotte Brontë, "History of the Year," ed. Wise and Symington, V.1, p. 1.

Abstract

In this thesis Emily Brontë's Gondal poems are approached from a new angle. Although these poems contain many fantasy elements, they have never before been studied as a work of fantasy literature.

Chapter One stresses the importance of fantasy to Brontë. It follows the evolution of the final Gondal world out of the four childrens' communal games of the imagination. In Chapter Two the previous critical work on Gondal is summarized. It is concluded that it is time for a new critical approach. Chapter Three deals with fantasy theory. The most salient features of the critics' commentaries on fantasy literature are assembled so as to provide a yardstick against which Brontë's poems can be measured. In Chapter Four the Gondal poems are examined in the light of those points of critical emphasis. It is demonstrated that even though Brontë's Gondal world was intended to be a private work, it contains enough universal elements to support its placement within the context of genuine literary fantasy. Chapter Five is an evaluation of the poems within this context.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to my thesis adviser Professor Tom Henighan for his helpful advice and insightful comments, and most of all for his inspired suggestion of approaching the Gondal poems through the medium of fantasy theory. Many grateful thanks must also be given to my typist Pierrette Meilleur for the many hours of work she put in to ensure that the thesis appeared in its best possible form. I would also like to thank my parents for their unfailing support during the completion of this thesis. I was continually motivated by their confidence in my abilities as a writer and researcher. Finally, a vote of gratitude must be given to my very tolerant friends who encouraged me to talk about Gondal even when they were all thoroughly sick of the subject. Thank you one and all.

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THE EVOLUTION OF GONDAL

The mystique of the Brontë legend has sprung from many sources. Certainly the tragedy of the four Brontës' untimely deaths is a contributing factor, as is the brooding moorland setting of their home. Striking as early deaths and poetic settings may be they are in no way limited to the Brontë family alone. The element that remains virtually unique to the Brontës is their isolated childhood and the intricate games of the imagination which absorbed their thoughts.

Visitors to the Brontë Parsonage in Haworth are particularly moved by the nursery. The other rooms of the house have an antiseptic, museum atmosphere to them, but in the nursery one has the feeling of being touched by a dream. A discerning eye can still trace the dim pencil outlines of a series of fancy portrait heads on the white plaster of the walls. The profiles and full-face studies are all obviously intended to be elegant portrayals of the heroes from the sagas of the children's fantasy kingdoms. In the tiny nursery four young imaginations were given unbounded creative power. One would imagine that in the Brontës' time the actual dimensions of the room would have belied the horizons opening up within it. In the true fairy-tale manner, it would have been a room far larger on the inside than on the outside.

The atmosphere of imaginative vision does not pervade the Brontës' lives in retrospect alone. Even in their own lifetimes the world of fantasy was a fact of their existence. However, since they were four individuals their responses to fantasy tended to vary.

Of the four it was Anne who passed most completely beyond the grasp of her fantasy kingdom. Although she continued to participate in the chronicling of Gondal with Emily, her birthday notes of 1841 and 1845 show a marked decline in enthusiasm for the pursuit. It should be noted as well that when Anne came to write her novels she used autobiographical experiences as a basis.

Although Charlotte seemed to be following the same lines as Anne, when she wrote her farewell to Angria, she did not achieve the severance from her world that her youngest sister did. It is apparent that Charlotte continued to rework the characters and situations of the Angrian drama, and used many of these as material for her later novels.

Branwell and Emily remained the most absorbed in their respective fantasy worlds, but in Branwell's case the principles of fantasy became sadly corrupted. The fact that Branwell continued to refer to himself in the name and title of his Angrian alter ego, even when his addiction to opium and alcohol had ruined his health, his prospects, and his self-esteem, aptly illustrates the morbid side of fantasy. The game was still being played, but it had become the means to a goal of self-annihilation for the player.

Emily alone cultivated fantasy for its own sake. She seems to have been the only one of the Brontës for whom fantasy was a positive creative experience. For her there were no strings of futility, or guilt, or morbidity attached to the ability to fantasize. Quite simply, she was supremely happy in an activity which absorbed very nearly all her life.

Her own Gondal world had been established by November 1834 and remained in play until May 1848, the month in which the last Gondal poem was written. This one saga accounts for fourteen years out of a thirty year life span. Previous to this Emily was a participant in the children's early communal fantasies which began around 1826 and ran up to the point when Emily and Anne established Gondal. In order to better understand the culminating Gondalian fantasy it is necessary to study the sagas that came before it. After all, these were the all-absorbing interest of Emily's impressionable childhood years and it is very likely that these first fantasy games formed the seeds for what was later to grow into a mature plant.

The first important event in the establishment of the early fantasies occurred on the fifth of June, 1826 when Mr. Brontë arrived home from Leeds bearing gifts for his children. Among these gifts was a set of toy soldiers which was intended as a replacement for earlier sets which were either "maimed, lost, burnt, or destroyed by various casualties."¹ A particularly striking characteristic of this new set of toys was the fact that the facial features varied with each soldier. As a result each of the twelve men was discernable as a distinct individual. All of the children were charmed by

¹ Branwell Brontë, "Introduction to the History of the Young Men," in Miscellaneous and Unpublished Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë, ed. T.J. Wise and J.A. Symington (Oxford, 1934), V.1, p. 63.

the gift and immediately chose a particular favourite from among the twelve.

Charlotte gives a spirited account of the scene in "The History of the Year".

Papa bought Branwell some wooden soldiers at Leeds, when Papa came home it was night, and we were in bed, so next morning Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed, and I snatched up one and exclaimed, "This is the Duke of Wellington! This shall be the Duke!" When I had said this Emily likewise took up one and said it should be hers; when Anne came down she said one should be hers. Mine was the prettiest of the whole, and the tallest, and the most perfect in every part. Emily's was a grave-looking fellow, and we called him "Gravey." Anne's was a queer-little thing, much like herself, and we called him "Waiting-boy." Branwell chose his and called him "Buonaparte."²

This event launched the children into the first of their "three great plays."

All that this account tells us about Emily is that she had a predilection for seriousness and gravity. This is certainly in keeping with the tone of her Gondal fantasy, and of her novel Wuthering Heights.

Branwell's "History of the Young Men" which was composed approximately a year and a half after Charlotte's "History" does help to expand upon the character of Emily's protégé. It should be noted that over the period of a year and a half, three of the four soldiers had undergone a process of metamorphosis. Buonaparte had become Sneaky and Waiting-boy had become Ross. Gravey still existed by that name, but it seems that Emily's interest[†] had been transferred

² Charlotte Brontë, "History of the Year," ed. Wise and Symington, V.1, p. 2.

to the soldier named Parry. "They each took up a soldier, gave them names, which I consented to, and I gave Charlotte, Twemy (i.e. Wellington) to Emily, Pare (Parry) to Anne, Trott (Ross) to take care of them..."³

Winnifred Gérin hypothesizes that Emily's interest in the Arctic explorer Captain Edward Parry stemmed from her fascination with the northern landscapes described in Bewick's British Birds.⁴ Charlotte was so fascinated by Bewick's book that she paid tribute to it in the opening chapter of Jane Eyre.

Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with 'the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space, that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surrounded the pole and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold.'⁵

This frozen world often appears in Romantic Literature as for example, in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Although there is no evidence to prove that Emily was familiar with Mary Shelley's use of the arctic landscape in her novel Frankenstein, she would certainly have read Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner.' The love of desolate scenery is another element that passes into her mature work. Even though images of the far north do not appear in the Gondal poems, it is likely that the bitter climate of the snow-capped Angoran mountains is a hold-over from Emily's childhood fascination with the arctic.

³ Branwell Brontë, "History of the Young Men," ed. Wise and Symington, V.1, p. 76.

⁴ Winnifred Gérin, Emily Brontë a biography (Oxford, 1971), pp. 12-13

⁵ Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (New York, 1946), p. 2

Branwell's thumbnail descriptions of the most important young men lend some clarity to the character of Emily's favourite. "W. E. Parry's character was that of a brave sailor like young man, differing from mariners in general in one respect only, that of being a little too fond of subterfuge, but alas! how are the mighty fallen!"⁶ Although this particular character trait does not come to the front in the subsequent tales of the young men, Branwell's mention of it does prove its existence and it is worth noting if only for the fact that it reoccurs in the character of Julius Brenzaida, Emperor of Gondal.

One particular interesting aspect of the young Brontës' games was their distinct political flavour. Most young children would be content with simply labelling the two sides "good guys" and "bad guys", but the Brontës were far too politically precocious to be so simplistic. Their heroes were the English, their villains the French and the Dutch, and the children possessed sufficient knowledge to toss about the names of these three nations' leaders. The children were fascinated by martial history. The names of the world's great generals were playthings to them from an early age.

When mere children, as soon as they could read and write, Charlotte and her brother and sisters used to invent and act little plays of their own, in which the Duke of Wellington, my daughter Charlotte's hero was sure to come off conqueror; when a dispute would not infrequently arise amongst them regarding the comparative merits of him, Buonaparte, Hannibal, and Caesar, when the argument got warm...I had sometimes

⁶ Branwell Brontë, "History of the Young Men," ed. Wise and Symington, V.1, p. 66

to come in as arbitrator and settle the dispute
according to the best of my judgement⁷

It is not surprising that the children in a household which subscribed to two newspapers and which had borrowing rights to a third as well to Blackwood's Magazine should be well up on current events. What is surprising is the interest that the children took in political questions. Most children cannot be bothered with parliamentary proceedings, but for the young Brontës a new policy was a treat

...O those three months from the time of the King's speech to the end! nobody could think, speak, or write of anything but the Catholic question and the Duke of Wellington or Mr. Peel. I remember the Sunday when the Intelligence extraordinary came with Mr. Peel's speech in it containing the terms on which the catholics were to be let in and with what eagerness papa tore off the cover and how we all gathered round him and with what breathless anxiety we listened as one by one they were disclosed, explained and argued upon...⁸

Although domestic politics obviously interested the children it seems to have been French history that inspired them. The french element was strong enough to warrant the creation of Frenchland, an island just off the coast of Glasstown. Many of the early stories contain french characters or allusions to France. There are for instance "The Frenchman's Journal", "The Enfant", and "The Adventures of M. Edouard de Crack."

The two events most interesting to the Brontës were the French

⁷ Rev. Patrick Brontë, "Letter to Mrs. Gaskell," in Unquiet Soul. A Biography of Charlotte Brontë, Margot Peters (New York, 1976), p.8

⁸ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in Charlotte Brontë: The Evolution of Genius, Winnifred Gérin (Oxford, 1967), p. 23

Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The children were quite familiar with the concept of rebellion. Their father had been an eye witness to Luddite uprisings and his story about the workers' attempt to storm the mill was a favourite with them.⁹ Branwell's "Letters of an Englishman" tells of the brief period of dictatorship in Glasstown. It is very much a retelling of the days of terror in Paris. Hundreds of people are thrown in prison, many are brought before the tribunal and are condemned to public execution in the town square.¹⁰

The source of the children's interest in Napoleon is not hard to find. Mr. Brontë owned a copy of Scott's Life of Napoleon Buonaparte. A two volume set of books detailing Napoleon's expedition to Russia could be obtained from the Keighley Mechanic's Library.¹¹ In 1825 Blackwood's Magazine ran a serial story entitled "The Subaltern - a Journal of the Peninsular War." They had material within easy reach.

The prevailing interests of her elders were not lost on Emily. It comes as no surprise to find that one third of her Gondal drama follows the exploits of a man who attempts to conquer the Gondalian Empire and that another third is taken up with the grim annals of the people's Revolution.

In 1826 the children created the first of their epic plays. The "Young Men's Play"¹² is the story of a glorious expedition to claim

⁹ Peters, p. 248

¹⁰ Branwell Brontë, "Letters of an Englishman," in Branwell Brontë Winnifred Gérin (London, 1961), pp. 48-49.

¹¹ Clifford Whone, "Where the Brontës Borrowed Books," in The Brontë Society Transactions, Vol. II, No. 5 (1950), p. 349

¹² In interests of clarity the names of the children's games will be put in quotation marks although they are not literary efforts in the strict sense of the word.

territories in Africa. It is a narrative filled with heroic enterprise and some particularly gruesome battles. The children themselves figured strongly in the stories. They assumed the roles of all-powerful genii, who took the part of guardian angels toward their own special charges. At an early age Emily assumed the role of a fate. Certainly in her early years the concept was a cosy one. Her potency was spent in interceding on behalf of her protégé to insure his well-being, or in using her magic powers to make the fallen heroes come alive again. This childish vision eventually gave way to the concept of fatality that haunts her Gondal world. There is in that work a sense that the world is a gigantic chess board and that an unseen hand is hovering overhead waiting to make the next move. It is no longer a question of patronage intervening in the spirit of solicitude, but of chance making a move at random.

The second of the three plays had a duration of six months, running from July 1827 to December of the same year. What little information there is in existence concerning "Our Fellows" is to be found in "The History of the Year"

The origin of the O'Deays was as follows. We pretended we had each a large island inhabited by people six miles high the people we took out of Esop's fable. Hayman was my Chief Man, Boaster Branwell's, Hunter Anne's and Clown Emily's. Our Chief Men were ten miles high except Emily's who was only four... ¹³

This play bears certain similarities to "The Young Men's Play". Both contain elements of magic, in one case genii in the other giants, and both deal with the ideas of territories and leaders. However the absence of

¹³ Charlotte Brontë, "History of the Year," in CB, Gérin, p. 25

information concerning this second play suggests that it never caught fire as the first one did. By the end of six months the young Brontës were ready for a new play.

The Play of the Islanders was formed in December 1827 in the following manner. One night about the time when the cold sleet and dreary fogs of November are succeeded by the snow storms, and high piercing winds of confirmed winter, we were all sitting round the warm blazing kitchen fire having just concluded a quarrel with Tabby concerning the propriety of lighting a candle, from which she came off victorious; no candle having been produced, a long pause succeeded, which was at last broken by Bany, saying in a lazy manner I don't know what to do. This was re-echoed by Emily and Anne.

- T. Wha ya may go t'bed
- B. I'd rather do anything than that
- C. Why are you so glum to-night? Suppose we had each an island.
- B. If we had I would choose the Island of Man
- C. And I would choose the Isle of Wight
- E. The Isle of Aran for me
- A. And mine should be Guernsey

We then chose who should be chief men in our islands; Branwell chose John Bull, Astley Cooper and Leigh Hunt; Emily, Walter Scott, Mr. Lockhart, Johnny Lockhart, Anne Michael Sadler, Lord Bentinck, Sir Henry Halford. I chose the Duke of Wellington and sons, Christopher North and Co. Mr. Abernethy. Here our conversation was interrupted by the, to us, dismal sound of the clock striking seven, and we were summoned off to bed...¹⁴

¹⁴ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in CB, Gêrin, pp. 30-31

It should be noted that the connecting link between the second and third plays is the use of the island motif. Later days were spent in compiling lists of the inhabitants of each island. These soon grew to include most of the great names in the British Empire.

Charlotte's re-creation of the scene adds another element to the list of Emily's priorities. Her choice of an island off the coast of Scotland and her decision to have such staunch Scotsmen as Sir Walter Scott, his son-in-law, and grandson as leading citizens are evidence of a growing passion for all things Scottish. As it happened the works of Scott were within easy reach of the Brontë children. In January 1828 their Aunt Branwell presented them with Scott's Tales of a Grandfather as a New Year's gift.¹⁵ Other of Scott's novels could be obtained at the Keighley Mechanics' Institute Library.¹⁶ It is likely that Scott was a general favourite with the family. By 1834 Charlotte could comment knowledgeably on his works in her letters to her friend Ellen Nussey.¹⁷ It would hardly be surprising if the enthusiasm passed from sister to sister. In fact Winnifred Gérin cites Scott as one of the prime influences on Emily's Gondal world.

The 'idea' once implanted in the Brontë imagination was never eradicated; with Emily in particular it took root. The Scottish landscape, which she never saw, supplied those distinctive features of Gondal's lakes, inland creeks, and bays, that are not a part of the topography of Haworth...The names of her Gondal heroes also--Douglas, Rodric, Lesley, Gleneden, Alexander, Flora--were predominantly Scots¹⁸

15 Gérin, EB, p. 21

16 Whone, p. 358

17 Charlotte Brontë, "Letter to Ellen Nussey," in EB, Gérin, p. 27

18 Gérin, EB, p.21

The idea of famous personages founding civilizations on Britain's coastal islands, held sway until approximately June 1828. At this point the desire for magic returned and the impetus of the play was transferred away from real islands onto a fictitious island of dreams. The island itself was fifty miles in circumference and housed at its centre a huge building built of pure white marble which was large enough to hold one thousand children, all of them the offspring of the highest nobles of the land.¹⁹

However, everything was not sweetness and light on this marvelous island. A hidden doorway in the Hall of the Fountain gave access to dark, fearsome, dungeons which lay deep below the palace. The dungeon is described as

a wide vault dimly lighted by a lamp which cast a death-like, melancholy luster over a part of the dungeon, leaving the vault in the gloomy darkness of night. In the middle was a slab of black marble supported by four pillars. At the end stood a throne of iron. In several parts of the vault were instruments of torture.²⁰

The dungeon and the rows of locked cells that open onto it existed for the punishment of the school's unruly pupils.

Even though Charlotte was responsible for writing down the description of the palace it is obvious that Emily was partially responsible for the conception of this particular play. Charlotte admits as much when she gives her sister equal rank with herself as jailer. Although Charlotte may have had the key to the dungeon, Emily held the key to the cells.²¹

¹⁹ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in The Brontës' Web of Childhood, Fannie E. Ratchford (New York, 1941), p. 8

²⁰ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in Ratchford, pp. 8-9.

²¹ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in EB, Gérin, p. 19

It is fairly obvious that one of the main roots of the Gondal world grew from this second phase of "The Islanders." With time the island lost its magic aura and became the heathy world of Gondal. Likewise the white marble turrets of the School for Royalty faded to the grey stone walls of the Palace of Instruction. Although the exterior changed, the interior remained the same. Prisons and imprisonment are important elements in the Gondal saga. Very few of the major Gondalian characters go through life without spending some time in the prison cells beneath the two colleges. As in the original, the elders of this institution are not above jailing their students in order to drive home certain ethics.

Although it has been suggested that it was Aunt Branwell's practice of shutting the girls up in their rooms as a punishment for misbehaviour that led to Emily's preoccupation with imprisonment, it is far more likely that she was inspired by Romantic Poetry. Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon" is the most obvious influence, but Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" cannot be discounted. These works exemplify both the apathetic acceptance and the proud defiance of an incarcerated spirit. One romantic concern is man's response to constraint. This may partially explain the interest generated by Silvio Pellico's diary of his ten year term of imprisonment. My Prisons describes Pellico's emotional responses to imprisonment. These range from fortitude to periods of despair and madness. Emily's prison poems also explore a variety of human reactions to confinement.

The second instalment of the "Tales of the Islanders," which was written in October 1829 bears a striking resemblance to later Gondal plot

material. A rebellion breaks out at the school and the pupils, armed with two cannons and under the leadership of Johnny Lockhart and Princess Victoria, take to the hills.²² The rebellion is brought to a quick end when the four children appear in the guise of *dei ex machinae* to restore order and to bring the dead back to life.²³ This event brings the story of "The Islanders" to a close. Charlotte writes as follows "for a short time thereafter the school prospered as before but we, becoming tired of it sent the children to their own homes and now only fairies dwell in the Island of a dream"²⁴

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²² Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in EB, Gérin, p. 21

²³ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in Ratchford, p. 9

²⁴ Charlotte Brontë, "Tales of the Islanders," in EB, Gérin, p. 25

²⁵ Charlotte Brontë, "History of the Year," ed. Wise and Symington, V.1, p. 1.

not her own? Finally there is the character of Emily herself to consider. Knowing her reputation as a staunch independent, it is not very likely that she would slavishly borrow so many elements from another's work. It is much more likely that the second phase of "The Islanders" play is an early version of the Gondal drama. The eleven year old Emily was simply holding a crude first rehearsal of a play that was yet to take the stage.

Whether Emily, like Mary, kept all these things and pondered them in her heart is another matter. However, when the two older children urged a return to the adventures of the young men in Africa, she did agree to play along with the others for the moment.

The period from October 1829 to the end of the following year was a time of great literary activity on the part of the young Brontës. Once they had settled their heroes in the newly conquered African lands, they proceeded to portion out the provinces and islands making certain that each of their four favourites received a goodly province for his own. Then they went on to erect Glasstown, the capital of this new British colony, and to ornament it with all the splendors that a thorough reading of the Arabian Nights could give rise to. Once the business of building an empire, dividing its lands, and assigning the duties of rulership to its inhabitants had been taken care of, the children embarked upon the publication of The Young Men's Magazine; a periodical which chronicled the political and social fluctuations of the Glasstown society through the medium of poetry, prose and epistles.

Owing perhaps to their superior co-ordination in writing on the miniature scale that was necessary to the magazine, Charlotte and Branwell

again took the lead in this enterprise. Nothing is to be found in Emily's hand from this date, but she is not entirely left out of the activities. In the second series of The Young Men's Magazine the first item for the month of October is an account of Lord Charles Wellesley's visit to Sir Edward Parry.

I was immediately struck with the changed aspect of things, all the houses were ranged in formal rows they contained four rooms each with a little garden in front. No proud castle or splendid palace towers...over the cottages around. No high-born noble claimed allegiance of his vassals, every inch of ground was inclosed with stone walls...Here and there were some poplar trees, but no heavy woods or nodding groves--rivers rushed out with foam and thunder through meads and mountains. Nasty factories with their tall black chimneys breathing thick columns of almost tangible smoke discoloured not that sky of dull hazy hue. Every woman wore a brown stuff gown with white cap and handkerchief. Glossy satin rich velvet and costly silk or soft muslin broke not on the fair uniformity... Parry's Palace was a square building surmounted by blue slates and some round stone pumpkins, the garden around it was of moderate dimensions laid out in round and oval flower beds, rows of peas, gooseberry bush and black and white currant trees. Some few common flowering shrubs and a grass plat to dry clothes on. All the convenient offices such as wash-house, back-kitchen, stable and coal house were built in a line and backed by a row of trees. In a paddock behind the house were feeding one cow to give milk for the family and butter for the dairy and cheese for the table; one horse to draw the gig, carry their majesties and bring home provisions from market, together with a calf and a foal as companions for both... 26

26 Charlotte Brontë, "A Day at Parry's Palace," in EB, Gérin, pp. 13-14

The description of this barren scene, so very reminiscent of the Haworth moors, implies that Emily was holding out against the marvelous gold and marble luxuries of the polite society at Glasstown and continuing to go her own way.

The game continued to go on until the beginning of the year 1831. At this point Charlotte was sent to Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head, where she remained until May 1832. There is no record of the children's activities at the parsonage during her absence. It is evident that Emily and Anne were slowly but surely drifting off on a new course. Certainly Charlotte's departure contributed to the dissolution of the group. Beyond this it is entirely possible that the Glasstown stories did not hold much interest for Emily and Anne. Judging from the relatively few appearances of Parry and Ross in The Young Men's Magazine it seems that Charlotte had enough to do in writing down the adventures of her own heroes without chronicling the exploits of her sisters' men as well. Playing at being sponsors to a couple of background figures is hardly exciting work at the best of times. Then too, there is the idea that the elegant society of Glasstown was not to Emily's taste. Certainly the marked contrast that exists between the landscape of Parrysland and that of the other Glasstown provinces leads one to believe that there are two entirely different world concepts at work. Branwell's enormous project of factualizing the entire history of the young men likely proved the final straw to the two girls. The thought of labouring through

piles of details concerning a country in which they had no particular interest could very well have caused them to turn their own resources to the creation of a new storyline.

The whole process took some time to evolve. The first obvious sign of any break-up among the children is found in Branwell's mock newspaper The Monthly Intelligencer. Under the title "A Few Words to the Chief Genii" comes the admonition,

When a parent leaves his children, young and inexperienced, and without a cause absconds never more troubling himself about them, those children, according to received notions among men if they by good fortune should happen to survive this neglect and become of repute in society, are by no means bound to believe that he has done his duty to them as a parent merely because they have risen, nor are they indeed required to own him or treat him as a parent. This is all very plain and we believe that four of our readers will understand our aim in thus speaking ²⁷

The short paragraph strongly suggests that Emily and Anne have fled the country, leaving their cast off playthings behind them. There is no further information detailing their activities until the twenty-fourth of November 1834 when Emily speaks in her own voice.

The first mention of Gondal is made in Emily and Anne's diary-paper of November 24, 1834. In the midst of a varied medley of items, including Tabby's admonitions to the two girls, the dinner menu for the day, and the sayings, doings, and whereabouts of all the other members of the Brontë family comes the following sentence. "The Gondals are discovering the interior of

²⁷ Branwell Brontë, "A Few Words to the Chief Genii," ed. Wise and Symington, V.1 p. 183

Gaaldine." ²⁸ It seems that the game is as yet in an early stage. Landmarks are only now being established.

In reference to geographical landmarks, Anne's list of Gondal and Gaaldine place-names transcribed onto the back page of Goldsmith's Grammar of General Geography is useful for an understanding of the country's structure. According to Anne's list, Gondal is a large island situated in the North Pacific. It is divided into two kingdoms: Angora and Exina, each ruled by a particular royal family. The island's capital is the city of Regina. Gaaldine is a large island newly discovered in the South Pacific. It is divided into the six provinces of Alexandria, Almedore, Elseraden, Ula, Zalona, and Zedora, each of which is governed by a statesman allied to one of the royal families of Gondal.²⁹

The second of the diary papers bears the date June 26, 1837. From this it is obvious that the Gondal story is now in full flow.

Anne and I writing in the drawing-room -- Anne a poem beginning "Fair was the evening and brightly the sun" -- I Augusta Ameda's life 1st v 1-4th page from the last...The Emperors and Empresses of Gondal and Gaaldine preparing to depart from Gaaldine to Gondal to prepare for the coronation, which will be on the 12th July ³⁰

The year 1837 may very well mark a change in the focus of the Gondal drama. At this point the story of the first major figure, Julius Brenzaida, has almost reached its culmination. The ceremony referred to in the paper is

²⁸ Emily Brontë, "Diary paper 1834," in EB, Gérin, p. 39

²⁹ Anne Brontë, "Geography of Gondal and Gaaldine," in Anne Brontë, Winnifred Gérin (London, 1959), p. 64

³⁰ Emily Brontë, "Diary Paper 1837," in EB, Gérin, p. 65

likely the coronation of Julius and his kinsman, Gerald Exina, as joint monarchs of Gondal. This event marks the climax of Julius' puissance. His downfall at the hands of assassins is soon to follow. However it should be noted that matters have been arranged so that Gondal will not be without an ascendant figure for long. A new star, this time a heroine, is already rising on the horizon. Emily states that she is working on the early life of Augusta Geraldine Almeda. Here we have the introduction of the key Gondal figure whose turbulent life provided the subject matter for at least half of the Gondal poems.

A four year gap in communications is broken by a birthday note written on the thirteenth of July 1841. Emily and Anne had agreed to write a synopsis of the events and hopes of that particular year and then to open these papers four years later in order to see how accurate their predictions had proved. The pertinent passage in Emily's note reads

The Gondalians are at present in a threatening state, but there is no open rupture as yet. All the princes and the princesses of the Royalty are at the Palace of Instruction. I have a good many books on hand, but I am sorry to say that as usual I make small progress with any.³¹

Anne's reference to the Gondals is shorter and less to the point than Emily's. She writes, "I wonder whether the Gondalians will still be flourishing and what will be their condition. I am now engaged in writing the fourth volume of Solala Vernon's Life."³²

Neither passage is particularly helpful in charting the development of the fantasy. The wording of both notes suggests that events are rushing

³¹ Emily Brontë, "Birthday Note 1841," in Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, ed. C. W. Hatfield (New York, 1941), p. 167

³² Anne Brontë, "Birthday Note 1841," ed. C. W. Hatfield, p. 168

towards some crisis, but the exact nature of that crisis is difficult, if not impossible to ascertain. Emily's talk of expected rupture in Gondal leads one to believe that the Gondalian civil war is looming on the horizon, but this is only guesswork.

It can be taken as a certain fact that by July 1845 the Gondal world was plunged deep into the chaos of civil war. Emily's birthday note of that year, describes the situation in Gondal, although the bright, buoyant tone is somewhat at odds with the material...

Anne and I went on our first long journey by ourselves together...and during our excursion we were, Ronald Macalgin, Henry Angora, Juliet Augusteena, Rosabella Esmaldan, Ella and Julian Egremont, Catherine Navarre and Cordelia Fitzaphnold, escaping from the palaces of instruction to join the Royalists who are hard driven at present by the victorious Republicans. The Gondals still flourish bright as ever. I am at present writing a work on the first Wars. Anne has been writing some articles on this, and a book by Henry Sophona. We intend sticking firm by the rascals as long as they delight us, which I am glad to say they do at present. ³³

Anne's corresponding note is a far more pessimistic affair. It collaborates Emily's statement and in some cases expands on the plots in play.

Emily is engaged in writing the Emperor Julius' life. She has read some of it, and I want very much to hear the rest. She is writing some poetry too. I wonder what it is about?...We have not yet finished our Gondal Chronicles that we began three and a half years ago. When will they be done? The Gondals are at present in a sad state. the Republicans are uppermost, but the Royalists are not quite overcome. The young sovereigns, with their brothers and sisters,

³³ Emily Brontë, "Birthday Note 1845," in Peters, p. 191

are still at the Palace of Instruction. The Unique Society, about half a year ago, were wrecked on a desert island as they were returning from Gaal. They are still there, but we have not played at them much yet. The Gondals in general are not in first-rate playing condition. Will they improve? ³⁴

Anne's synopsis of the situation makes it evident that the Gondal works were developing both backwards and forwards at the same time. Witness the fact that Emily is working on a prose history of the Emperor Julius, even though he was long dead by the time of the Civil War. This method of composition would ensure that the saga matured along with its authors. Early cruder narratives could be rewritten and gain ~~thereby~~ in strength and expression. The same process is also at work in the poetry. There are two complete versions and several fragments of Alexander Elbæ's death scene to be found in the verse. Perhaps this provides one clue to the continuing fascination which Gondal held over Emily. It was not a static form but an organic entity that grew and changed with its creator.

The remaining information about the Gondal story comprises a series of three Gondalian character lists. If these were actual family trees of the royal Gondalian families, listing marriages and children, they would be a veritable godsend to scholars of Gondal. Unfortunately two of these three lists provide nothing more than a group of names. The third does seem to contain more information, but this is expressed in a hieroglyphic code, meaningful to the author but not so helpful to the uninitiated.

The first two lists, which are in Anne's hand, are very difficult to date. One appears at the end of an undated poem which could just as easily fit in with the early Gondal poems of 1839 as with the later Gondal poems of

³⁴ Anne Brontë, "Birthday Note 1845," in Peters, p. 191

1845-46. It is impossible to state whether the lacklustre quality is attributable to the naiveté of an adolescent poet or to the lack of interest of an unenthusiastic adult. The other list is also undated, but it appears alone on the sheet of paper. Both lists are divided into two sides, one column for male characters and another for female. The first list reads as follows:

John Mertleheath	Isabella Abrantez
Gerald Exina (erased)	Isabella Senland
Gerald Hybernia (erased) Exina	Una Campbell
Eustacce	Flora Alzerno
Eustace Sophona	
Albert Vernon (erased)	Emily Vernon (erased)
Edward Hybernia	
John Mertleheath (erased)	Lucia MacElgin (erased) Angora
John Mertleheath (erased)	
Alexander Hybernia	

The second list is somewhat longer

Arthur Exina	Alexander Zenobia Hybernia
Gerald Exina	Isabella Senland
Edward Hybernia	Xirilla Senland
Gerald _____	Lucia Angora
	Catherina T. G. Augusteena
Alexander _____	Isabella Abrantez
Halbert Clifford	Eliza Hybernia
(Illegible erasure)	Harriet Eagle
Archibald MacRay	Isidora Montara
(erasure, possibly Gerald F.)	Helen Douglas
Henry Sophona	Cornelia Alzerno
Eustace Sophona	Rosalind Fizher (ending illegible)
Adolphus St. Albert	
Albert Vernon	
Alexander D. ³⁵	

³⁵ Anne Brontë, "List of Gondal Characters," in The Poems of Anne Brontë, ed. Edward Chitham (London, 1979), pp. 189-190

In reading through these lists one feels like a conjurer who has raised spirit but not substance. Only the music of the names remains; there are no clues to the character of their owners. In fact the most creative names appeared in the "Young Men's Play." There is undoubtedly a comic side to names like Stumps, Bravey, Sneaky, and Crashy, but these names have a sense of character in their very sound. As the children grew older their lists of names became more flowery, but they became pedestrian as well. The names which appear in the Gondal cycle appear to be a hybrid of the works of Sir Walter Scott and Anne Radcliffe.

The third list is in Emily's hand. It shares space on a tiny scrap of paper with several trial verses and two complete poems. The dating in this case is relatively easy. The list bears the date August 21 and one of the poems carries the complete heading July 26, 1842. It is likely that the poems and list were written during Emily's stay in Brussels as reminders of her dream world. The list is badly blurred and blotted but Gondal scholars David R. Isenberg and W. D. Paden have arrived at the following transcript.

Ronald Stewart-28 June 8th E-6-Brown H-Grey C-EN-Rand
 W-7--1-- Regina 24 June 29th-C-57-Dark Brown H-Grey
 C-GN-F-7--1-- "Marcellus Stewart 21 August 3rd B-511-light
 brown H-Grey E-RN-F-7- I1111-1
 Flora 17 June 18th-56-Chesnut H-brown E-GN-R and
 W-F-I1111-1-8
 Francesca 18 July 20th-V-56-light brown h-Grey E-RN-Rand
 W-7-1--- 36

³⁶ Emily Brontë, "List of Gondal Characters," in "A Gondal Fragment," in The Brontë Society Transactions, David R. Isenberg, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1960), p. 24.

The list appears to give the name of the character and then his or her personal data: age, birthdate, height, hair colour, eye colour, shape of nose and complexion. It would be far more helpful if these descriptions had been given to the major characters of the narrative, but perhaps their characteristics were so firmly set in Emily's mind that she had no need to write them down. At any rate the three lists do prove that the Gondalian kingdom is far more extensive than a reading of the poems would suggest it to be. It is also worth noting that Emily went to great lengths to visualize her characters and make them as close to real people as possible.

If these sporadic outcrops of information are combined with the material in the poems it is possible to arrive at a tentative understanding of Gondal. Metaphorically speaking the terrain surrounding this land is largely composed of bogs, precipices and labyrinthian forests, all thoroughly fatal to any hapless theories which may wonder off the intermittent stretches of pathway that lead to the centre. As Richard Benvenuto has remarked, a reconstruction of Gondal is similar to the reconstruction of a dinosaur with only the skull and thigh bone to go by.³⁷

The greater part of the problem is caused by the fact that the prose narratives, which were written as a chronicle of the events in Gondal, have completely disappeared. Exactly how they came to be destroyed is an open question, but one thing is for sure, with their passing went the one

³⁷ Richard Benvenuto, Emily Brontë (Boston, 1982), p. 26

formidable authority on Gondal plot sequence. The poems still exist, of course, but it is obvious that they do not represent a year by year summary of the Gondals in verse.

Little remains for the hopeful scholar's perusal, but portions of birthday notes and an occasional miscellaneous bit of information such as a list of place or character names. At least it can be said that Emily's half of the Gondal drama is clearer than Anne's, but anyone who has puzzled through that muddle of characterless names and unplaceable events will realize that this is not saying much.

As it stands now Gondal is a land cast in mist, its lords and ladies shadowy titans, and its history a series of silhouettes. However the chiaroscuro medium by which the Gondal saga descends to the modern critic does not detract from its power. Instead it becomes more appealing to the imagination and reaches an almost mythic state in its shades of darkness.

The Gondal world is comprised of two islands; the one Gondal, situated in the north, and the other, Gaaldine, located in the south. Gondal is a rugged land that possesses the landscape of Emily's beloved Yorkshire moors. Gaaldine is a tropical Eden. The flowery plains and rivers of its southern parts give way to forested glens in the north. The topography of Gondal varies from moors and lakes in the south to snowcapped mountains in the far north. Gondal is a monarchy set in a late medieval time period. The two royal houses of Angora and Exina have their strongholds in their native land of Gondal, but their influence extends down into the colonies of Gaaldine. There are three distinct periods in Gondalian history: the Julian Conquests,

the reign of Augusta, and the Republican Revolution. The first and third of these epochs are very politically oriented. The events of the Augustan years are determined by the caprices of the queen's temperament and as a result are far more private in scope.

There are twelve central characters and as many secondary figures in the Gondal story. In the first period the leading figure is Julius Brenzaida, a prince of the Angoran house. His ruthless ambition and military genius make him a total contrast to his counterpart the weak and trusting Gerald S. of Exina. The two women in this group conform to the same pattern. Rosina is a politically ambitious woman with flashing falcon eyes. Geraldine is a submissive girl with the gentleness of a dove. Gerald's son Arthur, and his southern allies, the Gleneden family are marginal figures.

The reigns of Julius and his successor Augusta are bridged by Douglas, the most Byronic of all Emily's Gondals. He is a social alien. His contempt for society has led him into a life of assassination and outlawry. The central character of the whole Gondal canon is Augusta Geraldine Almeda. She is a strikingly beautiful woman with a deep emotional capacity. Her desire for affection involves her in many private intrigues and brings much guilty suffering down upon her. Augusta is involved with four men: Amadeus, Alexander of Elbë, Lord Alfred of Aspin Castle, and Fernando de Samara. Their roles vary from a weak young courtier, to a lordly soldier, a noble aristocrat, and an almost fanatical romantic. Augusta's nemesis is Angelica, a hardened and vindictive girl.

Julian M., A. G. Rochelle, M. Douglas, and E. R. Gleneden, are all participants in the Republican Revolution, however they are never really defined as characters. There is very little characterization in the poems dealing with this epoch. Instead, Emily presents a panorama of nameless Royalists and Republicans in bloody conflict. It is the party and not the individuals that is important. Emily is presenting the philosophy of war.

Once the background to Gondal is established, the question arises as to why Emily should choose to bestow a life-time on this pursuit. Strangely enough she poses just that question in a poem which Fannie Ratchford describes as "the noblest apology for genius in the language."³⁸ "Speak, God of Visions, plead for me/And tell why I have chosen thee!"³⁹ Unfortunately in the poem the God of Visions proved to be as silent and enigmatic as its mistress.

Fantasy was an all absorbing pursuit for Emily. In her eyes it assumed a tripartite image of slave, comrade, and king (176, 1.25). With her God of Visions by her side, she had no need of anyone else.

Gondal was necessary to Emily because it provided her with a means of exercising her mind. Gondal was her weapon for fighting the poison of intellectual drudgery. It appears in this context in a poem written at Law

³⁸ Ratchford, "The Gondal Story," ed. C. W. Hatfield, p. 16

³⁹ Emily Brontë, "Poem 176," in The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë, ed. C. W. Hatfield (New York, 1941), 11.39-40. All references to Brontë's poems are taken from this source. For this reason any subsequent references to the poems will be identified by the numbers under which they appear in Hatfield's text and will be included in the body of the thesis.

Hill, during Emily's stay there as a teacher. The treadmill round of duties kept her busy from six in the morning till nearly eleven at night.⁴⁰ In her short periods of free time she sought Gondal as a means of freeing herself from the strict regime of the establishment.

Could I have lingered but an hour
It well had paid a week of toil
But truth has banished fancy's power;
I hear my dungeon bars recoil
Even as I stood with raptured eye
Absorbed in bliss so deep and dear
My hour of rest had fled by
And given me back to weary care. (92, 11.41-48).

Gondal meant liberty, and without that she could not survive. "Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils; without it, she perished."

Even during the time spent at home, where by all accounts Emily was most content, she still needed Gondal to combat the monotony. As the one remaining child at home a large share of the household duties descended to her care. These too were constraint, albeit of a pleasant kind, but constraint none the less. While her hands mechanically performed the set tasks, her mind was left free to wander with her Gondalians.

Emily was content enough to follow the slow rhythm of life at the parsonage, but she was not prepared to let her mind slip into a state of dry rot. As her teacher, Constantin Heger said of her, she had a great mind and a

⁴⁰ Charlotte Brontë, "Letter to Ellen Nussey," in EB, Gérin, p. 74

⁴¹ Charlotte Brontë, "Biographical Notice," in EB, Gérin, p. 55

vivid imagination.

She should have been a man--a great navigator. Her powerful reason would have deduced new spheres of discovery from the knowledge of the old; and her strong imperious will would never have been daunted by opposition or difficulty; never have given way but with life. And, yet, moreover, her faculty of imagination was such that if she had written a history, her view of scenes and characters would have been so vivid, and so powerfully expressed, and supported by such a show of argument, that it would have dominated over the reader, whatever might have been his previous opinions, or his cooler perceptions of its truth.⁴²

It appears that Gondal provided Emily with an outlet for creative thought. It was not an evasion of particularly unpleasant realities, the Gondal narratives prove that grim fates were a way of life in that land, but instead it served as an escape from mental stagnancy. Gondal stood as a whetstone to a keen imaginative mind whose cutting edge might otherwise have been dulled by disuse.

The foregoing pages are a summary of the stuff which one particular dream was made on. In this case the dream was composed of a child's fancies and an adult's insights. For anyone versed in Blakeian or Wordsworthian philosophy this amounts to a very potent combination indeed. Although the story of Gondal's development is fascinating as an end in itself it should not be allowed to usurp all interest from Gondal criticism. The evolutionary phase complements the second part of the story. Surely any critic who has

⁴² Constantin Heger, "Letter to Mrs. Gaskell," in The Life of Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 230-231

followed such a unique coming of age will not be content to abandon the subject once it has reached maturity. There is too much inherent potential at stake to be lost.

GONDAL CRITICISM

Gondal criticism comprises a very small body of work. This is not surprising when the obstacles facing Gondal critics are taken into account. Firstly, the greater majority of critical attention has always been drawn by Wuthering Heights. Several Gondal scholars readily admit that their study of Gondal was intended as a side line to gain background for Wuthering Heights. In many ways the power and originality of Emily Brontë's novel have proved to be the undoing of her poems. Gondal is lost in the shadow of the greater work.

Not only are there few Gondal critics, but their very credibility depends upon a time factor. It is necessary to eliminate virtually any scholarly work that predates 1941. The whole problem with early Gondal criticism lies in the fact that the first critics did not have a definitive edition of Emily's poetry to work from. C. W. Hatfield's masterly edition did not appear until 1941 and although no one is prepared to admit that it was not worth the wait, still it must be acknowledged that a long vista of lost years stretches out behind it.

This is not to say that scholars such as May Sinclair and Madeleine Hope Dodds were not discerning individuals. In fact May Sinclair's comments

on Gondal argue that she did indeed possess an intuitive understanding of her subject.

We have no clue to the history of the Gondals, whereby we can arrange these scenes in their right order. But dark and broken as they are, they yet trail an epic splendour, they bear the whole phantasmagoria of ancestral and of racial memories of 'old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago.' These songs and ballads strung on no discernible thread, are the voice of an enchanted spirit, recalling the long roll of its secular existences; in whom nothing lives but that mysterious, resurgent memory.¹

The fact that Sinclair fails to assemble the Gondal pieces properly seems somehow unimportant when it is placed beside her understanding of Gondal as a whole. She realizes that the Gondal poems are a piece of literature worthy of resurrection, and this in itself is much to her credit.

Madeleine Hope Dodds does not approach Gondal with the fervor that Sinclair does. Its mysterious quality appeals to her imagination and she is quite ready to concede its importance as a literary exercise to develop the imagination, but she does not believe that Gondal possesses any great inherent value. Dodds argues that at best Gondal is a flimsy structure which Emily's growing poetic powers finally burst into pieces.

But like the water fairy of the legend, as soon as an immortal soul had been breathed into the land, it perished. Gondaliand lay too far into the world of shadows to bear prolonged stress of emotion, moreover it must not be overlooked that a good deal of the country was mere pasteboard.²

¹ May Sinclair, The Three Brontës (Port Washington, 1912), p. 226

² Madeleine Hope Dodds, "Gondaliand," in Modern Language Review, Vol. 18 (1923), p. 20

The Gondal reconstructions put forward by these two critics are too garbled to be of any use. This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that during this period the only available edition of Emily's poetry offered not only the poetry of Emily, but also that of any and all of her three siblings. Then to further the confusion many of Emily's poems were printed without their Gondal headings, or with faulty transcriptions of the lines. In a situation where every line counts such mistakes can prove devastating to the critic. For instance because an early edition of the poems recorded the line "On cursed Gomorrah's howling plain 'as' On cursed Zamorna's howling plain" Sinclair envisaged a connection between Angria and Gondal and then went on to blend episodes from the lives of Julius, Douglas, and Arthur Exina into the career of the Duke of Zamorna.³ Likewise the significant number of Angrian poems led Dodds to believe that Gondal was simply a new name for the Parrysland of the old Glasstown games and that the communal fantasy-making had continued unabated.⁴

In the mid nineteen thirties an important aid to Gondal criticism resurfaced. Emily's manuscript book of Gondal poems had been held in the private collection of the Smith family since 1907. Upon Mr. Smith's death it was bequeathed to the British Museum whose officials made it available for critical examination. The notebook contains forty-five finished versions of Gondal poems, thus making it far superior to the miscellaneous sheets of paper which bear trial lines or first versions of Gondalian work.

³ Sinclair, pp. 232-233.

⁴ Madeleine Hope Dodds, "A Second Visit to Gondaliand," in Modern Language Review, Vol. 21 (1926), pp. 373-374

In 1938 Helen Brown and Joan Mott published both a transcript of the notebook and also a synopsis of the Gondal saga. Their main reason for publishing the synopsis was to ensure a proper understanding of Emily's poems. Prior to this several critics had taken Gondal material as covert autobiographical confessions. This culminated in the astonishing statement that Emily had been involved in a passionate but tragic love affair that had left her soul scarred for life.⁵

Brown and Mott's account of the Gondal saga is devoid of surmise. They only deal with such facts as arise from a reading of the forty-five poems in the notebook. Their reconstruction is divided into three units: stories of Julius, stories of Augusta, and the period of the great Civil War.

The first unit deals with the exploits of Julius Brenzaida, a prince of the Gondalian kingdom of Angora. The events move from his days as a wilful young man imprisoned in the college dungeons, through his conquests of Almedore and Zalona, on to the manipulation and betrayal that gained him the throne of Gondal, and culminate with the assassination that cuts him down at the height of his power. Other figures who appear in this section of the story are Rosina Alcona, Julius's first love and devoted wife, Geraldine S. a Gaaldian maiden whom he woos and who bears him a child, and Gerald S. King of Exina, whom Julius imprisons and murders in order to gain sole command of the throne of Gondal.⁶

⁵ Virginia Moore was responsible for this reading of the poems. Details can be found in Fannie E. Ratchford, The Brontës' Web of Childhood (New York, 1941), pp. 133-134.

⁶ Helen Brown and Joan Mott, "The Gondal Saga," in The Brontë Society Transactions, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1938), pp. 157-165.

Upon Julius' death the crown of Gondal passes to Augusta Geraldine Almeda a contemporary of Julius and a member of Gondal's royal race. Whereas Julius' story was one of power politics, Augusta's is made up of love and jealousy, passion and remorse. The two great loves of her life, Alexander of Elbé and Lord Alfred of Aspin Castle, both meet violent ends. The death scenes of the two men (the one dying of mortal wounds to his body, the other with wounds to his soul) haunt Augusta's thoughts. She trifles with young men, among them a musician named Fernando and a courtier named Amadeus, but sends them off into exile as she tires of them. In the case of Amadeus this proves her undoing. This cavalier treatment of the young man arouses the wrath of his sweetheart Angelica, who from that moment on lives for revenge. It is through her machinations that Augusta is murdered.⁷

The final phase of the Gondal story is made up of the Royalist and Republican Revolution. In these scenes the land is plunged into a violent and bloody civil war, which turns family against family and friend against friend.⁸

In 1941 the first of the real Gondal scholars appeared on the scene. In her book, The Brontës' Web of Childhood Fannie E. Ratchford puts forward a detailed analysis of the Brontë juvenilia. Due to the fact that the author's main intention is to trace characters, events, and themes from their inception to their reappearance in the sisters' novels; Gondal is approached more as a clue to Wuthering Heights than as an independent structure. In spite of this the 1941 book is a landmark in Brontë studies. It is the first book that makes a comprehensive study of the juvenilia and it sets forward the first

⁷ Brown and Mott, pp. 166-168

⁸ Brown and Mott, p. 172

chronologically correct presentation of the Brontës' fantasy worlds.

Ratchford's exact opinion of the juvenilia is somewhat difficult to ascertain. On the basis of the few comments within the book, one is led to believe that she approved the ends but distrusted the means. For instance, in the introduction to the book Ratchford states that "These little books hold in their tiny script the most remarkable romance in literature and the most accurate record of the evolution of genius extant in any language."⁹ Yet in the first chapter the source of this remarkable romance is described as something detrimental. It is a dangerous charm and an evasive mechanism which should have been curbed by understanding discipline.¹⁰ Although its founding forces may be suspect, Ratchford makes it clear that Gondal is above disapproval in her eyes. She describes it as a noble epic and treats it with respect.¹¹

In the final chapter Ratchford uses her knowledge of Gondal to explain the development of the idea of Wuthering Heights and to prove that the novel was conceived entirely by Emily and that it owed nothing to Branwell's hand. Ratchford finds a nascent Heathcliff in Douglas, the darkly Byronic outlaw of the Gondal saga. She points out a foreshadowing of the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine in the poems describing the devotion of a bright-haired angelic girl to a dark-haired boy of sorrow. She discovers similarities in the very nature of the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights and the Gondalians. Strong passions are a characterizing factor of both.

⁹ Ratchford, p. XV

¹⁰ Ratchford, pp. 4-5

¹¹ Ratchford, p. 190

Ambition, hatred, agonized love and staunch devotion are obvious similarities. The supernatural elements are also carried over from Gondal. Omens, ghosts, and spectres all appear in the Gondal drama. In fact, Lockwood's encounter with Catherine's ghost is a modified version of an early Gondal poem.¹²

In the appendix to the book, Ratchford describes the process of reconstructing the Gondal narrative and also presents her version of the story. This reconstruction differs from Brown and Mott's version on several counts. Foremost of these is Ratchford's telescoping of events and personages. The compression of events poses few problems since it is obvious that if Julius and Augusta are contemporaries some events in their lives would have occurred concurrently. Controversy does arise, however, when a single character is endowed with multiple identities. Ratchford argues that if the character Julius Brenzaida can also be known as Julius Angora, King Julius, and Emperor Julius there is no reason why the main female character should not have several names as well. She then puts forward the supposition that Augusta Geraldine Almeda is also designated by the names Rosina Alcona and Geraldine S. By so doing she maintains that the Gondal stories are principally occupied with the life of Augusta.¹³

Ratchford divides the Gondal time scheme into three periods: the discovery, exploration and conquest of Gaaldine to which none of the poems relate, the first wars, to which all the poems of Julius and Augusta belong, and the Republican Revolution which is described in some dozen poems.

In the Web of Childhood Ratchford could only spare twenty-five pages to the mysteries of Gondal. However, the subject was by no means closed.

¹² Ratchford, pp. 240-247

¹³ Ratchford, p. 134

Fourteen years later she expanded her theories in a study devoted entirely to the story of Gondal.

However, before the book was printed several critics took the opportunity to dispute Ratchford's initial hypotheses. The first to appear was Madelaine Hope Dodds who returned to the field in 1944 in order to put forward her opinions. She begins by dividing the families of Gondal into two ruling houses, Exina and Angora. The Exinian leader is Augusta Geraldine Almeda and the Angoran house is led by Julius Brenzaida.

Dodds points out that Augusta's personal relationships take the form of a square in which she and three other people intermingle. The first sequence of the story involves Augusta, Angelica, Amadeus, and Alexander. Augusta's intrigue with Amadeus leads to the young man's banishment to Gaaldine, where he, Angelica his betrothed love and Augusta's childhood friend, and a band of outlaws gather to plot revenge. Augusta marries Alexander of Elbé, a man who is shadowed by his dark fate. Amadeus, Angelica, and the outlaw Douglas stir up a revolt in one of the Exinian provinces of Gaaldine which brings Alexander south to restore order. He is mortally wounded and dies in Augusta's arms. Despite the efforts of the guards, Douglas, his murderer, makes good his escape over the mountains. The death of their leader proves to be a serious setback for the Exinian army. Augusta is captured and remains in prison until her demoralized troops are rallied under the leadership of Arthur Gleneden.¹⁵

Once these events are played out a new set of four take the stage. Augusta is now grouped with Fernando de Samara, a nameless girl from Areon

¹⁴ Madeleine Hope Dodds, "Heathcliff's Country," in Modern Language Review, Vol. 39 (1944), p. 117

¹⁵ Dodds, pp. 118-122

Hall, and Lord Alfred S. of Aspin Castle. Augusta has regained her throne, but she is lonely without Alexander, so she takes up with Fernando, a Gaaldinian musician. Her charms cause him to utterly forget his honour, his virtue, and his promises to the young girl at Areon Hall. She trifles with him for a time but eventually falls deeply in love with another man. In order to make way for her new love, she has Fernando removed to the prison caves of Gaaldine. He does escape but it is only to commit suicide on a desolate stretch of moor land. Augusta's relationship with Lord Alfred is shadowed by this cloud of death. Although Alfred is deeply infatuated with Augusta he is troubled by feelings of responsibility for Fernando's death. His sense of guilt finally causes him to leave Augusta and seek forced exile in England. He dies there, but his restless spirit returns to haunt Aspin Castle.¹⁶

The final event in Augusta's life is her assassination on Elnor Hill. By speaking empty phrases of faithfulness Angelica induces Douglas to perform the deed; he accomplishes his end but is mortally wounded in the process. Angelica departs, leaving both her victims to die.¹⁷

With Augusta disposed of Dodds turns to Julius. First though she stops to assert that Julius and Augusta are entirely unrelated. She argues that Augusta, Rosina, and Geraldine are three different women. Rosina's staunch devotion and high political ambitions are alien to Augusta's character as are Geraldine's gentleness and her quiet submission. The three women have nothing in common but good looks and this does not prove that they are one and the same.¹⁸

As Dodds tells it Julius' story begins with his imprisonment for the

¹⁶ Dodds, pp. 122-124

¹⁷ Dodds, p. 124

¹⁸ Dodds, p. 125

marked attentions which he paid to Rosina. His term of punishment causes him to miss out on the rebel uprising in which Alexander of Elbë loses his life. Julius eventually does reach Gaaldine where he commences a campaign which wins him Tyndarum and Zalona. During this time he becomes involved with Geraldine, who at first hesitates to flee with him, but later repents of her decision and journeys after him. In the course of her wanderings their child is born. Geraldine reaches Gondal only to hear that Julius has married Rosina. In a fit of despair, she leaves the child to die on the frozen moors. However the baby is saved by a shepherd who entrusts her to Blanche, a lady of the court; she in her turn carries the child to the court of Ula. In the meantime Julius conquers the province of Almedore and gains a position of great territorial power. He forces Gerald Exina, Augusta's successor, to swear an oath of union with him. Julius soon breaks this oath, imprisons Gerald, and assumes sole command of the united thrones of Gondal. He meets great resistance from the Exina patriots under the leadership of another member of the Gleneden clan, but he is able to defeat them in open warfare. He is not prepared for a devious attack and he falls to his assassin within his own palace hall.¹⁹

After Julius' death Dodds believes that the families of Angora and Exina may have been united by the courtship of Henry Angora and Lord Alfred's daughter, but this moment of peace is soon disrupted by the Republican uprisings.²⁰

¹⁹ Dodds, pp. 125-129

²⁰ Dodds, p. 129

Laura L. Hinkley published a study of Charlotte and Emily in 1945 which contains an appendix devoted to the Gondal sequence. Hinkley is drawn to Gondal mainly in search of traces of Wuthering Heights, but her curiosity is pricked and she exhibits a sneaking interest in the Gondal world on its own terms.

Like many others before her, Hinkley divides the Gondal events into three eras: The Julian conquests, the Augustan succession, and the Republican Revolution. She stays with Dodds' division of the ruling families into the houses of Angora and Exina, but she chooses to group the members somewhat differently. That Julius is the ruling head of Angora, there is no doubt, but Hinkley believes that there are three royal children in the house of Exina. By basing her theory both on the repetition of the initial "S" in the surname and on the similarity of the given names, she argues that Geraldine S. is the sister of Gerald S., King of Exina. Furthermore she uses the poem in which a boy with the initials AS comforts his brother Gerald S. to suggest that Lord Alfred S. is the younger brother of Gerald.²¹

There is nothing new or remarkable in Hinkley's relation of Julius' imprisonment, political conquests and murder. Her first original contribution concerns the identity of the child born to Julius and Geraldine. Hinkley believes that the baby is Augusta Geraldine Almeda. Although she is illegitimate her parentage ~~entitles~~ her to be the next monarch of Gondal.²² Hinkley's other original contribution to the Julius story lies

²¹ Laura L. Hinkley, The Brontës: Charlotte and Emily (New York, 1945) p. 360

²² Hinkley, p. 354

in her placement of Arthur Exina among the conspirators who plot Julius' death. It is he who leads the group and it is he who strikes the fatal blow, but he is killed in fulfillment of the dark doom which has hung over his head since infancy.²³

Hinkley's version of the Augustan years is fairly true to form. She believes that Augusta grew up in the court of her step-mother Rosina Alcona, who treated her coldly. Like Dodds she places the Amadeus episode as the first event in the adult Augusta's life. Augusta's love for Alexander Elbe is made sinful by the fact that he is married. When a child is born to them Augusta carries her up to the mountains to die of exposure. Soon after Alexander is killed in battle and Augusta is imprisoned. Hard upon her release comes the affair with Fernando. She is then greatly attracted by Lord Alfred and finally marries him although she knows him to be her mother's brother. At last her conscience overcomes her emotions and she sends him away vowing that they must never meet again although she relents enough to nurse him through his final illness.²⁴

Hinkley places the Republican Revolution within Augusta's lifetime. When the Republican party gains power, Augusta is forced to retreat into Angora with her followers. It is here in the wilderness that her old enemy Angelica engineers her murder. Augusta's death brings the revolution to a close. A hope for peace is represented by the scene of courtship between Henry Angora and Lord Alfred's daughter.²⁵

²³ Hinkley, p. 356

²⁴ Hinkley, pp. 357-361

²⁵ Hinkley, pp. 361-363

It should be noted that Hinkley's is the weakest of the five theories simply because she chooses to sidestep an important piece of evidence. There are five poems in the canon to which Emily has attached Gondal dates. From these we learn that in 1825 Julius was a student just entering in on his term of imprisonment and that in 1826 Augusta was a young widow mourning the death of Alexander. Emily's dates provide indisputable evidence that Julius and Augusta were contemporaries and not father and daughter.²⁶ Hinkley chooses to disregard this evidence on the grounds that the dates do not fit into the Gondal time scheme. This would be quite true if, as she presumes, poem 104 which describes the return of the depleted body of students to the Palace of Instruction in January 1827, were indeed a poem describing the aftermath of the Republican Revolution.²⁷ However, it is far more likely that the war which claimed the young Royalists' lives was Julius' final campaign of conquest. Julius certainly did not depose Gerald without a fight. Such a cause would call out the representatives and allies of both houses. Poem 29 which describes the winter battle at Tyndarum likely represents the turning point. Julius overcame the Exinian forces, captured Gerald, and sent his young supporters back to the Palace of Instruction. They arrive back there early in the new year and write a poem of mourning for their fallen comrades.²⁸

²⁶ These five poems together with their dates can be found in the Hatfield text. The poems in question are 104, 158, 164, 178, and 180.

²⁷ Hinkley, pp. 185-186

²⁸ Poems 125, 63, and 97 are helpful in this context. 125 confirms Gerald's downfall. Poems 63 and 97 show the policy that let Julius keep this throne. It is likely that, as in the case of the Gleneden family, Julius kept one family member hostage so as to insure the good behaviour of the rest of the family. One other interesting point arises out of 63. In line 36 Arthur Gleneden calls Julius a tyrant, the same word appears in the line 24 of poem 104. If as Hinkley supposes the poem does relate to the Republican Revolution then the terminology is wrong. It would be the Republicans who would pride themselves on their stand against tyranny, and not a group of Royalists.

These dates do fit into the Gondal time sequence, and they are better left there. Placing them in a new setting causes more problems than it solves. By arguing that the dates refer to Emily's first attempts at the Gondal material,²⁹ Hinkley forces the reader to conclude that the Gondal play predates the "Young Men's Play," thus adding increased confusion to an already confused area.

In 1955 Fannie Ratchford's elaboration of her Gondal theories was published. Gondal's Queen contains two sections, the one containing the theory itself, and the other containing the arguments for the theory.

Ratchford's summary takes Augusta as the main heroine of the piece. She is born among the mountains of Gondal and remains there until she is sent to the Palace of Instruction, where, as a token of her initiation, she assumes the name Rosina Alcona. Her obvious predilection for her fellow student Julius Brenzaida causes his imprisonment in the college dungeons.

Upon Julius' imprisonment, Rosina leaves the college and resumes her former title. She soon catches the eye of Alexander of Elbë but their relationship is of brief duration. He is killed in a battle against Julius' troops and she is captured and imprisoned. With her release she is free to travel to Gaaldine where the mild climate soon revives her health and spirits.³¹

With the recovery of her constitution comes Augusta's affair with Lord Alfred. Both he and his little daughter, Angelica devote themselves to her. However this love of Angelica's soon turns to bitter hatred when Augusta

²⁹ Hinkley, p. 187

³⁰ Fannie E. Ratchford, Gondal's Queen (Austin, 1955), pp. 50-54

³¹ Ratchford, pp. 55-68

dishonours her foster brother Amadeus. Their united prayers do nothing to turn aside Augusta's sentence of exile. Angelica bitterly accepts this fate as her own since she is unwilling to abandon the lonely, friendless child of doom that she adopted when she was just a little girl. Amadeus and Angelica join company with other exiles and embark on a career of outlawry.³²

Julius now re-enters the picture. Calling Augusta by the name Geraldine, he invites her to midnight trysts on the moor. At last, no longer able to deny that her true love lies with Julius, she runs away with him. Lord Alfred is crushed by her defection. Unable to face his own countrymen he travels to England where he commits suicide thus dooming his soul to eternal unrest.³³

With Augusta at his side, Julius embarks upon his trail of conquest leading up to his assumption of the title Emperor of Gondal. His assassination is accomplished by Amadeus, who is struck down at the scene of the crime. The Exina party once more takes power and Augusta is forced to flee. When in hiding in Zedora, she gives birth to Julius' child. Eventually she comes to decide that the baby would be better off dead than living as a fugitive, and so she exposes it on the mountains of Gondal.³⁴

Augusta is returned to the throne but thoughts of her murdered husband and dead child fill her days with grief. Although she tries to find relief in a flirtation with Fernando de Samara, she only succeeds in pouring more blood on her hands. Augusta's assassination at the hands of Angelica and Douglas

³² Ratchford, pp. 69-81

³³ Ratchford, pp. 82-92

³⁴ Ratchford, pp. 93-112 and pp. 120-124

takes place fifteen years after Julius' death. Upon her death the country plunges into the Republican Revolution.³⁵

The most disconcerting element of Ratchford's theory is her use of multiple names. The idea of Augusta's triple identity has stirred up much critical controversy. Ratchford's proof for her idea is taken from one of the poems in the Fernando group. In poem 117 Fernando describes the sufferings of the girl that he left at Areon Hall to a person addressed as Alcona. Ratchford argues that since Fernando's story is entirely involved with Augusta then she must be the Alcona to whom he speaks and, since Rosina Alcona is the only one with that surname then it follows that she and Augusta are one and the same.³⁶

Although it is a good argument it is by no means the proof positive that it is held up to be. There is no particular reason why the poem could not be addressed to Rosina Alcona who might be a kinswoman of the forsaken girl at Areon Hall. Family ties are so vague in Gondal that such a possibility is entirely conceivable.

If this issue of multiple names is mounted on a larger scale, it proves not only clumsy but lacking in consistency. If Julius chooses to call Augusta by the pet name from their college days then he should call her by that name throughout all the poems. As it is he calls her Rosina in some places and Geraldine in others, a discrepancy which makes little sense.³⁷

³⁵ Ratchford, pp. 133-160

³⁶ Ratchford, pp. 26-27

³⁷ There are six poems which refer to Rosina and Geraldine by name. Chronologically the first is a Rosina poem (178), the next three are Geraldine poems (80, 81, 150), and the last two are Rosina poems (151, 182).

Then too, there is the fact that this technique is not used once, but many times. Angelica is not only A.S. but R.C. Amadeus is variously designated as A.A.A., H.A., and A.E. Gerald's final initial S is ignored and he is rebaptised as a member of the Gleneden clan. All of this stands with little or no proof to back it up.³⁸

Some critics have suggested that Ratchford is too orderly to be an ideal chronicler of Gondal. She has produced a neat version of the story, but in so doing has taken some liberties with characters' names and identities. In Gondal's Queen Ratchford has presented Gondal as a perfect little parcel with flawless wrapping paper and a starched bow. Unfortunately if the real Gondal were put into a box the lid would refuse to close, there would be tears in the paper and the ribbon would be hanging in loose ends. Ratchford's precision makes her theory seem unnatural. In Gondal's Queen, Ratchford sets out to clarify Gondal. Unfortunately the mission seems to have taken precedence over the material.

The most minute and exact study of Gondal appeared in 1958. W. D. Paden responded to Ratchford's open invitation for other scholars to improve on her summary by compiling An Investigation of Gondal. Paden did his work so well that he virtually seems to have had the last word on Gondal. In modern anthologies of Brontë criticism his theory is often quoted as the most likely reconstruction of the story.

Paden begins by setting out three guidelines for himself.

We must assume that a name which occurs in several places always refers to the same

³⁸ Ratchford, pp. 43-44

character. We must assume that a set of initials which occur in several headings always refers to the same character. We must not assume that a character is referred to by more than one name and one set of initials.³⁹

Then after a process of deliberation and concentration on the Gondal material he arrives at the following storyline.

The discovery and conquest of Gaaldine is accomplished by a group of young Gondalian noblemen. Among their number is Alexander, Lord of Elbë Hall, who has just married Augusta Geraldine Almeda. Alexander remains in the south for several years and Augusta begins to despair of his ever returning home. At last she comes to think of him as a dead man and begins to consider remarrying. Her affection settles on Lord Alfred, the younger brother of Gerald S., King of Exina. With the passage of more months Alexander's death becomes an accepted fact and Augusta marries Alfred.

However, in the spring of the following year Alexander returns home. He raises an army and marches to Aspin Castle to reclaim his wife. Alfred lures Alexander to a meeting by the shores of Lake Elnor. There he takes his rival by surprise and inflicts a fatal wound. Alfred then flees to England where he suffers remorse for the murder. Augusta stays by Alexander's side till he dies; then flees into the mountains where she gives birth to Alfred's daughter. This child is left to die of exposure but is rescued by Augusta's faithful servant, Blanche, who takes the infant south to Ula. Augusta is caught and imprisoned.⁴⁰

³⁹ W. D. Paden, An Investigation of Gondal (New York, 1958), p. 18

⁴⁰ Paden, pp. 24-25

With rebellion and murder in the wind, the ministers of state began to single out other disruptive elements. Scrutiny falls on the entourage of Rosina Alcona, and as a result Julius Brenzaida is imprisoned. After his release he coaxes Geraldine S., the sister of Gerald, to accompany him to Gaaldine. His efforts seem futile, but at last she relents and joins him in the southern lands. Both their marriage and the birth of their son are celebrated in the south. Julius prospers in Gaaldine and wins enough military power to make him an imposing figure. His return to Gondal, the manipulation and betrayal of Gerald, and his own assassination form the final phase of Julius' story.⁴¹

. During the turmoil caused by Julius' assassination Augusta is able to escape to England where she stays by Alfred during his final illness. After his death she returns to Gondal and is crowned queen of the empire. However, her own disillusionment with life causes her to behave cruelly to those in her power. Her callous treatment of Fernando causes his suicide, while her capricious dismissal of Amadeus forces him into the life of an exiled outlaw. Her worst sin in this respect is directed towards Angelica, her step-daughter. Augusta not only steals the girl's sweetheart but then refuses to offer him any reprieve, thus dooming Angelica to a life of exile as well. This only succeeds in turning the adoring girl into a woman as bitter and cruel as Augusta herself.⁴²

⁴¹ paden, pp. 19-24

⁴² paden, p. 54

Alexander seems the more likely choice of the two.⁴⁵ Taken all together it is enough to make even a hardened critic cry tears of frustration.

Interestingly enough in 1912 May Sinclair fervently suggested that someone take up the task of rediscovering Gondal but then dismissed her suggestion deciding that no one could possibly be interested.⁴⁶ Years later some five critics did take up the task and used their intuition and insight to push their study to its limits. So vigorously did they work that these limits were soon reached. Unless some hidden document magically appears; say the life of Emperor Julius, or an explanation of Lord Alfred's mortal sin, or a detailed family tree of all the royal families, then this phase of investigation has been taken as far as it can go.

The major problem with the existing Gondal criticism is one of attitude. Too many people see these poems as quaint little things with which no self-respecting critic should be involved. The term "juvenilia" may very well be a major cause for this attitude. It is a neat blanket term but unfortunately it carries connotations of childishness and immaturity which do little to enhance the reputation of the Gondal material. If Gondal is generally belittled by the critics it is only because it is so firmly set in this stereotype of puerility that no one is able to see it as anything other than a relic of Emily's childhood.

This stereotypical view imposes strict limits on the scholarly work which can be done on Gondal. It is an unwritten rule that all research

⁴⁵ Paden, p. 66

⁴⁶ Sinclair, p.227

The only people brave enough to attempt a map of Gondal are Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi, the two editors of the Dictionary of Imaginary Places. Earlier critics likely avoided the exercise because any chart of Gondal and Gaaldine is apt to be something of a lacklustre affair. There is no information regarding the relative sizes of the islands or of their respective counties. The cartographer is limited to drawing two land masses and working in various provinces and lakes. Manguel and Guadalupi's map is interesting not because of any insights but because of the errors they manage to make with their meagre supply of information. Their map is marred by several inconsistencies with source material. Although they claim to base themselves on Paden's Investigation of Gondal, they do not seem to have read the text carefully enough. It is perplexing to discover that Zalona, one of the more tropical provinces in Gaaldine, has been placed up in the northern corner of that island. It is annoying to find that Aspin Castle, the stronghold of Alfred, younger brother to Gerald of Exina, has been situated in Angora. It is mind-boggling to realize that the mountain ranges which predominate the landscape of northern Gondal have been left off the map entirely.⁴⁴ Manguel and Guadalupi's contribution does at least serve to convince the serious Gondal critic that more is known about the geography of Gondal than what was previously thought possible.

Then there is the problem of placing events in their proper geographical location. Since the respective climate of the two islands are not precisely designated, it is sometimes difficult to decide which landscape

⁴⁴ Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi, The Dictionary of Imaginary Places (Toronto, 1980), p. 146

goes with which island. Certainly it is easy to say that if Lake Elnor is within sight of snow-capped mountains, then it is in Gondal, or if a cave is surrounded by palm trees and tropical flowers, it is in Gaaldine, but the finer points of the question are unanswerable. If any mention of heath and moors is to be taken as a sign post to Gondal, all might be well, but moors are not limited to Gondal alone. Upon his release from the Gaaldinian prison caves, Fernando takes his life on a lonely moor. The landscape is understood to be that of Gaaldine by virtue of the fact that "Gondal's wind" is described as being far from home. (85, 1.32) There are some scenes set in a temperate wilderness that might take place in either Gondal or Gaaldine. Once again a deadlock is reached.

Then there is the problem of the characters themselves. Although the ghost of the three-headed Augusta has been pretty well laid to rest by Dodds and Paden, other spectres are still on the loose. The critic must decide whether Angelica is to be Augusta's childhood friend or Lord Alfred's daughter. The line describing her relationship with Augusta, "My childhood's mate, my girlhood's guide" (143, 1.79) could represent either relationship, although the phrase girlhood's guide seems to imply that Augusta was older than Angelica. The boy of sorrow presents another bone of contention. The initials A.E. could just as easily stand for Arthur Exina as for Alexander Elbë. The scholars dilemma is aptly illustrated by Paden's footnotes. After having written a series of quarter page notes, each logically showing why a certain set of initials can only belong to one particular character, Paden is only able to justify his choice of Alexander, as the boy of sorrow, with two pathetic little lines in which he states that

Alexander seems the more likely choice of the two.⁴⁵ Taken all together it is enough to make even a hardened critic cry tears of frustration.

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⁴⁵ Paden, p. 66

⁴⁶ Sinclair, p.227

pertaining to Gondal must have a strong ulterior motive in order to be worthwhile. Gondal research is entirely justified if it is likely to provide insights into Wuthering Heights. Studies of Gondal elements and reconstructions of the story lines are approved if they are likely to yield discoveries into the workings of Emily's mind, but Tom Winnifrith's comments on Ratchford's work show what a very touchy area this second option is.

The Brontës' juvenilia are larger in bulk than their adult writings, but this does not mean that we should devote more attention to the juvenilia than to the novels. Still less should we follow the example of Miss Fannie Ratchford, who in between the writing of The Brontës' Web of Childhood and Gondal's Queen appears to pass from the view that Angria and Gondal are worth studying as a means to an appreciation of the novels, to the view that at any rate Gondal is worth studying as an end in itself.⁴⁷

Mr. Winnifrith is being somewhat short sighted in his commentary. Gondal is indeed worth studying as an end in itself. The poems are the utterances of an adult voice and not the prattlings of a child. They are trite at times and can be melodramatic to a fault, but they cannot be dismissed as foolish Inconsequential things. They have an inherent value which will appear if the poems are only cast in the right light. The popularity of fantasy and the development of a theory for this literary form makes this task considerably easier. Now that fantasy has been recognized as a genuine literary form, it can lend credence to Gondal. If Gondal can be proved to be a functioning fantasy world, then at last all the old apologies and excuses can be cast aside. Surely it is time to raise the cry of "Gondal for Gondal's sake" and begin a new literary campaign on a stretch of only partially conquered ground.

⁴⁷ Tom Winnifrith, The Brontës and Their Background: Romance and Reality (London, 1973), p. 5

FANTASY THEORY

Over the last couple of decades fantasy has become an increasingly popular art form. Inevitably, the rising numbers of contributors and readers have made the field a centre of critical interest. Like all good things it is haunted by an aura of cheap commercialism in which its primary elements are turned into mere travesties of themselves by the misguided pens of inept writers. In spite of such catastrophes, fantasy is a serious field of literature that is entirely deserving of the critical recognition it has received and is still receiving.

The process of classification occurs almost simultaneously with that of recognition. Although there may be advantages to classifying fantasy as a literary genre, in the long run it seems to cause more problems than it solves. Firstly, there are simply too many varieties of fantasy to be contained within one genre definition, sub-genres tend to multiply like Hydra's heads in the minds of determined critics. A good example of this can be found in the list of fantasy anthologies which are available in paperback. The volumes of "High Fantasy" are kept distinct from the book of "Myth Fantasy" which is in its turn entirely separate from the collection of "Christian Fantasy."¹ This is all very orderly, but unfortunately this type

¹ My illustration is taken from the Avon paperback Fantasy collection.

of sub⁴structuring only takes into account the manifest aspects of the plot, and hardly touches on the underlying themes and values of the works. Thanks to this sort of methodical pidgeon-hole organization anything concerning space ships, alien beings, or computers is placed in the science fiction dossier, anything dealing with puns, word play, or original language is relegated to the nonsense folder, and anything using plots, characters, or language that have a distinct fairy-tale feel is deposited in the fantasy file. Such a system rigorously upholds the value of diversity over unity.

Even when an honest attempt is made to by-pass the physical details and create a genre definition based solely on inner qualities, problems occur. This phenomenon is illustrated by the writings of two eminent fantasy theorists Eric S. Rabkin and William R. Irwin. These two men see fantasy as a genre defined by the principle of reality reversal. They maintain that a true fantasy should take socially accepted norms and flip them to a 180° angle. These inverted norms then become the governing principles of the fantasy world. Throughout the course of the narrative the reader perceives the tension between the laws of reality and their mirror images.²

This type of thinking only succeeds in locking a favoured few fantasies in a splendid ivory tower while their poor relations have the door shut in their faces. Both Rabkin and Irwin agree that fairy tales are not fantasies because they are set within a fantasy world and have no ties with the exterior reality.³ The reader does not have to maintain an

² Eric S. Rabkin, The Fantastic in Literature (Princeton, 1976), p. 12 and W. R. Irwin, The Game of the Impossible (Chicago, 1976), p. 76

³ Rabkin, p. 37, Irwin, p. 89

instantaneous comparison between fantasy and reality, but can forget all about the real world in his enjoyment of the story. The definition proves that fairy tales are not fantasies, yet neither critic would argue that a fairy tale does possess some traits in common with a fantasy. Once again an environment that is conducive to the growth of splinter groups has been produced.

The impediment to these classifications of fantasy is the idea of genre. Far too many divergent works contain elements of fantasy to allow for any enveloping genre definition. Whatever the wording there will always be marginal groups to contend with. Fantasy should be perceived not as a genre but rather as a texture or tone. It is adaptable enough to pervade a wide variety of genres, yet it is readily identifiable by its inventive nature. Fantasy often involves a great originality of approach. Although it does not always work such complete reversals as Rabkin and Irwin suggest, still it does take a new perspective on familiar ideas and this produces insights.

The boundless nature of fantasy is apparent if a list of some of its appearances in literature is compiled. Rabkin points out that there is an element of fantasy in the detective story.⁴ The underlying principle of every traditional mystery is the idea that every riddle has a logical solution. Rabkin stresses that detective fiction is often a celebration of order's triumph over chaos. Likewise fantasy theorists agree that the primacy of order is a guiding force in fantasy.

⁴ Rabkin, p. 66

Fantasy obviously figures in fairy tales, science fiction, myth, nonsense writing, and non-realistic animal stories. It is a strong element in time-travel stories and utopian or dystopian fiction.

Fantasy appears in epic poetry. One need only look to Odysseus' encounters with Circe, Calypso, and the Sirens, or to the candid depictions of everyday life on Mount Olympus which occur regularly throughout the course of The Iliad in order to find fantasy.

There are passages of fantasy in the novel as well. Dickens immediately comes to mind as one author who is proficient in the creation of fantasy texture. Bleak House contains two alternate modes of Dickensian fantasy. The opening pages of the novel describe the fantastic scene of a city overwhelmed by mud and fog. The fantasy here serves to underline the author's vision of the sluggish, befuddled chancery court system. The exaggerated images support the more overt social commentary of the novel. A weirder sort of fantasy can be found in the description of Mr. Krook's spontaneous combustion and the diffusion of his last remains through the night air. Such bizarre flights of fancy provide an outlet for the playful, "fantastic" side of Dickens' creativity.

Fantasy exists in lyric and narrative poetry: Coleridge made use of it when he wrote "The Ancient Mariner," "Kubla Khan", and "Christabel." There is fantasy at work in Tennyson's *Camelot* and in Milton's *Garden of Eden*. Then too there are the darker worlds of Browning's "Childe Roland" and Byron's "Darkness."

For that matter the fantasy element need not extend over the whole work. Ariel's song "Full Fathom Five" is a strikingly beautiful fantasy in miniature. Often a simple turn of phrase can become a fantasy if it combines both aptness and originality.

It is not necessary to stop in the world of literature in order to find examples of fantasy. It is a current that runs through many other arts. For instance any silent comedy enthusiast is aware that fantasy exists in the work of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Chaplin plays inventive games with many of his props. In his hands an object can undergo a series of unlikely but perfectly logical metamorphoses. A boiled shoe can become a prime piece of steaks, its laces can become spaghetti, and its nails can turn into spare ribs all in one convincing sequence. Keaton's work falls even more squarely within the boundaries of fantasy. He excels at performing sleights of hand with the physical laws of the universe. The neat way in which Keaton manages to fit the laws of momentum, balance, and other cornerstones of physics into the world of his films makes him a premier fantasist.

The list does not stop here. Fantasy can be found everywhere. It is in the art world in Rousseau's visions of thickly twining jungle filled with skulking jungle beasts. It is in opera in Wagner's ring cycle. It is in the clever repartee of verbal comedy that is so ably exemplified by the routines of the Marx Brothers. Fantasy is too ubiquitous to ever be confined within the context of a literary genre.

Although fantasy is too diffusive to be a genre, there are still a certain number of works which contain so large a share of fantastic qualities that they cannot be recognized as anything other than fantasy literature. A study of this group of writing reveals a reoccurring pattern or a number of underlying principles. Taken all together these common principles provide an insight into the nature of fantasy literature.

Foremost among these principles is order. This idea is so basic to fantasy that it runs the gauntlet of fantasy styles, beginning with nonsense and carrying through into epic fantasy. In her book The Field of Nonsense Elizabeth Sewell stresses that nonsense is governed by a set of laws.

We are going to assume that nonsense is not merely the denial of sense, a random reversal of ordinary experience and an escape from the limitations of everyday life into haphazard infinity, but is on the contrary a carefully limited world, controlled and directed by reason, a construction subject to its own laws.⁵

The governing principle of order dictates that nonsense deals with distinct entities, limited bounds, particulars instead of abstractions, and prosaic rather than poetic concepts.

In his book The Game of the Impossible William R. Irwin also stresses the importance of order, but in this case it takes the form of textual verisimilitude. Irwin believes that a good fantasy should be a literary *tromp l'oeil*. It must adhere to a realistic presentation of details such as topography, architecture, clothing, language, history, and culture. All such

⁵ Elizabeth Sewell, The Field of Nonsense (London, 1952), p. 5

details must be presented with a clarity that makes the fantastic world more credible than the real world it replaces.⁶

This principle of clarity extends further than the setting. Irwin believes that if the mind is taxed with too large a dose of fantastic elements it will refuse to believe in any of them. In order to avoid this the action should be kept clear-cut, the plot uncluttered, the characters simple but strong figures, and the language plain and pure.⁷

In order to be successful a fantasy must be a precise alternative reality. As Irwin himself defines it "A fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility; it is the narrative result of transforming the condition contrary to fact, into "fact" itself."⁸

The author's first concern is to create an original but credible new world. If as Diana Waggoner suggests the reader is enticed into reading fantasy by the promise of new worlds, then these new worlds must fulfil the reader's expectations; they must be entirely believable. "The lover of fantasy does not in the end, read it for its beautiful symbols, its princesses and quests. He reads it to experience the world in which princesses and quests must exist-to experience it as a consistent reality as well as a vision."⁹

Although no critic is prepared to argue that verisimilitude is not of prime importance to a fantasy, some do suggest that this pseudo-reality must be coloured by magic and flights of fancy. They argue that a fantasy must possess a properly fantastic atmosphere.

⁶ Irwin, p. 63

⁷ Irwin, p. 70

⁸ Irwin, p. 4

⁹ Diana Waggoner, The Hills of Faraway (New York, 1978), p. 25

Colin M. Manlove the author of Modern Fantasy: Five Studies believes that an ideal fantasy should be a total vision of reality transformed. Foremost in Manlove's criterion of excellence is the quality of otherness. He stresses that while a fantasy should deal with values and insights which are pertinent to the real world, it should not attempt to pass itself off as reality. The reader should be allowed to revel in the imaginative power which went into the creation of the characters, events, and setting without being bothered by the author's assertion that the details were learned via satellite communication with another universe.¹⁰

Manlove emphasizes beautiful craftsmanship. In fact he goes on to say that a well-evoked setting is as important as the plot. Messages and symbolic meanings may be brought to play in the text, but the author must give first priority to the creation of a potent setting which combines the colouring of a dream with the substantiality of the real world.¹¹ In this Manlove is echoing Tolkien's theory of the Secondary World. This Secondary World is linked to the real world by its ideal creations which have the inner consistency of reality, however the Secondary World is so pervaded by a quality of strangeness and wonder that it is firmly established in the magic realm.¹²

In some ways Ursula K. Le Guin is of the same mind as Manlove. Le Guin believes that fantasy must be a highly polished structure. In her essay "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie" she emphasizes the importance of style in

¹⁰ Colin Manlove, Modern Fantasy: Five Studies (Cambridge, 1975), p. 2

¹¹ Manlove, pp. 7-8

¹² J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories" in Manlove, p. 161

such as Lewis and Tolkien. She believes that these writers would rather cater to the "death wish" of their readers by allowing them to escape their society than force them to confront the repressive social structures which caused their initial dissatisfaction.²⁵ Jackson believes that a fantasy is poised between the real and the marvelous so that it can "represent dissatisfaction and frustration with a cultural order which deflects or defeats desire, yet refuse to have recourse to compensatory, transcendental other-worlds."²⁶

Jackson's favourite fantasies tend to be bleak. They are filled with timelessness, formlessness, emptiness, and confusion. They work to erode the pillars of society by corroding their categorical structures. They are social statements which deal in confrontations and not escapes.

All of the cited critics have raised legitimate issues. It is impossible to ignore one opinion in favour of another because there is no one theory that is absolutely correct. Fantasy is a blend of all four of these elements. In general it can be defined as a perfect intermingling of imagination and reality. It is dream curbed by the hand of reason. Fantasy allows the reader to benefit from these two forces. It reminds him of old ideas and enlightens him with new ones.

The poetic language in which a fantasy is expressed and the archetypal origins of its characters and events are elements which grow out of the imaginative faculty. These imaginative elements are balanced out by principles drawn from reality. Foremost among these is verisimilitude.

²⁵ Jackson, p. 156

²⁶ Jackson, p. 180

when Alice wishes that flowers could talk she is confirming the reality of mute plants. This reality is immediately shattered when the garden begins to speak. Rabkin argues that if the reader will allow himself to participate in the text by following the author's narrative signs, which in this case are represented by Alice's wish that flowers could speak, he will experience the fantasy which the work has to offer.¹⁴

A second group of critics express more concern with the material out of which a fantasy is made than with the fantasy's stylistic qualities. Of the critics who give priority to psychological and structural rather than stylistic components the two most fluent are C. S. Lewis and Ursula K. Le Guin. Le Guin can be counted among their number because she deals with their concerns. In her essay "Dreams Must Explain Themselves" she suggests that the components of fantasy come from the author's unconscious.¹⁵ Lewis and Tolkien also advocate a subconscious source for the material.

For Lewis the nexus of the question lies in the archetypal realm. The heart of fantasy is formed by primordial, poetic, and intrinsically exciting matters. The writer of fantasy is drawing on mythic or mythopoeic elements whose roots are the archetypes of human experience. Nor is the writer's meaning lost on uninitiated readers. There is nothing in fantasy that these readers do not know, there are only things of which they need to be reminded. Fantasy is a process of discovery for the reader. The material upon which fantasy is based is likened to "an unfocused gleam of divine truth falling on the human imagination."¹⁶

¹⁴ Rabkin, p. 4 and p. 13

¹⁵ Ursula K. Le Guin, "Dreams Must Explain Themselves," in Fantasists on Fantasy, eds. Robert H. Boyer and Kenneth J. Zahorski (New York, 1984), p. 187

¹⁶ C. S. Lewis, "Miracles: A Preliminary Study," in Irwin, pp. 49-50

Tolkien's theory of fantasy is complex by comparison. His theories of Recovery and Consolation are applicable to this context. The reader regains a clear view of the essence of things through the process of Recovery. Tolkien believes that with time familiar objects lose their individuality because they are seen so often that they are taken for granted. Fantasy strips these familiar objects of their common-place setting and reintroduces them in a new setting so that the reader may recover a sense of their uniqueness.¹⁷

Consolation is accomplished by the happy ending. This does not simply mean the stock situation of having all the good characters end happily, but goes far deeper. "The unique quality in a successful fantasy is joy and this is imparted by a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth."¹⁸

A fantasy builds a new and autonomous world out of the things which we hold in common. If this is done with the "pure elfish craft" of Tolkien's ideal then the fantasy can reveal truths about ourselves, our world, and even God.¹⁹

Lewis, Tolkien, and Le Guin would agree that a fantasy is founded on archetypes. These essences of life are best understood in the Jungian sense of the term. Fantasy deals with primordial images from the collective unconscious of humanity. It draws its material from the needs, desires, fears, and experiences that are common to all mankind.

¹⁷ Tolkien, "Leaf by Niggle" in Manlove, p. 165

¹⁸ Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories" in Manlove, p. 163

¹⁹ Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories" in Manlove, p. 161

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²⁵ Jackson, p. 156

²⁶ Jackson, p. 180

the actual world, gives it a new dimension of depth."²²

Lloyd Alexander takes a somewhat different view of the case. He too believes that fantasy awakens the sterling qualities of author and reader alike, but he goes further to state that the fantasy world represents the "substance of things hoped for." In many respects the fantasy world is superior to the present world. He argues that it will only be a matter of time before its higher honour, its nobility of deed, and its beauty of expression will be realized in our own world. Fantasy instills hope in the readers hearts.

Hope is one of the most precious human values fantasy can offer us--and offer us in abundance. Whatever the hardships of the journey, the days of despair, fantasy implicitly promises to lead us through them. Hope is an essential thread in the fabric of all fantasies, an Ariadne's thread to guide us out of the labyrinth, the last treasure in Pandora's box. If we say, "While there's life, there's hope," we can also say, "While there's hope, there's life."²³

A third group of critics approach fantasy as a social or cultural manifestation. In her book Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion Rosemary Jackson argues that fantasy is produced within and determined by its social context. "Though it may struggle against the limits of this context, often being articulated upon that very struggle, it cannot be understood in isolation from it."²⁴ This position makes her critical of fantasists

²² C. S. Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," in Irwin, p. 52

²³ Lloyd Alexander, "Wishful Thinking--or Hopeful Dreaming?," in Fantasists on Fantasy, eds. Robert H. Boyer and Kenneth J. Zahoráki (New York, 1984), p. 148

²⁴ Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion (London, 1981), p. 3

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²⁵ Jackson, p. 156

²⁶ Jackson, p. 180

All the magical flourishes must be portrayed as tangible realities in order to be suitable for fantasy literature. Then too, as Jackson suggests, a fantasy cannot be entirely involved with intrinsic questions. It should also deal with the pertinent social concerns of its readers.

All of these factors must be combined harmoniously. If one is over-emphasized the balance of the fantasy will be upset. Just as an excess of imagination will send a fantasy floating off to Never Neverland, so a surplus of meaning will send it crashing through the floor. For instance, Huxley's novel Brave New World is an inventive piece which presents a vividly realistic picture of a future society. However its heavy social message disqualifies it as a fantasy. The structure of fantasy is such that it cannot withstand heavy, pounding didacticisms. That is like trying to carry bricks in a gossamer bag. The final result can only be literary failure.

A good definition of fantasy is given in Diana Waggoner's critical overview of fantasy, The Hills of Faraway. She presents her definition as an equation in which fantasy equals the sum total of fairy tales plus realism plus fabulation. The fairy tale contributes psychological and emotional symbols which are embodied in rational form but which possess evocative power. The realistic tradition brings order, realism, and relevant concerns. The process of fabulation gives depth to the fantasy by relating the ordinary to the numinous world. The reader is shown the connection between the conscious and the unconscious, the temporal and the eternal, the real and the ideal.²⁷

²⁷ Waggoner, p. 27.

Relevant as these theories are to Emily Brontë's poems, there is one critical work which almost seems to have been specifically written for the justification of her poetry. Johan Huizinga's book Homo Ludens is a study of the play element in culture. This text is particularly applicable to Emily's work in the sense that Gondal had its inception in the Brontës' childhood games.

The main point of Huizinga's study is that play forms the matter out of which culture grows. "For many years the conviction has grown upon me that civilization arises and unfolds in and as play."²⁸ Huizinga believes that the elements of play and culture are identical. With time the primitive rituals which had their beginnings as play had grown and developed into cultural institutions. It could be said that the seeds of play grow into the plants of culture.

It adorns life, amplifies it, and is to that extent a necessity both for the individual --as a life function--and for society by reason of the meaning it contains, its significance, its expressive value, its spiritual and social associations, in short as a culture function.²⁹

It should be noted that Huizinga credits play with a set of characteristics that are strikingly similar to those granted to fantasy.

Huizinga's evaluation of the elements which comprise the play world is interesting because so many of them can be found in Emily's fantasy world.

The play world is not a real world. It is a temporary world with a disposition all its own. The players are quite aware of this unreality, but the spell of the game can catch them up and dispel their remembrance of this fact. "Any game can at any time wholly run away with the players."³⁰

²⁸ Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (London, 1949), p. 17

²⁹ Huizinga, p. 27

³⁰ Huizinga, p. 27

Although play is not real it has the capability to grow to the stature of reality and stay that way for any given period of time. Witness Emily and Anne's walk home from Keighley in which they did not just pretend to be, but actually were eight young Royalists escaping from the Palace of Instruction.³¹

The playground world is a world apart. It is a kind of consecrated spot in which special rules apply.³² Emily also worked in a magic circle of her own making. Either of the two sketches which represent the creation of Gondal material give the impression that the borders of the real world have receded. In both drawings the setting is left as a series of sketchy forms and the focus is placed on the author and her writing box, or on the authors and their paperwork. The picture of Emily and Anne surrounded by their Gondal manuscripts fits this context particularly well. In a typical creation of an artist's dreamworld Emily has carefully labelled the Gondal papers and the tin box which held the Gondal material, but has left the rest of the room to be represented by a group of four irregularly shaped outlines.³³

Play and fantasy connect in many dimensions. The two activities follow parallel lines and eventually converge on a common point.

Play demands absolute order. The least deviation from it "spoils the game," robs it of its character, and makes it worthless. All play has its own set of rules by which the player must abide in order to stay in the game.

³¹ Emily Brontë, "Birthday Note 1845," in Unquiet soul. A Biography of Charlotte Brontë, Margot Peters (New York, 1976), p. 19f.

³² Huizinga, pp. 28-29.

³³ This illustration can be found in Winnifred Gérin, Anne Brontë, (London, 1959), the plate adjoining page 112.

This absolute respect for order allows it to bring a limited perfection into the confusion of life.³⁴ Play is orderly by nature. It contains its own course and meaning and its own limits of time and space.³⁵ A game does not endure forever; it has a time span. A fantasy too is confined by limits. It is most fully alive during the time it takes the reader to read it through. However, it is possible for both play and fantasy to outwit these limitations and live on in the mind for a considerable time.

Huizinga finds the element of tension in a game. "Tension means uncertainty, chanciness; a striving to decide the issue and so end it."³⁶ In the play world this tension is best exemplified by games of skill which call for some ingenuity on the part of the player. This principle is true in the fantasy world as well. Most fantasists set themselves a particular question to explore in the course of their narrative.

Huizinga divides play into two groups: a contest for something and a representation of something. The latter of the two includes most games of the imagination. It is here that the player sets aside his own identity for another, often markedly different from his own.

The child is making an image of something different, something more beautiful, or more sublime, or more dangerous than what he usually is...the child is literally "beside himself" with delight, transported beyond himself to such an extent that he almost believes he actually is such and such a thing, without however, wholly losing consciousness of ordinary reality.³⁷

Likewise fantasy strives to go beyond the substance of reality without losing

³⁴ Huizinga, p. 30

³⁵ Huizinga, p. 28

³⁶ Huizinga, p. 29

³⁷ Huizinga, pp. 32-33

track of its essence.

Superficially speaking, Emily's Gondal world might appear to relate more closely to Huizinga's "play world" than to the critics' "fantasy worlds."

However, a study of Huizinga's philosophy of play shows that play and fantasy are grounded on common ideas. A play world is just a step away from a fantasy world. The fascinations of the Gondal world invite us to close the gap between the two; to take that single step.

GONDAL AS FANTASY

The one question remaining to be answered is the most vital of the whole project: is Gondal really a fantasy? Can it be best understood as a fantasy structure along the lines developed by the critics who were examined in the third chapter? It is certainly true that a superficial assessment of the Gondal world would prove it to be a fantasy, but a superficial fantasy is of little use to anyone. Obviously it is a terrible disappointment for the critic to discover that a seemingly solid topic of study is actually hollow at the centre, but in this case the person most affected by such a discovery would be the poet herself. Emily Brontë seems to have set herself high standards. The discontent she experienced when her own performance failed to meet these standards is never more clearly expressed than in a personal tirade she scribbled on the bottom of a page of poetry.

I am more terrifically and idiotically and brutally
STUPID than ever I was in the whole course of my
incarnate existence. The above precious lines are the
fruits of one hour's most agonising labour between
past 6 and ½ past 7 in the evening of
July-1836¹

This attitude is actually a very promising one. Devotion to superficial efforts was not in Emily's nature. If Gondal possessed no

¹ Emily Brontë, "Note on a page of Poetry," in Emily Brontë a biography, Winnifred Gérin (Oxford, 1971), p. 67

inherent value she would not have stayed with it for fourteen years. Emily believed in her world. Such a trust is not inspired by a hollow sphere.

The creation of an "alternative reality" is of primary importance to any fantasy. Without this basic structure the world will not stand up to the reader's scrutiny. The alternative reality is a duplication of the real world. The author must arrange the descriptive details in such a way as to create verisimilitude. Obviously geography, chronology, geneology, and cultural values are particularly important in this context since they are instrumental in the creation of a believable world. These categories will serve as good guidelines in an investigation of Gondal as a fully realized world.

Geography is one of Emily's strong points. She always had a feeling for nature poetry and her talent does not desert her in the Gondal poems. Fannie Ratchford comments on the large part that the landscape actually plays in Gondal.

Gondal's chief stage of action was the wide expanse of earth and sea. It was the cool, shady bower of the forest or the white, moonlit beach that heard the vows of the lovers; the mountain glen that gave a death retreat to the wounded outlaw; and the wild waste of the moor that drank the blood of the suicide and the assassin's victim--Earth was mother and nurse to Emily's Gondalians.²

In spite of the many lost details it is still possible for the reader to become familiar with the character of the Gondalian landscape. If studies of the two islands are compared it is soon apparent that Gaaldine has been

² Fannie E. Ratchford, The Brontës' Web of Childhood, (New York, 1941), p. 66

sketched in with fainter brush strokes than Gondal. Still, there are enough thumbnail sketches of the southern land scattered throughout the poems to make the reader aware of its salient features.

The southernmost provinces are similar in climate and landscape to the typical enchanted island of the South Pacific. Ula is continually described as an Edenic sanctuary.

And then I thought of Ula's bowers
Beyond the southern sea;
Her tropic prairies bright with flowers
And rivers wandering free. (166, 11.9-12).

This profusion of flowers is carried through all three southern provinces. Ula has the wild flowers of its tropic prairies, Zalona has bowers of myrtle and gardens of lilies (156, 11.61-64), and Zedora's rocky terrain is brightened by blossoms (150, 1.3).

The one description of a southern city is also encompassed by this fairy-tale quality. Zalona is described as a walled city whose towers and steeples of white stone gleam beneath the bright blue sky.

All blue and bright, in glorious light,
The morn comes marching on;
And now Zalona's steeples white
Glow golden in the sun. (156, 11. 1-4).

Although Zedora is grouped with the southern provinces (141, 11.35-36) its landscape is noticeably different. It would seem safe to assume that it is the most northerly of the three. The palm trees, rivers, and flowers are still present, but cedar forests and rocky outcrops are also prominent topographical features.

'Twas night; her comrades gathered all
Within their city's rocky wall;
When flowers were closed and day was o'er,
Their joyous hearts awoke the more.
But, lonely in her distant cave,
She heard the river's restless wave
Chafing its banks with dreamy flow:

Music for mirth and wail for woe.
 Palm trees and cedars ~~towering~~ high
 Deepened the gloom of evening's sky; (150, 11.1-10).

In many respects northern Gaaldine sounds a good deal like southern England. Its landscape features stately manor houses set on rolling parkland, or framed by deep forests. Elbë Hall is a good example of such an estate.

Wide, swelling woodlands seemed to rise
 Beneath soft, sunny southern skies-
 Old Elbë Hall, his noble home,
 Towered 'mid its trees, whose foliage green
 Rustled with the kind airs that come
 From summer heavens when most serene.
 And bursting through the leafy shade
 A gush of golden sunshine played,
 Bathing the walls in amber light
 And sparkling in the water clear
 That stretched below-reflected bright
 The whole wide world of cloudless air-- (9, 11. 41-52).

Emily does not only borrow elements from the pleasant garden counties of the south, Dartmoor seems to have found its way into northern Gaaldine as well. The Gaaldinian prison caves seem to be located on a desert moor, as dreary and dark and barren a place as Dartmoor has always been reputed to be (85, 11.3-4 and 1. 9).

Gondal's rough and rugged scenery is far more vital than Gaaldine's and it absorbs the majority of Emily's attention. Gondal is a land of mountains and inland lakes. There are forests and glens but most of Gondal is covered by wide expanses of moor land. Winnifred Gérin was probably not far wrong when she suggested that Gondal's landscape is an amalgamation of Yorkshire and Scotland.³

Northern Gondal is a land of high mountains, some of which are lofty enough to stay snow-capped throughout the summer months (9, 11. 25-28). It is a fierce, unfriendly land which gives no quarter to the weak. In the northern

³ Gérin, p. 21

most reaches the terrain is enough to vanquish most people. It is primarily inhabited by mountain goats and eagles, although some shepherds and mountain men are hardy enough to share this territory with them. Their scattered huts are connected by narrow tracks which follow the rocky ledges and at times wind perilously close to the chasms's edge.⁴

The lower lands are less dangerous to navigate but their bitter weather makes them as fatal as the mountains.

It was night, and on the mountains
Fathoms deep the snowdrifts lay;
Streams and waterfalls and fountains
Down in darkness stole away.
Long ago the hopeless peasant
Left his sheep all buried there
Sheep that through the summer pleasant
He had watched with fondest care. (160, ll. 1-8)

In southern Gondal the mountains appear as shadows on the horizon.
The land is still rugged, but it is gentler.

And here the fresh leaves gleam and glow
And there, down in the lake below,
The tiny ripples flame.
The breeze sings like a summer breeze
Should sing in summer skies
And tower-like rocks and tent-like trees
In mingled glory rise (110, ll. 3-9).

Although Gondal is a harsh land there is much in it that is strikingly beautiful. Native Gondalians scorn the Gaaldinian countryside and turn to their own moors which touch their souls in a manner that no southern garden could ever approach (166, ll. 31-34).

I've seen this dell in July's shine
As lovely as an angel's dream;
Above, heaven's depth of blue divine;
Around, the evening's golden beam.
I've seen the purple heather-bell
Look out by many a storm-worn stone;
And oh, I've seen such music swell,

⁴ This information is culled from the descriptive passages scattered throughout poem 75.

Such wild notes wake these passes lone-
 So soft, yet so intensely felt,
 So low, yet so distinctly heard
 My breath would pause, my eyes would melt,
 And my tears dew the green heath-sward.
 I'd linger here a summer day,
 Nor care how fast the hours flew by,
 Nor mark the sun's departing ray
 Shine sadly glorious from the sky (108, ll. 1-16).

It is impossible to judge the extent of the Gondal chronology without the prose narratives. It is very likely that Gondal did have a detailed chronology of its own. When one recalls that Wuthering Heights had such a detailed time scheme that C. P. Sanger was able to work out all the dates of the principle events using only the information contained in the novel, it seems ludicrous to suppose that Gondal could have been built on haphazard notions of time. Further proof for the existence of a Gondal chronology is provided by the five poems which actually have Gondal dates. Three of these headings specify the month as well as the year in which these events transpired, a fact which suggests that Emily had indeed established a time pattern.⁵

There are certain poems which only work if they are seen in the context of passing time. One poem in particular in which an old courtier is struck by the resemblance of two young lovers to a pair of young people from an earlier generation has an eerie sense of déjà vu about it.

In the same place, when Nature wore
 The same celestial glow,
 I'm sure I've seen those forms before
 But many springs ago;
 And only he had locks of light,
 And she had raven hair;
 While now, his curls are dark as night
 And hers as morning fair (153, ll. 1-8).

⁵ Poem 104 took place on the tenth of January 1827, Poem 178 in September 1825, Poem 180 in September 1826, and poems 158 and 164 in the year 1830.

The traces of Gondal's genealogy are even fainter than those of its chronology. Emily had certainly arranged her Gondals into families, but only snatches of these relationships figure in the poems. By making use of the references to sister, brother, and child, and by carefully noting the repetition of any designated surname, W. D. Paden did succeed in plotting a family tree in which all the principal Gondals figure.⁶ Unfortunately there is no way of knowing how much of his surmise is correct. There is also evidence to suggest that Emily had grouped her Gondals in political relationships as well. If the ties of loyalty which bind the Gleneden family of Ula to the S. family of Exina can be taken as being at all representative, then it would seem that not only families but also clans exist in Gondal.⁷

The one overriding value in Gondal is best summed up by W. D. Paden who remarks that no one in Gondal has a "coward soul".⁸ Stoicism, valour in the face of fate, and endurance comprise the code of Gondalian behaviour.

Through life's hard task I did not ask
Celestial aid, celestial cheer;
I saw my fate without its mask,
And met it too without a tear. (167, ll. 9-12).

Fannie Ratchford speaks of some other important precepts in Gondalian society: "The people of this northern continent were a bold, hardy, elemental race to whom loyalty was the highest virtue and treachery the darkest crime; freedom was their dearest blessing and prison their deepest hell."⁹

⁶ W. D. Paden, An Investigation of Gondal (New York, 1958), p. 51.

⁷ In poem 63 the imprisoned Arthur Gleneden has a vision of his enemy Julius' death. He is obviously a member of the Exinian army.

⁸ Paden, p. 74

⁹ Ratchford, p. 65

There are no villains in Gondal. The only people despised are those who shrink back and refuse to accept the challenge of life. A turncoat in the Republican Revolution is not the ignoble creature that he seems because he is motivated by personal conviction. He possesses the courage to adhere to his own beliefs even if they will bring down shame upon his head (179, ll. 61-64). Likewise the outlaw Douglas emerges as the tragic hero of the piece even though he is a confirmed assassin. The corruption and cruel laws gail him to such an extent that he is driven to strike out at them, thus making himself a wanderer and a criminal (143, ll. 29-36). Even Julius who is responsible for war, betrayal, and murder is redeemed by the daring which led him to attempt it all in the first place. Blakeian energy counts for much in Gondal.

An even more difficult aspect of reality to attain is a believable balance between reward and punishment. W. H. Auden calls for a realistic interplay of fate, choice, and chance.¹⁰ In other words, events must come to pass as they normally would. The forces of good cannot automatically overcome insurmountable odds simply because they are the protagonists. If the author allows his favourite characters to remain untouched by corruption, ill luck, and death then he is stretching the bounds of credibility too far. A glance into the annals of the Angrian civil war shows that Charlotte was guilty of this crime. Not only did she carefully arrange matters so that only two major characters were killed as a result of this uprising, but she went

¹⁰ W. H. Auden, "The Quest Hero" in Colin Manlove, Modern Fantasy: Five Studies (Cambridge: 1975), p. 184

further and allowed one of the casualties to come back to life. Mary Percy seems to have been none the worse for her demise, and she went on to play her old part in all the subsequent stories.¹¹

This was not Emily's way. No such miracles occur in Gondal, in fact so many people die that one is led to think that for Emily the pleasure of staging a heroic death outweighs the enjoyment of having the character alive.

Not only do the Gondals die, but they suffer for their transgressions. "But in Emily's Gondal sin was real, paid for with Old Testament certainty in fixed wages of suffering--real suffering--and death."¹²

This punishment works in two ways. First there is the suffering which springs from the pangs of conscience. These haunt the mind and rob the body of its vitality

Sleep brings no joy to me,
Remembrance never dies;
My soul is given to misery
And lives in sighs.
Sleep brings no rest to me;
The shadows of the dead
My waking eyes may never see
Surround my bed.
Sleep brings no strength to me,
No power renewed to brave,
I only sail a wilder sea,
A darker wave.
Sleep brings no wish to knit
My harassed heart beneath;
My only wish is to forget
In sleep of death. (34, 11. 1-8, 13-16, 21-24)

Secondly there is a principle of divine retribution which ensures that every sin will return to the sinner. Julius and Douglas both lead violent lives and both die violent deaths (98 and 143). Fernando's desertion causes the girl who loves him to die of a broken heart (42), and Fernando is led

¹¹ Ratchford, p. 131

¹² Ratchford, p. 102

to commit suicide by his thwarted passion for Augusta (85). Augusta fashions the weapon for her assassination through her cruelty to Angelica (143). Gondal operates under the old proverb "as ye sow so shall ye reap."

Fannie Ratchford was quite right in attributing these wages of sin to a Biblical source. They are best seen in the context of the Old Testament philosophy. Like everything else about her, Emily's religious beliefs are something of a mystery. Her stout agreement with the statement that religious beliefs were best left between the individual and God explains why she did not exert her personal tenets.¹³ As there are no overt religious traumas visible in her writing it has been generally concluded that she escaped the blasting influence of her Aunt Branwell's doctrine. However, judging from the tone of some of the poems, it might be wise to assume that she was more affected by her Aunt's religion than had been previously believed.

Aunt Branwell was a Wesleyan Methodist. Unlike the Calvinists this sect believed that redemption was possible for all, but the individual must prove himself worthy of salvation through the medium of good works.¹⁴ It is easy to see how the children would have understood their Aunt's theology in the terms of a contract of reciprocity; good deeds are rewarded with salvation, while bad deeds incur damnation. Anne Brontë confided to a Moravian minister that she had been taught to regard religion as a law and not as an impulse of love.¹⁵

¹³ Winnifred Gérin, *Anne Brontë*, (London, 1959), p. 39

¹⁴ Gérin, *AB*, pp. 32-33

¹⁵ Gérin, *AB*, p. 101

In keeping with this teaching, Gondal operates on judiciary principles in which the punishment is made to fit the crime.

Even in their incomplete state enough information can be culled from the Gondal manuscripts to prove that Emily's world is a fully-realized one. To be sure there are many gaps which must either be filled up with surmise, or else be left empty, but these gaps are largely due to the lack of any accompanying prose narrative. The Gondal structure is missing some of its framework, and the reader may have to choose some of his steps with care, but he can enter without the fear that the world will collapse around him.

Once the creation of a functional alternative reality has been achieved, the fantasist can begin to embellish the new world. The first set of details are basically factual in nature. Although these facts are of primary importance they do not adequately touch upon the nuance of the world's essence. For this, the author usually includes a series of primarily descriptive passages which convey a sense of atmosphere to the reader. Together exposition and atmosphere represent the sense and sensibility of fantasy.

The atmosphere created by Emily's poems is well described by Charlotte. "I thought them condensed and terse, vigorous and genuine. To my ear, they had also a peculiar music--wild, melancholy, and elevating."¹⁶ The Gondal world is not a particularly happy place. It has been mentioned that stoicism is the overwhelming characteristic of its people. They suffer

¹⁶ Charlotte Brontë, "Biographical Notice," in EB, Gêrin, p. 182

the trials of fate, and strive not so much to overcome them, but to bravely bear the burden. Charlotte's melancholy but elevating music arises from this situation.

There are certain soliloquies which express both the courage and the despair experienced by all Gondalians. These qualities are definitely in evidence in "Remembrance," one of Emily's three most famous poems.

But when the days of golden dreams had perished
And even despair was powerless to destroy,
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened and fed without the aid of joy,
Then did I check the tears of useless passion,
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine! (182, ll. 21-28)

There is beauty in its simplicity and power in its understatement.

Fernando de Samara's death speech contains both these elements as well as an element of defiance.

Light up thy Halls!! 'Tis closing day;
I'm drear and lone and far away-
Cold blows on my breast the north winds bitter sigh,
And oh, my couch is bleak beneath the rainy sky! (85, ll. 1-4)

Even the landscape is not exempt from this tone of melancholy wildness.

There shines the moon, at noon of night-
Vision of glory-dream of light!
Holy as heaven-undimmed and pure,
Looking down on the lonely moor-
And lonelier still beneath her ray
That drear moor stretches far away
Till it seems strange that aught can lie
Beyond its zone of silver sky. (9, ll. 1-8)

Moonlight nights are an integral part of the land of Faerie, but there is no confusing that land with Gondal. The presence of heath and rock serve to dispel any suggestions of a gentle, fairyland landscape.

Emily does write of secret fairy bowers, but the reader never forgets that a landscape like this,

'Tis moonlight, summer moonlight,
All soft, and still, and fair;
The solemn hour of midnight
Breaths sweetly everywhere.
But most where trees are sending
Their breezy branches on high,
Or stooping low are lending
A shelter from the sky. (139, ll. 1-8),

can, with the progress of the seasons become a scene of death.

But now there is no wandering glow,
No gleam to say that God is nigh;
And coldly spreads thy couch of snow,
And harshly sounds thy lullaby.
Forests of heather, dark and long,
Wave their brown, branching arms above,
And they must soothe thee with their song,
And they must shield my child of love! (108, ll. 21-28)

The greater part of the pastoral scenes in the Gondal poems are darkened by the shadow of death. The glen in which Augusta's grave is situated is beautiful in its tranquility, but it is a beauty tinged with melancholy like that of a country churchyard.

The linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells
That hide my lady fair:
The wild deer browse above her breast;
The wild birds raise their brood;
And they her smiles of love caressed,
Have left her solitude!
Blow, west wind, by the lonely mound,
And murmur, summer stream!
There is no need of other sound
To soothe my Lady's dreams. (173, ll. 1-8 and 25-28)

Atmosphere is the author's attempt to put the aura of his world into words. It is an expression of the spirit behind the substance. The passages should not be dead words which simply sit on the pages, they should speak to the reader; they should sing. Emily's Gondal passages do not sing, but they

do chant in a sombre monastic kind of tone which answers the prerequisite just as well.

Magic is an important element in many fantasies. It is a blanket term which covers persons, things, and occurrences which are accepted norms in the fantasy world, but which would not be acknowledged as possible in the real world.

There are many forms of magic. The most common make use of elements drawn from myth, legend, religion, or folk traditions. Emily's magic can be understood in terms of her theological background. Although Aunt Branwell managed to instill a good number of Wesleyan precepts into her nieces, her set of Methodist Magazines had an even greater impact on them.

The set-up of the Methodist Magazine followed a regular pattern which included in every month's issue...the relation of death-bed scenes vouched for by eye-witnesses, accounts of "conversions," descriptions of missionary activities, letters from readers dealing with specific aspects of faith; the texts of outstanding sermons, reviews of new theological books, and "special features"... with many occurrences of miraculous and supernatural characters...¹⁷

It was this last group of articles that held the greatest interest for the children. They were drawn by the glamour and thrill of the supernatural. When Charlotte looks back on the contents of the magazine it is these articles that she remembers "...mad Methodist Magazines full of miracles and apparitions, of prenatal warnings, ominous dreams and frenzied fanaticism."¹⁸ Taking this into account, it comes as no surprise to find that the three factors of Emily's magic are fatality, predestination, and visitations. However, it should be noted that Emily is not playing sinners

¹⁷ Gérin, AB, pp. 37-38

¹⁸ Charlotte Brontë, Shirley (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 376

and saved with her Gondals. The Methodist principles are placed in a pagan context. The Gondals' destinies are determined by detached fates. Endurance, not piety is being tested.

Fatality is a strong force in the Gondal world. In keeping with this Emily personifies the fates. Both good and evil spirits appear in the Gondal poems. They move along parallel, but separate lines and remain consistently distinct from each other. Neither power ever intrudes upon the other's territory.

An evil spirit haunts young Arthur Exina. When the time is ripe it approaches the boy's bedside and instills in the resisting child an awareness of his own doomed existence.

He hears me: what a sudden start
Sent the blood icy to that heart;
He wakens, and how ghastly white
That face looks in the dim lamp light.
Those tiny hands in vain essay
To thrust the shadowy fiend away;
There is a horror on his brow
An anguish in his bosom now;
A fearful anguish in his eyes
Fixed strainedly on the vacant air;
Heavily bursts in long-drawn sighs
His panting breath, enchained by fear. (14, 11. 29-40).

The child never recovers from this experience. He goes through his youth as a melancholy boy of sorrow, always shadowed by his grim fate. Its magnitude is such that it cannot be pushed aside, and its presence taints the hopeful aspects of the boy's spirit. Arthur describes life with the ever-present shadow in a series of four metaphors.

In dungeons dark I cannot sing,
In sorrow's thrall 'tis hard to smile:
What bird can soar with broken wing?
What heart can bleed and joy the while? (77, 11.1-4).

The good spirits of Gondal could not be more different in appearance from this terrifying apparition.

Her wavy hair, on her shoulders bare,
It shone like soft clouds round the moon;
Her noiseless feet, like melting sleet,
Gleamed white a moment, then were gone (95, ll. 25-28).

This ghostly woman presides over the wilderness of Northern Gondal. She is a guardian spirit who protects the life of any man or animal which sets foot within her sphere. She does not blight, but rather comforts and sustains the spirits of those who come into contact with her. This spirit does not have the sweeping power of its evil counterpart, but it too can predict the destiny of a human being.

And deem thou not that quite forgot
My mercy will forsake thee now;
I bring thee care and not despair;
Abasement but not overthrow.
To a silent home thy foot may come
And years may follow of toilsome pain;
But yet I swear by that burning tear
The loved shall meet on its hearth again. (95, ll. 57-64)

It has already been mentioned that in Gondal the fates work on separate lines. A doomed character cannot avert his fate, nor can a blessed character be perverted. Destinies are inexorable in Gondal. This situation places the Calvinist doctrine of election and reprobation in a pagan context. Predestination plays an important part in the Gondal world. The course of the characters' lives are determined at their births. Everything has been preordained by fate.

A classic example of predestination occurs in the first series of verse which Emily allowed to remain intact. The planets present in the sky and the character of the day itself reflect the nature of the newly born Augusta. She is a child of the planet Venus and as such is set aside to

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experience the blessings and curses of the love which is her birthright (1, 11. 1-6). Beyond this the entire course of Augusta's life is mirrored by the behaviour of the sun during the first day of her life. This information is delivered in a kind of soothsayer's chant beginning, "Lady, watch Apollo's journey:/ Thus thy first born's course shall be (2, 11. 5-6)" No poem exists which can be readily identified as a description of Augusta's natal day, but it is likely that the glorious day break preceded a blazing hot day which was brought to an abrupt close by a violent storm. This much can be inferred from Lord Eldred's musings over Augusta's dead body in which he speaks of her as a dazzling sun, glorious but comet-like in its course through the heavens (143, 11. 324-327).

Future events are also revealed in prophetic dreams. There are two instances of this in the Gondal poems. The first of these occurs in "Gleneden's Dream." Here the imprisoned man lapses into a fit in which he sees the assassination of Julius take place. Gleneden gains no comfort from his vision. When he awakens he experiences only despair because he believes it to be nothing more than a product of his own fervent desires, a species of wishful thinking which is incapable of ever being realized (63).

The other dreamer attributes more meaning to her vision. In this second poem a woman is sitting wakeful in the early hours of the morning. She is seemingly confronted by the despairing ghost of her dead lord which is consumed by the fear that the scorn and derision which it receives from its old enemies is simply an earthly version of the attitude with which God will receive it at the Last Judgement. She comforts the ghost, and as its sobs fade away she realizes that the man she saw as a sorrowing spirit is sleeping

peacefully by her side. To her alone has been entrusted the vision of this reckless man's unhappy end (34).

The abundance of prophecy in the poems rather suggests that a court prophet should be in evidence on the list of characters. It has already been mentioned that the poems dealing with Augusta's birth have a definite oracular sound to them. There is another poem which also rings of the strange and magical. It too is obviously a magical incantation given as counsel to a perplexed questioner.

This starry night shall tidings bring;
Go out upon the breezy moor,
Watch for a bird with sable wing,
And beak and talons dripping gore.
Look not around, look not beneath,
But mufely trace its airy way;
Mark where it lights upon the heath,
Then wanderer kneel thee down and pray. (90, ll. 1-8).

Paden believes that these lines guide Augusta to the dying Alexander.¹⁹

Whatever their place in the story, it is to Emily's credit that she can take the idea of mystical portents from the Methodist Magazine and treat it in a way that invites comparison with Greek myths or with Macpherson's stories of Ossian.

Likely as it is that a sibyl or prophet is present in Gondal, no obvious candidate presents himself for the post. Ratchford suggests that Lord Eldred may be the man,²⁰ but there is really no evidence to support the idea. Certainly he seems to put in an appearance at many of the crucial moments in Augusta's life, but he is far more of a mentor than a prophet.²¹

¹⁹ Paden, p. 76

²⁰ Fannie E. Ratchford, Gondal's Queen (Austin, 1955), p. 38.

²¹ In poems 143 and 171 Lord Eldred laments the fact that Augusta trusted her emotional nature for guidance and in poem 110 he appears to be taking her to task over her love affairs. He seems to be a senior member of the household who regrets the turns her life has taken.

Perhaps it is only fitting that the person who voices these prophetic speeches should be an enigma who appears for one dramatic moment, makes a pronouncement, then disappears without a trace.

The prevalence of ghosts in the Gondal stories might have turned Emily's world into a "spook show" if it were not for the fact that the ghosts interact with the people who see them. The inspirational effect of the spirit on the moorland wanderer, and the blasting effect of the apparition on Arthur Exina show that Emily's ghosts affect the lives that they enter. An even more marked effect on the individual is produced by the spirits who have some moral value to impart.

An example of this enriching power can be found in the poem "Julian M. and A. G. Rochelle". Most Brontë critics now agree that the opening verses of the poem describe Lord Julian's nightly vigil as he awaits the visit of his dead love A. G. Rochelle. Her influence has changed him from an idle young man who seeks amusement by strolling about the castle dungeons mocking the prisoners (190, ll. 13-14), to a stoic capable of quietly enduring personal insult in order to follow a course he believes in (190, ll. 137-144). She brings values into his vapid life and her spirit continues the process in its nightly visitations.

An almost parallel situation is found in the earlier part of the poem in which the imprisoned Rochelle depends upon a spiritual visitor to inspire her against despair (190, ll. 65-68). This twilight messenger is a far more philosophical conception than Julian's midnight angel, but it is also a nourishing presence. Rochelle's will is fortified as is Julian's character.

Another poem describes the recurrent visits of a ghost of conscience.

I'll come when the heart's real feeling
Has entire, unbiased sway,
And my influence o'er thee stealing,
Grief deepening, joy congealing,
Shall bear thy soul away. (37, ll. 6-10)

This is moral chastisement in its worst aspect. The spirit is described as a "stern and awful power (37, l. 15)" before which the offender trembles.

Magic is often used to underline the character of the fantasy world. The nature of the magic is usually determined by the world from which it originates. Obviously a world which works dark incantations is entirely different from a world which recites fanciful spells. This principle holds true in Emily's world. Hers is a rather grim kind of magic which is entirely different from the light touch of enchantment. This is completely understandable. Emily does not use magic as a key which frees the Gondals from their fates, but rather as a lock which holds them to their destinies. One of the cornerstones of her philosophy is expressed in a line from "The Old Stoic": "With courage to endure (146, l. 12)". Stoicism in the face of an unavoidable destiny is a favourite topic of hers. Emily uses magic to give this principle full scope. The magic that she creates is like her world, stern and unyielding.

Even if an imaginary world is fully realized and is in possession of a distinctive atmosphere, it is still not necessarily a fantasy. The reader of fantasy does not only ask to be given the experience of a new reality, he asks for enlightenment as well. A fantasy should possess an archetypal level. It should draw its material from what Jung calls the collective unconscious of

humanity. It should deal with images that are fundamental to the human psyche. If it does not deal with themes that are comprehensible to all people of all eras, then it becomes escapist literature. The material of a true fantasy should be timeless and universal. Such a story is exempt from aging because its concerns never become dated and its message never goes out of style. It is set in the rock of human understanding.

The universal principles at work within the Gondal world emerge as part of a vision of social order and chaos. The story is one of the decline and fall of a whole political order. Emily is trying to produce a kind of cautionary history, the story of a world we see degenerate before our astonished eyes.

The disruption of order begins with Julius. Proof of this can be found in the birthday notes written by Emily and Anne in 1845. Emily writes that she is writing a book on the "first wars."²² Anne confirms this information, but describes the work as the "history of Emperor Julius' life."²³ This links the first stirrings of military aggression with the character of Julius.

Charlotte Maurat's description of Julius' career enhances this idea.

Spurred on by his wife and by his own ambition, he wished to reign alone over both islands, recoiling before no disloyal action, no crime, to attain his ends. Insensitive to the shedding of blood, to devastation, to utter poverty, the price of his triumphs in battle, he became intoxicated with his glorious success, never satisfied.²⁴

²² Emily Brontë, "Birthday Note 1846," in Unquiet Soul. A Biography of Charlotte Brontë, Margot Peters (New York, 1976), p. 191

²³ Anne Brontë, "Birthday Note 1845," in Peters, p. 193

²⁴ Charlotte Maurat, The Brontës' Secret, translated by Margaret Meldrum (London, 1969), p. 260

Julius' tyranny incites his enemies to take violent action against him. They succeed in killing him, but the wave of aggression which he set in motion is not so easily stamped out. The pattern has been set for events in Gondal.

Augusta's reign is one of intrigue. She is not a principled ruler, instead she sets everything down to the guidance of her reckless nature. Her counselor Lord Eldred compares her to a foolish pilot who allows his ship to run before a raging gale (171, ll. 21-24). Others follow her example in giving their passions free rein and Augusta is murdered on the moors.

This trend toward disintegration is completed by the outbreak of the Republican Revolution. The social order is splintered. Ancient bonds between families are broken as allegiance to the two warring parties becomes all important.

Come, the wind may never again
Blow as now it blows for us;
And the stars may never again shine as now they shine;
Long before October returns
Seas of blood will have parted us;
And you must crush the love in your heart, and I the love in mine!
For face to face will our kindred stand,
And as they are so shall we be;
Forgetting how the same sweet earth has borne and nourished all—
One must fight for people's power,
And one for the rights of Royalty;
And each be ready to give his life to work the other's fall.
(175, ll. 1-12)

Foreshadowings of the victory of chaos abound in Emily's final poem, an apocalyptic vision of Gondal at war. The countryside is ravaged by the battles. Manor houses have been pillaged and burned, villages have been razed, and fields of crops have been crushed by the feet of men and horses.

It was the autumn of the year,
The time to labouring peasants dear;

Week after week, from noon to noon,
September shone as bright as June-
Still, never hand a sickle held;
The crops were garnered in the field-
Trod out and ground by horses' feet
While every ear was milky sweet;
And kneaded on the threshing-floor
With mire of tears and human gore.
Some said they thought that heaven's pure rain
Would hardly bless those fields again: (192, ll. 4-20).

The soldiers are hardened by the brutality they see around them.

"Foot-kissers of triumphant crime
Crushers of helpless misery,
Crushing down Justice, honouring Wrong:
If that be feeble, this be strong.
Shedders of blood, shedders of tears:
Self-cursers avid of distress;
Yet mocking heaven with senseless prayers
For mercy on the merciless. (193, ll. 4-11)

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth becomes their guiding maxim.

Every loss from either side is paid for in the lives of enemy prisoners. No mercy is to be found. The brutality of the Republican soldiers who taunt the Royalist leader as he lies on his death-bed (192, ll. 215-217) is more than equalled by the cold-blooded cruelty of the Royalists who plan to hang all the captive prisoners including the women and children (192, ll. 220-228).

The last request of the Royalist leader saves the children, but the poem does not end on a hopeful note. The differences between the two parties are too deep to be breached. Both sides will go on fighting and when they have killed themselves off a new generation will take up their parent's arms.

There is no hope to be found in the children. They are children of war and they are shaped in their father's image. The one child in the poem is the Royalist leader's daughter. She is a ragged little waif who has seen her home looted and burned and has been told with brutal frankness that her

father is dead. The narrator takes pity on the child and adopts her, but the kindness comes too late. She is filled with such fierce hatred of all Republicans that he gives up trying to tame her and allows her to slip off one night (192, ll. 258-263). Of such children as this the future generation will be made.

One ambitious military venture has snow-balled to create desolation. The war-torn, famine-ridden country is doomed. It can never climb out of the abyss into which it has fallen. There will be no recovery. The Republican Revolution is Gondal's last battle.

In archetypal terms Gondal can be seen as a waste land. There is a description of an autumn landscape which appears near the beginning of poem 192. In these lines the soldiers' coming is like a curse on the land. Their tokens of war make an ugly contrast with the beauties of nature. It is an ideal harvest season with clear skies, bright sun, and warm temperatures, but the land cannot respond to the season's influence because it is scarred by war. The fields of Gondal are like desecrated temples. These ravages apply to the civilization as well. The brutal warfare has destroyed the harmony and peace of the land. The nobility and high-mindedness of the people are replaced by base instincts. The Gondals have become a fallen people lost in a campaign of primitive violence.

The Gondal poems contain an overriding social vision. Their political dimension fulfills the demand for relevance that Rosemary Jackson cites as an integral part of fantasy.

Emily's work, thus shows a preoccupation with events rather than with individuals. In all her Gondal storylines the characters are over-shadowed by

the history of the moment. The Gondals are instruments who enact the tyrannies, assassinations, and rebellions. It is the history of Gondal that really absorbs Emily's interest. Whereas the individual characters are somewhat shadowy, the events come through in clear focus. It is for this reason that the critics often tend to organize their Gondal reconstructions under the headings of events. They are working around the most solid points of reference. This tendency of allowing the events to supplant the characters is pushed to its limits in the final Gondal poem. In this last work there is only one vivid character and that one is the Revolution.

Fannie Ratchford describes Emily's final Gondal poem as a fervent denunciation of war.²⁵ Emily arrives at her vision by combining overwhelming political ambition, desire for victory at all costs, lack of restraint, and all the other factors that unite to make up the warrior's mentality. Gondal can be seen as an expression of Emily's deep distaste for warmongering.

There is no need to ask whether or not the theme of world disintegration is relevant to the real world. In any period there is always the danger that an act of excessive aggression may upset the tenuous balance of peace. Now more than ever in this age of nuclear unrest human beings are seeking a means of preserving civilization. In Emily's final Gondal poem she suggests that the crumbling world could be saved if the soldiers could regain their humanity. As it is they are nothing but war machines programmed to do

²⁵ Ratchford, The Brontës' Web of Childhood, p. 176

violence. Still, they are not impregnable. The dying Royalist leader's unselfish act redeems the hardened mercenary. He in turn attempts his own act of charity upon the dead man's daughter. Gondal is not saved from destruction but Emily makes it clear that, for her, selflessness, generosity, charity, and fellowship are the key to averting ruin. Emily deals with some wide-reaching ideas in her final poem. It is little wonder that Fannie Ratchford describes it as her most universal work.²⁶

Gondal was always intended to be a strictly private vision. Even though it was specifically written for Emily's own amusement it is amazing to see how closely it resembles a fantasy written for public consumption. Although Gondal was conceived as a personal work Emily could only express it by drawing on material which is common to all fantasies. In this case the universal qualities overcame the particular ones. It can be concluded that Gondal deserves to be ranked with the other fantasies of literature, and to be re-evaluated as the history of a mythical kingdom in decline, one that offers a potent, if general and implicit, warning about the possible fate of mankind's efforts to realize a stable social order.

²⁶ Fannie E. Ratchford, "War in Gondal: Emily Brontë's Last Poem," in Nineteen Century Literature, Vol. 2 No. 3 (1947), p. 148

GONDAL IN THE FANTASY WORLD

Despite its special character, Emily Brontë's Gondal world is not a completely private "household" fantasy. Even though it is indebted to certain previous works and it anticipates some trends in subsequent fantasy writers, it remains an oddity because there is so little concurrent material with which to compare it. It is like a voice calling out of a wilderness in fantasy writing.¹

On the whole Emily's work relates best to epic fantasy, but the first of the modern epic fantasies, George MacDonald's Phantastes, was not published until ten years after Emily's death. The only group of fantasists with whom she is at all contemporaneous is the nonsense writers, and she is by no means exactly contemporaneous with them (Lewis Carroll's Wonderland books did not appear until 1865 and Edward Lear published his Book of Nonsense in 1846). Moreover Emily's work has little in common with their type of inventive nonsense fantasy. It is obvious from her work that verbal whimsy did not appeal to her. There is no invented language in Gondal. The only original words are place names, and not all of these are invented. The one fantasy group with which Emily did roughly coincide in time was alien to her.

¹ A good time line of Fantasy is included in Diana Waggoner, The Hills of Faraway (New York, 1978), pp. 65-67

If her work is studied from this limited range Emily is a misfit. However, if the boundaries are widened her work becomes a harmonious part of the historical tradition of fantasy.

Although Emily was not influenced by her contemporaries some of the traditions of her forerunners can be found in her work. In Victorian Fantasy Stephen Prickett cites the "Gothick" as an eighteenth-century manifestation of Fantasy.² Emily was untouched by the grandiose elements of the "Gothick." She did not make use of the various extravagances to be found in the writing of Beckford, Lewis, and Walpole. If "Gothick" material does occasionally appear in her work it can be traced to another eighteenth-century form which exerted a profound influence on her poetry, namely the ballad.³ The greater majority of her poems owe both form and content to the ballad tradition. The ballad metre is continually found in her work and the aesthetics of her pieces are generally those of the ballad.

The distinctive quality that popular ballads share is sparseness: they are apt to deal only with the culminating incident or climax of a plot, to describe that event with intense compression, to put the burden of narration on allusive monologue or dialogue, and to avoid editorial comment.³

The poem which first comes to mind as an example of Emily's use of the ballad form is her "Song" on the murder of Julius Brenzaida. This is a piece which is even more stringent than is usual with Emily. It is a particularly blunt poem that only deals with the issue at hand and lacks even the descriptive flourishes that Emily usually allows herself.

King Julius left the south country
His banners all bravely flying;
His followers went out with Jubilee
But they shall return with sighing. (98, ll. 1-4).

² Stephen Prickett, Victorian Fantasy (Hassocks, 1979). p. 14

³ E. Talbot Donaldson, "Popular Ballads," in The Norton Anthology of English Literature, general editor M. H. Abrams (New York, 1974), Vol. 1, p. 430.

Aside from the ballad it is likely that Emily was influenced by Macpherson's Ossian poems. Branwell received a book of these poems in 1820 and was very impressed by it, "Upon an attentive perusal of the above said works I found they were most sublime and excellent."⁴ It is likely that the enthusiasm passed from brother to sister. Certainly Gondal is to some extent indebted to Macpherson's carefully crafted ancient Celtic world.

A similar atmosphere pervades Macpherson's Erin and Emily's Gondal. The Celts and the Gondalians are primarily nations of warriors. Both nations stand poised on the brink of the death that fate may send them. As in Gondal valour and nobility are honoured above all.

However, there is more to the Celtic nobles than ethics of battle. If valour and chivalry form the body of the country, then music makes up the country's soul. Macpherson's Erin is founded on these two elements. This is particularly evident in the character of Ossian who is honoured not only as a warrior, but also as a bard. Although the poems are primarily concerned with battles each one is interspersed with laments, tributes, and descriptions of visions. In the Ossian poems there is an interplay of two different spheres of human ability. Each is integral to the other. The action gives meaning to the poetic metaphors and the poetry expresses the motivation behind the action. Likewise, Emily's Gondalians are equally alive to music and to warfare. Several main characters are talented musicians. Augusta plays the harp (59, 105) and Fernando the guitar (76). Julius composes proud, spirited songs (40, 80, 81), while Geraldine and Blanche sing soft lullabies to the

⁴ Branwell Brontë, "Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine," in Charlotte Brontë: the Evolution of Genius, Winnifred Gérin (Oxford, 1967), p. 29

infants in their care (150, 62). Not only is music a human talent in Gondal, it is an ethereal presence in the land. A lonely orphaned girl who longs for death is recalled to life by unearthly music.

Suddenly in that silence drear,
A sound of music reached my ear;
And then a note; I hear it yet,
So full of soul, so deeply sweet,
I thought that Gabriel's self had come
To take me to my father's home. (109, 11. 23-28)

Emily uses music to illustrate the level of harmony in the character's and in the country's soul. Order is manifest in music. In Erin music and action continue to mirror each other because the Celtic nobles never lose their high-minded ethics, but as Gondal deteriorates under the workings of passion and ambition, the music withdraws.

I would have woke the entrancing song,
But its words died upon my tongue;
And then I knew that hallowed strain
Could never speak of joy again; (38, 11. 3-6).

Finally nothing is heard in Gondal but the cacophony of the battlefield.

The characters in Erin and Gondal are presented in much the same way. Macpherson does not provide any kind of character analysis, instead he defines his heroes in terms of the descriptive titles that they bear. For example the melancholic characters are given epithets such as dark-browed, dark-eyed, or simply gloomy. The fierce and brutal characters are often described as being red-haired or red-eyed. The promising young heroes are often fair-haired. The women are white-handed, light-footed, or soft-eyed.

Although Emily does present better realized characters their complexities can often be reduced to a single motivating drive that can be expressed in a pithy title. There is falcon-eyed Rosina, gentle-hearted

Geraldine, bitter-hearted Angelica, dark-minded Douglas, trusting Gerald, ambitious Julius, the dark-haired boy of sorrow, and the bright-haired girl of joy. Not many of the character types are the same. Emily's women are stronger and her men possess more vitality, but like Macpherson's characters before them their nature's can be crystalized in one catch phrase. Perhaps it says something about the limitations of the Gondal world that it should be so readily comparable with "spurious" epic like Ossian.

Emily's work is also deeply influenced by the Byronic Hero. There are certain aspects of this literary persona which make it suitable for inclusion with other early forms of fantasy. The Byronic hero is clearly a larger than life figure who possesses a set of established characteristics similar to those belonging to the familiar figures of fantasy. Just as the Byronic hero has his own set of iconography so too does the wizard, the prince, and the sorceress.

Emily's hero Douglas can only have been inspired by the dark heroes of Byron's Romances. An enumeration of Douglas' characterizing features is similar to a summary of the chapter headings in Thorslev's book The Byronic Hero. Douglas is an outlaw sworn to rebel against a society which he has condemned as corrupt (143). When moved he is capable of fervent emotion (143) but he generally holds himself aloof. In other's eyes he appears to be an "iron man" cold, hard, and unfeeling (99), however beneath the veneer he is tormented by the enormity of his actions (107). Rebel, wanderer, sufferer, he fits the pattern perfectly.

On the physical level the parallel is even clearer. One description of Douglas is enough to confirm his bloodline.

No-there was something in his face,
 Some nameless thing they could not trace,
 And something in his voice's tone
 Which turned their blood as chill as stone.
 The ringlets of his long black hair
 Fell o'er a cheek most ghastly fair.
 Youthful he seemed-but worn as they
 Who spend too soon their youthful day;
 When his glance drooped, 'twas hard to quell
 Unbidden feelings' sudden swell;
 And pity scarce her tears could hide,
 So sweet that brow, with all its pride;
 But when upraised his eye would dart
 An icy shudder through the heart.
 Compassion changed to horror then
 And fear to meet that gaze again.
 It was not hatred's tiger-glare,
 Nor the wild anguish of despair;
 It was not useless misery
 Which mocks at friendship's sympathy.
 No-lightening all unearthly shone
 Deep in that dark eye's circling zone,
 Such withering lightning as we deem
 None but a spectre's look may beam;
 And glad they were when he turned away
 And wrapt him in his mantle grey.
 Leant down his head upon his arm
 And veiled from view their basilisk charm (197, ll. 19-46).

Emily's work is actually more forward-looking in conception. It ties in surprisingly well with certain trends that come after it. Unfortunately there is no evidence to prove that Morris, Stevenson, or Hope ever read any of the Gondal poems. What is interesting is the common vision. Gondal possesses qualities that were later recognized as typical of the heroic fantasy and the Ruritanian Romance.

According to Diana Waggoner the first practitioner of modern heroic fantasy was William Morris. Like Emily he too was inspired by saga literature. The quasi-medieval setting which is one of the prime ingredients

in heroic fantasy is the product of this interest. Basically heroic fantasy is a recreation of the medieval epic and romance forms. Its storyline is punctuated by action, but all of this action has a serious purpose. Exciting events are not enough, there must be a major issue at stake. Morris often took the conflict of good and evil as his theme.⁵

Waggoner calls E. R. Eddison's The Worm Ouroboros the classic heroic fantasy. Although it was written in 1926, almost eighty years after Emily's death, Eddison's conception of the world of the court is strikingly similar to Emily's.

Eddison's heroes are all public men, concerned with great matters of state, power, policy, and war, men whose private lives mold and are affected by public affairs. He portrayed Renaissance princes, not knights errant. He was as concerned with love as with power; his women are as important as his men, a rarity in heroic fantasy. These women are not drooping princesses or healthy Viking maids as in Morris, but great court ladies, the wives and the mistresses of the powerful, as intelligent and subtle as the men. They too take part in the intrigues and necessities of government; they are as capable of revenge and murder as they are of soft words and lingering glances.⁶

Emily too concentrates far more on public issues than on private ones.

Despite their indomitable natures her heroes and heroines are reduced to pawns in a great game of political chess.

Emily's fascination with political events connects her with an off-shoot of heroic fantasy—the Ruritanian Romance. This type of literature is best characterized as a cross between the heroic fantasy and the adventure story. At its worst, as exemplified by the novels of Elinor Glyn, it does not deserve to be called true fantasy. At its best it ranks as a second cousin to

⁵ Waggoner, pp. 36-37

⁶ Waggoner, p. 39

fantasy. Ruritanian Romance lacks the imaginative colouring and the serious theme of the heroic fantasy, however, it does retain the Machiavellian court intrigues of this type of fantasy.

The best known writer of the Ruritanian Romance is Anthony Hope. Upon his death he was credited with the creation of the form, but as the editor of The London Mercury pointed out in an obituary notice, this was something of a misconception. Hope gave Ruritanian stories their final form, but Robert Louis Stevenson seems to have conceived the idea.⁷

In 1885 Stevenson's novel Prince Otto was published. The story is set in the small state of Grunewald. The characters are all members of the inner court. As the editor of The Mercury pointed out, Stevenson provided the standard list of characters for the Ruritanian world.

All his (Hope's) political romances of that kind (and many others through him) derive from Stevenson's Prince Otto, which contains all the ingredients, enlightened princes, sage old advisers, beautiful peasant girls, palace revolutions, flights through the forest, and all the rest of it.⁸

Hope's contribution to the form was vitality. Stevenson's novel tends to be a rather "talkie" work and several critics condemned it for its lethargic quality.

The author calls his book a romance, but the story deals with persons who have no high or romantic aspirations, no lofty ideals, no longing to perform doughty deeds. None of the princes or princesses, or great lords or ladies, soar: they all grovel.⁹

Hope's theatrical experience helped him to achieve dramatic tableaux.

⁷ J. C. Squire, "Editorial Notes," in The London Mercury, Vol. 28, No. 166 (August, 1933), p. 289

⁸ Squire, p. 289

⁹ "The Saturday Review," in Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage, Paul Maixner (London, 1981), p. 184

He laid particular faith in dialogue for sustaining life in the work. "Hope always attached the greatest importance to dialogue and emphasized that too much narrative in a novel produced a sense of lifelessness-as if one moved among the dead."¹⁰

His best known book The Prisoner of Zenda would be a typical adventure story if it were not for the political paraphernalia which is inherent in the plot. The reader never forgets that he is not just hearing about exciting adventures, but is actually watching history being made. Prince Otto and The Prisoner of Zenda are filled with political intrigues, kidnappings, rescues, conspiracies, rebellions, and assassinations. This same budget makes up the plot events of Gondal. A sense of history pervades both Gondal and Ruritania, but Gondal is set apart from its sister country by the quality of "other worldliness" which marks it out as a fantasy.

Gondal is a member of the fantasy community. It makes use of fantasy principles, playing with images from the unconscious and working out a conscious structure to express them. Furthermore its subject matter is often strikingly similar to that found in the work of other fantasy writers. Emily's material, and her approach to that material are above reproach. However, the question remains as to how the aesthetic effect of Gondal strikes the modern reader. In other words, how palatable is Gondal?

¹⁰ "Obituary of Anthony Hope," in The London Times, July 10, 1933, p. 16

The main problem of the Gondal saga is that it calls for a great deal of tolerance on the part of the reader. The first drawback is its lack of accessibility. In order to come to any kind of understanding of the Gondal world it is necessary to read the poems many times. As a rule the first half dozen readings are taken up with the identification of persons, places, and events, and with a sequential sorting process. This usually entails drawing up charts and generally reorganizing the whole canon in terms of groups of episodes. It is a time-consuming project and there are simply not enough people who are prepared to put this much effort into reading a fantasy. It cannot even be assumed that Brontë scholars would be willing to take on the task.

Gondal could be made more accessible if the Gondal poems were separated from the personal poems and published in a new volume complete with annotations and explanatory prose settings, but such a publication would cause another major problem to surface. There are so many points of controversy in Gondal reconstructions that a single, universal storyline would be difficult to produce. Who can say for certain which character is the real boy of sorrow, or who can prove that Angelica is Augusta's step-daughter and not her childhood friend? There are too many questions which have no answers. Hypothesizing is fine in critical studies, but guesswork cannot be presented to the public as solid facts. What scholar would be prepared to claim omniscience in regard to the Gondal plot material? Fannie Ratchford did something of the sort in The Brontës' Web of Childhood when she stated that Emily had made a mistake in her headings and had attributed

the poem to the wrong character.¹¹ It took her years to live it down.

There is no way to arrive at the definitive Gondal storyline; the poems lack the necessary clarity for such a task. However, the magnitude of this defect varies with the circumstances. To the uninitiated reader the Gondal poems are appallingly vague, but if the poems are seen in their correct context as lyric counterparts to the factual prose histories of Gondal, and not as an independent body of work, they become amazingly informative.

As yet the problems encountered have been technicalities, but if the argument is taken one step further a question of aesthetics arises. If it did so happen that a council of Gondal scholars agreed on a storyline and published an annotated volume of Gondal poems it is entirely possible that the poems would be found lacking in audience appeal. Even though the poems possess the components of published fantasy stories they are probably not objective and "realized" enough to fulfill the average reader's expectations. The abundance of personal material may still make the Gondal poems inaccessible to the general public.

Although the relationship between the Gondal drama and the children's early plays is one of its most interesting characteristics it also proves to be one of its greatest liabilities. At times the Gondal story is marred by the lingering traces of childishness in its conception. For instance, it is somewhat disconcerting to find that Emily has retained the Palace of Instruction from "The Islanders" and is still playing with deep, dark dungeons and all their accompanying paraphernalia. The maturity with which she handles

¹¹ Fannie E. Ratchford, The Brontës' Web of Childhood, (New York, 1941), p. 256.

the theme of the imprisoned spirit transcends the narrative device but the reader questions the presence of such a creation in an adult fantasy. Similarly, in the ballad "Douglas' Ride", Douglas escapes his pursuers by rolling a heavy log down the slope to crush them (75). A sympathetic reader would envisage the scene in all seriousness, but other people might find the action analogous to certain sequences in Saturday morning cartoons.

However, the bulk of the problem lies in situations which seem excessively melodramatic by modern standards. Emily's Gondalians are drawn on an epic scale. Moderation is unknown in that land. Actions are earth-shattering and emotions are soul-shattering. The Gondalians have a greater capacity for feeling than ordinary human beings. Their emotional reactions are intensified versions of normal responses. Just as they are nobler and more stoical than ordinary human beings so their anger is more fierce, their hatred is more bitter, their love is more passionate, their despair is more agonised than is ours. The depiction of these heightened emotions brings Emily perilously close to the brink of melodrama. At times she goes over the edge.

This is particularly evident in the story of Fernando and Augusta. Fernando's highly romantic temperament is stretched to the breaking point by Augusta's callous dismissal.

And thou, false friend and treacherous guide,
Go sate thy cruel heart with pride.
Go, load my memory with shame;
Speak but to curse my hated name;
My tortured limbs in dungeons bind,
And spare my life to kill my mind.
Leave me in chains and darkness now;
And when my very soul is worn,
When reason's light has left my brow,
And madness cannot feel thy scorn,

Then come again--thou wilt not shrink;
 I know thy soul is free from fear--
 The last full cup of triumph drink,
 Before the blank of death be there. (133, ll. 35-48)

It is not just the ravings and cursings, but the whole final tableau on the Gaaldinian wastelands, in which Fernando stabs himself and sinks to the ground with a portrait of Augusta in his hand and an avowal of his unchanged love for her on his lips (85), is far into the realm of melodrama. Nor are these situations good melodrama, many of them are melodramatic clichés. The young girl dying of unrequited love is a familiar scenario (42), as is the transformation of a sworn friend into a bitter enemy (143), as is the fatal attractiveness of a dark-haired woman (154). These old storylines have become parodies of themselves. They are a child's idea of powerful writing. This brings us to the major aesthetic problem of the Gondal world; in some respects it is a fantasy that never quite grew up. Part of this can be attributed to the Brontës' sentimentality toward their early narrative efforts. This is evident in both Charlotte and Branwell's later work. Even after they were long past the fairy-tale stage nostalgia moved them to retain the genii and their magic as prime factors in the founding of Glasstown.¹² Emily may have been equally staunch to her first drafts of Gondal plot material.

It is likely that Gondal served the same psychological purpose as the

¹² See Branwell's History of the Young Men and Charlotte's The Green Dwarf

children's games. Although they were obviously played for pleasure, these games also served to familiarize the children with the outside world. They could gain the right of possession over any thing or person that happened to appeal to them by incorporating that material into their stories. Their infatuation with certain famous personages brought the Duke of Wellington, Captains Parry and Ross, and Napoleon into the games. Their fascination with literature first introduced elements from the Arabian Nights and later brought the situations and characters from Byron's poetry to the stories. They painted pictures, published magazines, and wrote poetry in order to make themselves a part of those cultural spheres. The political world was treated in the same manner. The children's precocious reading ability soon informed them that there were complex political events taking place in the world. These both fascinated and awed them so they created politics of their own which they could control. The idea of control is particularly important in regard to the frightening elements of the outer world which the children sought to tame through their games. The Palace of Instruction is obviously the result of the girls' devastating experience at Cowan Bridge School. Likewise, the omnipresent guardian genii of the "Young Men's Play" are a reaction to their Aunt's religious teachings. The children came to terms with the incomprehensible parts of the outer world by reducing them to child's size and thereby gaining control over them.

Gondal is not a child's eye view of the world but it does work on the same principles as the children's games. Emily was a very reserved and quiet person who loved her own quiet homelife. She does not seem to have feared the world, instead she disdained it. She had no desire to be an active participant in life, but was content to live vicariously.

Emily would never go into any sort of society herself, and whenever I went I could on my return communicate to her a pleasure that suited her, by giving the distinct faithful impression of each scene I had witnessed. When pressed to go she would sometimes say: "What is the use? Charlotte will bring it home to me." and indeed I delighted to please her thus. ¹³

Gondal gave her excitement, adventure, heroism, tragedy, and romance. It fulfilled her desire for politics by letting her write her own history. It allowed her to live in a society governed by the stoical philosophy she held so dear. It let her interact with the personages she most admired: Byron's heroes, Scott's heroines, Napoleon--anything that appealed to her could be transferred into Gondal and lived out there. Many of the Byronisms and clichés may have been taken up on a whim for experimental use. Again a problem of context has appeared. The poems need the support of biographical information to appear in their best light.

Strictly speaking the Gondal poems are too closely related to Emily's personal life to be successful as a published fantasy. They are an

¹³ Charlotte Brontë, "Letter to William Smith Williams," in Emily Brontë: A biography, Winnifred Gérin (Oxford, 1971), p. 232

introverted work which lack the objectivity to appeal to an audience. Emily's world does not cater to any market of fantasy readers. It is too complex, too stoical, too pessimistic for young children. Most adolescents are too worldly to enjoy Gondal. Many adults would be put off by its melodramatic situations. The only people who can really appreciate the Gondal world are those Brontë scholars who possess enough background to put the poems into perspective, or those people who happen to be naturally empathic with Emily Brontë. Obviously this makes for a rather small audience. The poems possess all the components of fantasy literature, but they are too inward looking. Their enlightenment is only given up after much toil by the reader. A publically oriented fantasy only asks the reader to think and feel but the Gondal poems put him through a set of Herculean labours before he or she can even begin to think or feel. It is a hard won victory when it comes, and it comes to all too few readers.

It may be concluded that the Gondal poems would never make the best seller list, but this does not really matter. Gondal always has been and always will be an appealing fantasy for those able to understand it. The poems are akin to the drawings on the nursery wall at the parsonage. To some they are nothing more than odd, childish sketches. To others they are the relics of a vision. The poems are filled with potential for those willing to draw it out, and Emily would make no apologies for the obscurity of her poems. She is not asking anyone to share in her vision. Gondal was conceived to please herself, not to entertain an audience. Emily was a true individualist,

and she paid little heed to popular opinion. Emily would probably grant this evaluation of her poems the same ironic little smile that the condemnatory reviews of Wuthering Heights brought to her lips. The poems are as unique as their author. Just as some could not see past the outmoded dresses and the lank petticoats to the glowing intellect of the individual within, so some will be misled by the lack of clarity and the naive notions of the poems. Let it be so. Genius and the work of genius can never be accepted on any terms but their own.

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