

JANE EYRE'S CONSERVATIVE CANADIAN COUSIN: THE NYMPH AND THE LAMP¹

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In a review which appeared shortly after the publication of Thomas Head Raddall's *The Nymph and the Lamp*, Joan Rice faults the novel for being a "simple, rather predictable story" (Rice 213). This criticism is not without repetition in other critical treatments of the novel. Another contemporary review suggests that "the basic pattern is a not unfamiliar one" (*Kirkus* 487); and, more recently, Alan Young has observed that, while *The Nymph and the Lamp* is "now an established classic of Canadian literature" (Young 87), it nevertheless features a somewhat familiar plot: "so familiar a narrative pattern carries all the danger of a literary cliché" (Young 88). Although Young does suggest that "Raddall's treatment of his love triangle is far from ordinary" (Young 86), his comment on the familiar nature of the "narrative pattern" echoes what seems to be an equally familiar tendency among Raddall's critics.

Although Raddall's critics have been ready enough in the past to use such words and phrases as "predictable," "not unfamiliar," and "literary cliché," none has yet ventured to give any specific indication of what it is that *The Nymph and the Lamp* is similar to. This impasse may, however, be overcome by simply reducing the plot of Raddall's novel into a single, broad sentence: in *The Nymph and the Lamp*, the plain heroine lives (not as a wife) with the hero, abandons him to sort out her thoughts, rejects the marriage proposal of another man, and finally returns to the hero (who has become almost blind in her absence). Reduced to the length of a sentence, the plot of *The Nymph and the Lamp* is decidedly similar to the plot of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

Given this tentative identification of what it is that makes Raddall's plot "familiar," it becomes necessary to consider that neither Raddall nor his critics have been ready to cite Brontë as one

of Raddall's influences. Raddall makes no note of Charlotte Brontë or *Jane Eyre* in his autobiography, *In My Time*,² and critic Alan Young, whose study of Raddall's work is extensive, does not include Brontë among Raddall's "literary models" (Young 5-7). Nevertheless, these omissions ought not to preclude further speculation. The reason that Charlotte Brontë has not been cited among Raddall's influences may well lie in the fact that although *The Nymph and the Lamp* borrows heavily from *Jane Eyre*'s plot, it shares none of *Jane Eyre*'s feminist spirit. However, *The Nymph and the Lamp* is not only similar in plot to *Jane Eyre*, but it may also be read as a calculated response to Brontë's novel. Similarities of plot exist which draw the novels together and make room for a number of points of comparison between the two, but the "messages" of the novels are substantially opposite: where Brontë expounds a progressive feminist cause, Raddall's cause is conservatively (regressively, one might say) patriarchal. Hence, after first establishing the nature and the extent of Raddall's literary borrowing from Brontë's novel, I will show how this borrowing is, in a sense, ironic, as it undermines and subverts the feminist message of *Jane Eyre*.

I

Superficially, one might turn to a similarity between the name and position of Brocklehurst in *Jane Eyre* and Brockhurst in *The Nymph and the Lamp*, but aside from the fact that both characters are fairly opinionated and relatively inhuman headmasters, nothing much may come of any such comparison. Equally, although the careful reader may raise an eyebrow and notice that, in both novels, the disability of the hero—that which forestalls the happy union of hero and heroine and brings about the hero's blindness—is acquired as part of a voyage to the West Indies,³ this observation is relatively slight. The similarities between the novels do not, as a rule, take place on the elemental level of common names, but rather on that level which directly pertains to the depiction of character and the progression of plot.

It is in the respective resolutions of the novels that their similarity takes on its most literal form. When, at the end of *Jane Eyre*, Jane observes of the blinded Rochester that "his countenance reminded one of the lamp quenched, waiting to be relit" (*JE* 464), one might cheerfully think of Isabel-cum-Jane rushing off to her

Carney-cum-Rochester intending to be “a lamp for Carney!” (NL 310). Clearly a difference exists: Raddall’s heroine is aware—as Brontë’s is not—of her lover’s blindness before she returns to him. But a basic point of similarity remains at the end of both novels: the heroine has returned to act as a “lamp” for a lover whom she had previously abandoned.

Not only do Jane and Isabel return to their once-abandoned lovers, but each does so immediately upon rejecting the marriage proposal of another man. Isabel rejects Skane’s proposal and promptly returns to Carney just as Jane rejects St. John’s proposal and returns, with equal promptness, to Rochester. The similarity in plot which comes to light through this particular point of comparison is reinforced when one observes that Carney, like Rochester, has been wandering about with a token of his lost love strapped around his neck. Isabel returns to Marina to discover that Carney is wearing, “slung by the cord upon his breast” (NL 330), the wedding ring she had left behind; equally, Jane is informed by Rochester that he is wearing the pearl necklace that she had left behind: “‘Do you know, Jane, I have your little pearl necklace at this moment fastened round my bronze scrag under my cravat? I have worn it since the day I lost my only treasure, as a memento of her’” (JE 470). In each novel, the memento worn by the hero reveals the depth of the hero’s love for the heroine, just as, in each novel, the heroine returns to the blinded hero in the end.

If one considers the circumstances under which Isabel and Jane left their mementoes behind, further points of similarity between *The Nymph and the Lamp* and *Jane Eyre* may be established. Not only is it significant that each heroine is given cause to doubt the love of her male counterpart, but it is also notable that in each novel the heroine makes a point of leaving behind a trinket of love. Isabel, immediately before her departure from Marina, “worked the wedding ring off her finger and slipped it under the pillow. It seemed the only way to mark the end of their relationship” (NL 228). In a parallel passage from *Jane Eyre*, Jane muses to a similar end over the pearl necklace which Rochester had given her: “I left that; it was not mine: it was the visionary bride’s who had melted in air” (JE 346). Each heroine, with a forceful meditation on the finality of her departure, chooses to leave behind a memento of a love considered lost. At a key moment in the plot of each novel, the heroines respond to their situations in strikingly similar fashions.

The episodic similarity is also visible in the initial courtship of the hero and heroine in each novel. *The Nymph and the Lamp* and *Jane Eyre* both feature a man of financial means who courts a woman who is relatively impoverished; in each of these cases, the man is reminded by the woman of this difference of status. When Carney decides to purchase "the best in the shop" (NL 82) and feels "a lover's desire to load her [Isabel] with gifts" (NL 82), he resembles Rochester who demonstrates a similar exuberance in his shopping: "I will myself put the diamond chain around your neck and the circlet on your forehead . . . and I will clasp the bracelets on these fine wrists, and load these fairy-like fingers with rings" (JE 287). Jane meets Rochester's extravagance with an affirmation of her conception of self in a fashion which curiously resembles Isabel's response to Carney. Isabel's exclamation to Carney, "You and your diamonds. I'm just a poor working girl!" (NL 82), seems to reflect Jane's response to Rochester: "No, no, sir! . . . Don't address me as if I were a beauty. I am your plain, Quakerish governess" (JE 287). Both heroines insist, in similar situations, on being thought of as they are. Each makes a stand for her identity as an individual and resists the attempt of her suitor to modify her appearance.

It may be noted along these lines that, as part of the process of asserting themselves as individuals, Jane and Isabel not only refuse the lavish gifts of their lovers, but they also refuse to accept any stereotypes their lovers impose upon them. Jane pleads with Rochester, who has called her an angel, "I am not an angel . . . and will not be one till I die: I will be myself. Mr. Rochester, you must neither expect nor exact anything celestial of me" (JE 288). In much the same fashion, Isabel reacts against Carney's preconceptions of what "women" think. Refusing the stereotype, she rebukes him: "I'm not 'women,' Matthew Carney. I'm me. Don't ever forget that" (NL 89). The phrasing of Isabel's comment is peculiarly similar to the phrasing of Jane's—each one features an affirmation of self in a stiffly formal address to the lover. Each passage indicates the heroine's insistence that she be accepted on her own terms.

Just as the heroines share a common method of keeping in check the preconceptions of their lovers, so too do they have similar methods of dealing with their own illusions. Isabel, in *The Nymph and the Lamp*, is given to a good deal of fantasizing, and when her fantasies fail to materialize in real life, she exercises a

fairly consistent method of self-reproach. Exemplary in Isabel's case is her honeymoon fantasy, in which a black night-gown, itself "little more than an illusion" (NL 93), fails to have the desired effect of creating "charming impressions that will last a husband's lifetime" (NL 94). When sea-sickness robs her of her "blissful fancies" (NL 95), she chastises herself for having believed her fancies in the first place: "You've been wicked and foolish and this is the result" (NL 96). So too does she reproach herself when her initial sighting of Marina does not meet with her expectations. Here, again, "The voice within, more insistent than ever, cried *Fool! Fool! Fool!*" (NL 101). Raddall presents to the reader a heroine who scolds herself for having set too much store in her fantasies.

Brontë's heroine responds to her own fantasies in much the same manner. Jane Eyre, like Isabel, acknowledges the folly of her own illusions and, like Isabel, reproaches herself for having had them:

I pronounced judgement to this effect:

That a greater fool than Jane Eyre had never breathed the breath of life: that a more fantastic idiot had never surfeited herself on sweet lies, and swallowed poison as if it were nectar. (JE 190)

Jane's assessment of herself is not unlike Isabel's self-assessments, and it functions within the novel with similar effect. Revealing at the same time a recognition of self-delusions, a growing state of self-awareness, and an increasing degree of maturation, the judgement of self is integral to the development of her character.

This developmental pattern—of fantasy checked by reality—is pervasive throughout both novels, and it finally leads to that plateau of self-realization which Jane summarizes as "Delightful consciousness!" (JE 461). Jane arrives at this plateau by continually keeping in check that "tale my imagination had created . . . [which was] quickened with all of incident, life, fire, feeling that I had desired and had not had in my actual existence" (JE 141). Jane's maturation is finally sealed by self-knowledge, and she is able to state, towards the end of the novel, "My powers were in play and in force" (JE 445). Once she attains self-knowledge, Jane's happiness is ultimately ensured by her subsequent return to Rochester: "It brought to life and light my whole nature: in his presence I thoroughly lived; and he lived in mine" (JE 461). Jane's progress in *Jane Eyre* begins with the processes of self-discovery and is

finally capped by the happy reunion with Rochester.

Much the same pattern of progression may be seen as Isabel moves through *The Nymph and the Lamp*. She too comes to see that the expectations of imagination are subject to revision by reality, and between her shock at finding that "the Kingsbridge she had known had vanished" (NL 216)⁴ and her realization that she had misjudged Carney ("I was the blind one!" [NL 309]), she becomes quite "transfigured" by a new sense of "full knowledge" (NL 309). She, like Jane, reaches a plateau of self-knowledge, and she, too, comes to see the union of herself with her former lover as the final fulfilment of life. In her last stride towards self-understanding, she observes:

"All my life I've wanted—I've craved to have someone need me absolutely and completely. To feel that I was doing something that mattered, that nobody else could do. To feel my life had a purpose. And not to feel lonely any more. Those are the things I've really wanted. They've been vague and separate things. I never saw them clearly and together until now. And now they're waiting for me on Marina, in spite of all my folly and stupidity!" (NL 310)

Isabel, like Jane, seemingly comes to an understanding of herself—a realization of what she "really wants"—and speedily returns to her once-abandoned lover.

What one has, when one compares *The Nymph and the Lamp* and *Jane Eyre* is, more than anything else, a pair of plots which trace the growth of a heroine through a number of similarly structured episodes and situations. Both novels, in this sense, are of the *Bildungsroman* genre, and both find their heroines stepping out of a passively conventional existence to embrace a way of life which is, for its time, somewhat unconventional. Jane's return to Rochester and her assertion "I don't care about being married" (JE 460) are no less unconventional than Isabel's tearing up of her marriage license on her return voyage to Carney. Just as Jane has "overleaped conventionalities" (JE 460) in *Jane Eyre*, so too does Isabel overleap them in *The Nymph and the Lamp*. Isabel turns her back on the fashions of society—"the lights and noise and human scabble of the city"—and embraces life on Marina, away from the "common illusion" (NL 323).

Comparisons made to this point reflect a significant similarity between the heroines of the two novels, but little has yet been said

of the male protagonists. Certainly, on the level of characterization, there seems to be little room for comparison beyond the fact that both Rochester and Carney wear mementoes of the women who have left them. Brontë's Rochester, after all, is a Byronic hero, whereas Raddall's Carney only *reads* Byron. Equally, Brontë's St. John has none of the passionate nature of Skane, his counterpart in Raddall's novel. However, if one considers the relationships of these characters to the heroines of the novels, some parallels do come to light.

Given the fact that each novel traces the development of a heroine who in the process of self-discovery rejects conventionalities, it becomes significant that neither Carney nor Rochester is conventionally attractive, and that both St. John and Skane are.⁵ Furthermore, if one considers that Isabel, in rejecting the marriage proposal of Skane, turns away from his conception of "everything that's good in life" (NL 310), it must be acknowledged that just as she is playing the role of Jane Eyre, he is serving the function of St. John Rivers. Skane represents a way of life which is no more tenable to Isabel than St. John's way of life is to Jane. Both Skane and St. John serve, in their respective novels, as conventionally handsome characters who represent a way of life against which the heroines rebel. However different their characters might be, each functions as a catalyst, precipitating the actions of the heroine.

Raddall's novel, like Brontë's, demonstrates that "a heroine could be interesting without being beautiful" (Brontë, in Leavis 11). In *Jane Eyre*, as in *The Nymph and the Lamp*, the heroine rejects "the fundamental rules of social intercourse" (Austin 116), and in each novel the self-discovery of the heroine enables her to see past the conventionally attractive surface of a suitor and dismiss an incompatible attractive lover in favour of an unattractive compatible one.

II

To this point, at least, Raddall's novel and Brontë's novel might be granted a degree of similarity in plot and vision. However, although Raddall is as willing as Brontë to allow a plain heroine to be interesting, he will not allow Isabel to retain the sexual freedom, the independence, or the social respect she struggles so hard to gain. Isabel ultimately rejects these "new" values of liberation and sexual freedom in favour of the "old" way of life on

Marina. She fails to alter or reform the stolid nature of the lover to whom she returns. Instead, she dallies with the licences given her by the modern world and rejects these to assume an occupation—teaching—which falls well within the realm of traditional roles for women. Her skill—her use of the morse code—is predestined to become obsolete, and, instead of embracing new skills, she embraces an old Carney. Instead of pursuing her equality as she has established it in Kingsbridge, she seemingly insists that the “real” values in life are not arbitrary and man-made, but innate. What she has wanted all along is indeed what she’s always had! The “folly” of Isabel is to have hoped for something better than a life as a wife with the first man who proposed to her. The “folly” of Jane, on the other hand, is to have assumed that marriage was a “solution” to her social inequality and insecurity. Jane rejects the dependency of marriage; Isabel rejects the freedoms and independence of the “new” world, and with them she dismisses all of the progress she had made in gaining respect as an equal in the working world. She turns down Skane, the man who had encouraged her to learn the wireless, and takes up with Carney, the man who was “astonished” (NL 186) that she had been able to learn. The implications of Raddall’s text, here, seem to challenge Austin’s assessment that Raddall’s female characters are ones “of whom no modern feminist need be ashamed” (Austin 113). In *The Nymph and the Lamp*, Raddall seems to first assert that women have the *ability* to live independently and the *freedom* to defy conventions, and then to conclude that what women really *want* is to serve men. Raddall’s novel is, in this respect, a latter-day patriarchal fantasy—a novel in which a woman, admittedly an equal, will sacrifice all of the possibilities of independence and self-assertion to become a servant to a man. ‘

This rather regressive conclusion is echoed in the distribution of guilt in Raddall’s novel. In Brontë’s novel, Rochester is guilt-ridden; Jane’s victory comes as she plays a role in Rochester’s redemption/reformation. Rochester is clearly responsible for his own “fall” (literally).⁶ In *The Nymph and the Lamp*, on the other hand, Raddall allows Isabel to see Carney as guiltless and to believe that her sorrows are “entirely of her own making” (NL 123); it is the sin of Isabel which forces her to leave Marina, and it is the recognition of fault that takes her back. Guilt is placed squarely on the shoulders of Isabel, and it is decidedly sexual in form.

The division between the "passionate" and the "pure" woman is never reconciled in Isabel. She never fully accepts her role as a sexual being. She does not return to Carney as Jane returns to Rochester, with an acknowledgement of physical, passionate needs. Although she is willing enough to engage in sexual activity throughout the novel, she generally regrets and resents her sexual encounters with Carney;⁷ with Skane, on the other hand, Isabel is able to yield "body and soul" with "fervor" (NL 211). Thus, when Isabel chooses Carney over Skane at the end of the novel, she rejects passion and tacitly accepts her place as a "pure" woman in Carney's dichotomy between "the 'nice' ones, the virtuous women" and "women of the easy kind, the lusty kind" (NL 25).

In Brontë's novel, the female identity, split between the pure and the passionate, is played out in the scenes involving Bertha Mason. Bertha, as Gilbert and Gubar point out, reflects the passionate, sexual dimension of woman which the patriarchy has kept locked up and hidden (Gilbert and Gubar 27-33, 359-62).⁸ Bertha's passion is both the element which drew Rochester to her (JE 332) and the element which estranged Rochester from her (JE 333); Jane's departure from Thornfield seems to be spurred on, to no small degree, by the fear that she might take Bertha's place (JE 339). Only later, when she recognizes and accepts her need for passion, does she return to Rochester.

Curiously, the mad, passionate, and violent Bertha Mason of Brontë's novel appears in Raddall's novel as the dark, island-born Sara Giswell. Sara is portrayed with the same supernatural mystery as surrounds Bertha: Skane suggests that "Old Two," which he and Isabel have left just prior to the incident in which Sara shoots Isabel, is "supposed to be haunted" (NL 215). Shortly thereafter, Isabel and Skane are made aware of Sara's approach as a shadow draws near: "[I]t was long and grotesque, the shape of a creature neither man nor beast" (NL 218). Significantly, Sara is driven to her blood-letting act of violence not by the wrong-doings of Carney (Rochester's counterpart), but by the romance of Isabel and Skane. It is Isabel who characterizes Sara as a "half-wild creature" (NL 160) living on an island which is like "a private lunatic asylum" and is peopled by "savages" (NL 185); and it is Isabel who wishes that Sara could be restrained so that Skane's attentions will not be divided (NL 159-160). Isabel, in effect, takes on the male role of Rochester and becomes the jailor and denigrator of female passions. Whereas the innocent Jane tacitly recognizes

the passions of Bertha in herself and comes to accept them, the sexually active Isabel recognizes the passions of Sara in herself and strives to stifle them.⁹

Unlike Brontë in his evaluation of the passions, Raddall also differs from Brontë in his refusal to allow his plain heroine to have an effect on the man she finally chooses to live with. Raddall's hero, Carney, is *grateful* when Isabel returns, but he is not significantly changed. Carney, although once reproached for seeing Isabel as "woman," is never given the insight to see her as anything but a mythologized figure. His blindness humbles him, to a degree, but his vision of Isabel is forever to be constrained by an unreality—she will always be beautiful. He is a static character, limited by his illusions, and Raddall suggests that she finally chooses to play her part as one of them: "could she fail to know, this intelligent young woman, that in the days to come when Carney could see her no more he would go on thinking of her as he saw her now?" (NL 330). Raddall assures his readers that Carney's blindness is imminent and that his illusions are to be sealed by Isabel's return.

Here Brontë differs substantially. Rochester is not only humbled by Jane's initial refusals to marry him or be his mistress, but he is finally redeemed by Jane, who strips him of his illusions. Rochester is no longer in a position to "elevate" her to a higher social position; she has assumed "ascendency" (JE 445) and is empowered with the will and the force to bring Rochester to a new way of seeing. With Jane at his side, his vision returns. Rochester has not only a restored vision, but a reformed vision. He "sees" her as she is, a way in which Carney never "sees" Isabel, who returns not in "ascendency," but to be "need[ed]" (NL 310) by a man who is to live with a "visionary bride" the rest of his life.

To return, then, to one of the original points of comparison, a notable irony may be discovered: when Jane "relights" the lamp for Rochester, he comes to see in a new, enlightened fashion. When Isabel chooses to be a lamp for Carney, his darkness never disappears. Bright as Isabel is, she fails to cast a new light on Carney's misconceptions. Whereas Jane lights the way to Rochester's new understanding of women, Isabel is left to stand as a beacon and as a transmitter of old patriarchal ideals.

Raddall's novel, then, contains enough similarity in structure and plot to suggest a comparison to *Jane Eyre*, yet its conservative, patriarchal message stands largely in opposition to the

feminist message in Brontë's novel. Although Raddall is ready to play along with Brontë and concede that men must allow women to develop their "own" identities, he finally insists on the patriarchal notion that women have an innate desire to act as caretakers to men. By having Isabel reject the progressive mood of her day, he has her reject all thoughts of freedom and independence. By making his male figures immutable, and by making Carney flawless, Raddall suggests that the "vice" of Skane is a by-product of the "new woman" and that the "virtue" of Carney is a reward available only to those women who are ready to accept a limited role in the affairs of the world. Raddall takes Brontë's first-person celebration of a woman's ascendancy and turns it into a third-person fable of woman's folly,¹⁰ simply by changing the conventions against which the heroine rebels. While Jane rebels against the impositions society makes on her freedom, Isabel seemingly rebels against the very freedoms which she has gained in society. As William McFee, a contemporary reviewer of *The Nymph and the Lamp*, suggests, Raddall's story "sounds familiar enough" but has a "somewhat melodramatic anti-climax" (McFee 15). Clearly, the familiarity comes from Brontë's novel; the melodramatic anticlimax is what Raddall adds to *Jane Eyre* in the process of subverting Brontë's feminist message. Although Raddall freely borrows Brontë's plot and frames it within the context of the twentieth century's shifting social atmosphere, he rejects the forward motion of Brontë's feminism and imposes on a "familiar" feminist story a regressive patriarchal twist.

NOTES

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² In his autobiography, Raddall makes specific note of several Victorian authors, but he does not cite Brontë's name. One might, however, take to heart Robert Cockburn's warnings about the degree of trust which one ought to place in the autobiographical writings of any author. "After all," writes Cockburn in his review of Raddall's *In My Time*, "how far is the narrator to be trusted in what he says? How important to our fullest understanding of him is all that he leaves unsaid? Is his tale more self-serving than it is illuminating?" (Cockburn 135). Although Cockburn insists that "most such forebodings are found to be groundless

as one reads Thomas H. Raddall's *In My Time*" (Cockburn 136), the questions remain legitimate. Raddall's omission of Brontë as a potential influence need not dismiss speculation on that point. Raddall's unacknowledged literary borrowing might be accounted for by his assertion that his plotting is an "unconscious" procedure (Austin 112). The borrowing, in this respect, falls only loosely within the "categories of literary recycling" proposed by P.J. Rabinowitz (246); it seems to be less than his categories of "plagiarism" or "homage" would suggest, and to be most closely related to his categories of "criticism" or "revision" (Rabinowitz 246-49).

³ Carney acquired the disease which causes his blindness "years before, on a voyage to the West Indies" (NL 305). Similarly, Rochester married Bertha—whose actions precipitate his blindness (JE 453,454)—in the West Indies (JE 332).

⁴ It is interesting to note that a part of the maturation process in Isabel is the return to Kingsbridge, a place of her youth. Jane makes a similar voyage in *Jane Eyre*, returning to Gateshead in chapter 21. Jane observes, "The inanimate objects were not changed; but the living things had altered past recognition" (JE 256). Isabel, upon returning to Kingsbridge notes, "Kingsbridge looked the same but all the faces were strange" (NL 247). The observations of Isabel and Jane are, again, substantially the same.

⁵ Passages revealing the unconventional, rather rough-hewn appearances of Rochester and Carney appear throughout their respective novels (NL 17-18; JE 162). In contrast, the depictions of Skane and Carney reveal very conventionally attractive men (NL 284; JE 466).

⁶ Rochester, whose marriage to Bertha was arranged by his father, cannot be absolved as the blind victim of his father's capitalistic schemes. Rochester confesses to Jane that he married Bertha even though he "never loved" and "never esteemed" her: "I had marked neither modesty nor benevolence, nor candour, nor refinement in her mind or manners—and I married her" (JE, 333). To Rochester is attributed the guilt of being a slave to his passions, and instead of redeeming this guilt with a subsequent benevolent treatment of Bertha, he compounds it by caging her as if she were an animal. His fall from the roof is the consequence he suffers for having committed Bertha to a top-floor cell (JE 453).

⁷ With Carney, Isabel feels that she has "committed if not the most shameful, at all events the most vulgar of sins" (NL 77); she feels the guilt of Eve (NL 77); she feels "wicked and foolish" (NL 96); she "despise[s] her own flesh for its wants" (NL 124). Curiously enough, the one time when Carney and Isabel seem to have a mutually satisfying sexual encounter, Isabel is described as being in a state of "captivity," while "guiltily" thinking of Skane drawing her bath (NL 143). See also note 8, below.

⁸ The passionate, "monstrous" woman is at once the temptress Eve, precipitating the fall of man, and the castrating mother, denying the desire of the Oedipal son. In Brontë's novel there is no Oedipal connection, although there is the connection of Jane and Eve. In chapter 23 of *Jane Eyre*, Jane sits in the "Eden-like" garden and resists the temptation of Rochester: Brontë's Eve remains innocent, defying (and denying) the responsibility for Adam's fall. By way of contrast, Raddall's Isabel Jardine plays out the role of a guilty Eve; Isabel has an "uncomfortable notion of herself as the Eve who had robbed Carney of his innocence" (NL 136). (For more on Raddall's use of the Biblical creation myth, see Alan Young 96-97, 136 n.5). As far as the Oedipal dimension of Raddall's novel is concerned, Carney seems to be enacting a decidedly Oedipal role—his return to Halifax and his first encounters with Isabel, at the beginning of the novel, follow his failed

attempt to be reunited with his mother, an attempt that had been spurred on by "the romance of memory" (NL 23). Carney allows Isabel to think that he had returned from Marina to find an old lover, not to find his mother (NL 49). The narrator refers to Carney as a "waif" (NL 28), and Isabel sees him as a "small boy" (NL 52) as they go out together. His separation of women into two groups—"the lusty kind" and "virtuous women" (NL 25)—seems to correspond to his Oedipal role, as he plays out the role of being desirous of yet unable to approach the "virtuous" mother-figure, and unwilling to confront its counterpart, the "lusty" (and threatening) woman of passion. Carney's view of women seems rather Victorian in this respect—much more Victorian than Brontë's. He divides the sex into two groups, the good and the evil; and it is clear that what he seeks in a wife is a mother (to replace his dead mother) rather than a sexual partner.

⁹ Consequently there is a notable irony in Isabel's return to Marina, as it demarks not only her own willingness to suspend her existence as a sexual being, but also her willingness to "educate" the children of Marina out of a worry-free existence in which there are no taboos on passion (see Carney's comments on 159). In Isabel's view, the people of Marina believe themselves to have an "ideal existence," to have "none of the ordinary worries of existence," and to be satisfied (NL 317); Isabel seemingly hopes to civilize the "savages" (NL 160) by taming their passions and introducing frustration into their lives.

¹⁰ Brontë's first-person narrative evokes empathy and sympathy, making *Jane Eyre* a woman's tale of personal triumph; *The Nymph and the Lamp*'s third person omniscient narrative invites the reader to measure one character's thoughts and opinions against another's. Raddall manipulates this voice to the degree that the thoughts and opinions of Carney seemingly exist exclusively for the purpose of *justifying* the later thoughts and opinions of Isabel. His disdain for the state of civilization (NL 56) and city life (NL 32) anticipates her feelings at the end of the novel. No motives of men are explored (at any length) except so that the reader might measure Isabel's motives against them.

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