with, that Christine Lowther is getting on with her life and is doing it through the redemptive power of language. This is a book of poems to rejoice in—even though the facts they reveal are horrendous. Christine Lowther is indeed her mother's daughter and the gift of language has surely been received.

WINDWARD HEIGHTS

Maryse Condé. Trans. Richard Philcox. London: Faber and Faber, 1998.

BY CHRISTINE SINGH

As *Jane Eyre* has its *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Wuthering Heights* now has its *Windward Heights*, a new novel written by the esteemed Guadeloupean author Maryse Condé. Published in French in 1995, and translated into English in 1998, *Windward Heights* resembles Jean Rhys's novel in that it is set in the Caribbean, partly in Cuba, but mostly in Guadeloupe, yet it differs completely in direction. While Rhys invents a history for Charlotte Brontë's character Bertha, thereby writing an entirely different story from *Jane Eyre*, Condé re-writes Emily Brontë's novel using the same story, only setting it in the second half of the nineteenth century, just after the abolition of slavery. Unlike Alice Hoffman's *Here On Earth* (1997), a twentieth-century version of the original *Wuthering Heights*, Condé keeps with the post-colonial genre in which Rhys writes, thereby adding another dimension to the novel's complexity—that of race relations.

Heathcliff becomes Razye (a sort of French amalgamation of the words "heath" and "cliff"), a dark-skinned outsider, with long curly black hair, and an unknown history. The Earnshaws become the Gagneurs. Mr. Earnshaw becomes Hubert, "a tallow-coloured mulatto who had inherited from his white Creole father his pretentiousness and l'Engoulvent (a sort of French interpretation for 'Wuthering'), an overseer's house almost in ruins...situated on the Windward Heights." Hindley becomes Justin—"somewhat sad and taciturn, with a fair skin, fair enough for him to earn a place for himself in white folks' company through sheer hard work." Catherine becomes Cathy—"she was the colour of hot syrup left to cool in the open air, with black hair like threads of night and green eyes." And the Lintons become the Linseuils, with son Aymeric (Edgar) and daughter Irmine (Isabella), a rich white Creole family whose estate, Belles-Feuilles (Thrushcross Grange) is a plantation.

Condé, it seems, parallels the class relations in *Wuthering Heights* with West Indian racial relations. It soon becomes obvious that the whiter one's skin and features the higher one's social position. As Nelly Raboteur (Nelly Dean's counterpart before Aymeric fires her) says in her narration: "The abolition of slavery hadn't changed anything at all, you know. It was still the rich white planters who laid down the law and the blacks who lived from hand to mouth." So the white Creoles form a superior social class, which is also based on race and further enhanced by financial status, while the dark-skinned Blacks, freed slaves who have little money, are at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Race is also present in the plot changes that Condé makes. Like Rhys, Conde tries to give marginal characters a voice. While there are far fewer characters in Brontë's novel than in Condé's, the servants, especially at Thrushcross Grange, who stay in the background, are brought to the foreground in *Windward Heights*. While they do not alter the original story line drastically, they are given crucial roles as narrators. Chapter headings, such as "Mabo Sandrine's Tale" and "Sanjita the Housekeeper's Tale" are the outcome. Other modifications from the original novel are manifest: Lockwood, for instance, is not present in *Windward Heights*. Instead there is a slew of different narrators, who not only relate the story, but divulge their personal histories as well; Razye/Heathcliff's three-year absence is examined in Condé's novel; he spends the time making money and joining rebellions in Cuba; Razye/Heathcliff also becomes a socialist rebel in Condé's re-writing; Hareton becomes Justin-Marie, who is feminine and dies early, while Linton becomes Razye II, a strong, ragged brute; and Irmine/Isabella in *Windward Heights*, lives until the end.

Aside from these creative changes, as well as others scattered throughout the novel, Condé mostly conforms to Brontë's original *Wuthering Heights*. While the numerous new characters, and new sub-stories that accompany those characters, can add confusion to an otherwise smooth narrative, Condé's richly descriptive prose and powerfully evocative characterization is still able to preserve the emotional power of Brontë's original novel. By using race, however, to show different perspectives and outcomes of the same emotional conflicts faced by the original Brontë characters, Condé perhaps achieves an even more heightened narrative than Brontë, for she not only examines class issues, but racial ones as well. It is also possible then that Condé touches the concerns of a wider readership. Whatever the case, not only does Conde masterfully rewrite *Wuthering Heights*, but she also gives *Windward Heights* a stamp of her own, for that exotic, rich, textured prose is unmistakably Maryse Condé's.