

The Brontës and Masculinity

Erin Nyborg
Mansfield College
University of Oxford

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the D.Phil. in English

Hilary Term, 2016

Abstract

This is the first comprehensive study of the Brontës' representations of masculinity. In it, I analyse the ways this family of writers depicted forms of masculinity as they developed from late-Romantic child writers to mature novelists and poets of the Victorian period. My chief concern is to situate the Brontës within the historical period of 1829-1855, from Charlotte's first Glass Town stories to the time of her death. This thesis examines the Brontë siblings' complete body of work, including Branwell's contributions to the Angrian saga, Emily's and Anne's Gondal poetry, and Charlotte's and Emily's Belgian *devoirs*. In undertaking this work, I model my approach on Heather Glen's precise, historical readings in *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (2002), as well as John Tosh's social historical examination of Victorian masculinity, particularly in *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home* (1999).

This study examines representations of masculinity in the modes of cultural production the Brontës were exposed to: contemporary periodicals, poetry, fiction, domestic handbooks, gift books, educational texts, clerical and medical handbooks, and labour management treatises. I track the Brontës' various engagements with and revisions of Byronic and Carlylean forms of masculinity, as well as the rise and fall of the silver fork dandy and the emergence of both the Victorian self-made man and the new professional.

This study considers how the Brontës' representations of gender formation were affected by different modes of familial literary production and collaboration. Though the Brontës shared their creative works from a young age and grew up within the same domestic literary culture, the siblings' depictions of masculinity diverge, and each sister situates herself within various cultural contexts relating, for example, to child-rearing, romance, and professional conduct. My thesis is organised thematically, with chapters examining heroic, domestic, and professional representations of masculinity in the Brontës' works.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Abbreviations | iv |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter One: Hero-Worship in Charlotte and Branwell Brontë’s Glass Town and Angrian Collaboration, 1829-1836 | 16 |
| Chapter Two: Ironic Heroism: Changing Sibling Collaborations and Depictions of Heroic Masculinity, 1837-1848 | 47 |
| Chapter Three: Fathers, Sons, and Brothers: Familial Masculinities in the Brontës’ Novels | 94 |
| Chapter Four: Intimates: Marriage and Male Friendships | 133 |
| Chapter Five: Professional Masculinity: Teachers, Clergymen, and Doctors | 179 |
| Chapter Six: Paternalism and Professionalisation: Landowners, Captains of Industry, and Men of Leisure | 234 |
| Conclusion..... | 270 |
| Bibliography..... | 275 |

Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Sally Shuttleworth, for her unstinting guidance in the composition and revision of this thesis. Without her incisive critiques, this study could not exist in its present form.

At Mansfield College, I would like to thank Ros Ballaster, Tutor for Graduates and my teaching mentor, and my college advisor, Michèle Mendelssohn, for their support. I have benefited from the college's generous travel and book funding, and was thrilled to be one of the first recipients of Mansfield's Graduate Award in 2015.

My research activities have also been supported by two Maxwell and Meyerstein grants from the Faculty of English Language and Literature. To my fellow labourers in the faculty's graduate workspace, I am forever grateful for all our research (and not at all research-related) discussions and debates. Thank you to Nele Pollatschek, Callum Seddon, and Sarah Hanks for graciously proofreading sections of this thesis.

I would like to offer a heartfelt thanks to Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, Helen Small, and Sophie Ratcliffe, whose perceptive and sometimes challenging advice helped to shape this thesis. Thanks are also due to my excellent examiners, Stefano Evangelista and Valerie Sanders, who read this work with great care and gave me the opportunity to defend my approach and readings.

Thank you to Sarah Laycock, Library and Collections Officer at the Brontë Parsonage Museum and Library, who allowed me consult the Brontës' books, and for photocopying much needed material for me.

It has been an honour to work with, and learn from, the fantastic students I have taught during my degree through Mansfield College, the Oxford Department for Continuing Education, and Keble College.

Thank you to my parents, Bob and Shannon Johnson, for your unwavering moral support, both over Skype and during our trans-Atlantic visits. Thank you to Mom for being the most wonderfully finicky proof-reader a daughter could ask for. And to Tim, thank you for being willing to go on this adventure with me, for proofreading, and for believing in me.

Sections of Chapters One and Two will be published as an essay titled 'From Angria to Thornfield: Charlotte Brontë's Cross-Period Development of the Byronic Hero', in *Charlotte Brontë from the Beginnings: New Essays from the Juvenilia to the Major Works*, ed. by Judith E. Pike and Lucy Morrison (New York: Routledge, 2016)

Part of Chapter Six was published as 'Captains of Industry and the Subversion of the Professional Ideal in Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor* and *Shirley*', in *Brontë Studies*, 40 (November 2015), 306-313.

Abbreviations

- Tales* Christine Alexander, ed., *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- Allott Miriam Allott, ed., *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974)
- Barker Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994; rev. edn London: Abacus, 2010)
- EEW* Charlotte Brontë, *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Christine Alexander, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987-1991)
- Five Novelettes* —, *Five Novelettes*, ed. by Winifred Gérin (London: The Folio Society, 1971)
- Jane Eyre* —, *Jane Eyre*, ed. by Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Letters* —, *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Margaret Smith, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995-2004)
- The Professor* —, *The Professor*, ed. by Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Shirley* —, *Shirley*, ed. by Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Tales of Angria* —, *Tales of Angria*, ed. by Heather Glen (London: Penguin, 2006)
- Villette* —, *Villette*, ed. by Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Belgian Essays* Charlotte and Emily Brontë, *The Belgian Essays: A Critical Edition*, trans. Sue Lonoff (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996)
- Agnes Grey* Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, ed. by Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- AB Poems* —, *The Poems of Anne Brontë: A New Text and Commentary*, ed. by Edward Chitham (London: Macmillan, 1979)
- Tenant* —, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, ed. by Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

- Wuthering Heights* Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. by Ian Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- EB Poems* *The Poems of Emily Brontë*, ed. by Derek Roper with Edward Chitham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)
- PB Letters* Patrick Brontë, *The Letters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë*, ed. by Dudley Green (Stroud: Nonsuch, 2005)
- Works* Patrick Branwell Brontë, *The Works of Patrick Branwell Brontë*, ed. by Victor A. Neufeldt, 3 vols (London: Garland, 1997-1999)
- Life* Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Angus Easson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Page references for the Brontës' published novels will appear as in-text parenthetical references when the cited text is not ambiguous. In-text referencing will also be used for discussion of Charlotte Brontë's fragment, *Ashworth*, and Branwell Brontë's fragment, *And the Weary Are at Rest*, in Chapter Two.

Introduction

Douro gradually yield[ed] to feelings that with all his energy he could not control – [...] and as his eyelids closed over [...] quivering tears [...] gushed beneath them – Tears which I warn no man to deride for they were the result of smothered but most intensely felt emotions. ('[Four Years Ago]', 1837)¹

The reader is requested to note a seeming contradiction in the two views which have been given of Graham Bretton [...] In the first, the public, he is shown oblivious of self; as modest in the display of his energies, as earnest in their exercise. In the second, the fireside picture, there is expressed consciousness of what he has and what he is; pleasure in homage, some recklessness in exciting, some vanity in receiving the same. Both portraits are correct. (*Villette*, 1853)²

These two passages, written by Charlotte Brontë sixteen years apart, offer very different constructions of masculinity. The first passage is set in the aristocratic world of Angria, the fictional kingdom Charlotte had created with her brother Branwell in the late 1820s. In it, Charlotte depicts Arthur Wellesley, the Marquis of Douro, and his intimate friend and rival Alexander Percy as they move through a Regency clubland as dandies, the superficial masculine type Thomas Carlyle had lambasted in *Sartor Resartus* (1834).³ But Douro also reveals hidden depths of 'ardour' for his older male friend, in whom he sees an equal in power and genius.⁴ Though Douro attempts to control his feelings, they are too powerful for restraint. This new struggle for self-control reflects the self-improving masculinity which became central to the emerging Victorian, middle-class brand of masculinity. Douro's self-control breaks down under the weight of his romantic friendship for Percy here, only one example of the intense male relationships which feature in the Angrian writings. The narrator Charles Wellesley, Douro's brother, commands that 'no man [...] deride' his tears, as they are signs of deeply felt emotion,

¹ Haworth, West Yorkshire, Brontë Parsonage Research Library, '[Four Years Ago]' by Charlotte Brontë, Hatfield Transcription 10, p. 36.

² C. Brontë, *Villette*, p. 197.

³ During this period, Charlotte and Branwell more often referred to these characters as the Duke of Zamorna and the Earl of Northangerland, respectively.

⁴ C. Brontë, '[Four Years Ago]', p. 36.

which recall the passionate Byronic hero, rather than new forms of Victorian sentimentality. Brontë seems aware that though Douro's tears are still defensible, they are becoming effeminate. The unevenness of Douro's depiction suggests Charlotte was navigating different forms of possible masculinity for him, as the Regency shifted into the Victorian period.

The second passage, from *Villette*, is emblematic of other tensions within masculinity central to the Brontës' works: public and private selves, work and home, professional and family relationships. Graham Bretton (or Dr John, in his professional mode) presents himself in significantly different ways at home and at work. As a physician to the poor, Dr John is humble, selfless, and professional, but at home his flaws of pride and vanity are more apparent, and the narrator Lucy draws attention to this 'seeming contradiction'. Lucy assures the reader that 'both portraits are correct', suggesting that the performance of masculinity requires divergent traits which vary with audience and environment, tensions present elsewhere in the Brontës' novels. For instance, St John Rivers in *Jane Eyre* acquits himself well in the commission of his parish duties, but desires glory and sacrifice as a missionary in India. His desire to abandon England is mirrored in his awkward escapes from the feminine domestic sphere. Conversely, Robert Moore in *Shirley* states that he has 'two natures' and that 'Gérard Moore is a hard dog, brought up to the mill and market', while 'Robert' is humanised through time at home with his cousin Caroline Helstone (p. 215). Male characters in the Brontës' works respond in various ways to the pressures of the home and workplace, as Anne Brontë's Gilbert Markham struggles with an unsatisfying inheritance as a gentleman farmer, and Emily's Heathcliff disappears for three years to make his fortune in a mysterious manner, for the sake of Catherine Earnshaw. From the Brontës' early

writings through to their published novels, representations of masculinity, with its shifting forms and internal tensions, form a chief problematic.

This study seeks to answer a range of questions, covering the formations and representations of the male-gendered self in the Brontës' works. I analyse the styles of masculinity the Brontë siblings engaged with as these forms change over time. I track these evolutions both over the course of an individual author's adolescence to adulthood and within the wider cultural context of the complex and often ambivalent shift from the Romantic to the Victorian period. How did these writers variously absorb and challenge the representations of masculinity found in the forms of cultural production to which they were exposed? This study examines discussions of masculinity in contemporary periodicals, particularly *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and *Fraser's Magazine*, which the Brontës had access to from a young age. I examine both 'feminine' genres – domestic handbooks and gift books – and professional, 'masculine' ones – clerical and medical handbooks, and labour management treatises – to evaluate how the Brontës responded to debates surrounding gender. I also examine how the Brontës' representations of gender formation were affected by different modes of familial literary production and collaboration. Within a family of writers, which could itself be seen as a sort of controlled literary experiment, how does each author individuate her- or himself whilst writing on shared themes: hero-worship, domestic masculinities, male friendship, professionalism, and romance?

Studies of masculinity in the Brontës' works to date have focused on a handful of figures: Heathcliff and Mr Rochester as Byronic heroes; Arthur Huntingdon as domestic abuser and alcoholic; and William Crimsworth as male narrator. This thesis offers the first comprehensive study of the Brontës and masculinity, moving beyond the major works and key male figures to analyse the ways this family depicted forms of masculinity

as they developed from late-Romantic child writers to mature novelists and poets of the Victorian period. I track the Brontës' responses to the early nineteenth-century shift in expectations for masculinity, by which physical and aristocratic models of Regency masculinity lost favour and were replaced by new Victorian ideals of moral, middle-class manliness. This study is organised thematically into three parts, with the chapters examining heroic, domestic, and professional representations of masculinity in the Brontës' writings.

Building on the earlier editorial and critical work of Christine Alexander, Heather Glen, and Victor A. Neufeldt, I examine the Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal writing, much of which was written collaboratively by Charlotte and Branwell Brontë, and offers a significant exploration of gender. I also consider the formative literary influence provided by the Reverend Patrick Brontë's published works, including his didactic poems, stories, treatises, sermons and numerous letters to the editor. In addition to the Brontës' major novels, the thesis considers formulations of masculinity in other often overlooked works, including *Ashworth* and *And the Weary Are at Rest*, fragments of domestic novels by Charlotte and Branwell, respectively; Charlotte and Emily's Belgian *devoirs*; and Charlotte's final, unfinished novel, *Emma*. Though the Brontës shared their creative works from a young age and grew up within the same domestic literary culture, I argue the sisters' depictions of masculinity diverge, and each sister situates herself differently within various cultural contexts relating, for example, to child-rearing or professional conduct.

My chief concern is to situate the Brontës within the historical period of 1829-1855, from Charlotte's first Glass Town stories to the time of her death, and encompassing the Brontë siblings' complete body of works. In undertaking this work, I model my approach on Heather Glen's precise, historical readings in *Charlotte Brontë:*

The Imagination in History (2002). I apply Glen's questions regarding the relationship between literature and history to my examination of the Brontës' approaches to masculinity: 'What is the difference of the 'literary' from other forms of discourse? What does the literary imagination do with the materials with which it works? What kinds of understanding of history does it yield?'⁵ I also draw on John Tosh's social historical examination of Victorian masculinity, particularly in *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home* (1999), which considers the home and the world-at-large as twin arenas for the formation of Victorian masculine styles.⁶ In Tosh's view, home, work, and all-male association contributed to the formation of the male-gendered self. I use my examination of Victorian social history and contemporary discourses on manliness to guide my analysis of the Brontës' literary engagement with these ideals and their complications.

In this study of how the Brontës interact with, represent, and sometimes subvert the ideology, education, and socialisation of masculine types, I will draw on the concept of gender as 'performance' in a broad, literal sense, while also drawing on criticism which has been undeniably shaped by Judith Butler's radically social-constructionist view of gendered performance, as introduced in *Gender Trouble* (1990).⁷ The Brontës' earliest writings, as we know, grew out of 'plays' the children created, in which the siblings' chief male characters were acted out, and this self-conscious awareness of gendered performance continues to appear throughout the Brontës' works. As mentioned

⁵ Heather Glen, *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 3.

⁶ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

⁷ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990). For instance, James Eli Adams argues that his conception of 'styles of masculinity' mirrors Butler's notion that 'gender is always a doing' (qtd in *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 2). Valerie Sanders draws on Butler's concept of 'the indeterminacy of gender', arguing that '[g]ender therefore becomes a matter of choice, as we construct ourselves according to our own needs at the time' (qtd in *The Brother-Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: From Austen to Woolf* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 131).

above, the Brontës drew on the theatrical figure of the dandy in their 1830s fictions, but this theme is also present in the *tableaux* at Thornfield in *Jane Eyre* and in Mr Rochester's turn as a gypsy woman. Performative scenes are key to *Villette*, with M. Paul directing Lucy in the cross-dressed role of the fop at Madame Beck's fête. Less obviously theatrical gender performance occurs throughout the Brontës' works, as in the Bloomfield men's attempts to hide their newly moneyed status in *Agnes Grey* or Walter Hargrave's playing at the elite masculinity of his friends (and overspending in the process) in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

Professional performance is often dramatised in the Brontës' novels, with teachers and clergymen playing particularly public roles as a means of asserting their authority. In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff is defined by others according to his performance of masculinity, with the Lintons seeing him first as a wild animal, but later as a self-made gentleman. The performative is thus a particularly useful framework for reading the various manifestations of masculine styles in the Brontës' works, and their shifting modes of representation.

To a certain extent, any literary-historical study of the Brontës' works must consider their biography, but must also use that biography perhaps more carefully than earlier generations of Brontë scholars have tended to. Both Patrick and Branwell Brontë offer intimately known, domestic models of masculinity within the Parsonage, and, in drawing on those models, I take a similar view to Nancy Henry, who writes:

[B]iographical analysis is essential to any form of literary studies that seeks to place literature in historical context, and that evading fact and issues that are central to the author's life can lead to misinterpretation of both texts and contexts [...] What can and should be gained from biography is an appreciation of the framework in which lives were led, issues debated, and decisions made.⁸

⁸ Nancy Henry, *George Eliot and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

As readers and critics, we must avoid simplistic biographical readings of the Brontës' novels, but equally we must be attuned to the particular experiences of the domestic sphere, and the worlds of school and employment, which contributed to the four Brontë siblings' understandings of masculinity. For the past twenty years, Brontë scholars have had access to Juliet Barker's authoritative biography, *The Brontës*, which has done much to dispel many of the Brontë 'myths' Lucasta Miller has written about.⁹ In particular, Barker revived Branwell's reputation by quoting extensively from his Angrian writings and published poems and by correcting the assumption that his alcohol and opium abuse long pre-dated his sacking from his post at Thorp Green. Barker also illustrated Patrick Brontë's humane, politically-engaged, philanthropic nature and proved him to be an encouraging father, who allowed all his surviving children the chance to read and write, unfettered by parental supervision. My analysis of Branwell and Patrick Brontë's personal and literary influence on the Brontë sisters follows on from Barker's fair depictions, as opposed to the negative representations found in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*.¹⁰

Masculinity studies and theory is finally emerging from the shadow of feminist theory, but needs to be considered in the context of the wider field of gender theory. The first literary studies of Victorian masculinity were published in the 1980s and 1990s.

⁹ Juliet Barker, *The Brontës*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994; rev. edn London: Abacus, 2010); Lucasta Miller, *The Brontë Myth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001).

¹⁰ Charlotte's most recent biographer, Claire Harman, suggests that of the anecdotes Gaskell printed regarding Patrick's eccentricities, there may be some truth to the story that Mr Brontë cut up one of his wife's dresses, as it is attested to by Nancy Garrs and Ellen Nussey, who viewed it as a joke. Harman casts this incident as 'a marital stand-off' and argues Maria's forbearance illustrates her character, noting 'the last thing she was going to do was scold him, however childishly or irrationally he behaved' (p. 29). Harman ends her analysis of this anecdote by speculating on the impact of incidents like this on the Brontë sisters: 'Her daughters were brought up to placate him also, and to hide their opinion of his actions. Privately they would "condescend", as their mother did, but in their writing they returned obsessively to just such scenes of questionable authority and expose every nuance of injustice in them mercilessly' (*Charlotte Brontë: A Life* (London: Viking, 2015), pp. 29-30). There is no evidence of this condescension in Charlotte's letters to her sisters, and no suggestion that the patriarchal figures in the Brontës' novels were modelled on their own father.

Robin Gilmour's *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (1981) explored the confusion surrounding markers of gentlemanliness, but did not engage with contemporary feminist critiques of the Victorian novel. Similarly, Gilmour did not address the ways in which female writers of the early to mid-Victorian period represented masculinity.¹¹ Herbert Sussman's *Victorian Masculinities* (1995) and James Eli Adams's *Dandies and Desert Saints* (1995) both challenged the cultural narrative of a monolithic Victorian masculinity and marked a decisive shift in the critical visibility of studies on this subject.¹² Adams positioned masculinity as 'a central problematic in literary and cultural change' in *Dandies and Desert Saints*, from which I will borrow the helpful term 'style' with regard to the multiplicity of possible masculinities available to men at mid-century. Recent studies of Victorian masculinity have broadened the critical and theoretical horizons of the topic, considering Victorian fatherhood,¹³ masculine performance,¹⁴ the 'New Man' as foil to the *fin de siècle* New Woman,¹⁵ queer masculinities,¹⁶ imperialism,¹⁷ and professional men.¹⁸ Single author studies of

¹¹ Gilmour tracks representations of masculinity from Addison's essays in the *Spectator* through to Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, and into the Victorian age, examining Thackeray, Dickens, and Trollope (*The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981)).

¹² Adams, p. 2; Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

¹³ Valerie Sanders, *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Claudia Nelson, *Invisible Men: Fatherhood in Victorian Periodicals, 1850-1910* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1995); Trev Lynn Broughton and Helen Rogers, eds., *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); *Fathers in Victorian Fiction*, ed. by Natalie McKnight (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011).

¹⁴ *Performing Masculinity*, ed. by Rainer Emig and Antony Rowland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁵ Tara MacDonald, *The New Man, Masculinity, and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015).

¹⁶ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: Male Homosocial Desire in English Literature* (1985); Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (London: University of California Press, 1990, rev. edn 2008); Andrew H. Miller and James Eli Adams, eds., *Sexualities in Victorian Britain* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996); Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

¹⁷ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (London: Pearson, 2005); Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

¹⁸ Susan E. Colón, *The Professional Ideal in the Victorian Novel: The Works of Disraeli, Trollope, Gaskell, and Eliot* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Jennifer Ruth, *Novel Professions: Interested*

masculinity have focused on male writers: Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Joseph Conrad, and Arthur Conan Doyle.¹⁹ The only single-author study published on a Victorian woman writer's handling of masculinity is Susan Walton's *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge's Models of Manliness*.²⁰ To date, no full-length study has comprehensively examined the Brontë siblings' representations of masculinity across their early and published writings.

I will apply Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's formulation of male homosociality and the triangulation of men's relationships through women in my consideration of male friendships, first developed in Sedgwick's monograph, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), one of the pioneering texts of queer theory. Male homosocial relations take many forms in the Brontës' writings, from the erotically charged relationship between Charlotte's Duke of Zamorna and his father-in-law, Branwell's Earl of Northangerland, to the romantic friendship between Gilbert Markham and Frederick Lawrence in Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and the clubland friendships and rivalries of Arthur Huntingdon's set. In considering male friendships, I also apply Carolyn Oulton's narrative frames of substitution and expulsion

Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in the Victorian Novel (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2006); Laura Fasick, *Professional Men and Domesticity in the Mid-Victorian Novel* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003); Albert D. Pionke, *The Ritual Culture of Victorian Professionals: Competing for Ceremonial Status, 1838-1877* (Ashgate: Farnham, 2013).

¹⁹ For instance, Holly Furneaux, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Margaret Markwick, *New Men in Trollope's Novels: Rewriting the Victorian Male* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Diana Barsham, *Arthur Conan Doyle and the Meaning of Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Joseph A. Kestner, *Sherlock's Men: Masculinity, Conan Doyle, and Cultural History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997); Andrew Michael Roberts, *Conrad and Masculinity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Thomas F. Strychacz, *Dangerous Masculinities: Conrad, Hemingway, and Lawrence* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007).

²⁰ Susan Walton, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge's Models of Manliness* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). Michael Kramp's study on Jane Austen and masculinity, *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man*, is the only other recent study of masculinity in the works of a nineteenth-century woman author (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007). No book-length studies have been written on representations of masculinity in Elizabeth Gaskell or George Eliot's work, for example.

within romantic friendships. My study further critically assesses other, less often theorised or discussed representations of male relationships, especially in *Shirley*.²¹

The first two chapters contextualise the Brontës' formulations of heroic and anti-heroic, Byronic and dandyish, masculinity in the early writings on Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal, as well as the Belgian *devoirs* and Charlotte and Branwell's early novel fragments. Throughout the thesis, I will make reference to the Brontës' 'early writings' rather than to their 'juvenilia' for two reasons. First, all four Brontës continued to write prose and poetry set in the imagined worlds of their childhood and teenage years well into adulthood, so to term these productions as exclusively juvenile is misleading. Second, as Margaret Anne Doody argues, '[t]he term "Juvenilia" is a careful condescension, an epithet indicating that this work is *not required reading, not accountable to the standards of criticism*, but a mere curiosity, the childish output of one later distinguished for better work.'²² I argue that for a full understanding of the Brontës' published novels and mature poetry, and in particular, their representations of masculinity, the Angrian and Gondal writings must be read and analysed using all appropriate tools of criticism. These works are fascinating in their own right and allow us to consider the Brontës' literary apprenticeships. As Sara Lodge writes of Charlotte's early work, it is 'rumbustious, political, highly rhetorical, and increasingly sophisticated'.²³ The early writings are also significant for their mode of composition, as sibling collaborations, in which Branwell, so often forgotten, played a central role. Valerie Sanders suggests that cross-sex sibling collaborations give us access to

²¹ Carolyn W. De la L. Oulton, *Romantic Friendship in Victorian Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

²² Margaret Anne Doody, 'Jane Austen, that Disconcerting "Child"', in *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, ed. by Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 101-121 (p. 103). Emphasis mine.

²³ Sara Lodge, 'Masculinity, Power and Play in the Work of the Brontës', in *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 1-30 (p. 1).

‘imaginary projections of male-female roles which are commentaries on the experience of writing from a family basis’, a context which is extremely productive when considering the Brontës’ works.²⁴ Considering the early writings at length will help us to determine ‘the relationships of continuity and transformation which exist between Charlotte’s earlier and later writings’.²⁵ Because the Brontës’ first characters were almost all male, this longitudinal study allows us to see how certain figures, such as the Byronic hero, were developed by different siblings, at different times.

In Chapter One, ‘Hero-Worship in Charlotte and Branwell Brontë’s Glass Town and Angrian Collaboration, 1829-1836’, I examine the ways the Brontës deploy and critique ideal forms of masculinity, drawing on early nineteenth-century discourse on heroism and hero-worship, as found in the works of Thomas Carlyle and others. In exploring the early writings prior to 1837, I situate the Brontës’ youthful, collaborative productions in relation to their wide and often shared literary influences: from *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* and *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, to Romantic writers Walter Scott and Lord Byron, and the literary productions of Patrick Brontë. In this work, I model my approach on that taken by Andrew Elfenbein in his study *Byron and the Victorians* (1995) to consider how literary influences shaped the Brontës’ intertextual engagement with, and representations of, gender and Romantic heroism.²⁶ I also draw on Christine Alexander’s article ‘Charlotte Brontë, Autobiography, and the Image of the Hero’ (2011), which discusses Charlotte’s evolving use of the Duke of Wellington in her early and mature writings.²⁷ Both Elfenbein and Alexander address the degree to which a writer’s use of such a literary or historical figure may conform to or subvert literary trends in representation. Alexander also addresses the

²⁴ Sanders, *Brother-Sister Culture*, p. 33.

²⁵ Carl Plasa, *Critical Issues: Charlotte Brontë* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. x.

²⁶ Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

²⁷ Christine Alexander, ‘Charlotte Brontë, Autobiography, and the Image of the Hero’, *Brontë Studies*, 36 (2011), 1-19.

self-fashioning aspects such literary imitation or hero-worship can have, thus making the literary into personal matter. In the early writings, we see Charlotte and Branwell grappling with Byronic and dandyish forms of masculinity, as well as trying to envision new ways of being a man. This dialogue and creative working out of gender formation would continue into the published novels that shocked and challenged so many of the Brontës' contemporary reviewers.

In Chapter Two, 'Ironic Heroism: Changing Sibling Collaborations and Depictions of Heroic Masculinity, 1837-1848', I argue that Charlotte and Branwell's new use of satirised forms of masculinity and heroism in the post-1836 Angrian works is guided by their maturation as writers and their desire to experiment with long-established characters. This turn to irony and satire is also the result of changing literary trends and forms of cultural representation. The silver fork novels of Edward Bulwer, Benjamin Disraeli, and Catherine Gore, and the reviews of these novels in the periodicals the Brontës consumed, are key to this chapter, which analyses the Brontës as young writers engaging with, and critiquing, transitional forms of masculinity during the 1830s. I also consider Charlotte's novel fragment *Ashworth* (c.1840) and Branwell's fragment *And the Weary Are at Rest* (1845). In both these attempted novels, Charlotte and Branwell shift Angrian characters into newly domestic forms of masculinity and transpose them from their original West-African setting into Yorkshire. There is some evidence in Charlotte's *Ashworth* that new patterns of literary collaboration were forming among the three sisters. Charlotte may have developed a collaborative relationship with Emily during their time together in Brussels, when both were mentored in their French composition by Constantin Héger. The shift from paired sibling collaborations to collaboration among the three sisters is evidenced by the ways in which *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* represent, critique, and transform the Byronic hero, a figure

found not only in Charlotte and Branwell's early Angrian work, but also in Emily and Anne's collaborative Gondal poetry.

The second part of this thesis explores how masculinity is constructed within the complex, gendered power structures of the domestic sphere, drawing on John Tosh's work on Victorian domestic masculinity. In Chapter Three, 'Fathers, Sons, and Brothers: Familial Masculinities in the Brontës' Novels', I consider the rearing and education of sons, the relationships between fathers and sons, cross-sex sibling relationships, and brotherly rivalries. In her study of the 'New Man', Tara MacDonald argues that critics must '[attend] to both harmful and constructive models' of masculinity in Victorian literature, in order to [reorient] our critical understandings away from crisis and towards negotiation'.²⁸ To this end, I pay special attention to the rare but significant positive representations of fathers and brothers within the Brontës' novels.

In Chapter 4, 'Intimates: Marriage and Male Friendship', I situate the Brontës' representations of courtship and marriage in relation to the commentary on husbands in the domestic conduct books of Sarah Stickney Ellis, Sarah Lewis, and William Cobbett. While Ellis and Lewis are now seen as chief evangelists for Victorian domestic ideology, their writings, in fact, introduce complications into the vision of complementary roles for men and women they seem to support, by criticising men's faults under the cover of offering feminine advice. The Brontës engage with and critique the concept of the 'woman's mission', and their novels form a sustained but incomplete assault on the ideal of the morally influential, self-abnegating woman who appears in these conduct books, suggesting instead a critical family stance towards ideas of masculine dominance.

Apart from marriage, the key form of relationship Victorian men chose for themselves was their friendships with other men. In this chapter, I consider the ways in

²⁸ MacDonald, pp. 19-20.

which romantic friendships could prepare men for marriage or challenge the centrality of the domestic sphere. I endeavour to determine why the Brontës' depictions of groups of men so often see these male friends impinging upon the peace of the home, leading to social sins or even moral degradation. There is a striking paucity of discussion of the various male relationships within *Shirley*, despite the fact that these relationships structure much of the action of the novel and, as I will argue, provide an important insight into Charlotte's representations of sympathy, domesticity, and power. In Part Two, I aim to broaden the discussion of male roles within the Brontës' novels to consider the plethora of possible male domestic roles and the strong critique the Brontës launch against the patriarchal authority often invested in these positions.

In the final two chapters of the thesis, I examine the Brontës' male characters as defined by their work and class identities, with specific reference to the emergent professional ideal. The Brontës' depictions of professional masculinity have been largely neglected by critics, perhaps because the Brontës' methods of representation differ from those of Trollope or George Eliot, who especially explore the domain of male work. I argue that the Brontës' analyses of professional masculinity encompass the intensely personal and often sexual factors that influence professional and gender performance: self-control, romance, fear of failure and emasculation. In Chapter Five, 'Professional Masculinity: Teachers, Clergymen, and Physicians', I consider the Brontës' many representatives of teachers, clergymen, and doctors, who are often depicted both within the world of work and the domestic sphere. I examine the ways in which Charlotte Brontë's male teachers transform the classroom into an arena for male dominance and the methods by which clergymen and doctors construct their styles of masculinity through their professional authority over the bodies and minds of women. In this section, rather than examining the Brontës' male characters in only their domestic or erotic roles, I offer

the first in-depth repositioning of the Brontës' representations of professional masculinity by exploring the complex interconnections between larger social and professional structures and gender performance. In Chapter Six, 'Professionalisation: Landowners, Captains of Industry, and Men of Leisure', I consider the Brontës' representations of landed gentlemen and industrialists, whose roles must change to fit new configurations of ideal professional service, traditional paternalism, and social relations. Finally, I consider the strange prevalence of men who give up their professional roles and retreat into domesticity and romance.

Chapter One: Hero-Worship in Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Glass Town and Angrian Collaboration, 1829-1836

Hannibal was wily and persevering; Alexander was bold and rapid; Caesar was wise to combine, and swift to execute; but Wellington, as a general, is wily, persevering, bold and rapid; his powers of combination are immense, and his execution like thoughts! (*The Maid of Killarney*, 1818)¹

This commentary on military heroism in the Reverend Patrick Brontë's 1818 novella, *The Maid of Killarney*, suggests his influence on his children's early conceptions of hero-worship and the qualities of ideal manliness. The Duke of Wellington is positioned as the best of all generals, combining the qualities of his 'great antagonist' Napoleon and his classical forbears.² His greatness, for Mr Brontë, lay in his exacting intellect and his ability to translate his thoughts into decisive action. And, crucially, Wellington fought and conquered for the sake of Patrick Brontë's adopted homeland, England, and shared his predominantly Tory political values. On 5 June 1826, the Brontë children seized upon the twelve toy soldiers Mr Brontë brought home from Leeds and created in them male heroic figures, following in their father's footsteps. Charlotte reports that she had 'snatched up one and exclaimed, "This is the Duke of Wellington! It shall be mine,"' reflecting her father's admiration for the hero of Waterloo.³ Emily and Anne, then only eight and six, chose soldiers whom they named Gravey and Waiting Boy, only later to rename them (in grander fashion) Parry and Ross, after the Arctic

¹ [Patrick Brontë], *The Maid of Killarney: or, Albion and Flora: a Modern Tale; In which are interwoven some cursory remarks on Religion and Politics* (London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Jay, 1818), p. 39.

² P. Brontë, p. 39.

³ Charlotte Brontë, 'The History of the Year', *EEW*, I, pp. 4-6 (p. 5). In Branwell's account of the toy soldiers, written two years after Charlotte's, he notes that while the soldiers he received in 1826 were the basis of the original Twelve Adventurers who founded the fictional West-African kingdom of Glass Town, the children's early stories were drawn from games running over a six-year period. He thus challenges the narrative of the single creative moment, which Charlotte dated to 5 June 1826 ('The History of the Young Men', *Works*, I, pp. 137-169 (p. 138)).

explorers Sir William Edward Parry and Sir James Clarke Ross. Nine-year-old Branwell's 'chief man' was called Bonaparte, perhaps an early sign of sibling rivalry with Charlotte or a way to distance himself from his father's influence.

The Brontë children's interest in heroic masculinities is discernible in another early 'play', the 'Tales of the Islanders', for which each sibling chose an island and its inhabitants.⁴ Branwell's characters were John Bull, the personification of England; Astley Cooper, a prominent surgeon; and Leigh Hunt, the Romantic poet and essayist. Emily chose Walter Scott, his son-in-law John Gibson Lockhart, and Johnny Lockhart, the original for 'Hugh Littlejohn' of Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, which Aunt Branwell had given the children. Anne's first islander was Michael Sadler, a Tory MP for Leeds who opposed Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill, both issues Charlotte commented on in her Glass Town stories. Sadler also wrote for the Tory *Leeds Intelligencer*, to which Patrick Brontë often wrote letters to the editor for publication.⁵ Sadler's name would have been familiar to the children from a young age, and is a sign of their precocious political consciousness. Anne also included Lord Bentinck (another Member of Parliament), as well as Henry Halford, a noted physician. Charlotte peopled her island with the Duke of Wellington, 'North and Co.' (the writers of *Blackwood's* in their literary guises), thirty officers, and John Abernethy, yet another surgeon.⁶ In adopting this wide range of early heroes, the Brontës exhibited their interest in Romantic poets and novelists, periodical writers, politics, military history, exploration, and medicine. This obvious fascination with great men beyond the usual soldiers and explorers suggests that the Brontë children found active, adult male life heroic and wished to play at the authority found in middle-class professional roles. Interestingly, for

⁴ C. Brontë, 'The origin of the Islanders', *EEW*, I, p. 6.

⁵ Stewart A. Weaver, 'Sadler, Michael Thomas (1780–1835)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁶ C. Brontë, 'The History of the Year', pp. 4-5.

the children of an Anglican cleric, there are no clergymen and missionaries in key roles in the early Glass Town writings, while in the novels, there are no professional writers, politicians, or soldiers, though a plethora of teachers, landowners, and industrialists are present.⁷ These continuities and shifts over time suggest the Brontë siblings' changing interests, values, and personal and professional experiences (especially with clergymen and as teachers).

Mr Brontë closely observed and took an interest in the children's heroic plays, writing later:

[A] dispute would not infrequently arise amongst them regarding the comparative merits of [the Duke of Wellington], Buonoparte, Hannibal, and Cæsar. When the argument got warm, and rose to its height, as their mother was then dead, I had sometimes to come in as arbitrator, and settle the dispute according to the best of my judgement.⁸

The heroes whose reputations the Brontë children argued over in their 'plays' are the same men Mr Brontë had written about in *The Maid of Killarney*, which strongly suggests that he transmitted his hero-worship to his children. While the children's games reflected their interest in their father's opinions, Mr Brontë believed that their mother would have intervened, had she been living. Instead, as a lone father whose work as a clergyman often kept him in the parsonage, accessible to his children, Patrick Brontë took on the role of arbiter.

In this chapter, I examine the types of heroic masculinity present in Charlotte and Branwell's early Glass Town and Angrian writings, from 1829-1836.⁹ This is a particularly significant period as almost all the major characters in this writing are men and the siblings take on male narrating voices. I will consider how late-Romantic, post-

⁷ Christine Alexander notes the lack of missionaries in 'Imagining Africa: The Brontës' Creation of Glass Town and Angria', in *Africa Today: A Multi-Disciplinary Snapshot of the Continent in 1995*, ed. by Peter F. Alexander, Ruth Hutcherson, and Deryk Schreuder (Canberra : Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, 1996), pp. 201-219 (p. 212).

⁸ Elizabeth Gaskell, *Life*, p. 47.

⁹ The siblings' collaboration seems to have broken down after 1836. The Brontës' works of 1837-1845 will be discussed in the next chapter.

Napoleonic literary culture impacted the Brontës' engagement with ideals of masculinity and heroism. In the semi-anonymous staff of *Blackwood's*, the Brontës found literary men on whom to self-consciously model their own writing and early professional practice. The imperial exploration of West-Central Africa by Mungo Park and others, which inspired the Brontës' Twelve Adventurers, was covered in *Blackwood's* during this period, as was the political career of the Duke of Wellington. Similarly, the young Arthur Wellesley's masculinity was probably influenced by Scott's Waverley heroes. Later in the saga, both Wellesley and Branwell's 'chief man', Percy, develop into Byronic heroes. This chapter analyses the ways in which Charlotte and Branwell's representations of masculinity differ, and will explore the significance of Charlotte's cross-gendered writing.

While the Brontës' heroic games began as play-acting, their stories soon became literary exercises, recorded in miniscule print in the form of histories, chronicles, collections of narrative fragments, poems, novelettes, and periodicals made to emulate the Brontës' beloved *Blackwood's*. It is worth noting, however, that the Brontë children were not uniquely precocious. Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster's edited collection, *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf* (2005) points out that Coleridge's son, the poet Hartley Coleridge (to whom Charlotte would later send portions of *Ashworth*), wrote about the imaginary kingdom of 'Exjuria' as a child, while Charles Dodgson and the young Stephen siblings wrote family periodicals, just as the young Brontës did.¹⁰ While the Brontës' early writings often resemble those of other Victorian child writers, three features make their early corpus exceptional. Charlotte and Branwell were extremely prolific: each sibling's early writing is more extensive than Charlotte's four

¹⁰ *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, ed. by Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

published novels taken together.¹¹ The scope of Emily and Anne's work on the island kingdom of Gondal is much harder to gauge because, for unknown reasons, their prose writings are no longer extant. Instead, a fragmentary collection of lyric and narrative poems remains, which makes any attempt to fully reconstruct the plot impossible.

The Brontës' imagined worlds also had a greater longevity than those created by other child writers, persisting into the siblings' adulthood. Charlotte stopped writing Angrian stories in 1839, at the age of 23, while Branwell continued writing Angrian poetry almost up to his death. Emily and Anne continued to write Gondal poetry and prose until their deaths, even play acting Gondal scenes together on their 1845 train journey home from York when they were twenty-eight and twenty-seven.¹² Emily's final poem, 'Why ask to know the date – the clime', is set during the brutal Gondal civil war and was written after *Wuthering Heights*.

The Brontës' early writing is further distinct because it was not subject to parental surveillance or interference. The miniature print was too small for Mr Brontë or Aunt Branwell to read, which could have been done by design. While the imprint of Patrick Brontë's hero-worship, his Tory politics, and his reading material – Scott, *Blackwood's*, the Bible – made their mark on his children's youthful writings, Mr Brontë did not direct or censor their work. Thus the Brontës' early writings were written for, and read by, the four siblings, a freedom which may explain the surprising degree of violence and sexuality in these works.

In the General Introduction to her edition of Charlotte's early writings, Christine Alexander comments on Branwell's early writings and their relationship to Charlotte's work: 'To some extent we are reading only half the story in the following pages, but [...]

¹¹ Christine Alexander, 'The Legacy of Sir Walter Scott on Youthful Artists and Writers', in *The Shadow of the Precursor*, ed. by Diana Glenn (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. 106-123 (p. 115).

¹² Emily Brontë, 'Diary Paper 30 [31] July 1845', in *Tales*, pp. 490-491 (p. 490).

it is her [Charlotte's] version that is important to any study of the later novels.'¹³ For a full understanding of Charlotte and Branwell's collaboration and the impact of this writing relationship on the Brontës' published novels, I argue that the best method is to read both writers' texts in tandem and chronologically. Only then can the reader trace the development of the characters' relationships and political situations within the larger, shared, and incredibly complex narrative. This joint reading allows for analysis of how Branwell's plotting and political focus might have influenced Charlotte's work and how her development of romantic relationships might have left their imprint on Branwell's writing. Branwell's work is particularly important for the present study, as it allows for an examination of the points of departure between his depictions of masculinity and those of his sisters.

When Alexander first published her edition of Charlotte's early writings, no comprehensive, accurate critical edition of Branwell's early writings had been published. The manuscripts were spread across Britain and America and, like Charlotte Brontë's early works, notoriously difficult to decipher. Comprehensive study of both siblings' early works has been feasible since Neufeldt published the final volume of his edition of Branwell's works in 1999. Still, this dual analysis has seldom been undertaken, and even more rarely has it directly addressed the siblings' representations of masculinity, as this study aims to do.¹⁴

¹³ Alexander, 'General Introduction', *EEW*, I, pp. xiii-xix (p. xvii).

¹⁴ Studies of this collaboration include Bette London's *Writing Double: Women's Literary Partnerships* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Robin St. John Conover's 'Creating Angria: Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Collaboration', *Brontë Society Transactions* 24 (1999), 16-32; Valerie Sanders's, *The Brother-Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: From Austen to Woolf* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Drew Lamonica's *We Are Three Sisters': Self and Family in the Writing of the Brontës* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003). Alexander and Neufeldt both contribute essays to *The Child Writer*, writing on Charlotte and Branwell's early works, respectively, but the collaboration is not closely considered (Alexander, 'Play and Apprenticeship: The Culture of Family Magazines', in *The Child Writer*, pp. 31-50; Neufeldt, 'The Child is Parent to the Author: Branwell Brontë', in *The Child Writer*, pp. 173-185). Despite the inclusive title of Sara Lodge's essay 'Masculinity, Power and Play in the Work of the Brontës', this analysis focuses almost exclusively on Charlotte's early writings (*The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 1-30).

These early works reveal Charlotte and Branwell to be highly imaginative young writers who have read widely and are interested in politics, geography, history, mythology, and folklore. They are still maturing and have not yet developed assured narrative construction, characterisation, or prose style (or grammar and punctuation, for that matter).¹⁵ They do, however, evince a great sense of fun and a keen feeling for comedy and satire. Charlotte's works become distinctly more sophisticated around the age of fourteen, when she becomes capable of writing more sustained pieces, such as 'Albion and Marina'. By the end of this period, both siblings were able to write thematically complex and dark fiction, often with sexual undertones. For Charlotte and Branwell, the imagined space of Angria and their respective heroes allowed them to compete with each other, develop their literary powers, work out frustrations arising from sibling rivalries, and explore their sexuality in a world safe from prying adult eyes.

The Hero as Man of Letters

I am just about to commence writing an account of the life and character of the most extraordinary man of this century For amid all the Monarchs Warriors Statesmen Poets and Philosophers whose stars have blazed Africa turns always from the lights of a Malbourough Johnson Bonaparte Byron Nelson Scott or a 'Georgius' to look at the red troubled uncertain flashings of an Alexander Percy.¹⁶

At the beginning of his three-volume biography of his 'chief man', the young Branwell Brontë uses a rhetorical device similar to his father's comparative positioning of the Duke of Wellington among other great generals in *The Maid of Killarney*.

Branwell situates his entirely fictional hero among the greats of history from a myriad of disciplines: monarchs, warriors, statesmen, poets, and philosophers – all roles Alexander

¹⁵ While Alexander's edition of Charlotte Brontë's early writings presents the reader with a substantially clear text, Neufeldt's edition of Branwell's work retains his many faults of spelling and grammar. Branwell's errors and idiosyncrasies will thus be reproduced in quotations drawn from this edition.

¹⁶ P.B. Brontë, 'The Life of Field Marshal the Right Honourable Alexander Percy', *Works*, II, pp. 92-190 (p. 92).

Percy plays amongst the literati and political elite of Angrian society. The inclusion of poets and philosophers emphasises the importance of artistic and intellectual qualities in the men the Brontës admire, even though these figures seem out of place in an adolescent's list of favoured military heroes and rulers.

Branwell's inclusion of literary heroes anticipates Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1842), in which Carlyle extolled the value of hero-worship for the creation of better, greater men in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ His heroic types were the Hero as Divinity, Prophet, Priest, Man of Letters, and King, and ranged from Odin to Cromwell through to Johnson and Napoleon. Though these great men (Carlyle named no women) played very different roles in history, they shared, he suggests, common moral qualities – integrity, simplicity, honesty – which could be emulated by Victorian men. Carlyle's rhetoric on heroes thus creates a tension between his worship of great men – 'the History of the world is but the Biography of great men' – and his belief that heroism was accessible to all – 'If Hero means *sincere man*, why may not every one of us be a Hero?'¹⁸ However, by writing a biography of great men, Carlyle implicitly set himself up as a heroic cultural prophet and Man of Letters. He, too, was fashioning himself as a hero through his writing, with the ability to enter into the subjectivity of past heroes. He could compare, weigh, and ultimately judge heroic acts and inner selves in the act of writing a heroic history. In 1828, Leigh Hunt made just such a suggestion regarding the greatness of the biographer in his reminiscences of Byron in *Blackwood's*:

[I]t is, in almost all cases, an essential condition of certain kinds of the biography of a great man, that his biographer should be a great man likewise; — either great in power and genius, or in capacity and feeling, — that he may comprehend all

¹⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. by Michael K. Goldberg, Joel J. Brattin, and Mark Angel (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Carlyle, p. 20.

his widest sympathies, and see all his achievements in the light in which they were wrought.¹⁹

Hunt quickly clarifies that he does not see himself as worthy to write this type of biography of Byron, but he is confident enough to write of him and his associates in *Blackwood's*, a magazine notorious for mocking Hunt as a member of the so-called 'Cockney School of Poetry'. The young Brontës realised that in writing the lives of their heroes – first real-world ones such as Wellington and then the purely fictional Arthur Wellesley and Alexander Percy – they could act out heroism by proxy and take on heroic qualities themselves. These characters also allowed the Brontës to combine aspects of past heroes in their own creations, which may explain why Branwell sets Percy up as the ultimate hero: he is not just a politician or rebel or poet – he is all three, magnificently. In writing Percy's life, Branwell could engage in his own literary heroism, as Boswell to his Johnson, Moore to his Byron.²⁰ Because Percy (later Northangerland) plays such a strong role in Branwell's literary identity, it is unsurprising that almost all Branwell's later, published poems appeared under the pseudonym 'Northangerland'. The character is the embodiment of all great manly and poetic qualities, a public mask he has fashioned for himself.

The Brontës would have had access to a source of heroic history and biography in the home, possibly from a very young age, in the form of the 1813 edition of *Mangnall's Historical and Miscellaneous Questions*, which Charlotte annotated, possibly while she was a student at Roe Head School. Barker notes that Patrick Brontë may have been familiar with Richmal Mangnall's teaching, as family friend Elizabeth Firth had been

¹⁹ Leigh Hunt, 'Byron and Some of his Contemporaries', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 23 (March 1828), 362-408 (p. 366).

²⁰ The Brontës owned a copy of George Allan's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* and Charlotte's 1834 reading list for Ellen Nussey provides a list of biographies: 'read Johnson's lives of the Poets, Boswell's life of Johnson, Southey's life of Nelson, Lockhart's life of Burns, Moore's life of Sheridan, Moore's life of Byron, Wolfe's remains' ('To Ellen Nussey, 4 July 1834', *Letters*, I, pp. 129-132 (pp. 130-131)).

educated at her school, Crofton Hall.²¹ Mangnall's educational text, like Carlyle's lectures, constructs ancient and modern history using the 'Great Man' model. While Barker notes that 'names, dates and further information have been added' by Charlotte to the section on Ancient Greek history, it is crucial to realise that Charlotte did not merely add facts to her schoolbook but also acted as an editor of the text in places, adding colour and character to the accounts of Greek heroes and wars. At times, she seems to have edited the text for clarity and concision, asserting her own authority over the rendering of these heroic feats, even as a young teenager.²² In 'Miscellaneous Questions in Grecian History', Charlotte crossed out a few lines on page 22, and at the bottom of the page has written: 'A King of Argos and Nicene Nestor the venerable King & sage of Pylos who had see [sic] three successive generations of men & Ulysses prince of Ithica famous to his wisdom assist of him by their prudent counsels.'²³ Here, we see a small character sketch of Nestor and Ulysses and the importance of good counsellors to a leader. On pages 23 and 24, Charlotte added 'curiosity' to the list of the characteristics of the Athenians: 'Glory, liberty, and interest | were their darling passions', suggesting that she was not simply interacting with the text as a depository of facts she needed to learn by rote, but that she felt she could add to the narrative provided, using her own opinions as to the qualities of a hero, including material read elsewhere or learned from her teachers, perhaps. For instance, on page 33, she adds character and drama to the description of Socrates waiting for his execution: 'the execution of his sentence was suspended thirty days [CB: waiting for the return of the sacred vesel upon the arrival of which] he was

²¹ Barker, pp. 135-136.

²² There is no way to date the annotations, but Barker's statement that the book was used at Roe Head could suggest Charlotte made these annotations around age fifteen or sixteen. However, because the annotations are all made in pencil and printed, rather than in ink and cursive (as in the autographs at the beginning and end of the book) and because the Brontës owned the 1813 edition, these additions could have been made much earlier.

²³ Haworth, West Yorkshire, Brontë Parsonage Research Library, *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the Use of Young People, with a Selection of British and General Geography*, by Richmal Mangnall (London, 1813), bb215, Bonnell 43, annotated by Charlotte Brontë.

compelled to drink hemlock.’ Through this small addition, Charlotte heightens the drama and suspense of Socrates’s forced suicide, and provides a concrete image for the reader to focus on, the ‘sacred vessel’.

The Brontë children were also exposed to the genre of the miniature biography valorising great men, which anticipates Samuel Smiles’s format for *Self-help* (1859). Mangnall provided ‘An Abstract of British Biography; Containing Some of the Most Eminent Men Who Have Flourished in the United Kingdom’, running to sixty pages.²⁴ This directory of great British men includes authors, as well as medical and military men, perhaps providing a source for the Brontës’ diverse heroic types in their early writings. In Mangnall’s work, Addison, Bunyan, Burke, and Johnson appear amongst monarchs and Marlborough, whom Branwell cites at the beginning of his biography of Alexander Percy. No women were included in this list of British greats, not even Queen Elizabeth. In the entry on Nelson, Mangnall suggested both the universality and the distinction found in his heroism: ‘Many Nelsons may be found among our gallant countrymen in courage and patriotism, but, considered as a NAVAL COMMANDER, he stands unrivalled.’²⁵ While Nelson’s interior, moral qualities – his courage and patriotism – are cast as universal elements of British heroism, his particular skills as a naval commander set him apart from his peers. In this way, Mangnall perhaps anticipated Carlyle’s praise of great men and his universalisation of the moral qualities which actuate male heroism.

The Brontës most obviously act out the heroic role of the Man of Letters in their play at being periodical authors. Both Branwell and Charlotte used multiple male writing personae in their early writings and tried to imitate book print, the layouts of title pages and colophons, and periodicals. The siblings created several series of periodicals,

²⁴ Mangnall, pp. 212-273. This section is followed by ‘A Sketch of General Modern Biography’, which highlights Continental and Middle Eastern greats from the Dark Ages to the present. As the Brontës’ edition of the book was published before the battle of Waterloo, neither Wellington nor Napoleon is profiled in these biographical sections.

²⁵ Mangnall, p. 247.

starting with *Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine*, which reproduced the range of material found in the original journal – reviews, serialised tales, horror stories, poems. They also copied the distinctive tone of raillery in the famous *Noctes Ambrosianae* series in the form of ‘Conversations’ among the Brontës’ characters. Instead of Timothy Tickler, Christopher North, and the Ettrick Shepherd trading barbs, Charlotte substitutes Charles and Arthur Wellesley.²⁶ Just as the *Blackwood's* crew praise or, more often, criticise other writers, the Glass Town literati compliment or censure each other’s verse.

Charlotte wrote a two-act drama titled *The Poetaster* purely to skewer the overly romantic literary pretensions of the poet Young Soult and, by extension, Branwell, the character’s creator. In ‘An Interesting Passage in the Lives of Some Eminent Men of the Present Time’ (written 17-18 June 1830), Charlotte’s Charles Wellesley exposes the theft of library books by Branwell’s characters. In Branwell’s ‘The Liar Detected’, written a day later on 19 June 1830, Captain Bud, a highly respected historian, retaliates by accusing Lord Wellesley of slandering men of good standing, including himself and Captain Tree. Even in this early work, Branwell compares his characters to classical authors, using hyperbole to satirise himself and his characters: ‘Homer had his Zoilus Virgil his Meavius and CAPTAIN TREE his wellsly.’²⁷ The Brontës frequently cast their characters and even themselves in a self-aware, mock-heroic register.

For example, in transferring the editorship of Branwell’s periodical to Charlotte, the two eldest Brontës criticise each other’s chosen literary genres and tone with pompous seriousness.²⁸ Branwell states that ‘all soberness is past and one, | The reign of

²⁶ For instance in the ‘Conversations’ section of Charlotte’s ‘Blackwood’s Young Men’s Magazine,’ for December 1829 (*EEW*, I, pp. 113-123 (pp. 118-121)).

²⁷ P.B. Brontë, ‘The Liar Detected’, *Works*, I, pp. 92-97 (p. 92).

²⁸ From January to July 1829, Branwell had acted as editor and proprietor of *Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine*, and in August, 1829, Charlotte began her own rival magazine, the *Blackwood's Young Men's Magazine* (in its second series, retitled the *Young Men's Magazine*).

gravity is done, | Frivolity comes in its place'.²⁹ Charlotte, however, reports that '[n]o more dullness reigns' in the magazine, arguing that her mix of fairy tales and stories of the Wellesleys is preferable to Branwell's focus on drinking songs and military manoeuvres.³⁰ In taking on the masculine roles of editor and periodical writer, Charlotte and Branwell enact pitched battles for literary authority, often in playful, comic ways.³¹ These literary skirmishes show the young writers trying on the different styles and modes allowed by the periodical format and ultimately testing themselves against their siblings in print.

Writing Themselves into the Story

Charlotte and Branwell create metafictional representations of the four Brontë children in various guises, often for the purpose of poking fun at each other and their literary endeavours. In 'A Day at Parry's Palace', Charles Wellesley visits Anne and Emily's heroes. He finds Parry's kingdom 'intolerably dull', full of farm buildings and belching factories.³² Parry and Ross bear no relation to their real-world explorer antecedents, and Charlotte depicts Emily and Anne as their wives. All are denigrated as childish and dull, and speak 'a scarcely intelligible jargon'.³³ Charlotte sees their productions as juvenile compared to Branwell's and her own. Emily and Anne were no doubt writing with less sophistication than their elder siblings at this time, being only twelve and ten respectively. However, as these stories were shared amongst the siblings,

²⁹ P.B. Brontë, 'Lines Spoken by a Lawyer on the occasion of the Transfer of this Magazine,' *EEW*, I, pp. 94-95 (p. 94).

³⁰ C. Brontë, 'Lines by One who was Tired of Dullness upon the Same Occasion,' *EEW*, I, pp. 95-96 (p. 96).

³¹ Alexander argues that Emily and Anne were probably writing Glass Town stories at this time but their contributions are no longer extant, so it is impossible to know how involved they were. Alexander suggests that after 1831, Emily and Anne broke away from Charlotte and Branwell to begin work on their Gondal tales and poems (*The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 1).

³² C. Brontë, 'Young Men's Magazine, October 1830,' *EEW*, I, pp. 228-241 (p. 233).

³³ C. Brontë, 'Young Men's Magazine, October 1830,' p. 231.

these portrayals were likely meant in fun, for the purpose of mutual recognition and humour. They do, however, serve to set Charlotte's writing apart from her siblings' and to stamp her authority.

Charlotte later creates a satirical version of Branwell in the person of Benjamin Wiggins of Howard, a transparent stand-in for Haworth. He appears at length in *My Angria and the Angrians* (1834), in a portrayal which makes fun of Branwell's overweening ambition. Wiggins longs to be greater than Bach, Byron, and Claude Lorrain, as well as Branwell's own creations, Alexander and Edward Percy.³⁴ This comparison recalls Branwell's declaration that Alexander Percy is greater than other poets, statesmen, and generals, which in turn perhaps draws upon Patrick Brontë's praise of the Duke of Wellington in *The Maid of Killarney*.³⁵ Seeing Branwell's self-identification with Percy's character, as well as his desire to leave home for success in the world of work, Charlotte uses the figure of Percy to mock Branwell's personal pride.

Charlotte also uses this representation of Branwell to express judgments of herself and her sisters. Wiggins characterises his sisters this way:

[T]hey are miserable silly creatures, not worth talking about. Charlotte's eighteen years old, a broad dumpy thing, whose head does not come higher than my elbow. Emily's sixteen, lean and scant, with a face about the size of a penny, and Anne is nothing, absolutely nothing.³⁶

This is an oddly reflexive and critical commentary on the family. Charlotte here projects onto the figure of Wiggins Branwell's supposed criticism of Charlotte and her sisters.

This passage may reflect Charlotte's punitive criticism of herself and her sisters, as well as the narrow scope of their hopes for the future, as opposed to Branwell's better prospects. In late 1834, Charlotte believed her formal education had come to an end, and

³⁴ C. Brontë, 'My Angria and the Angrians', *EEW*, II, 2, pp. 239-293 (p. 250).

³⁵ Neufeldt suggests tentative dates of June 1834 to November 1835 for Branwell's composition of this biography. Charlotte's *My Angria and the Angrians* was completed on 14 October 1834, during the early period of Branwell's work on the biography.

³⁶ C. Brontë, 'My Angria and the Angrians', p. 250.

she and her sisters were destined for lives as governesses. Mr Brontë, however, had high hopes for Branwell, who left home to work as a portrait painter in Bradford in 1838. The attacks on the sisters' physical deficiencies may be a riposte against Branwell's perceived self-aggrandisement, but might also reflect Charlotte's own lack of self-esteem.³⁷ Where once she had channelled her energy into representing herself as the heroic, creative, powerful genii Tallii, she now uses her pen to criticise herself. The figure of Wiggins is both a satirical version of Branwell's apparent adolescent hubris and a reflection of Charlotte's distinct sense of being unheroic and marginalised.

Imperial Heroes

Angria allowed Charlotte and Branwell a new field for their heroes to test themselves in. The Brontës established the kingdom of Glass Town at the Niger delta, an almost blank imaginative space for the British reader, allowing the children to recreate the adult world of politics, war, and love affairs as they saw fit. The Brontës' much used and annotated copy of Goldsmith's *A Grammar of General Geography* provided the children with exotic names for peoples and places: the *Jibbel Kumera*, the Ashantee, the rivers Niger and Calabar.³⁸ Christine Alexander notes that during the 1820s, *Blackwood's* covered Bowdich's mission to the Ashantee from Cape Coast Castle, and Mungo Park's exploration and death.³⁹ In the literary annual *Friendship's Offering* for 1829 (which the Brontës almost certainly owned, or, at least, had access to, as the siblings copied a number of the volume's engravings) a short memoir written by Thomas Edward Bowdich's widow titled 'Going to Sea, And the Ship's Crew' appeared, which

³⁷ Gaskell notes that Charlotte described her fifteen-year-old self as 'stunted', though Gaskell describes her person as only 'very small in figure' (*Life*, p. 76). While Charlotte's comments about herself are self-deprecating, they could also be ironic, in the distance between Charlotte's actual petite form and Wiggins's description of her as 'dumpy'.

³⁸ Alexander, *The Early Writings*, p. 19.

³⁹ Alexander, *The Early Writings*, p. 20.

briefly described her sea voyage to West Africa. The piece included racialised commentary on the ship's African cook, who, she writes, 'shin[es] with borrowed and native grease'.⁴⁰ The Glass Town writings have their genesis in the Brontës' imaginative colonisation of spaces that were being opened up to exploration and British imperialism, while their inhabitants were cast within a number of racial stereotypes.

The colonial strain of the early writings and the centrality of British heroic ideals are apparent early on in both Charlotte's and Branwell's writings. In Charlotte's telling, the British battle the Ashantee almost immediately after arriving in West Africa, taking their chief hostage and then releasing him in return for a peace treaty 'on terms most advantageous to ourselves'.⁴¹ The Twelve Adventurers begin to cultivate the land and build the halls and towers of the Great Glass Town, with magical assistance from the Genii. Arthur Wellesley suggests that their prosperity may inspire envy in the 'King of the Blacks', which could lead to further colonial warfare.⁴² He argues they should call up the English military to maintain control of their imperial prize: 'Would not the best way be to send immediately to England, tell them of the new world we have discovered and of the riches that are in it, and do you not think they would send us an army?'⁴³ Charlotte, even as a thirteen-year-old, reflects in her imaginative world the real-life colonial and commercial expansion of Britain into West Africa.⁴⁴ In Charlotte's version, Wellesley (not yet the Duke of Wellington) becomes an imperial political and tactical hero, and is

⁴⁰ [Sarah Bowdich], 'Going to Sea, And the Ship's Crew', in *Friendship's Offering: A Literary Album, and Christmas and New Year's Present for MDCCCXXIX* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1829 [1828]), pp. 361-372; Christine Alexander and Margaret Smith, *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 203. While the Brontës were almost certainly exposed, in some degree, to the accomplishments of Sarah Bowdich, an artist, naturalist, and professional author, no accomplished female characters of this type appear in the Brontës' early writings (Donald deB. Beaver, 'Lee, Sarah (1791–1856)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2007). The only notable female intellectual in the early writings is Zenobia, who is derided for her blue-stocking pretensions.

⁴¹ C. Brontë, 'A Romantic Tale', *EEW*, I, pp. 7-18 (p. 11).

⁴² C. Brontë, 'A Romantic Tale', p. 12.

⁴³ C. Brontë, 'A Romantic Tale', p. 12.

⁴⁴ Alexander, 'Imagining Africa', p. 204.

eventually elected king. In Branwell's 1831 'History of the Young Men', the Ashantee cannibalise the British dead after battle, reflecting contemporary stereotypes about 'savage' peoples. Though the Genii conveniently resurrect the fallen, the British pursue the Ashantee to the city of Acroferoomh: '[H]ere they set fire to the city murdered the unresisting Inhabitants and then returned to their own town laden with honour and glory.'⁴⁵ Branwell gleefully describes the genocidal vengeance wrought by his imperial heroes. For this, they return not with the material wealth Charlotte's heroes are so anxious to maintain, but with those more prized, abstract qualities of manliness: 'honour and glory'.

Glass Town is soon established as a wealthy, almost utopian British society and becomes a destination for male emigration. The Brontës would have read commentary in *Blackwood's* on emigration, such as the 1819 article 'Emigration to the Cape of Good Hope', in which the author confidently asserts that 'there is no country under heaven, where [...] activity, economy, and good conduct, will meet with so certain and full a reward'.⁴⁶ The Brontës were steeped in discourse surrounding emigration, with curates coming and going from Ireland, and Charlotte's friend Mary Taylor first studying in Brussels, then teaching in Germany, and finally emigrating with her brother to New Zealand. John Tosh argues that the appeal of emigrating during the period from 1818-1852 'lay in the opportunity it seemed to offer [...] of achieving a fully adult masculinity which was recognised as such both at home and in the new social environment'.⁴⁷ In the early writing, emigration to Africa allows for the full use of a man's ability and heroic potential. In Branwell's 'The Politics of Verdopolis', Sir Richard Weever Pelham emigrates to Angria with dreams of success:

⁴⁵ P.B. Brontë, 'The History of the Young Men,' pp. 137-169 (p. 163).

⁴⁶ 'Emigration to the Cape of Good Hope,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 5 (1819), 523-527 (p. 526).

⁴⁷ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (London: Pearson, 2005), p. 186.

Sir Robert. who finding himself. unfettered and aware of his own great ability and knowledge. looked about for some place some method. by which. to signalise himself exert his ambition and employ his mind. but Alas England affords no feild for such he saw that and. determined to embark for the widly celebrated and magnificent regions of Africa. where he felt that his talent would find its way.⁴⁸

Pelham meditates on the lack of opportunities available in England, a pressing issue for young, middle-class men like the then sixteen-year-old Branwell Brontë. As it was increasingly difficult to break into a respectable profession and attain a steady income, many men left England to make their fortunes in the colonies. George Eliot's step-sons both emigrated to South Africa, for example, while a number of Dickens's sons emigrated when they found no suitable, middle-class work available at home.⁴⁹

Branwell's Pelham seeks the promise of adventure and fortune which will confirm his class status and test his manly qualities.⁵⁰

While Charlotte and Branwell initially present Angria as an ideal English space, Charlotte later paints it with a distinct strain of Orientalised sexual corruption. 'A Leaf from an Unopened Volume' (1834) is unique among Charlotte's tales because it looks twenty years into the future and imagines Angria on the verge of disastrous imperial fall. The action takes place after the 'bloody extermination' of the Ashantee, completing the genocide first envisioned in Branwell's 'The History of the Young Men'. Emperor Adrian brings Quashia, the king of the Ashantee and Adrian's former foster brother back to the new capital of Adrianopolis as a trophy and has him beheaded out of a 'deep and fixed' hatred.⁵¹ Adrian also discovers that his mute dwarf Finic is his son by Sofala, an African mistress from his past. Again, Adrian acts without remorse and has both Finic

⁴⁸ P.B. Brontë, 'The Politics of Verdopolis', *Works*, I, 333-364 (pp. 359-360).

⁴⁹ Nancy Henry discusses these difficulties in *George Eliot and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). The difficulties involved in entering the professions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

⁵⁰ A few months earlier in 1833, Charlotte had written of Edward Sydney, who, also dissatisfied with the opportunities available to him in England, decides to emigrate to the 'almost utopian colony lately founded in Africa, which is rising like a New Albion' ('The Foundling', *EEW*, II, 1, pp. 43-125 (p. 49)).

⁵¹ C. Brontë, 'A Leaf from an Unopened Volume', *EEW*, II, 1, pp. 321-378 (p. 326).

and his uncle killed when they confront him. Adrian's violent ruthlessness, and the corruption of his character, are thus ascribed to his union with a black woman and his living in an Orientalised land. This is but one instance of Charlotte taking the styles of grandiose, violent masculinity suggested by her material to an extreme, revealing a new critical stance towards the imperial project. The once grandly heroic son of the Duke of Wellington becomes racially polluted and heartless in this one-off representation.

With the notable exception of Quashia Quamina, no other African character plays a substantial role in Branwell and Charlotte's early writings. This character is presented in complex and contradictory ways, in part because the siblings wrote of him over a long period of time and in part because each sibling draws on conflicting cultural scripts for representing black men, some of which are sympathetic, if still highly problematic. Quashia's father, King Sai Tootoo made war on the Glass Towners and was killed at the Battle of Coomassie. After the battle, the Duke of Wellington fostered Quashia in his own family and at age seventeen, Charles Wellesley reports, '[H]e was a tall handsome youth, black as jet, and with an eye full of expression and fire. His disposition was bold, irritable, active, daring, and at the same time deeply treacherous.'⁵² In this reading, Quashia is presented as a possible heroic type, in some ways the double to later versions of the passionate Zamorna, but his treachery is problematic, as it threatens Angria's white English society.

However, the Brontës were exposed to some arguably sympathetic readings of Africans, albeit still within a highly racialised frame. 'Daddy Davy, the Negro: A True Tale' appeared in the *Forget Me Not* annual for 1831, in which the narrator refers to the slave trade as 'that horrible traffic' and tells the story of a former slave who appears at

⁵² C. Brontë, 'The Green Dwarf', *EEW*, II, 2, pp. 127-206 (p. 179).

his grandfather's door.⁵³ Black people are described in biblical terms as 'the poor anathematized descendants of Ham', and the beggar has stereotypically 'rolling eyes'.⁵⁴ The story is convoluted and concerns the narrator's grandfather's time on Trinidad, where slaves are said to receive the harshest treatment and thus 'their debased condition rendered them more depraved in their habits and more treacherous in their actions'.⁵⁵ These slaves are treacherous, like Quashia, but Quashia's betrayal is presented by Charlotte as more culpable because it is not the result of debasement, but rather is a reaction to being fostered in a white aristocratic family. In 'Daddy Davy', we learn that the narrator's grandfather had saved Davy from being shot for involvement in a mutiny on a slave ship; Davy repaid him by rescuing his daughter (the narrator's mother) during an earthquake, for which his master gave Davy land and freedom. Having afterwards been run off his land, Davy returns to England to look for his kindly master and serve him again. The tale ends happily, with slavery defeated and the hierarchy of race relations confirmed. Depictions of black men shift even within this short piece, with the author depicting the threat of the treacherous slave, the horror of discovering a slave ship, the heroism of Davy's rescue of his white master's daughter, and the cringingly sentimentalised return of the former slave to his old master. It is no wonder that Charlotte and Branwell's portrayals of Africans were problematically racialised, shifting between the available, kaleidoscopic fragments of cultural messaging about the African 'Other'.

In some ways, Quashia resembles Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights*: he is the dark outcast fostered in a powerful man's family, enters into rivalry with his foster

⁵³ 'Daddy Davy, The Negro: A True Tale', in *Forget Me Not: A Christmas, New Year's, and Birth-Day Present for MDCCCXXXI*, ed. by Frederic Shoberl (London: R. Ackermann, 1831 [1830]), pp. 35-50 (p. 37). This is another of the annuals the Brontës probably owned or had access to as Branwell copied the volume's engraving of 'Queen Esther' (from a painting by John Martin) (*Alexander and Smith, Oxford Companion*, p. 200).

⁵⁴ 'Daddy Davy', *Forget Me Not*, pp. 37, 38.

⁵⁵ 'Daddy Davy', *Forget Me Not*, p. 37.

brother, and ultimately rebels.⁵⁶ These similarities could suggest that Emily was inspired in part by her siblings' earlier writings when she came to write her first novel.

Heathcliff's origins and racial identity have long been debated, as he comes from Liverpool, a port associated central to the slave trade, and because Nelly Dean suggests a number of possible identities within the novel, all of which contribute to the ambiguity of Heathcliff's position. Like Quashia, Heathcliff is associated with darkness and seen by others as animalistic, mad, and demonic. Quashia differs from Heathcliff in that his race and origins are clearly determined and frequently contribute to his negative representation by Charlotte and Branwell. He is not granted the intelligence, cunning, or sympathy which Emily grants Heathcliff. Quashia remains under-developed as a character and could not be said to be properly heroic in the Angrian narratives.

Quashia sets himself against Zamorna by stirring up the Ashantee in rebellion against their colonial oppressors and takes the side of Branwell's revolutionary figure, Alexander Percy. From her first introduction into the saga in Branwell's 'The Politics of Verdopolis' (1833), Quashia desires Percy's daughter, Mary. Percy, however, has no intention of giving his daughter to 'an outlawed blackamoor'; he promises Mary to Robert Pelham instead, manoeuvring Quashia out of the picture by prosecuting him for the murder of a political opponent, a narrative move which highlights Quashia's gullibility and lack of intelligence.⁵⁷ Branwell portrays Quashia as drunken, rash, and violent, despised even by his strategic allies. Alexander argues that in a later narrative of 1836, Branwell uses Northangerland's actions to suggest Quashia's infantile character.⁵⁸ This depiction occurs most obviously when Quashia says 'having Heard at noon that you

⁵⁶ Alexander notes this resemblance in 'Imagining Africa', p. 212.

⁵⁷ P.B. Brontë, 'The Politics of Verdopolis', p. 355.

⁵⁸ Alexander, 'Imagining Africa', p. 214.

was', and Northangerland replies, 'You were Quashia my Boy!', correcting his grammar and infantilising him in the same handful of words.⁵⁹

Post-colonial readings of Angria have been particularly concerned with the Roe Head journal fragment 'Well, here I am at Roe Head', in which Charlotte describes a vision of the abandoned rooms of Zamorna Palace, its inhabitants having fled during Northangerland's uprising. In Mary Percy's bedroom, she sees Quashia:

[A] swarth and sinewy moor intoxicated to ferocious insensibility had stretched his athletic limbs, weary with wassail and stupified with drunken sleep [...] [W]ell could I guess why he had chosen the Queen of Angria's sanctuary for the scene of his solitary revelling [...] [H]is tusk-like teeth glanc[ed] vindictively through his parted lips [...] Quamina, triumphant in the halls of Zamorna! In the bower of Zamorna's lady!⁶⁰

Quashia's lust for Mary and his 'revelling' in her bed fits the stereotype of the lascivious moor, levelled so often at Othello, but this representation is reinforced by Charlotte, not subverted, as in Shakespeare. Quashia's 'tusk-like teeth' make him less than human, reflecting the madness of rebellion and his rapacious sexuality. Susan Meyer argues that as 'a young female writer becoming conscious of her gender position and its limitations', Charlotte identifies with Quashia in this fragment and shares his sense of social disempowerment.⁶¹ They are thus both rebels against the white patriarchies of Angria and England.

However, it is crucial to note that Branwell was solely responsible for instigating this revolutionary plot and that Charlotte's sympathies lie with the white Angrian aristocracy, which she continues to write about until 1839. It is entirely possible that this fragment reveals a personal response to this Angrian situation because Charlotte was writing in isolation and perhaps had no plans to share her Roe Head journal with her other siblings. This may explain why the fragment is more overtly sexual than

⁵⁹ P.B. Brontë, '[Angria and the Angrians] II (d)', *Works*, II, pp. 480-486 (p. 481).

⁶⁰ C. Brontë, 'Well, here I am at Roe Head', *Tales*, pp. 158-160 (p. 160).

⁶¹ Susan Meyer, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 29, 37.

Charlotte's other Angrian writings. Carl Plasa argues that Quashia functions as a metaphorical rapist in this passage, because his and Mary Percy's bodies are imaginatively overlaid in time.⁶² The images function rather like a palimpsest, in fact, as Charlotte overlays her textual response to Branwell's plot. Plasa sees this scene as evidence of a crisis of collaboration, with Charlotte responding to her brother's narrative decision with a sense of 'belatedness', which 'endow[s] the tensions intrinsic to the colonial encounter with a particularly raw sexual edge'.⁶³ This fragment reveals simultaneous impulses of attraction and repulsion towards Quashia's body, his sexuality, and his act of symbolic violence.

In these ways, the Brontë figure Quashia most resembles is Bertha, of unknown race from the West Indies, alternately characterised as animal or demonic. In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte doubles the marginalised Bertha with Jane, just as she had doubled Quashia and Zamorna. This later representation of (possible) blackness does not fully inspire the reader's sympathy, but it is more complex than Charlotte's use of Quashia in her Angrian stories and Roe Head fragment, both in its presentation of Jane's sympathy for Bertha and in the structural symbolic connections between the two women, both of whom are threatened by Rochester within the Gothic space of Thornfield.

Quashia is both central and marginalised within the Duke of Wellington's household. His later rebellion has a sympathetic motivation, unlike Northangerland's rebellions, which are motivated by a Miltonian Satanic desire for dominance. Despite this difference in motivations, the siblings position Northangerland as a Byronic hero with a darkly intriguing subjectivity, not Quashia, who is never a protagonist. In Branwell's works, he is depicted as an infantilised dupe, while Charlotte's portrayals present him as a nobler but also a more dangerous figure.

⁶² Carl Plasa, *Charlotte Brontë: Critical Issues* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 15.

⁶³ Plasa, pp. 17-21.

Byronism in Angria

Forms of Byronic masculinity are central to Charlotte and Branwell's Angrian narratives from 1833 onward. Charlotte had read Byron widely by 4 July 1834, when she recommended his poetry to her friend Ellen Nussey, with the exceptions of *Don Juan* and possibly *Cain*, which Charlotte nevertheless identified as 'a magnificent poem'.⁶⁴ In tempering her recommendation, Charlotte reproduced the guidance offered to women readers by periodical reviewers of Byron, though she ignored it herself, as is evident in the many textual echoes of *Don Juan* in Charlotte's early work.⁶⁵ Charlotte even reproduces Byron: for example, 'High Life in Verdopolis' begins with an epigraph lifted from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, but modified to fit the Angrian setting (3n.).⁶⁶ Elfenbein suggests that the speaker's desperate ride at the beginning of Branwell's long poem 'Misery' echoes that of Byron's *Giaour*, while the speaker's discovery of his dying wife resembles the discovery of Medora's death at the end of *The Corsair*.⁶⁷

Both Charlotte's Angrian protagonist Arthur Wellesley, Marquis of Douro, and Branwell's Alexander Percy took on increasingly Byronic characteristics, beginning in 1833 when Charlotte and Branwell, now aged seventeen and sixteen, were well into adolescence.⁶⁸ Branwell began to Byronise Percy in the 1833 story 'The Pirate', in

⁶⁴ C. Brontë, 'To Ellen Nussey, 4 July 1834', *Letters*, p. 130.

⁶⁵ Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 72. Christine Alexander notes many passages that indicate the influence of *Don Juan* in her edition of Charlotte's early writings. See, for instance, in Volume II, Part 2 'The Secret' (p. 285n.), 'High Life in Verdopolis' (p. 71n.), 'A Peep into a Picture Book' (p. 86n), and 'A Day Abroad' (p. 125n.).

⁶⁶ C. Brontë, 'High Life in Verdopolis', pp. 3-81 (p. 3n.) See *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto III, xxi for the original.

⁶⁷ Elfenbein, p. 130.

⁶⁸ Many of the characters in the early writings go by different names and titles at different times. Arthur Wellesley is known as the Marquis of Douro early on and later (and most often) as the Duke of Zamorna or Emperor Adrian. Branwell's Alexander Percy likewise later becomes the Earl of Ellrington or (most often) Northangerland.

which he takes to piracy in exile following his failed rebellion.⁶⁹ This story could have been inspired by Walter Scott's tale of the same name and Byron's *The Corsair*. At about this same time, Zamorna and Northangerland both gain pasts and sexual secrets in the form of earlier wives and lovers. In many ways, Charlotte's early Marquis of Douro is a perfectly formed but passive Romantic hero, rather like those in Scott's Waverley novels.⁷⁰ He begins his Byronic transformation in 'Something about Arthur' (1833), in which his 'effeminate delicacy' is replaced with a 'lofty heroic stature and free, bold, chivalric bearing' during a sojourn in the mountains, where he first meets Mina Laury, who becomes his mistress in later stories.⁷¹ By 1834, his younger brother Charles describes him in demonic terms: 'All here is passion and fire unquenchable. Impetuous sin, stormy pride, diving and soaring enthusiasm, war and poetry are kindling their fires in all his veins, and his wild blood boils from his heart and back again like a torrent of new-sprung lava.'⁷² Zamorna becomes increasingly prone to violent changes of mood, controls his wife and begins to have affairs. He is characterised as an oriental sultan and despot in the writings of 1834–35. In 'High Life in Verdopolis' (1834), Charles Wellesley draws explicit and quite critical connections between Zamorna and easternised sexuality: 'He [...] is about on a par with the Grand Sultan of Turkey surrounded by his seraglio'.⁷³ In 'A Leaf from an Unopened Volume', Emperor Adrian is described as a 'stern, black-hearted, remorseless, haughty, ungovernable, yet superb and noble despot'.⁷⁴ Charlotte's piling up of adjectives makes Adrian a darkly sublime hero, a characterisation that could well have been influenced by narrative poems such as Thomas

⁶⁹ P.B. Brontë, 'The Pirate', *Works*, I, pp. 239-249.

⁷⁰ For a detailed discussion of Scott's possible influence on Charlotte Brontë, particularly her story 'The Green Dwarf', see Alexander's essay 'The Legacy of Sir Walter Scott on Youthful Artists and Writers', in *The Shadow of the Precursor*, ed. by Diana Glenn (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. 106-123.

⁷¹ C. Brontë, 'Something About Arthur', *EEW*, II, 1, pp. 7-40 (pp. 13, 38).

⁷² C. Brontë, 'A Peep into a Picture Book', *EEW*, II, 2, pp. 85-96 (p. 93).

⁷³ C. Brontë, 'High Life in Verdopolis', p. 30.

⁷⁴ C. Brontë, 'A Leaf from an Unopened Volume', p. 326

Moore's *Lalla Rookh* and Byron's *Turkish Tales*. This depiction certainly looks forward to Rochester's Orientalised, possessive characteristics in *Jane Eyre*, such as when he casts upon her such as look 'as a sultan might, in a blissful and fond moment, bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched' (p. 269), language which was familiar to Charlotte from her early reading of Byron and *The Arabian Nights*.

Even in these adolescent writings, Charlotte is not completely seduced by her own creation. Her use of Charles Wellesley as ironic, detached narrator allows her to pass judgement on Zamorna. While in earlier writings, Charles had jested about his elder brother's romantic exploits, in the Angrian tales of 1834–35 his criticism takes on a strong warning tone. Zamorna's overblown sexuality and control of women are part of a dangerous style of masculinity. Charlotte is also capable of magnifying the Byronic hero's ambivalent and extreme qualities to the point of satirical absurdity. In this passage, Zamorna outlines Northangerland's great, but opposed, attributes:

[T]hat great, vile, splendid, hateful, fiendish, angelic, black, bright, abominable, blessed scoundrel, that Northangerland, that illustriously infamous relative of mine, whom I abhor yet admire, detest and yet love, that bundle of contradictions and yet that horribly consistent whole.⁷⁵

This self-consciously overwrought description of Northangerland's faults and virtues threatens to fall apart, riven with self-proclaimed 'contradictions' and the heavy, plodding emphasis caused by the alliteration on 'black, bright, abominable, blessed'. Northangerland is here both a Satanic-Byronic epitome and a figure of fun. This deflation of the Byronic hero usually occurs when Charles Wellesley is narrating, but here Charlotte has her own Byronic hero Zamorna mock Northangerland's exaggerated qualities, and consequently his own.

In this period of the early writings, different aspects of the Byronic hero seem to have appealed to Charlotte and Branwell. Elfenbein posits that Branwell 'isolates what

⁷⁵ C. Brontë, 'High Life in Verdopolis', p. 33.

periodical reviewers taught him was most Byronic, the tormented male psyche, and expands it to the point of ignoring all else'.⁷⁶ Branwell makes use of the tormented male mind in his depiction of Northangerland's mourning for his second wife Mary Henrietta, as well as in the sufferings of Lord Albert, the speaker of the aptly titled poem 'Misery' (1836):

—Heavily and slow
 The blood ebbs forth, —but, parts not so the soul.
 Hither, I came with pain! —Hence must I go
 Still, still, in pain! —Is such our changless doom?
 God!—Shall such destiny unroll
 Its agonies beyond the tomb?⁷⁷

As a psychological evocation of agony, Branwell's handling of poetic diction, repetition, and rhyme is clearly derivative of the Byronic style. Emily would later use a similar but honed technique to give voice to Heathcliff's agony after Cathy's death in *Wuthering Heights*: 'I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!' (p. 148). Much as Branwell is drawn to painting the depths of suffering, his chief protagonist Northangerland is also a vehicle for acting out political drama and carries with him militaristic vestiges that recall Branwell's first protagonist, the toy soldier named 'Bonaparte'. The siblings' two primary protagonists act as literary representations of real-world sibling rivalry, as is apparent in the anarchic echoes of Milton's Satan present in Northangerland's wish to overthrow the Angrian aristocracy, headed by Charlotte's Zamorna.

For Charlotte's part, she uses the sexual aspects of the Byronic hero in complex ways. Zamorna is characterised with some admiration for his attractiveness and power as a sexual despot. But Charlotte also criticises him by means of his brother Charles for the careless way he uses women and their servile dependence on him. On the other hand,

⁷⁶ Elfenbein, p. 131.

⁷⁷ P.B. Brontë, 'Misery', *Works*, II, pp. 500-517 (p. 511).

Charlotte clearly identifies with her Byronic hero's boundless subjectivity, his power and his passion. Elfenbein argues that Mary Shelley, Felicia Hemans and Lady Caroline Lamb (a former mistress of Byron's) all make use of the Byronic hero in their writing because 'the figure was available not solely for desire and admiration but also for emulation and identification'.⁷⁸ Charlotte's cross-gendered writing and adoption of male narrators, including the Byronic Zamorna, allowed her both power as a young writer and access to imagined experience she was barred from as a young woman in early-nineteenth-century society.

Charlotte and Branwell also created an oddly incestuous attraction between Zamorna and his father-in-law Northangerland. Charlotte's closest approach to homoeroticism appears in her 1836 poem 'And when you left me what thoughts had I then', in which the exiled Zamorna addresses Northangerland. In an attempt to stop Northangerland from beginning a new revolution, Zamorna has sent Mary back to her father, knowing that her pain in being separated from her husband will in turn wound her father. In this way, the relationship forms an erotic triangle, such as those outlined in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men* (1985), in which men negotiate their own relationships through the manipulation of women. Charlotte's poem gives voice to the intimate and mutually-annihilating relationship between the two men, in language that recalls the destructive passion of Emily's Cathy and Heathcliff:

How oft we rung each other's callous hearts
 Conscious that none else could so effectively
 Waken the pain or venom the keen darts
 We shot so thickly so unsparingly
 Into those sensitive and tender parts.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Elfenbein, p. 65. For a more detailed discussion of Caroline Lamb's imitation of the Byronic hero, see Paul Douglas, 'The Madness of Writing: Lady Caroline's Lamb's Byronic Identity', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 34.1 (1999), 53-71.

⁷⁹ C. Brontë, 'And when you left me what thoughts had I then', *CB Poems*, pp. 194-209 (p. 195, ll. 33-37).

Zamorna speaks like an abandoned lover in a blighted romance, attesting to his equal responsibility for both causing and suffering emotional injury. Where the men's hearts are otherwise 'callous' and presumably difficult to move or wound, Zamorna and Northangerland prick each other continually and with intention, 'conscious' of each's facility in 'effectively' harming the other. Damage to the heart is described in the language of 'savage' primitive warfare conducted by means of poison dart (indirectly reflecting the colonial attitudes found in the Brontës' use of a West-African setting). Both men are prone to Byronic passion and suffering and each directs his desire and hatred towards the other.

These statements of passion and mutual wounding occur in Charlotte and Branwell's early writing only in relation to Zamorna and Northangerland. This homoerotic intimacy is central because none of the female characters present in the Angrian writing have a similar degree of power, agency or passion within heterosexual relationships. Mina Laury, Zamorna's long-term mistress, is described as '[s]trong-minded beyond her sex, active, energetic and accomplished,' but with Zamorna '[s]he lost her identity. Her very life was swallowed up in that of another'.⁸⁰ Her relationship with Zamorna – especially in her disempowered role of mistress – dooms her to give up her selfhood. Mary Percy is no different, telling Zamorna she would die if he ever left her for another woman, as indeed he had left his previous wife to be with her. In her novels, Charlotte reroutes the passion and eroticism that had occurred between male characters in the Angrian writings into heterosexual relationships, as her later heroines bring passion and self-respect into their relationships with men.

Although Charlotte was no doubt attracted by her Byronic hero Zamorna, she also identifies with him rather than with his wives and mistresses, who almost without

⁸⁰ C. Brontë, *Mina Laury, Tales of Angria*, pp. 3-62 (p. 58).

exception are passive. Charlotte's construction of strictly male-gendered forms of heroism was almost certainly a result of the dominant, late-Romantic images of heroism she was exposed to as a child and young woman: active, adventurous, masculine. Even the literary annuals the Brontës read, aimed at a female readership and containing narratives and poems which emphasised feminine love and longing, presented numerous and varied narratives concerning male heroism in the realms of politics,⁸¹ Scott-inspired romance,⁸² and the military, as the contents of the *Friendship's Offering* for 1829 demonstrate.⁸³ Heather Glen has argued in *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* that the literary annuals' evocations of sublime female imagination and passion later inspired Charlotte's delineation of Jane Eyre's subjectivity, on which point I agree.⁸⁴ However, Charlotte's early reading of the literary annuals may have cemented for the young writer the image of a heroic male subjectivity. As Charlotte matured, her views on the importance and interest of women's experience changed, with her late novelette *Henry Hastings* and first novel *The Professor* marking important transitions in her presentations of gender and power. *The Professor* is narrated by a literary descendant of Angria's William Percy, but also features the independent-minded central female character, Frances Henri, while *Henry Hastings* (1838) follows Elizabeth Hastings, a forerunner of Jane Eyre and an earlier example of the passionate subjectivity which Glen traces as a line of influence from Charlotte's early reading to her first published novel.

⁸¹ [Mary Russell] Mitford, 'The Election: A Tale', in *Friendship's Offering*, pp. 8-18; see also, 'Surprises; or, the Return Home', which follows the fortunes of a self-made man returning to his rural home from London, and engages with the class tensions created by his new money. A local landowner promises to support him in the next parliamentary election (*Friendship's Offering*, pp. 152-160).

⁸² See the narrative poem, 'Glen-Lynden', *Friendship's Offering*, pp. 19-35; 'The Covenanters', *Friendship's Offering*, pp. 113-142.

⁸³ See G.R. Gleig's short story, 'The Brothers', which is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two (*Friendship's Offering*, pp. 37-58); or David Lester Richardson's sonnet 'The Disgraced Soldier' (*Friendship's Offering*, p. 310).

⁸⁴ Heather Glen, *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 105-116.

Within Charlotte and Branwell's brother-sister literary pairing, each writer explored the gender differentiation which governed their roles in the home and were reflected in the forms of cultural production they consumed. For Branwell, writing heroic male characters was a way to test gender formations he could emulate in his own life, particularly through the rebellious, wish-fulfilling Earl of Northangerland. Charlotte, aware early on of the ways in which masculine and feminine ideals were embedded in her culture, reflects and critiques these in her bold, daring hero, Zamorna, while defining her heroines by their beauty and relegating them to signally passive roles. Charlotte had to write across gender to take on her male heroes' imagined subjectivity and social roles and to exercise her hopes for an active adult life. These imagined possibilities became less satisfying to Charlotte as she entered adulthood, with a better awareness of her restrictions and Branwell's comparatively limitless horizons as a young man. But through this key collaboration, Charlotte achieved an equal standing with Branwell. That all four siblings later adopted male pseudonyms for publication – Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, as well as Branwell's Northangerland – tells us that idealised forms of professional literary masculinity remained crucial to the Brontës' sense of writerly identity into adulthood.

Chapter Two: Ironic Heroism: Changing Sibling Collaborations and Depictions of Heroic Masculinity, 1837-1848

Shortly after the October 1847 publication of *Jane Eyre*, numerous press reviews appeared, alternately praising the novel for its passion and psychological truth, or fixating on its ‘coarse’ elements. Two other strains are notable in this early critical commentary. First, many critics discussed Mr Rochester’s character, with the mixed review in the *Christian Remembrancer* noting his ‘shade of Byronic gloom and appetizing mystery’.¹ The radical writer A.W. Fonblanque was characteristic in remarking on Mr Rochester’s less than heroic attributes: ‘The hero, if so he may be called, is (or becomes) middle-aged, mutilated, blind, stern, and wilful.’² Charlotte had embraced and then subverted the figure of the Byronic hero, making him both an attractive and ambivalent hero for the domestic novel.

Many critics also commented on *Jane Eyre*’s originality, which differentiated it from the novels of the 1820s and 1830s. The reviewer for the *Era* took this position: ‘We have no high life glorified, caricatured, or libelled; nor low life elevated to an enviable state of bliss [...] The story is therefore unlike all that we have read, with very few exceptions.’³ The anonymous writer set *Jane Eyre* apart from the popular genres of

¹ ‘From an unsigned review, *Christian Remembrancer* XV (April 1848): 396–409’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 88-92 (p. 90).

² A.W. Fonblanque, ‘From an unsigned review, *Examiner* (27 November 1847): 756–7’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 76–78 (p. 77).

³ ‘From an unsigned review, *Era* 9 (14 November 1847): 9’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 78–80 (p. 79). Similarly, Fonblanque wrote: ‘Whatever faults may be urged against this book, no one can assert it is weak or vapid. It is anything but a fashionable novel. It has not a Lord Fanny for its hero, nor a Duchess for its pattern of nobility. The scene of action is never in Belgravia or Grosvenor Square’ (rpt. Allott, p. 77). In noting the obvious ways in which *Jane Eyre* did not resemble the fashionable novel, Fonblanque missed the elements which do recall the genre, such as the detailing of Rochester’s lavishly furnished drawing room, the country house party at which he pretends to court Blanche Ingram, and the badinage between his upper-class acquaintances.

the 1820s and 1830s, now little studied and seldom read: the silver fork novels of Edward Bulwer, Benjamin Disraeli, Lady Blessington, and Catherine Gore, and the Newgate novels which glorified criminality, such as Bulwer's *Eugene Aram* (1832) and William Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839). In these novels, versions of the Byronic hero were lifted from Romantic poetry to appear in the roles of the passionately agonising criminal, the urbane dandy, and the morbid melancholic. Unbeknownst to Charlotte's reviewers (and most present-day readers), Brontë had in her early writings become adept at depicting the Byronic hero in various guises. Mr Rochester is a Byronic hero in all his ambivalent attractiveness and is, significantly, the most fully developed and final iteration of Charlotte's manipulation of this trope. He is the result of conscious experimentation within existing popular literary genres, Charlotte's developing maturity as a writer, and her changing vision of the Byronic hero.

This chapter considers the Brontës' continuing engagement with models of heroic masculinity – often, but by no means always, Byronic – in the years following the breakdown of Charlotte and Branwell's Angrian collaboration. In this period, the Brontës' writings take part in complex and gradual transitions towards realism and the domestic novel, while continuing to engage with the Romantic and Gothic influences that had fueled much of the early Glass Town, Angrian, and Gondal writings. As maturing writers, the Brontës pursued their changing depictions of male heroism as post-Napoleonic culture moved towards the Victorian mid-century. The Brontës experimented with an astonishing array of literary genres and forms during this period, before Charlotte, Emily, and Anne were finally published as (obscure) poets in 1846, and novelists in 1847. For a time, in the later 1830s, both Charlotte and Branwell continued to work on the Angrian stories, perhaps reading each other's work but not collaborating on the same plots. Branwell became fascinated with a new protagonist at this time, the

poet, soldier, and deserter Henry Hastings, diminishing his old ‘chief man’, Northangerland. Branwell wrote battle sequences, while Charlotte began to construct more cohesively plotted ‘novelettes’ concerned with Angrian high society, which Heather Glen argues, ‘are not simply tales of Angria but fictions of the 1830s, flexibly, variously responsive to the world in which they were conceived’.⁴ At this same time, Emily and Anne were writing the Gondal poems, mostly separately, each with her own characters and a loosely shared plot of revolution and civil war on the fictional north Pacific islands of Gondal and Gaaldine. In this chapter, I will examine how Charlotte and Branwell engaged with the forms of masculinity present in the silver fork novel in the late-Angrian writings, and the ways in which Emily and Anne’s depictions of masculinity differ from those of Charlotte and Branwell’s Angria.

In 1840, Charlotte wrote the first four chapters of *Ashworth*, an unfinished domestic novel, which transposed Angrian characters and conflicts onto Yorkshire soil. In 1845, after Branwell’s disastrous affair with Lydia Robinson, he wrote what he estimated to be the first volume of a three-volume novel. Apparently independently of Charlotte’s example, he similarly decided to rewrite an Angrian story (the 1837 Thurston fragment) as a realist novel, set in Yorkshire. These two novel fragments have not previously been compared at length, and are significant for the elements of domestic masculinity which are present and the evolution of Charlotte’s and Branwell’s handling of the Byronic hero.

No unbroken record of youthful literary development in prose exists for Emily or Anne, as exists for Charlotte and Branwell. However, clues to Emily’s development as a young writer can be found in the essays or *devoirs* she and Charlotte completed in French while under the tutelage of M. Constantin Héger in Brussels. In these writings, Emily

⁴ Heather Glen, ‘Introduction,’ *Tales of Angria*, pp. xi-lii (p. xiv).

and Charlotte sometimes worked to the same or similar themes, which allows for insight into the sisters' individual approaches to depicting masculinity and heroism. This gives us a window onto the sisters' differing responses to M. Héger's influence as mentor and his chosen canon of eighteenth-century and Romantic French authors. Emily's Gondal poetry and Belgian *devoirs* provide our only hints as to her vision of masculinity, Byronism, and heroism prior to the publication of *Wuthering Heights*. Branwell's literary potential and production were hindered by his decline into alcohol and opium abuse, which no doubt hastened his death in the autumn of 1848. This chapter forms the endpoint to my study's consideration of Branwell's *oeuvre* and his, as yet, little-studied literary influence on his sisters' writings.⁵

The Silver Fork Novel and Anti-Byronism in Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Post-1837 Angrian Works

The silver fork novel fits neatly into the canonical gap – or, as Edward Copeland writes, '[t]he black hole in literary history' – between Jane Austen's novels (1811–1817) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and the early novels of Dickens.⁶ The silver fork novel concerned itself with the matrix of Regency fashionable society, politics, and literature; two of its most popular authors – Edward Bulwer and Benjamin Disraeli – went on to become Members of Parliament. The fashionable novel both celebrated and

⁵ Until the 1990s, when Juliet Barker's ground-breaking and well-documented biography *The Brontës* was published and Victor A. Neufeldt's three-volume edition of Branwell's works was released, Branwell was routinely presented as never leaving the world of Angria, much to the detriment of his creative work. For instance, Winifred Gérin writes that '[i]t was Branwell's tragedy that he never succeeded in coming to terms with reality' ('General Introduction', *Five Novelettes*, pp. 7-23 (p. 16)), a view echoed by Carol Bock in *Charlotte Brontë and the Storyteller's Audience* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), p. 20). These assertions were long-supported by the supposition that Branwell became addicted to alcohol as early as 1835 and opium not much later (Gérin, 'Introduction to *Julia*', *Five Novelettes*, pp. 85-86 (p. 85)). Barker has shown that Branwell's decline into addiction, ill health, and decreased literary production did not occur until after he was dismissed from his post as tutor at Thorp Green and forced to end his affair with his employer's wife in 1845 (p. 553).

⁶ Edward Copeland, *The Silver Fork Novel: Fashionable Fiction in the Age of Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 2-3.

mocked its aristocratic characters as they courted and wed, danced at balls, gossiped in drawing rooms, and went hunting and shooting, with some dueling thrown in for good measure.⁷ The genre has its roots in Frances Burney's and Maria Edgeworth's novels of manners, Gothic novels, and Byron's poetry.⁸

Following Byron's death in 1824, the Byronic hero appeared in hyper-morbid or dandified iterations within this genre. For instance, Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1827) and Bulwer's *Pelham* (1828) not only featured Byronic dandies as their protagonists, but also depicted melancholic or otherwise decaying emblems of Byronism. Bulwer's Glanville is moody and on the run from a murder charge in *Pelham*, while Disraeli's Vivian Grey comes across Cleveland (a stand-in for an ageing Byron) on his travels through the Continent: 'I was then very much struck at the alteration in his appearance. His face was swollen and he was getting fat. His hair was grey, and his countenance had lost that spiritual expression which it once eminently possessed. His teeth were decaying.'⁹ Byron is in some ways central to the silver fork novel, as an image of both Regency dandyism and Gothic romance, but he is also an absent idol, so authors could experiment with and even denigrate his self-presentation, as interpreted through his biography or literary works.

Because the Brontës' early writing is deeply concerned with contemporary politics, professional writers, high society, and forms of Byronism, the silver fork novel is a crucial genre to examine, as Heather Glen has done in the introduction to her edition, *Tales of Angria*, with reference to Charlotte's later novelettes. In this section, I consider the silver fork novel's influence on both Charlotte's and Branwell's changing depictions of Angrian masculinity following 1837. Charlotte and Branwell may have read Bulwer's

⁷ Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 219.

⁸ Cheryl Wilson, *Fashioning the Silver Fork Novel* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), p. 13.

⁹ Qtd in Alison Adburgham, *Silver Fork Society: Fashionable Life and Literature from 1814 to 1840* (London: Constable, 1983), p. 85.

relatively well-respected silver fork novel *Pelham* (1828).¹⁰ They would almost certainly have been made aware of the chief elements of the genre in the often negative reviews of silver fork novels in *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's*.¹¹ In an 1830 article, William Maginn censured the genre in heavily gendered terms: 'A writer of fashionable novels becomes by his very profession an emasculated person in point of intellect [...] Wit is a puny, harmless weapon, unless wielded by powerful thought and manly intellect.'¹² Maginn argued that it was emasculating to be a (male) writer of fashionable novels, feminising the genre and devaluing its satirical elements. He suggested these novels were failed attempts at wit, not intellectual enough to be forceful and therefore manly. He further took issue with the fact that the novels were based on the principles of fashion, relaxation, and entertainment, not instruction. Thomas Carlyle denounced the silver fork dandy in *Sartor Resartus* (1834) after reading Maginn's 1830 review of *Pelham*.¹³ Carlyle identified the dandy as 'a Clothes-wearing man, a man whose trade, office, and existence consists in the wearing of Clothes'.¹⁴ In his performance of passivity and his enslavement to fashion, the dandy represented a feminised figure as emasculated as Maginn suggested the silver fork writers and readers were.

Where the original silver fork novel's satirical purposes were sometimes ambiguous, Charlotte's later novelettes offer emulation of, and pointed satire on, the genre itself, which suggests that she had a detailed knowledge of the tropes used, as well

¹⁰ Heather Glen notes that *Pelham* and other novels by Bulwer were available at the library of the Keighley Mechanics' Institute ('Introduction', p. xlv). See Clifford Whone, 'Where the Brontës Borrowed Books: The Keighley Mechanics' Institute', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 11 (1950), 355–358.

¹¹ See for example, 'Noctes Ambrosianae', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 25 (March 1829), 371–400, as well as 'The Five Nights of St Albans', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 26 (October 1829), [563]–566.

¹² William Maginn, 'The Dominie's Legacy', *Fraser's Magazine*, 1 (April 1830), 318–335 (pp. 321).

¹³ Elfenbein, p. 103; [William Maginn], 'Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer's Novels; and Remarks on Novel-Writing', *Fraser's Magazine*, 1 (June 1830), 509–532.

¹⁴ Thomas Carlyle, 'The Dandiacal Body', in *Sartor Resartus*, ed. by Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 207–217 (p. 207).

as the critiques that had been launched against this derided genre.¹⁵ Branwell also draws on the fashionable novel in his depictions of parliamentary proceedings and drawing room conflict. Northangerland and Zamorna, once the titanic, twin poles of the Angrian writings, become diminished in the post-1836 writings. The hero-worship of these characters found in the earlier stories is ‘emphatically, ironically absent’ here and, as in the silver fork novel, ‘masculinity has become a problematic thing’.¹⁶ In Charlotte’s 1837 narrative ‘[Four Years Ago]’, a dandified Northangerland and Zamorna live in a fashionable world and are leaders of *ton* at the Elysium Club, acting out a male version of the social control exacted by the lady hostesses at Almack’s. In the past Northangerland and Zamorna had dealt in politics and rebellions; now they argue over ‘the cut of a coat or the model of a castor,’ mere figures of fashion, superficiality, and commodity culture.¹⁷ For Branwell and Charlotte, as the creators of these formerly grand Byronic heroes, there must have been an implicit humour in the distance between the earlier versions of these characters and their new absurd states.

Northangerland, almost always brooding and arrayed in black, maintains a melancholic Byronic stance in these later writings, resembling Pelham’s friend Glanville in Bulwer’s novel, who similarly appears in ‘customary mourning’ and is pale, with a habitual ‘faint and sicklied expression’.¹⁸ This ill-health is echoed in Branwell’s later Angrian works by emphasis on Northangerland’s agedness. Northangerland, like Glanville, is subject to ‘gloom and despondency’.¹⁹ Lauren Gillingham argues that Glanville never integrates into society, ‘a Byronic hero whose obsessive, guilty brooding

¹⁵ For a fuller overview see Heather Glen’s introduction to *Tales of Angria*.

¹⁶ Glen, ‘Introduction’, p. xxi.

¹⁷ Haworth, West Yorkshire, Brontë Parsonage Research Library, ‘[Four Years Ago]’ by C. Bronte, Hatfield Transcription 10, p. 19.

¹⁸ Edward Bulwer, *Pelham; or the Adventures of a Gentleman*, 3 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), II, pp. 140, 177).

¹⁹ Bulwer, p. 91.

equally disables him from social or political action'.²⁰ The later Northangerland resembles him in this way, as he shuttles between carousing and brooding after 1836, no longer the fiery republican leader he had once been.

Branwell uses his ageing Northangerland to act out a version of the dandy's progress plot. Elfenbein provides an example of this plot in *Byron and the Victorians* (1995), charting the titular hero's trajectory from self-involved dandy to domesticated husband in Bulwer's *Pelham*. *Pelham* ends the novel as a man of action, proving that his friend Glanville is not a murderer, and becoming an MP and husband. Branwell's 1837 version of this plot sees Northangerland leave his mistresses and return home to seek the ministrations of his wife, pronouncing in desperation, 'all the Hope I have left I must look for only in you!'²¹ This is a Northangerland stripped of his rebelliousness, ambition and physical power, and now dependent on his wife. Neufeldt hypothesises that Branwell meant for Northangerland to die at this point in the saga.²² His Byronic melancholy impairs him and unfits him for public life, but also domesticates him, a theme which recurs in Branwell's *And the Weary Are at Rest*. After this point, Northangerland does not perform any other meaningful action in Branwell's Angrian writings, which are increasingly given over to the exploits of the younger Henry Hastings.

Zamorna, especially in Charlotte's later novelettes, fills the silver fork role of the ageing seducer, with his disreputable conquests publicised by his gossipy brother. Zamorna moves between seeking out his mistresses and being coaxed home by Mary Percy. He slinks through the house at night 'like a large tom-cat [...] on his toes like a

²⁰ Lauren Gillingham, 'The Novel of Fashion Redressed: Bulwer-Lytton's *Pelham* in a 19th-Century Context,' *Victorian Review*, 32.1 (2006), 63-85 (pp. 77-78).

²¹ P.B. Brontë, '[*Angria and the Angrians*] IV (j)', *Works*, III, pp. 157-177 (p. 165).

²² Neufeldt, *Works*, III, p.167n.

magnified dancing-master'.²³ This image brings out Charlotte's sense of the absurd, as Zamorna becomes a figure of melodrama, with his over-emphasised gait and his resemblance to a sexualised yet domestic animal. Where once Zamorna resembled a sultan, here he has been much reduced for humorous purposes. The satirical models of Byronic masculinity offered by the silver fork novel gave both Charlotte and Branwell the opportunity to engage more fully in the humorous critique that had long been a central element in their Glass Town and Angrian writings. Both siblings seem to have tired of their overblown Byronic heroes and used these new, often feminised and diminished, masculine types to experiment with their now well-worn protagonists.

Religious Satire

From the spring of 1836, the atheistic Northangerland poses as a Methodist preacher named Ashworth, giving mock fire-and-brimstone sermons at Ebenezer Chapel.²⁴ To some degree, this characterisation reflects Charlotte and Branwell's loyalty to the established Church, despite their mother and Aunt Branwell's upbringing in the Methodist tradition before its formal separation from the Church.²⁵ This role casts Northangerland as a preacher in a marginalised religious group and a lower-class figure, again creating a humorous contrast to his past status as an aristocrat and political rebel. However, as a cynical atheist conscious of his performance, Northangerland wields power in this role, as he uses his flamboyant and over-the-top sermons to mock those he is preaching to, calling for death and damnation for all:

²³ C. Brontë, *Caroline Vernon*, in *Tales of Angria*, pp. 325-440 (p. 284).

²⁴ P.B. Brontë, '[Angria and the Angrians] II (f)', *Works*, II, pp. 518-532. This section of narrative was completed on 23 May 1836. Charlotte also has her characters attend the preaching of a Methodist minister named Mr Bromley at the Slugg Street Chapel in her 1836 novelette *Passing Events*, written contemporaneously with the first appearance of Mr Ashworth (*Five Novelettes*, pp. 31-82).

²⁵ Barker notes that Patrick Brontë tended to work ecumenically with Methodists (pp. 290-291), though he was also critical of Dissenters, writing against the Baptist practice of adult baptism in his pamphlet *A Brief Treatise on the Best Time and Mode of Baptism, Chiefly in Answer to a Tract of Peter Pontifex, Alias the Rev. M. S—, Baptist Minister* (Keighley: Printed by R. Aked, Bookseller, Low-Street, 1836).

Through thy Holy Spirit give unto these wretched sinners a knowledge of their state – a burning blasting and consuming vision of their sin – hunt them into the dust that they may cast ashes upon their head and in howling and gnashing of teeth behold the frightful life they have dragged on.²⁶

Ashworth uses his rhetoric to scare men out of their money, making this a role that both demeans and empowers him. In using such rhetoric, Branwell draws on representations of Methodist preaching common to the periodicals and other texts in circulation in the Brontë household. For instance, in the following year, a *Blackwood's* writer published this description of an imagined camp meeting:

[A] preacher haranguing the multitude proceeded, in the usual style of their oratory, to proclaim himself a sinner, nay, a horrid ruffian, wretch, miscreant, unfit to live; no man among those pious persons being supposed to be in a state of salvation, who had not confessedly been as close as possible to the exactly contrary state.²⁷

In this imagined sermonising, the preacher takes upon himself the role of the sinner destined for hell, or casts his wife or family members as inveterate sinners.

Northangerland, as Ashworth, instead berates his audience, using similarly heightened invective.

The Brontës had in their household a source of even more vituperative abuse of Methodists: the anonymous author's *An Earnest Address to the Working Classes of Old England ... by a Poor Man*, which Patrick Brontë inscribed on the title page: 'This book is just & excellent in all its parts.'²⁸ This suggests that the book's energetic criticism of Catholicism, Methodism, and the Whigs was welcomed in the Parsonage. For instance, the author writes of Methodism: 'In making up his NEW religion, Wesley made use of a little Christianity, in order that it might be the better swallowed, just as people mix

²⁶ P.B. Brontë, '[Angria and the Angrians] II (f)', p. 521.

²⁷ 'The World We Live In. No. XII', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 42 (October, 1837), 506-525 (p. 524).

²⁸ Haworth, West Yorkshire, Brontë Parsonage Research Library, *An Earnest Address to the Working Classes of Old England ... by a Poor Man* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1836), bb23, annotated by Patrick Brontë.

something good up with their poison, that it may not be so easily detected.’²⁹ The author further contends that ‘John Wesley was a crafty, ambitious man; and laid and followed up his plans with a good deal of hypocrisy, adapting his doctrines and preaching to the depraved taste of the carnal mind’, criticism which perhaps inspired Ashworth’s preaching on the evils of his audience.³⁰ The writer’s view that Methodism is a new and false religion and that dissenting ministers are ‘gross imposters’, their services ‘mere farce’, and their positions the result of ‘sham ordination’ suggests a more complex and intriguing relationship between Ashworth, the obviously ‘sham’ Methodist preacher, and representations of Methodists which Branwell and Charlotte had access to as young adults.³¹ Rather than merely parroting this negative rhetoric, Branwell, and perhaps Charlotte as well, seem to be satirising the overblown language which was used at the time to demonise Methodist ministers. Charlotte’s Mr Bromley is a real Dissenting preacher, while ‘Ashworth’ is only Northangerland performing the role for money. Branwell’s satire seems to be doubly pronged, aimed both at Dissenters and the melodramatic way they were dramatised in the conservative press.

A further aspect of *An Earnest Address* suggests this awareness and criticism.

The anonymous author argues that Methodist ministers are truly in business for parishioners’ money, which is just what motivates Ashworth:

I soon found that dissent was much too expensive for a poor man [...] there were collections almost without end, and if you do not give something they will pull a very long face at you, and immediately set you down as no religious man.³²

Furthermore, the writer also charges that ‘[o]ne of the dissenting missionary societies robbed the public of TWENTY THOUSAND POUNDS at one stroke – *pious* creatures

²⁹ *An Earnest Address*, p. 86.

³⁰ *An Earnest Address*, p. 87.

³¹ *An Earnest Address*, pp. 89, 91, 92.

³² *An Earnest Address*, p. 118.

these are! – pretty sums to be drained from the people of this country!!’³³ This illustration strongly suggests the scene in Branwell’s later *And the Weary Are at Rest*, in which Percy and his friends (including Quashia, as a ‘converted’ African) pose as missionaries to take up a collection for their ‘mission’, drawing up a notice as if it were a playbill, which Branwell indicates through his formatting.³⁴ Branwell’s use of the Methodist minister is thus more complex than Charlotte’s, whose Mr Bromley is a simpler satirical figure. Branwell uses Ashworth to satirise both Methodists and the hyperbolic negative commentary on Methodist ministers in circulation at mid-century. Charlotte uses ‘Ashworth’ as the name for her Percy-figure in the novel fragment *Ashworth*, and mentions his turns at preaching as a result of *delirium tremens*. This figure is a borrowing from Branwell, made oddly absurd within Charlotte’s new framework of the domestic novel, and anticipates the satirical portrayal of Methodists in *Shirley*.

Dandies and Deserters: The Failed Masculinities of Charles Townshend, William Percy, and Henry Hastings

While Charlotte and Branwell present the Duke of Zamorna and the Earl of Northangerland as dandies in the later Angrian writings, other young male characters, who are unable to grasp the levers of power, take on dandyism as a form of passive protest. Charles Townshend writes about Angrian high society and critiques his estranged brother’s excesses, while William Percy performs heroic deeds on military duty (namely killing African natives, furthering the saga’s early colonial themes), but becomes fashionable and foppish when on leave in the city. The other young man who

³³ *An Earnest Address*, p. 128.

³⁴ P.B. Brontë, *And the Weary Are at Rest*, *Works*, III, pp. 420-466 (pp. 446-447).

takes on a central role in these works is Henry Hastings, the ‘Poet of Angria’ and a soldier, who becomes Branwell’s protagonist in the mid- to late-1830s. By the time of Charlotte’s 1838 novelette, *Henry Hastings*, the soldier has become a deserter, murderer, and outlaw.

What does being manly entail for young men, divorced from the political and military power still wielded by Northangerland and Zamorna’s generation? Amidst the shifting tonalities of Charles Townshend’s narration (high drama, melodrama, satire, critique) and the diverse genres present in Charlotte and Branwell’s later works – newspaper reports, fashionable intelligence, diaries, letters, advertisements – normative forms of masculinity become difficult to define. Additionally, though Angrian society still resembles the *ton* of the silver fork novel, the genres and forms of masculinity portrayed therein were becoming unfashionable in the later 1830s. Victorian standards of masculine conduct and morality make themselves felt in these later works, especially in *Henry Hastings*. All three young men fail in various ways to conform to either the new ideals of early Victorian masculinity or the Romantic heroism which had actuated the earliest Glass Town stories.

Charles Townshend serves as Charlotte’s primary narrator for her later Angrian novelettes.³⁵ He does not actively participate in the Wellesley family or political machinations but rather serves as a critical observer of Angrian high society.

Townshend, along with his comrade William Percy, gleefully presents himself as a dandy. In *Stancliffe’s Hotel* (1838), he describes the long performance of being dressed:

It took me a full half hour to dress, and another half hour to view myself over from head to foot in the splendid full-length mirror with which my chamber was furnished. Really, when I saw the neat figure therein reflected, [...] I thought, ‘There are worse men in the world than Charles Townshend.’³⁶

³⁵ These include *Passing Events* (1836), *The Return of Zamorna* (1836-37), *Julia* (1837), *Four Years Ago* (1837), *Mina Laury* (1838), *Stancliffe’s Hotel* (1838), *The Duke of Zamorna* (1838), *Henry Hastings* (1839), and *Caroline Vernon* (1839).

³⁶ C. Brontë, *Stancliffe’s Hotel, Tales of Angria*, pp. 63-123 (p. 91).

Charlotte could have read just such a lengthy, technical, and self-involved description of dressing in Maginn's June, 1830 article on Bulwer's novels. The review quotes at length from the scene in *Pelham* in which the protagonist gives instructions on jackets, waistcoats, collars, and neckties to his tailors, or 'man-maker[s]', as the narrator terms them. Here, Pelham famously rejects earlier dandyish fashion by refusing padding or waist-nipping.³⁷ This litany of fashionable advice ends with an admonition from the narrator: 'For the rest, I cannot sufficiently impress upon your mind the most thoughtful consideration to the minutiae of dress, such as the glove, the button, the boot, the shape of the hat, &c.' and cites as the 'greatest of all sciences' the 'science of dress'.³⁸ Charlotte mocks and emulates this silver fork element of male attention to dress when Townshend details his own and William Percy's appearances when they meet at Stancliffe's Hotel:

We were both [...] somewhat foppishly dressed, with small feet set off by a slender *chaussure* and white hands garnished with massive rings [...] He wore a blue dress-coat with velvet collar, velvet waistcoat and charming white tights: I endued a well-made green frock and light summer jeans. Now, reader, have you got us before you?³⁹

Charlotte is familiar enough with the silver fork novel's conventions to recreate appropriately dandyish dress for her characters, as well as Townshend's self-satisfied tone and use of French. She emphasises the role of display in her narration with Townshend's rhetorical question to the reader, who is expected to visualise the surface characteristics of the two men. In many ways, Townshend is deeply 'unmanly', as he is vain and utterly passive, aside from his writing for much needed money. He does not develop as a character or act, except to travel among the Brontës' imagined Angrian landscapes and cityscapes. He is happy to criticise others, namely Zamorna, whom he

³⁷ [Maginn], 'Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer's Novels', p. 517.

³⁸ Edward Bulwer, *Pelham*, qtd in [William Maginn], 'Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer's Novel', p. 518.

³⁹ C. Brontë, *Stancliffe's Hotel*, p. 85.

casts as an oriental despot and satanic figure, and in *Passing Events* (1836), as a madman.⁴⁰ Charlotte's depiction of Charles's idle life reflects the difference in expectations for elder and younger sons (or, as in the Brontë family, sons and daughters).

As a dandy and self-confessed bachelor, Charles Townshend is an anti-domestic figure. In *Passing Events*, he declares, 'I never could understand what home-pleasures & family affections meant.'⁴¹ Elsewhere, Charles and William Percy go together to woo Jane Moore, the celebrated Angrian beauty (both fail miserably), while at the beginning of *Henry Hastings*, Townshend advertises for a wife, specifying that the lady must have 'that one great and paramount virtue, that eminent and irresistible charm, C-A-S-H!'⁴² Charlotte thus exaggerates the theme of fortune-hunting commonly found in the silver fork novel, but usually ascribed to female characters. Charles follows this with an about-face: 'No! I am too beloved by too many to give up my liberty to one [...] Charles Townshend will still be the handsome bachelor.'⁴³ Charlotte presents Townshend as desiring only to be admired by society ladies. Towards the end of the 1830s, this presentation of foppishness, artifice, and vanity was becoming unfashionable in a man. Charlotte uses Charles's dandyish qualities to contrast his stagnant, passive character against her new presentation of William Percy's increasingly active and normative masculinity.

Because Charles has renounced his family and clings to his status as a bachelor, his friendship with William Percy is his only significant interpersonal relationship. At surface level, they have similar social circles and pursuits, such as going to the theatre and to house parties. Both are allies in their subversive masculinity as dandies and both are estranged from their families of origin, as William keeps away from both his hated

⁴⁰ C. Brontë, *Passing Events*, p. 74.

⁴¹ C. Brontë, *Passing Events*, p. 81.

⁴² C. Brontë, *Henry Hastings, Tales of Angria*, pp. 197-322 (p. 101).

⁴³ C. Brontë, *Henry Hastings*, p. 201.

brother Edward and Northangerland, the father who abandoned him as an infant. Aside from this similarity, their relationship lacks firm, intimate ties. For this reason, their friendship is vulnerable to change and the men grow apart as William finds more fulfilment in his work and becomes more closely aligned with the establishment, as Heather Glen argues.⁴⁴

William Percy is sent on a mysterious diplomatic mission to Paris at the end of *The Duke of Zamorna*, and this increased responsibility creates a more mature, professional sense of masculinity in him. In a letter to Charles, he uses allegorical language similar to the self-making rhetoric of Samuel Smiles, which anticipates the language used by William Crimsworth in Charlotte's first novel, *The Professor*:

Manhood is the best portion of life after all [...] I am unfettered now. I see my steep path clearly, and I have got the strength to climb. It is no labour to me; it is a delight to mount up, up, clinging to every projecting stone, grasping at every tough root and wild stem of heath, gazing at the far-above, cloud piercing summit. When I do reach it, what will strained sinews, weary limbs, dizzy brains be then? I shall forget all when I look down at the unbounded prospect.⁴⁵

Manliness and professional toil are here likened to physical exertion and the overcoming of physical obstacles. William emphasises the difficulty of his climb and thus the sweetness of his reward – success, the view of the landscape. William hopes to be both ‘unfettered’ from the hardship of his early life in industrial servitude, and rewarded with an ‘unbounded prospect’.

The dandy's progress plot usually ends with a suitable marriage. William, having earlier admired Jane Moore and harboured a secret passion for Mina Laury, grows to long for more domestic, companionate attributes in a future wife:

I will never marry till I can find a woman who has endured sufferings as poignant as I have done, who has felt them as intensely and, in the end, has triumphed over her woes as successfully. A woman so gifted, with youth and refined education,

⁴⁴ Glen, ‘Introductory Note’, *Henry Hastings, Tales of Angria*, pp. 199-200 (p. 199).

⁴⁵ C. Brontë, *The Duke of Zamorna, Tales of Angria*, p. 181. Heather Glen's chapter “‘Calculated Abruptness’: *The Professor*” provides a detailed analysis of the influence of self-improving discourse on Charlotte's first novel (*Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History*, pp. 33-49).

would attract my love far more irresistibly than the beauty of Helen or the majesty of Cleopatra [...] [M]ind, feeling, passion and the crowning grace of fortitude are the attributes of an angel.⁴⁶

Unlike Charles Townshend's advertisement for a rich wife, William desires traits which would lead to a companionate marriage, like those described by domestic handbook authors – intellect, fortitude, sympathy, feeling. These are the same moral qualities William values in himself, as a survivor of the blighted childhood Branwell describes in 'The Wool is Rising' (1834).⁴⁷

However, in *Henry Hastings*, William's growth from Regency dandy into responsible early Victorian gentleman is halted when Elizabeth Hastings, Jane Moore's plain, quakerish governess, refuses to become his mistress.⁴⁸ This rejection introduces Victorian, normative notions of sexual morality into the narrative, as for the first time in the Angrian saga, a woman refuses a man. The scene takes place in the lonely churchyard of Scar Chapel by the tomb of Rosamund Wellesley, a former lover of the Duke of Zamorna, who killed herself out of shame. Elizabeth comments that Zamorna 'never forsook her, and [...] remembered her after she was dead,' but also judges that he 'is a sort of scoundrel [...] But then, most men of rank are, from what I can understand'.⁴⁹ Because Elizabeth dares to judge Zamorna's sexual morality and that of his aristocratic class, it is not surprising that when William Percy identifies himself as a man of rank and asks her to be his mistress, she sticks by her principles and refuses him. She wants to protect the honour and feelings of her father, her brother, and the Prime Minister, Warner Howard Warner, who had assisted her when her brother was on trial. Despite William's new maturity and professional success, he becomes a failure of early Victorian moral masculinity. He is honourable and manly when he captures Henry

⁴⁶ C. Brontë, *The Duke of Zamorna*, p. 182.

⁴⁷ P.B. Brontë, 'The Wool is Rising', *Works*, II, pp. 24-91.

⁴⁸ As many commentators have noted, Elizabeth Hastings bears more than a passing resemblance to Charlotte's Jane Eyre.

⁴⁹ C. Brontë, *Henry Hastings*, p. 302.

Hastings and brings him to justice, but is dishonourable when he asks Elizabeth to become his mistress. Her moral vision becomes that of the text; his manlier course of action would clearly have been to propose marriage instead of ignominy.

Henry Hastings's character arc represents another and more severe form of male dishonour, as Branwell and Charlotte's final plot collaboration results in his downfall and humiliation. Henry Hastings, in Branwell's writings, had been a well-loved poet and soldier, but he deserts the Duke of Zamorna's forces after murdering his superior officer and then deserts Northangerland's army, fleeing to France. After this point in Branwell's writings, Hastings is most often depicted drinking, fighting in taverns, and consorting with other deserters. In Branwell's penultimate Angrian fragment, he depicts Hastings's attempted assassination of the Duke of Zamorna.⁵⁰ In Charlotte's novelette *Henry Hastings*, descriptions of Hastings emphasise his negative personal attributes and the depths of his dishonour:

The man had wasted his vigour and youth in vice; there was more to repel than charm in a dark, fiery eye sunk far under the brow and an aspect marked with the various lines of suffering, passion, and profligacy. Yet there were the remnants of a strong young frame, a bold, martial bearing in proud, confident and ready action.⁵¹

Here Charlotte emphasises the remaining signs of Hastings's previous military prowess and contrasts these with his moral flaws. Hastings outwardly resembles the Byronic hero as 'a Cain-like wanderer', but his lack of admirable qualities makes him a rather tired and stale version thereof.⁵² He is repellent, not attractive or seductive as earlier incarnations of the Byronic Duke of Zamorna had been.

Hastings's fall, dissolute behaviour, and fugitive status suggest Charlotte and Branwell's desire to experiment with another popular genre of the 1830s – the Newgate

⁵⁰ Hastings's attempted assassination takes place in '[Angria and the Angrians] V (d)', *Works*, III, pp. 249-51.

⁵¹ C. Brontë, *Henry Hastings*, p. 233.

⁵² C. Brontë, *Henry Hastings*, p. 234.

novel. One set-piece of this genre was the pursuit of its hero-villain, such as Dick Turpin's famous flight in William Harrison Ainsworth's *Rookwood* (1834). The Brontës would have been exposed to this genre in their periodical reading. The Tory lawyer and historian Archibald Alison dismissed the genre for 'exhibit[ing] to our view the lowest and most degraded stages of society and [...] interest[ing] us too often in the haunts of vice and the pursuit of infamy'.⁵³ From Emily Brontë's 1837 diary paper, we know that Charlotte and Branwell read Bulwer's *Eugene Aram* (1832), in which the titular hero is executed for murdering his business partner.⁵⁴ Charlotte and Branwell turned to this disreputable genre to experiment with a criminal protagonist in a more sophisticated way than in their early stories of drunkards and body snatchers. Where once Hastings had been a heroic poet and possible version of Branwell, now Branwell and Charlotte play with making him a hated, dangerous figure. In the late 1830s, standards of male behaviour were fast shifting away from the liberties of the Regency and solidifying around domestic and moral Victorian gentlemanliness. Aware that the foundations of manliness were unstable, Branwell and Charlotte often depict their three younger lead male characters putting a foot wrong, and failing. Hastings is the siblings' most obvious examination of the humiliations heaped upon the fallen heroes of their youth.

Charlotte and Branwell's Angrian writings pose many challenges to critics: their combined length, the relationships between works authored by the two siblings, and the saga's decade-long evolution. Zamorna and Northangerland – the two most central figures in an extremely large cast – change greatly from their original incarnations, their histories repeatedly revised and their relationship to each other complicated by marriage, revolution, and sexual tension. Unlike the Brontës' novels, the Angrian stories are not unitary or fixed, allied to one genre or one author. They evolved with the siblings'

⁵³ [Archibald Alison], 'The Historical Romance', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 58 (September 1845), 341-356 (p. 342).

⁵⁴ Emily and Anne Brontë, 'Diary Paper, 26 June 1837', *Tales*, p. 487.

growing maturity and changing interests. All these changes are reflected in Charlotte and Branwell's depictions of masculinity, whether heroic, satirical, domestic, or self-making. These representations follow shifts in cultural norms, charting the fading ideal of Byronism, the fall of the dandy, and the rise of the self-made man. These changes are filtered through a multiplicity of possible genres, all of which gave the siblings different ways to experiment with the styles of masculinity available to them for their writing craft and their own self-fashioning. By the end of the saga, Charlotte and Branwell have positioned their main characters in relation to women and the domestic sphere rather differently. Branwell sees the possibility of domesticity as a fulfilling space for Northangerland, while Charlotte's *Caroline Vernon* is deeply interested in the ways in which young women disastrously romanticise dangerous men, with Zamorna positioned at the last as a sexual predator. These two trends continue into the siblings' first attempts at writing domestic novels.

Ashworth, And the Weary Are at Rest, and New Domesticity

In about 1840, Charlotte wrote *Ashworth*, her first attempt at the opening chapters of a novel. She retells the story of Northangerland's life (he is now called Ashworth), but sets the action in England as opposed to the romantic hothouse of Angria.⁵⁵ The major characters are landowners and this fact, coupled with the Yorkshire setting, makes *Ashworth* most resemble Emily's *Wuthering Heights*. This fragment marks Charlotte's involvement in yet another literary trend: the Victorian domestic novel, pioneered by Harriet Martineau's *Deerbrook* (1839), which detailed the lives of middle-class characters in a rural setting, in contrast to the silver fork novel's focus on aristocratic

⁵⁵ For an explanation of the textual background of *Ashworth*, see Melodie Monahan's introduction to her edition in *Studies in Philology* 80.4 (Autumn 1983), 1-133 (pp. 1-33).

London. Charlotte is self-conscious that she is writing a novel; she notes that the work is not a biography and makes a show of introducing Arthur Ripley West (Zamorna) as the hero of the story. She purposefully shifts her Angrian plots and characters into the realist novel genre, and thus the narrative can be awkward, unwieldy, and at times unrealistic.⁵⁶ Her character studies and dialogue have improved, and show the maturing artistry that will be more fully developed in *The Professor*, completed six years later.

Ashworth is a revised version of Branwell's Northangerland and combines Byronic characteristics from earlier Angrian writing and more recent aspects of the silver fork-inspired post-1836 writings. Charlotte uses some aspects of the silver fork novel in setting *Ashworth* in the Regency and recounting her protagonist's movements among London high society and his desire to become an MP. However, she also returns to the older, more romantic Byronic elements of Ashworth's character, commenting on his mysterious sins with women, describing him as 'fierce and fantastic', 'the Satan' among his band of followers (pp. 82, 92). Upon inheriting his ancestral hall, Ashworth invites his friends there for 'orgies,' which recall the revels held by Lord Byron at Newstead Abbey, especially as one crony is named George Charles Gordon (p. 83). Charlotte also draws on the more domestic aspects introduced by Branwell in his later Angrian writings by making it clear that Ashworth's first wife Miss Wharton (Angria's Mary Henrietta) has a strong moral influence on him: 'the longer he lived with her, the more dependent he seemed to grow on her society and presence' (p. 84). We are told that an 'attachment to home [...] formed a prominent feature in his character during his wife's life' (p. 89). Charlotte combines elements of older characterisations of Branwell's chief protagonist to create her Ashworth, maintaining his Byronic, satanic cast.

⁵⁶ Despite the real world setting, a number of extreme Angrian plot and character details are carried over, some of which jar. For instance, Ashworth's preaching as a result of *delirium tremens*, his disowning of his two, legitimate sons, and his gyrations and gymnastic feats.

Charlotte's own main protagonist, Zamorna, is presented as a young graduate named Arthur Ripley West, who is sowing his wild oats and is Ashworth's friend.

Charlotte's lengthy description upon his first appearance offers hints as to how she would have developed his character, had she continued writing:

His features were regular and Roman, and, in his dark smiling eyes and round his lips, there was all that expression of mingled keenness and sweetness, which, since the world began, has ever been the attribute of clever, handsome scamps, of fellows who with smiles and jests can buy themselves the privilege of sinning on a grander scale than their contemporaries, of men who with genius and poetry of character can so disguise their evil deeds that a careless eye may easily mistake them for virtues, of gentlemen whom nature has gifted with haughty gallantry that they may defy to the teeth all who would stop them in their career of crime.

(Ashworth, 117)

This passage begins as a rather innocuous description of a physically attractive young man, with Ripley West's 'regular and Roman' features and 'keenness and sweetness' recalling the pre-1833 descriptions of Charlotte's Marquis of Douro. However, the portrait then turns to the darker psychological features hidden behind the manners of such 'clever, handsome scamps'. The latter section, which is magnified by increasingly dark and critical descriptions of such 'scamps,' 'fellows,' 'men,' and 'gentlemen,' suggests the 'crimes' Ripley West may commit in the future narrative, while reflecting the career of sexual sin and despotism Charlotte had previously written for the Duke of Zamorna between 1833 and 1839. This shift in diction suggests that Charlotte had not decided how she wanted to characterise her hero at this point in composition, but that she did want to draw on the passion, and immoral conduct of the Byronic hero in creating her main character, including his 'genius and poetry of character,' his 'haughty gallantry' and the dangerous pride necessary to 'defy to the teeth' any opposition.

Charlotte also demonstrates Ripley West's treatment of women early in the fragment. His first scene takes place in a drawing room with two of his future wives (if Charlotte was planning to keep to her Angrian plot) – Miss Ashworth (Mary Percy) and

Marian Fairburne (Marian Hume). He also demonstrates an incipient tendency to control women he is romantically attached to, rifling through Marian's portfolio for a sketch and then proceeding to improve it. In this, he demonstrates both his artistic prowess and his lack of concern for others' property or intellectual productions. This scene looks forward to Mr Rochester's similar demand to view Jane's portfolio on their first formal meeting in the drawing room at Thornfield. It also anticipates the way Anne dramatises Arthur Huntingdon looking through Helen's portfolio without her permission, an early sign of the marital woes to come in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. This family 'resemblance' in *Ashworth*, as well as its tight focus on three Yorkshire families (which anticipates the opposition between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange in Emily's novel), suggests that Charlotte shared this piece with her sisters, moving away from her earlier collaboration with Branwell to the sisterly collaboration that would lead to the publishing *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* in 1846 and writing the novels that would make them famous.⁵⁷

Five years later, in the summer of 1845, Branwell wrote to his friend J.B. Leyland: 'I have, since I saw you at Halifax, devoted my hours of time [...] to the composition of a three volume *Novel* – one volume of which is completed.'⁵⁸ While this fragment would not have made a very lengthy volume, Branwell approached his novel in much the same way as Charlotte had done when writing *Ashworth*: he returned to the dramatic Byronic material of Alexander Percy's early life and transposed these elements from the exotic climes of Angria to the well-known scenes, details, and even dialects, of

⁵⁷ Use of Yorkshire landed masculinity also occurs in Charlotte's final Angrian novelette, *Caroline Vernon*, in which the Emperor Adrian plays at being a gentleman farmer, a role the Earnshaws of *Wuthering Heights* and Gilbert Markham of *Tenant* will fulfill in Emily's and Anne's novels. Northangerland mutters disparagingly that Hawkscliffe resembles an 'Angrian squire's den', replete with stag's antlers and copies of the *Agricultural Magazine*. Northangerland takes every opportunity to mock Zamorna's play-acting as a farmer, asking Mary: 'Does he kill his own meat? Or he buys it? Does he feed pigs, Mary?' (p. 344). Zamorna enters wearing a straw hat and is accompanied by a pointer named Juno (the name of Heathcliff's dog in *Wuthering Heights*).

⁵⁸ P.B. Brontë, 'To J.B. Leyland, 10 September [?1845]', in *Letters*, III, pp. 424-425 (p. 424).

Yorkshire and Lancashire. In Branwell's case, his Angrian borrowing was more obviously intertextual, as he rewrote the 1837 Thurston fragment for what is now known as *And the Weary Are at Rest*.⁵⁹

In both of these texts, a younger Alexander Percy visits Darkwall with his friends and falls in love with its married mistress, Maria Thurston. Branwell, like Charlotte, focuses on Percy's earlier exploits, perhaps as a strategy to reinvigorate this old character. The Thurston fragment is quite short and lacks narrative thrust. It seems to have been written purely for the sake of dramatising Percy again in his Byronic mode – with his character formed by a 'strange union [...] of Debauched profligacy and impassioned feeling and restless ambition' – in the act of seducing yet another beautiful woman.⁶⁰

The greatest difference between the earlier text and the novel fragment is the later work's increased psychological and moral complexity. To this end, Branwell begins his novel with a monologue in Percy's voice, in which he expresses his fears of ageing and remembers the loss of his beloved wife, Mary Henrietta:

[T]he lap against which my temples used to beat was not that of a Mother or daughter but of a WIFE and if I appear outwardly forgetful of her now do I not inwardly think of her till sleep snatches away remembrance? I have no longer the half bashful half delighted cheek to blush to my morning salutations no longer the evening solace for the past days cares. (*And the Weary Are at Rest*, 420)

Northangerland expresses his grief for his wife, and chiefly, his loss of an idealised, feminine, domestic support to fulfill his emotional needs. While his friends hunt at Darkwall, Percy enters into an intimacy with Maria, its neglected and abused mistress. It is difficult to read this fragment without considering that Branwell had just been forced to abandon a love affair with a married woman. He may have chosen to rewrite this particular narrative in the belief that his own adulterous love was vindicated because

⁵⁹ The Thurston fragment appears under the title of '[Angria and the Angrians] IV (I)', *Works*, III, pp. 186-193.

⁶⁰ P.B. Brontë, '[Angria and the Angrians] IV (I)', p. 192.

Lydia Robinson had been neglected or abused, as Maria clearly is in this narrative. While in the 1837 fragment, Mr Thurston is said to be ‘more addicted to vice than virtue’, any suggestion of abuse remains unspoken.⁶¹ In the novel fragment, Percy distinctly contrasts with Mr Thurston, which attracts Maria to him, despite herself:

[A] visitor was sheltered under her roof whose mind possessed some mettle more attractive than ebullition of sour reproach – whose feelings had a wider and higher and deeper range than what would be exercised [sic] in attempts to ruin others or onse self [sic] – whose person likewise gave animated instead of cloudy looks gentle flexibility of tone instead of bilious snappishness – eyes of mobile imagination instead of bull-like suspicion – lips of winning sweetness instead of acerb ill-temper. (*And the Weary Are at Rest*, 426)

The passage works by implicitly comparing Percy’s attractive attributes against Mr Thurston’s deplorable, even threatening, aspects. The psychological significance of Percy’s friendship as opposed to her husband’s apparent emotional abuse is pointed up with some nuance, even if the comparative rhetorical device is taken to an extreme. Any man, it seems, would be an improvement upon Maria’s husband, but she is interested in more than Percy’s fame or looks (which are emphasised as the reason for her interest in the 1837 piece). She desires the emotional features of a companionate relationship, not simply a sexual dalliance. In this way, Branwell domesticates Percy’s appeal for Maria.

In another series of comparisons, Percy suggests Maria is like a devoted Indian wife who would sleep on a bed of nails (which suggests the language of suttee used by Charlotte in her Angrian writings and *Jane Eyre*), or, in a violent masculine simile drawn from the world of boxing, ‘like a pugilist that [...] can smile after a sledge hammer hits your teeth’ (p. 334). Percy, having appealed to Maria’s sense of her intolerable position, argues that she would give him the feminine, domestic care he has lacked since his second wife died. While Maria’s bosom broods ‘dovelike over home scenes,’ his ‘wandering wings have expanded like those of the stormy peteril over lifes ocean through

⁶¹ P.B. Brontë, ‘[Angria and the Angrians] IV (l)’, p. 188.

every clime and climate – every grief and joy’ (p. 375). Rather than try to seduce Maria overtly, as Branwell had earlier depicted him seducing Louisa Dance or Harriet O’Connor, he instead attempts to convince Maria that they could each fulfill the other’s emotional needs. He makes an emotional case first, though sexual desire and tension lie beneath their intimacy. Another new aspect of Percy’s character is his awareness that Maria could reject him, which would wound him, as he is emotionally invested. He is also aware that a love affair could have negative consequences if Mr Thurston found out.

The middle portion of the narrative fits awkwardly between the impassioned and more or less well-wrought scenes of Percy’s attempted seduction. Instead, Percy poses as the ranting Methodist minister Ashworth and has his friends pretend to be missionaries in the local chapel, as discussed earlier. When Maria questions Percy about his performance of false zeal, he returns an absurd answer, which sits uneasily in the otherwise realist text: ‘When I am most inwardly serious I am most outwardly absurd’ (p. 461). He claims that his love and desire for Maria have been transmuted into fire and brimstone ranting. Though Branwell tries to explain away this awkward, lengthy set of scenes in the middle of his ‘volume’, they are Angrian, a return to old, repeated, comfortable anti-Methodist satire from the late 1830s. Branwell’s new love scenes, however, mark a step forward in his depictions of masculine psychological depth.

Unlike Charlotte’s approach to composing *Ashworth*, Branwell does not provide any back story to the relationships and characters portrayed in *And the Weary Are at Rest*. The novel fragment seems to have been written for the author himself, as he does not introduce Percy or his fellows to an unfamiliar audience. In writing *Ashworth*, Charlotte seems hyper-aware that she is working in a new genre, and for public consumption. By contrast, only Branwell’s published poetry offers any evidence of him writing for a wider

public; this transposed Angrian material could only be read and understood by him or his sisters.

But, like Charlotte, Branwell here engages with more fully domesticated forms of masculinity, with Percy meditating on the emotional support he lost in losing his wife, just as Charlotte depicts Ashworth as similarly bereft. In these works, both siblings maintain their interest in romance – for emotional and companionate purposes now, rather than the seduction and casual conquests featured in the earlier Angrian writing. However, Charlotte’s Ripley West, as a new version of Zamorna, is still a problematic romantic figure, prefiguring the attractive and dangerous aspects of Mr Rochester’s character. The potential scales of Charlotte and Branwell’s projects also differ in intriguing ways. Charlotte, it seems, might have recapitulated many of the key interpersonal relationships and plot points of the original Angrian saga, while Branwell focused his attentions on a character study of Percy at a specific moment. It is curious to think that in 1845, Branwell may have been composing his novel fragment at the same time as, unbeknownst to him, his sisters were drafting *The Professor*, *Agnes Grey*, and *Wuthering Heights*.

The Return of the Hero: Charlotte and Emily Brontë’s Pensionnat Héger *Devoirs*

In February 1842, Charlotte and Emily Brontë began studying at the Pensionnat Héger in Brussels in order to improve their French so they would be better qualified to open their own school on their return to England.⁶² Under the instruction of M. Constantin Héger, Charlotte and Emily composed a series of *devoirs* or essays in French, which have been given little critical attention. I argue that these essays, as the only

⁶² Both sisters were called home after the death of Aunt Branwell, and Emily, always homesick, did not return to Brussels with her sister at the beginning of 1843. Charlotte remained until December 1843.

surviving creative prose by the sisters from the early 1840s other than Charlotte's novel fragment *Ashworth* (c.1840) and Emily's diary papers, provide a rich opportunity to track the late stages of Charlotte's and Emily's writing apprenticeships.⁶³ The essays showcase the new forms of collaboration taking place between the siblings at the dawning of the Victorian period, and the approaches to representing masculinity which would inform their published novels of 1847.

In Brussels, Charlotte found herself working at the behest of M. Héger, not her equal as Branwell had been, but an older, better educated mentor, with whom she became infatuated. While Charlotte tried to shape her essays to please Héger, Sue Lonoff argues that Emily's essays formed an act of linguistic and artistic resistance, because she made good progress in French but refused to bend to its traditional syntax.⁶⁴ I suggest that Emily emulated the assigned dictées as required but sometimes subverted the structure or philosophy of the original piece to suit her own ends. The *devoirs* which Charlotte and Emily wrote on similar themes allow the reader an unparalleled opportunity to compare the sisters' literary approaches and, in particular, I argue, their differing modes of portraying heroic masculinity. In her *devoirs*, Charlotte praises heroic figures, in ways which look back to her and Branwell's enthusiastic depictions of Wellington and Napoleon in the early Glass Town stories. She now, however, emphasises her hero's self-control and morality, as these qualities, in addition to strength and passion, were becoming the ideal elements of the early Victorian hero, especially as depicted by Thomas Carlyle in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1842). Emily

⁶³ Twenty-two of Charlotte's *devoirs* are extant, while we have nine essays by Emily, which offer tantalising glimpses of Emily's scene painting and characterisation in prose, the only examples that exist beyond her short diary papers and *Wuthering Heights*. The best source on the *devoirs* is Sue Lonoff, who edited, translated, and provided commentary on them in *The Belgian Essays* (1996). Charlotte's first *devoir*, 'L'Ingratitude', lost since the beginning of the twentieth century, was recently recovered and was published with translation and commentary (Trans. by Sue Lonoff, *The London Review of Books*, 34.5 (2012), 12).

⁶⁴ Lonoff, 'Introduction,' *The Belgian Essays*, p. xxxiii.

sometimes embraces this language of self-control, while also using her own alternately cynical or highly Romantic voice to respond to Héger's themes. This language of self-mastery could reflect the sisters' own struggles to become financially independent and to succeed as women writers.

Lonoff believes M. Héger set the outline for both Charlotte's and Emily's 1842 *devoirs* titled 'The Siege of Oudenarde', possibly drawing on his teaching plan for History at the Athénée Royal in 1842, under which is listed 'some account of the great men of antiquity and of those who made Belgium renowned'.⁶⁵ Both *devoirs* recount the fifteenth-century siege of Oudenarde. Simon Lalaing, the city's defender must choose between the lives of his sons, who are held hostage by the attacking Ghents, and the safety of the city. In Charlotte's version, Lalaing undergoes '[a] frightful struggle [that] rent his heart', before finally pronouncing that his children must die, as he has 'only one duty to fulfil', 'to remain faithful to [his] country'.⁶⁶ Charlotte's *devoir* focuses on Lalaing's emotional torment, his self-control, and the sacrifice of his domestic affections for the sake of his city. The quality of Lalaing's struggle illustrates the degree of his self-mastery, though in the end, the Ghents do not murder his sons, so he demonstrates his patriotism without losing his domesticity. Emily's *devoir* is structurally similar to Charlotte's, and she too praises Lalaing's devotion to his country above all else: 'For a moment he hesitated; nature wrestled strongly with honor; his breast swelled with a terrible emotion. But finally the patriot subdued the father.'⁶⁷ Both sisters, perhaps influenced by Héger, write pieces that emphasise patriotism and military duty over family, while also bringing out the Romantic depth of their hero's suffering. Emily's depiction of the moment of Lalaing's crisis differs from Charlotte's in that the man's warring duties are personified as 'patriot' and 'father', with the patriot taking precedence

⁶⁵ Lonoff, *Belgian Essays*, p. 76.

⁶⁶ C. Brontë, 'The Siege of Oudenarde', *Belgian Essays*, pp. 72-75 (p. 74).

⁶⁷ E. Brontë, 'The Siege of Oudenarde', *Belgian Essays*, pp. 68-71 (p. 68).

in an internal struggle painted even more distinctly than the war between Ghent and Oudenarde. What Emily has seen in the historical model, and Charlotte has not, is an opportunity to illustrate psychological conflict as a personified, symbolic conflict, perhaps anticipating the way she would later use *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange* as symbols for nineteenth-century gender and class conflict.

In June 1842, Charlotte and Emily composed portraits of Peter the Hermit and King Alfred, respectively. These were probably both written in emulation of a *dicteé* on Victor Hugo's portrait of Mirabeau, but with each sister expressing the key attributes of male heroism and power differently. Charlotte's *devoir* opens with a classification of heroic types that recalls the structure of Carlyle's lectures in *On Heroes*. Peter is shown as a monk who inspired kings to take up the cause of the Crusades, having earlier tamed his worldly appetites and funnelled his genius and ardour into religion: 'Peter was a little man, of a displeasing physiognomy; but he had that courage, that constancy, that enthusiasm, that energy of feeling which crushes all opposition and makes the will of a single man the law of an entire nation.'⁶⁸ The force of Peter's personality and inner qualities makes him heroic, and proves to be more important than his physical insignificance, differentiating him from the Duke of Zamorna, whose physical presence and sexuality had been emphasised in the Angrian stories. In the final scene, Peter stands before Jerusalem, surrounded by knights: 'His genius has already mastered that whole army and at this moment he masters himself.'⁶⁹ In this case, Peter guarantees the re-taking of Jerusalem by virtue of his prophet-like stance (he is compared to Elijah) and specifically because of his manly self-mastery, which reflects the universal moral qualities which define Carlyle's heroes. Charlotte's characterisation of Simon Lalaing

⁶⁸ C. Brontë, 'Peter the Hermit', *Belgian Essays*, pp. 118-131, (pp. 120-121). The *dicteé* on Mirabeau from Charlotte's notebook can be found on pp. 108-111.

⁶⁹ C. Brontë, 'Peter the Hermit', p. 124. Curiously, this central description of Peter's self-mastery does not appear in the 31 July 1842 version of this *devoir* (both were marked up by Héger). Instead, Peter's prophecy of success convinces the army (p. 130).

and Peter the Hermit follows emerging ideologies of self-control, as articulated in Samuel Smiles's statement that 'the highest virtue of all [is] victory over ourselves'.⁷⁰

In Emily's *devoir*, 'King Harold before the Battle of Hastings', her protagonist also becomes truly heroic before battle. However, Harold's heroism does not arise from successful action (nor is it a faithful historical representation). And unlike Peter, Harold's cause is doomed to failure. Emily's hero has been transformed and freed by war, because 'in peace he would doubtless have been, [...] a nothing, a wretch entombed within his palace'.⁷¹ But war will also lead to Harold's death and the loss of his kingdom to the Norman invaders. Thus, the moment of potential strength and action that Emily depicts is highly Romantic, while also ironic: 'the soul divine shines in his eyes; a multitude of human passions awoke there at the same time, but they are exalted, sanctified, almost deified.'⁷² Like Charlotte's depiction of Peter the Hermit, Alfred's heroism is defined by his internal qualities, and the Byronic strength and clarity of his passions. As Lonoff argues, Emily's 'vision of heroism differs radically from Hugo's, her sister's, and presumably Héger's. They assume greatness is connected to accomplishment [...] She keeps her hero poised in the space of revelation.'⁷³ Emily's unorthodox approach to ideals of masculine worth is characteristic of her Romantic individuality and anticipates her characterisation of Heathcliff. Like King Alfred's moment of revelation, Heathcliff's intense love for Cathy in *Wuthering Heights* can in a sense be isolated from the revenge and violence that love impels him to commit, creating in Heathcliff a Byronic hero whom the reader can simultaneously admire, sympathise with, and condemn. This feature of his characterisation, in turn, makes Heathcliff a very

⁷⁰ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 243.

⁷¹ E. Brontë, 'King Harold Before the Battle of Hastings', *Belgian Essays*, pp. 96-107 (p. 96).

⁷² E. Brontë, 'King Harold Before the Battle of Hastings', p. 98.

⁷³ Sue Lonoff, *Belgian Essays*, p. 115.

different figure from Mr Rochester or Arthur Huntingdon, in whose actions Charlotte and Anne locate their failings or positive attributes.

In Charlotte's lengthier 31 May 1843 *devoir*, 'The Death of Napoleon', Napoleon is lauded for the genius of his empire-building, which is likened to 'the crime of Prometheus', and his self-sufficiency, especially his denial of affective and erotic ties, which makes him more resilient than Ulysses: 'he did not dread the Sirens' song, he disdained it.'⁷⁴ Unsurprisingly, the *devoir*'s focus shifts quickly to praise of the Duke of Wellington. Charlotte sets up a series of comparisons which clearly portray Wellington as the superior man because 'he loved his homeland better than his own reputation'.⁷⁵ Napoleon's military genius is faulty because he 'love[s] celebrity' and 'prize[s] his reputation'; for Wellington, on the other hand, 'public opinion is a notion, a nothing that the breath of his mighty will blows away like a soap bubble', making him truly self-sufficient and proving that his cause is more righteous, because it springs from patriotism, not self-interest or vanity.⁷⁶ This *devoir* anticipates Samuel Smiles's depictions of Napoleon and Wellington in *Self-Help* (1859), in which he writes that '[o]ur own Wellington was a far greater man [...], more self-denying, conscientious, and truly patriotic. Napoleon's aim was "Glory;" Wellington's watchword, like Nelson's, was "Duty"'.⁷⁷ Smiles depicts Wellington as possessing the moral traits that make a Victorian gentleman – self-denial, conscientiousness, patriotism – in addition to his valour and genius. This similarity in Charlotte's and Smiles's judgements of Wellington and Napoleon points to a common discourse of self-control, morality, and attention to duty in the mid-century construction of great men, and gentlemen more broadly.

⁷⁴ C. Brontë, 'The Death of Napoleon', *Belgian Essays*, pp. 270-301 (pp. 272, 274).

⁷⁵ C. Brontë, 'The Death of Napoleon', p. 276.

⁷⁶ C. Brontë, 'The Death of Napoleon', p. 278.

⁷⁷ Smiles, p. 195.

Two of Charlotte's later *devoirs*, 'The Aim of Life' and 'Letter from a Poor Painter to a Great Lord', illustrate a turning point in each of two young men's lives – the beginning of the struggle to do their duty and exercise their talents. In the first, a young student reflects on his 'cowardly' life of study; he has 'lived the life that pleased [him] most' rather than conquering 'aversion' and fulfilling a 'stern but necessary duty'.⁷⁸ Brontë argues it is not enough to work hard if one is not also doing one's duty. Additionally, this young man realises that he must take an active role in forming his faculties and character rather than 'let[ting] the defects of [his] disposition grow without fighting energetically against their growth'.⁷⁹ This language suggests the phrenological discourse Charlotte was exposed to at this time: exercising one's good faculties was supposed to aid self-improvement, while self-control of one's 'defects' was also paramount.⁸⁰ Manliness could not be allowed to develop passively; purposeful self-control needed to be exercised at all times.

In Charlotte's last *devoir*, dated 17 October 1843, a young painter assured of his own genius writes to a great lord asking for patronage. The painter explains that he is pursuing this perilous career because he believes it is his 'vocation' and because he believes he has 'the courage to persevere despite all the obstacles [he] may encounter'.⁸¹ This rhetoric of vocation is an early example of Charlotte's writing on professional masculinity, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. Vocation for a specific profession was seen as a high-minded, secular dedication to one's field and promoted an ethos of service which tended to hide the profit-motive behind a young middle-class man's desire to work. However, the concept of vocation was necessarily in

⁷⁸ C. Brontë, 'The Aim of Life', *The Belgian Essays*, pp. 194-199 (pp. 195, 196).

⁷⁹ C. Brontë, 'The Aim of Life', p. 196.

⁸⁰ Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 63. Shuttleworth examines the self-improving literature and psychological texts which would have been available to the Brontës in her chapter 'The Haworth Context', pp. 19-33.

⁸¹ C. Brontë, 'Letter from a Poor Painter to a Great Lord', *The Belgian Essays*, pp. 358-367 (p. 360).

tension with the reality of getting one's bread and advancing in life within one's class. Thus, the realities of professional life require the young painter to seek another's help, rather than attempt to make his own way: 'I know that in the long run true merit always triumphs, but if power does not offer a helping hand, the day of success can be a long time in coming.'⁸² In this way, the speaker seeks help in achieving professional success, while protesting that his own genius would eventually prevail anyway, which reflects Charlotte's knowledge of the importance of social connections for middle-class men attempting to gain professional positions and prestige.

The letter also recalls those sent by Charlotte and Branwell to Wordsworth, Robert Southey, and Hartley Coleridge in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Charlotte initially attempted to hide her sex from these correspondents, for professional authorship would be more difficult to achieve if she was known to be a woman. Charlotte's fictional seeker of patronage modulates his tone more effectively than Branwell did in his letter to Wordsworth, who, Robert Southey reported, 'was disgusted with the letter, for it contained gross flattery to him, and plenty of abuse of other poets'.⁸³ Branwell's multiple letters to the editors of *Blackwood's*, asking for a position as a writer, are likewise overly self-confident. For instance, on 4 January 1837, he had harangued them: 'Will you still so wearisomely refuse me a word [...] Is it pride which actuates you – or custom – or prejudice? – Be a Man – Sir! and think no more of these things! Write to me – Tell me that you will receive a visit.'⁸⁴ Professional mentorship and patronage will have important ramifications for William Crimsworth in *The Professor*, as he claims to desire to do his duty and advance by his own initiative, but also seeks the intervention of more powerful men during the course of his career. Charlotte's increased focus on the

⁸² C. Brontë, 'Letter from a Poor Painter to a Great Lord', p. 366.

⁸³ Robert Southey, 'Robert Southey to Charlotte Brontë, 22 March 1837', *Letters*, I, pp. 170-171 (p. 171n.).

⁸⁴ P.B. Brontë, 'Patrick Branwell to William Wordsworth, 10 January 1837', *Letters*, I, pp. 160-162 (p. 162n.).

centrality of self-control in her Brussels *devoirs*, even within heroic portraits, points towards the picture of masculinity she would present in *The Professor*. Her focus on the importance of domestic ties, even for great military men, anticipates her detailed, sophisticated treatment of domestic masculinity in her novels.

Gondal Masculinity: Imprisonment and the Horrors of War

Emily's and Anne's Gondal poetry is extant from 1836 to each sister's death and was written contemporaneously with *Wuthering Heights*, *Agnes Grey*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Emily and Anne used both male and female voices within the Gondal poems, and their writing about male characters tends to fall into shared themes, particularly those of imprisonment and civil war. The imprisonment theme makes the male speaker passive and allows for rumination on his social and romantic relationships, while the Gondalian civil war provided opportunities to consider the damage that violence and the suppression of emotion do to men. All four Brontë siblings seem to have determined by the late 1830s that war was neither as glorious nor as heroic as they had portrayed it in the writings of their early youth. Examination of Emily's and Anne's constructions of masculinity in the Gondal poetry can give readers better insight into the sisters' engagement with Byronic and other models of masculinity, beyond those present in their novels. Considering this fragmentary poetic canon also gives the reader a better sense of how Emily and Anne collaborated and how their fictional project may have differed in significant ways from Branwell and Charlotte's Angrian saga.

In two of Emily's imprisonment poems, male speakers attempt to contest the will of the women whom they love and who are, in fact, the cause of their imprisonment. The speakers scratch their impassioned rhetoric on the walls of their prison cells, as the

Brontë's no doubt knew had been done during the French Revolution and in the Tower of London. In 'Written in the Gaaldine prison caves To AGA' (1840), the imprisoned Fernando De Samara wishes for an earthly hell of imprisonment and suffering for his lover and ruler A.G.A. (Augusta Almeda). He desires her to suffer as he does, because he betrayed his faith, heaven, and virtue for her: 'If there be a God above | Whose arm is strong, whose word is true | This hell shall wring thy Spirit too.'⁸⁵ If Cathy Earnshaw's heaven is earthly, psychically and physically located in *Wuthering Heights* and the moors, then De Samara's hell is both a Blakean internal geography and spatially limited to his prison cell. De Samara demands that A.G.A. recognise his suffering, his madness, and his hatred for her, but his passionate diction reveals his continued, anguished love:

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—⁸⁶

Despite De Samara's degradation and hatred for A.G.A., he does not demonise her, as one might expect in a poem in the male Romantic tradition. His forceful language recalls Heathcliff's speech on the morning after Catherine's death, in which he hopes she may 'wake in torment' and suffer as he does (p. 147). Emily's 1844 poem 'Listen! When your hair like mine' is identified as being 'From a Dungeon Wall in the South College' from Julius Brenzaida to Rosina Alcona.⁸⁷ Brenzaida, too, has been betrayed in love and driven to commit misdeeds. He identifies his lover Rosina Alcona as his 'despot queen' and blames his fate on her ambition (l. 39). He ends by stating that he still loves her and has not wronged her, that she has wronged his love instead, which recalls Heathcliff berating Catherine shortly before her death.⁸⁸ Brontë creates a tension between the men's

⁸⁵ E. Brontë, 'Written in the Gaaldine prison caves To AGA', *EB Poems*, pp. 100-102 (ll. 74-76).

⁸⁶ E. Brontë, 'Written in the Gaaldine prison caves To AGA', ll. 37-40.

⁸⁷ E. Brontë, 'Listen! When your hair is like mine', *EB Poems*, pp. 158-160.

⁸⁸ Brenzaida is elsewhere figured as a conquering king, a match for Rosina, unlike A.G.A.'s lovers, who, in the extant texts, are depicted primarily as her satellites.

passive states as prisoners (who have been victimised by women, no less) and the power of their voices, recorded on the imagined prison wall as an artefact of their love and suffering. Emily's Byronic, conflicted male speakers thus emphasise the dominant-submissive dynamics of the sexual and emotional relationships between the male speakers and their absent female lovers, who nonetheless are constructed as equally passionate and powerful figures. Because most readers of these poems will already be familiar with the similarly tumultuous relationship between Heathcliff and Cathy in *Wuthering Heights*, the radical mutuality of Emily's male and female characters may be overlooked. Shelley and Byron wrote about the search for the female principle which would provide a whole love or identity for the male speaker, but female subjectivity and authority were often ignored or demonised. Thus, Anne K. Mellor argues that Emily Brontë sometimes performs a subversive act of literary 'cross-dressing', taking up the materials and approaches used by the canonical male Romantic poets but revising these same elements to suit her needs.⁸⁹ We see this in the poetic power granted to the powerless male speakers, and in the way Emily's female protagonists are politically and sexually empowered.

While Emily's Gondal poetry seems to be a precursor to the Byronism found in *Wuthering Heights*, critics seldom point out the continuities between the male characters in Anne's Gondal poetry and those in her novels. This oversight seems to be a result of the critical privileging of Anne's personal, spiritual lyric poetry over her Gondal work. However, interesting parallels do exist between Anne's representations of Gondal masculinity, which often feature psychological portraits of despair, and the violent, psychologically complex male characters in Anne's novels.

⁸⁹ Mellor develops this thesis in 'Ideological Cross-Dressing: John Keats / Emily Brontë', in *Romanticism and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 171-212.

The imprisoned male speakers of Anne's Gondal poems often address the absent female lover, but in a more domestic, compassionate register than is found in Emily's Gondal poetry. In 'Weep not too much, my darling' (1846), the speaker exhorts his lover to 'scorn not Nature's bounties', both for her own peace of mind and because he conceives them as sharing a spiritual connection, despite his separation from both society and nature: 'My soul partakes with thee.'⁹⁰ The same speaker states in 'Power of Love' (1846) that only his beloved's love has saved him from 'Death, and Madness, and Despair!', a much different fate than Emily's De Samara, who becomes mad after his lover's betrayal.⁹¹ In 'Lines Inscribed on the Wall of a Dungeon in the Southern P of I' (1844), Anne also writes about the fear of being forgotten. The speaker imagines that his love enjoys the warmth and beauty of spring and shares her joys with others, but does not think of or write to him: 'No sigh disturbs her bosom's swell, | No shade o'ercasts her angel brow.'⁹² What is most interesting here is not that the beloved has forgotten the imprisoned male speaker, but that he creates this painful fantasy out of his despair.

The speaker of Anne's 'A prisoner in a dungeon deep' is an outlier, since he denies any and all social connections and makes no reference to nature or the world outside as 'he has lost regret and hope, | has ceased to mourn his doom', lost in '[t]he stupor of despair'.⁹³ When he is informed that his 'foes are dead' and he is to be freed (l. 47), Orlando gives no sign of 'ecstasy' or 'surprise' but says:

My foes are dead! It must be then
 That all mankind are gone.
 For they were all my deadly foes.
 And friends I had no one.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ A. Brontë, 'Weep not too much, my darling', *AB Poems*, p. 62 (ll. 57-58).

⁹¹ A. Brontë, 'Power of Love,' *AB Poems*, pp. 134-135 (l. 4).

⁹² A. Brontë, 'Lines Inscribed on the Wall of a Dungeon in the Southern P of I', *AB Poems*, pp. 106-107 (ll. 15-16).

⁹³ A. Brontë, 'A prisoner in a dungeon deep', *AB Poems*, pp. 126-128 (ll. 11-12, 20).

⁹⁴ A. Brontë, 'A prisoner in a dungeon deep', ll. 47, 51, 52, 53-56.

This poem reflects the hopeless mode of prison poetry, as opposed to the more transformative, visionary nature of a poem like Emily's 'The Prisoner' or Anne's other prison poetry, in which the speaker is able to draw hope from his remaining connections to human society.⁹⁵ Casie LeGette distinguishes between these two modes of Romantic prison poetry, using Byron's hopeful 'Sonnet on Chillon' as a contrast with the more famous 'The Prisoner of Chillon'. Anne has created a more cynical speaker than is usually found in her works, a true Romantic outcast who believes himself outside society, even if this impression is only a result of his madness. The end of the poem echoes the speaker's experience at the end of Byron's 'The Prisoner of Chillon', who is also disturbed when his freedom finally comes:

At last men came to set me free,
 I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
 It was at length the same to me,
 Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
 I learn'd to love despair.⁹⁶

In Byron's poem, the problem is not the speaker's misanthropy or distrust of others, but rather that after long confinement, freedom and bondage have become indistinguishable. Anne's poem similarly depicts the madness that comes with isolation, and the ways in which apparent polar opposites – freedom and imprisonment, enemies and friends – can blur during a period of sustained psychological torment.

Manliness and lack of heroism are key themes in Emily's and Anne's civil war poems. Anne's war poems sometimes flinch from violence. Her 'We know where deepest lies the snow' and 'Come to the banquet – triumph in your songs!' were written on successive days in September 1845 and offer morally principled views of combat, with the speaker of the former poem asserting he would rather be the 'hare' than 'the

⁹⁵ Casie LeGette analyses these two modes of prison poetry in her article 'The Lyric Speaker Goes to Gaol: British Poetry and Radical Prisoners, 1820-1845', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 67 (2012), 1-28 (p. 21).

⁹⁶ George Gordon, Lord Byron, 'The Prisoner of Chillon', *Selected Poems*, ed. by Susan J. Wolfson and Peter J. Manning (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 400-411 (ll. 370-374).

hunter's hound,' acting for his own survival rather than harming another.⁹⁷ But Anne's 'Z—'s Dream', in its brutality and coldness, challenges the view of Anne as a didactic writer, as it baldly depicts the dehumanising effects of war, without providing a moral turn.⁹⁸

Emma Butcher's recent research points out that the Brontës were exposed to stories about the Napoleonic wars in *Blackwood's*, and that they read contemporary military memoirs, which focused on the individual soldier's experience.⁹⁹ The Brontës also read about military trauma in unlikely places, such as the story 'The Brothers' in the literary annual, *Friendship's Offering*.¹⁰⁰ The literary annuals or gift books were aimed primarily at the female reader. Yet, in this volume, which almost certainly was owned by the Brontës, appears a short story by G.R. Gleig, the author of the Peninsular War memoir *The Subaltern* (1825). This memoir was originally published as a series of articles in *Blackwood's*, so the children may already have been familiar with his work and view of war. In 'The Brothers', the narrator learns of two Scottish brothers who went to war under Wellington in Spain. Donald Cameron is older and stronger than Allan, and the brothers' devotion is described in oddly homoerotic and almost incestuous language: 'Donald absolutely worshipped his brave and gentle relative; whilst Allan clung to Donald as the ivy clings to the oak, or the honeysuckle to the trellis-work over which it is twined.'¹⁰¹ This language suggests feminised dependence in marriage; Thackeray uses the same image of the ivy and the oak to describe Dobbin and Amelia's marriage at the end of *Vanity Fair*. When Allan dies, Donald is devastated and appears

⁹⁷ A. Brontë, 'We know where deepest lies the snow,' *AB Poems*, p. 121 (ll. 15, 21); A. Brontë, 'Come to the banquet – triumph in your songs!', *AB Poems*, pp. 121-122.

⁹⁸ A. Brontë, 'Z—'s Dream', *AB Poems*, pp. 136-139.

⁹⁹ Emma Butcher, 'Napoleonic Periodicals and the Childhood Imagination: The Influence of War Commentary on Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Glass Town and Angria', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48 (2015), 469-486 (pp. 472, 481).

¹⁰⁰ [G.R. Gleig], 'The Brothers', in *Friendship's Offering: A Literary Album, and Christmas and New Year's Present for MDCCCXXIX* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1829), pp. 37-58.

¹⁰¹ [Gleig], p. 50.

to suffer from what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder: ‘Donald Cameron has never been himself [...] When first discovered he was in a state of pitiable idiocy; and he has continued ever since a melancholy maniac.’¹⁰² The intense attachment of the brothers and the opposition of the weak and strong men recalls the relationship detailed in Anne’s poem, ‘Z—’s Dream’, while Anne’s speaker shares with Gleig’s Donald Cameron the experience of war trauma.

In Anne’s case, the speaker also carries with him the Byronic hero’s sense of internal guilt, as he dreams of the boyhood companion he has killed in war and of their earlier romantic friendship. As a child, the speaker of the poem expressed his love through physicality and wrestled his weaker friend to the ground:

I seized him in my boisterous mirth;
I bore him struggling to the earth
And grappling, strength for strength we strove –
He half in wrath, – I all for love.¹⁰³

The physicality and emotion expressed by the speaker reads today as homoerotic, suggesting the emotional intensity of Zamorna and Northangerland’s relationship in Charlotte and Branwell’s Angrian writing or that between Gilbert Markham and Frederick Lawrence in Anne’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.¹⁰⁴ In adulthood and civil war, this physical strength is used to murder, which act is accomplished coldly, ‘without a tear’ (l. 99). The speaker is disgusted when he later weeps over this crime: ‘I wept! | Wept, like a woman over the deed | I had been proud to do’ (ll. 105-107). The speaker immediately retreats from his admission of both unmanly tears and newfound shame. The image of the soldier is not heroic here, as it had been in the early Glass Town stories. In order to serve his country, whose victory is ‘the crowning object of [his] life’ (l. 13),

¹⁰² [Gleig], p. 58.

¹⁰³ A. Brontë, ‘Z—’s Dream’, *AB Poems*, ll. 70-74.

¹⁰⁴ Male homosociality and romantic friendship will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

the speaker must continue to deny his emotional responses. Unlike Gleig's Donald Cameron, the speaker represses his trauma, seeking solace in action, not melancholy:

Advanced this far, I'll not recede; —
Whether to vanquish or to bleed,
Onward, unchecked, I must proceed.
Be Death, or Victory mine!¹⁰⁵

Where once the speaker's sense of duty to his country was patriotic and manly, after killing his friend and suppressing his guilt, the speaker continues as a soldier out of resignation and perhaps a sense of self-preservation. This internal, morally-barren desperation suggests Arthur Huntingdon's mental state at the end of *Tenant*, as he clings to life out of a fear of death and Christian judgement.

'Z —'s Dream' was written on 14 September 1846, the same day Emily penned 'Why ask to know the date – the clime?', a dramatic monologue in which the speaker recalls his most bitterly regretted actions from the past war.¹⁰⁶ Like the *devoirs* Charlotte and Emily wrote on the same themes in Brussels, these two poems provide an opportunity to compare Anne's and Emily's poetic treatment of the same subject, as both speakers dwell on their misdeeds – not so much the act of killing but the unmanly hard-heartedness and lack of mercy required in those acts. Emily's speaker regrets the 'cruelty' which 'hurt [his] chivalry' and unmanned him during the war (ll. 38, 37). Throughout the poem, the speaker illustrates the process of dehumanisation by war: 'I grew hard — I learnt to wear | An iron front to terror's prayer' (ll. 39-40); 'I was adamant stone | Nor felt one touch of tenderness' (ll. 188-189). But there are exceptions to this rule: 'there were fates that made me feel | I was not to the centre, steel—' (ll. 49-50). The speaker has become trapped between two different codes of masculinity: one for war – hard, unfeeling, without mercy; and one for peacetime –

¹⁰⁵ A. Brontë, 'Z—'s Dream', *AB Poems*, ll. 147-150.

¹⁰⁶ E. Brontë, 'Why ask to know the date – the clime?', *EB Poems*, pp. 184-192. Anne's more positive poem 'Power of Love' was written the day before. Emily's and Anne's more pessimistic poems of the next day could have been a reaction against the hopefulness of this poem.

gentle, chivalrous, merciful, emotional. To be a good soldier, a man must be ‘steel’, a weapon, a cog in a great military machine – de-individualised and inhuman.¹⁰⁷ The speaker mocks and torments a dying man, refusing to grant him a merciful death. This same enemy captain, towards the end of the poem, saves the speaker’s son from slaughter before his own death, leaving the speaker to attempt to care for the captain’s daughter. The speaker cannot right his wrong to the father by saving the daughter, however, and she serves as a symbol of the earthly atonement he will never achieve for his crimes. Like Henry Hastings in Charlotte and Branwell’s final Angrian stories, Emily’s and Anne’s Gondalian soldiers are not heroic in the way that the fictionalised Napoleon and Wellington of the early Glass Town stories were. In adulthood, the Brontë siblings demonstrate a much better sense of the realities of war and no longer glorify it in their writings. Emily and Anne differ from their elder siblings by dramatising more obviously, through the vehicle of war poetry, the tensions between idealistic visions of heroic battle and the ways in which men actually experience war.

Byronism in the Novels: Rochester, Heathcliff, and Huntingdon

Charlotte’s letter to W.S. Williams of 14 August 1848 gives the contemporary reader an opportunity to consider the three sisters’ collaboration and their sometimes drastically different approaches to literary masculinity. In response to Williams’s observation that Anne’s *Huntingdon* reminds him of Mr Rochester, Charlotte meditates

¹⁰⁷ In Emily’s poem, ‘Gleneden’s Dream’ (1838), the speaker is in prison following his attempts to battle tyranny in Gondal. He remembers the loved ones he has lost and maddens under the weight of grief. In his despair, he dreams of assassinating Gondal’s tyrant, describing himself as a ‘glad Avenger’ (l. 51), even though he has an essentially gentle, chivalrous nature:

Yes, the arm that once would shudder
Even to peirce [sic] a wounded deer,
I beheld it unrelenting,
Choke in blood its sovereign’s prayer.

In this poem, too, Emily demonstrates the damage war does to manliness, as well as the psychological toll of constraint and captivity (*EJB Poems*, pp. 55-57, ll. 53-56).

on the motivations and masculinities of Huntingdon, Rochester, and Heathcliff. She states that there is no ‘likeness’ between the three male characters:

Huntingdon is a [...] specimen of the naturally selfish sensual, superficial man whose one merit of a joyous temperament only avails him while he is young and healthy [...] Mr. Rochester [...] is ill-educated, mis-guided, errs, when he does err, through rashness and inexperience: he lives for a time as too many other men live – but being radically better than most men he does not like the degraded life, and is never happy in it.¹⁰⁸

Despite Charlotte’s insistence on Rochester’s moral transformation, his earlier character embodies the dangerous sexual control and exotic sexuality of the Byronic Duke of Zamorna. This is most obviously present in Rochester’s willingness to defy anyone who would stand in the way of his contracting a bigamous marriage, his perverted attempt to redeem and reform himself following his disastrous marriage to Bertha Mason (with the West Indies standing in for Angria as the locus of exotic sexuality), and his sexual escapades on the Continent.

What makes Rochester different from Zamorna or Branwell’s Northangerland is the way Charlotte alters his Byronism to make him a viable husband for the Victorian novel and for her own passionate heroine, Jane. Where in the post-1833 writings, Zamorna and Northangerland are inveterate adulterers, Rochester and Jane have a loving marriage of equals, in which Jane asserts she is ‘absolutely bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh’, and they live together in the seclusion of Ferndean, carefully enclosed in ideal romance and domestic felicity (p. 450). This shift in masculine style is facilitated by the burning of Thornfield and Rochester’s consequent physical and mental humbling.

Despite the corrective felling of his pride and loss of his right hand and sight, Rochester retains his physical prowess: ‘not in one year’s space, by any sorrow, could his athletic strength be quelled’ (p. 431). Also, as proven by the birth of Jane and Rochester’s son, Mr Rochester retains his virility. But because his hubris has been destroyed (and his first

¹⁰⁸ C. Brontë, ‘To W.S. Williams, 14 August 1848’, *Letters*, II, pp. 98-101 (p. 99).

wife conveniently removed), he has lost the aspects of the Byronic hero which imperilled women in the Angrian writings.

Though Charlotte denies the resemblances between Rochester and Huntingdon, Anne's character functions as a realist corrective to Charlotte's and Emily's romanticised Byronic figures, who mistreat and control women. This intertextual relationship to *Jane Eyre* is emphasised by Huntingdon's status as Helen Graham's 'madman' in the attic. Likewise, Anne's second novel shares the curious Chinese box structure of Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, in which a male protagonist (Lockwood/Gilbert Markham) learns the story of the secret past of a woman (Cathy Earnshaw/ Helen Graham), in a narrative which focuses on a tenant and a country house (*Wuthering Heights*/Wildfell Hall). In Anne's rewriting of the seductive Byronic hero, any romantic glamour is stripped away, revealing Huntingdon's need to manipulate women and glut his appetites for sex and drink. While Charlotte domesticates Mr Rochester, Helen Graham in Anne's *Tenant* focuses on the moral education of Gilbert Markham, who, while he commits a shocking act of violence against Frederick Lawrence, is nonetheless not dissipated like Huntingdon.

As for Heathcliff, Charlotte calls him 'a mere demon' and later noted in her 1850 'Editor's Preface to the New Edition of *Wuthering Heights*' that Heathcliff is never redeemed:

[H]is love for Catherine [...] is a sentiment fierce and inhuman: a passion such as might boil and glow in the bad essence of some evil genius; a fire that might form the tormented centre – the ever-suffering soul of a magnate of the infernal world: and by its quenchless and ceaseless ravage effect the execution of the decree which dooms him to carry Hell with him wherever he wanders [...] Whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ C. Brontë, 'Editor's Preface to the New Edition', *Wuthering Heights*, pp. 324-328 (p. 327).

Charlotte wants to place Heathcliff beyond the bounds of human morality and condemn him for it. Her comments also act as a negative judgement on Emily's artistic choices in creating this character. Charlotte nonetheless reflects on the power Heathcliff possesses as a Byronic hero. In this passage, Charlotte could be describing the Satanic Zamorna from the later Angrian stories, but her own depictions of masculinity and beliefs about what is socially acceptable in the novel have changed over time. In some ways, Heathcliff belongs to the uncensored worlds of Angria and Gondal, but at the same time, Emily positions Heathcliff as a man who self-consciously uses nineteenth-century economic and legal structures to his advantage. Like Rochester and Huntingdon, Heathcliff is presented as a danger to women, as Isabella Linton becomes infatuated with a romanticised vision of Heathcliff, despite Cathy's warnings.¹¹⁰

The Brontës' novels continued to engage with the Byronic, Gothic, and aristocratic forms of masculinity which had informed the Angrian and Gondal writings, though the sisters' novelistic critiques of patriarchal power became possible only once they began to work together. Male authority became something not only to imitate in fiction and poetry, but also a potentially oppressive force in their own lives and in their works. The degree to which each sister depicts the potentially damaging aspects of masculinity forms a key difference between them as writers. Though Charlotte initiated entry into professional authorship for herself and her sisters, and was the sister who most desired literary fame, her novels' critiques of the problematic aspects of Byronism were the most tentative, and less incisive than they had been in her early writing. Emily and Anne, despite having been raised in the same home and exposed to the same changing culture, were much more willing to represent the details of male substance abuse, domestic violence, and adultery, even to the point of baffling Charlotte's more

¹¹⁰ I will discuss Emily's more prosaic, less Byronic representations of Heathcliff as a father, husband, and landowner in Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

conventional artistic standards. This similarity between Emily and Anne perhaps suggests the effect their Gondal partnership had on their later writing, though this dynamic is impossible to reconstruct, given the fragmentary nature of the texts that remain. These sharp critiques of primarily domestic forms of masculinity will be discussed in more detail in the next two chapters.

Chapter Three: Fathers, Sons, and Brothers: Familial Masculinities in the Brontës' Novels

In a scene early in *Wuthering Heights*, a young Edgar Linton inadvertently insults Heathcliff's appearance and is repaid with a tureen of hot applesauce thrown in his face. Edgar bursts into tears, and Hindley Earnshaw, once Heathcliff's foster brother, but now his *de facto* guardian as the new master of Wuthering Heights, beats Heathcliff as punishment. Hindley counsels Edgar, in fatherly fashion, that next time he should 'take the law into [his] own fists – it will give [him] an appetite!' (p. 52). Hindley suggests that physical retaliation is the best way to respond to an insult, rather than depending on the abstract authority of the law, as embodied in Edgar's father, the magistrate. Hindley also implies that physical dominance will increase animal and sexual appetites, and thus Edgar's virility. The juvenile antagonism between Heathcliff and Edgar will be rewritten as erotic rivalry in adulthood, with Edgar married to Cathy Earnshaw and Heathcliff eloping with Isabella Linton.

This isolated moment between the three male scions of the first generation in *Wuthering Heights* illustrates how Heathcliff and Edgar already embody the masculine styles associated with Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff and Hindley's masculinity is sturdy, sexual, and violent, while Edgar, and later his nephew, Linton, are cultured, sensitive, and effeminate. What Edgar lacks in physical strength, he makes up for in cultural capital, wealth, and social position. *Wuthering Heights*, like Charlotte's and Anne Brontë's novels, is often read with a focus on its romantic, heterosexual relationships. However, much of the action of *Wuthering Heights* concerns

men's familial relationships as played out within and between the domestic spaces of *Wuthering Heights* and *Thruscross Grange*.

Where the preceding chapters of this study considered how the Brontës' early writing engaged with literary and cultural models of heroic masculinity, the remainder of this study divides its discussion of masculinity in the mature novels according to the complexly intertwined 'separate spheres' which structured Victorian perceptions of gender and sexual difference: the 'feminine' home and the 'masculine' world of work, politics, and the economy. This chapter and the next address how masculinity is constructed within the domestic sphere in the Brontës' novels. In this chapter, I consider how the Brontës represent relationships between fathers and sons, and between brothers, and how these familial ties produce particular masculine types. In Chapter Four, I will examine how husbands are depicted and how male homosocial relationships impact upon marriage and the home. The last two chapters of this study will consider depictions of masculinity in terms of early Victorian discourse on professionalisation.

Any distinction between the two spheres of Victorian domestic ideology must be qualified, especially with regard to the construction of masculinity.¹ Though home was identified as the woman's sphere, men were also closely identified with domesticity, especially in the first half of Queen Victoria's reign. As John Tosh argues, a man's status as householder, husband, and father confirmed his manhood, while home was the place where a man's 'deepest needs were met', a refuge from the competitive, alienating

¹ My sense of Victorian domestic ideology as filtered through fiction has been influenced by Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Mary Poovey's *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989), though the present study does not couch its consideration of ideology in Armstrong's and Poovey's Foucauldian terms. I draw on Rachel Ablow's recent work on domestic ideology, marriage, sympathy, and the novel in Chapter Four.

world of work.² Tosh writes that it was in fact a man's privilege to 'pass at will between public and private', as women could not.³

Although the worlds of home and work were gradually being prised apart during the early nineteenth century, they still co-existed for many professional men, such as clergyman and doctors, who consulted with parishioners and patients in the home, and mill owners, who lived in mill houses. Even if a man's work did not keep him in the home, he could interfere with his wife's new, idealised domestic authority by managing household accounts too closely or involving himself too much in the affairs of his children.⁴ Fathers and husbands wielded patriarchal authority over their dependants but also relied on their wives' emotional support and moral authority. The wife's new role as moral guide in the home increasingly reduced a man's spiritual authority and his responsibility for raising his children. Amidst the complex cultural constructions of gender, the early Victorians had to contend with (at least) two competing models of masculinity. John Tosh defines 'sturdy' masculinity as based on traditional concerns with sexual and physical prowess: 'The key was independence. Learning to "shift for yourself", to be resilient, to rub shoulders with your peers, to stand out from the crowd if need be – these qualities were an essential preparation for life, including public life', with emphasis on 'physical toughness'.⁵ The alternative, broad model for mid-century masculinity was moral manliness, as conceptualised by John Henry Newman in his lecture 'The Idea of a University' (1852):

[I]t is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain [...] He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him [...] He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd [...] He [...] never takes unfair advantage [...] From

² John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 1.

³ Tosh, p. 2.

⁴ Tosh, p. 63.

⁵ Tosh, pp. 118, 119.

a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend.⁶

The Victorian notion of gentlemanliness was highly contested, but Newman's definition of the concept describes an ideal of moral conduct, which is reflected in, for instance, Anne's depiction of *Agnes Grey's* sensible and thoughtful Mr Weston (who considers his future mother-in-law's wellbeing before proposing marriage to Agnes). This gentle, solicitous masculinity is also present in *Villette* when M. Paul carefully arranges a rural picnic for his students and fellow teachers. It is curious that Newman's definition of gentlemanliness suggests a level of surveillance and self-abnegation which recalls Sarah Stickney Ellis's representations of ideal, self-sacrificing femininity. The Brontës' male characters do not generally reflect this level of self-abnegation, but Newman's model is helpful nonetheless as an ideal against which men were measured in the period.

Claudia Nelson, Trev Lynn Broughton, and Helen Rogers have noted that Victorian fatherhood has until very recently been little considered by either social historians or literary critics.⁷ Similarly, both Valerie Sanders and Leonore Davidoff have noted that sibling relationships have received much less examination than filial, generational relationships.⁸ This chapter will consider how the Brontës construct the ideal education for boys, as well as the ways sons replicate within the nursery the restrictions placed on their mothers and sisters in society at large. The risk of ruination and the potential for domestic violence run under the surface of these portrayals, suggesting a deep anxiety about how sons were to be shaped into successful fathers and

⁶ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. by Frank M. Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 145-146.

⁷ Claudia Nelson, *Invisible Men: Fatherhood in Victorian Periodicals, 1850-1910* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), p. 1; Trev Lynn Broughton and Helen Rogers, eds., *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 1.

⁸ Valerie Sanders, *The Brother-Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: From Austen to Woolf* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Leonore Davidoff, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century English Siblings', *Journal of Social History*, 39 (2005), 411-428, p. 411.

husbands. I also examine how the sisters value the different aspects of fatherhood highlighted in Victorian debates, as noted by Sanders: the importance of financial support as a breadwinner and the role of emotional, nurturing supporter and moral guide.⁹ These latter aspects had been usurped to a large extent by the idealised mother within Victorian domestic ideology. I will of course consider the patriarch's potential for abuse and violence in these novels, though the prevalent strain of domestic 'dominance' among these male characters is more compelling and less often discussed by critics. To this end, I will use the troubling domestic scenes at the end of Charlotte's *The Professor* to structure my discussion of fathers and sons. In my analysis of male characters within sibling relationships, I look first at the Angrian model of rival brothers, but also consider the gendered pressures featured in brother-sister relationships. Like fathers, brothers are rarely presented as domestic supports, but those who are represent brotherly devotion to, rather than control of, their sisters. By removing male characters from the romantic framework which often accompanies their discussion in critical literature, I hope in part to answer Nelson's charge that scholars must 'examine men's domestic invisibility, its manifestations and its ramifications'.¹⁰ In the Brontë canon, men are significant home-dwelling actors as sons, fathers, and brothers, both in their relationships with other men within the home and through the ways they master or aid the women and girls who share those domestic spaces.

'A Fine Lad': Raising Sons, Constructing Masculinities

In the final, domestic chapter of Charlotte Brontë's first novel, *The Professor*, the protagonist and narrator William Crimsworth shoots and kills his son's rabid dog. The

⁹ Valerie Sanders, *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Nelson, p. 2.

dog had been named Yorke, after the family friend who had given him to young Victor. This short chapter provides a complex case study for the Brontës' engagement with domestic masculinity, education, and self-control. Heather Glen has commented on the 'disquieting images of violence and unease' in these scenes, in which Crimsworth 'mirrors his own self-suppression' in relating 'to his child by attempting to break his will'.¹¹ The purpose of this treatment is to foster a style of masculinity based on self-control in order to meet the pressures of industrial capitalism. Sally Shuttleworth argues that Yorke Hunsden is a 'destabilizing figure' as a competing father-figure and 'feared contaminating influence' on the young boy.¹² Victor is seen by Hunsden as a 'fine lad' (p. 219), while his father believes the boy shows troubling signs of self-will and defiance. Because William envies Hunsden's influence on his son, he identifies these attributes as the 'leaven of Adam', which should be '*whipped*' out of Victor or 'at least soundly disciplined' (p. 222). Victor has become the victim of competing definitions of what makes a 'fine lad', each held by a different father figure.

William's cruelty becomes apparent in Victor's anguished response to the shooting: 'I'll never forgive you! I'll never forgive you! [...] You shot Yorke – I saw it from the window – I never believed you could be so cruel – I can love you no more!' (p. 220). What concerns Victor most about this situation is the idea that his father might be cruel, 'for that idea seemed to give [him] exquisite pain' (p. 221). Such pain can be seen as arising from a conflict in ideologies of masculinity. Popular manuals for raising children, such as those by Sarah Stickney Ellis, argued that young boys should not use their greater 'strength in an unfair or ungenerous manner [...] to take advantage of comparative weakness' in acts of cruelty towards animals, for fear that this could escalate

¹¹ Heather Glen, *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 46-47.

¹² Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 146.

into violence against others.¹³ For Ellis, childish acts of cruelty, moreover, are ‘one of the surest symptoms of a mean, ungenerous, and tyrannical disposition, which a youth can exhibit’.¹⁴ William’s violence towards the animal, therefore, suggests that he is a tyrannical figure within the home, as well as the victim of an oppressive system of male socialisation.

Unlike the gentle Victor, John Reed does commit boyhood violence in *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte constructs this cruelty as deriving from a twisted sense of patriarchal authority, as ‘Master’ John Reed is the heir to Gateshead and will own house, contents, and dependents formally ‘in a few years’ (pp. 9, 10). John’s sense of possession extends to the copy of Bewick’s *History of British Birds* Jane reads; he throws the book at her, transmuting it from an aesthetic object to a physical signifier of his authority. Jane calls John a ‘[w]icked and cruel boy!’ (p. 11). For Jane, he is like ‘a murderer’, ‘a slave-driver’, or ‘the Roman emperors’ (p. 11). Jane emphasises his abuse of power by comparing him to present and past villains, casting him as an adolescent Caligula. In this way, the hopeful domestic ideal put forwards by Isaac Taylor and others that ‘a sister would profit intellectually from contact with her brother, while the brother would be morally elevated by his sister’s influence’, gives way in practice to a domestic system which allows for male dominance.¹⁵ The soft, elusive ‘influence’ of female morality is subjugated to the boy’s greater physical power and ego, rather than allowed to smooth down the edges of ‘future tyrants’.¹⁶ This keen sense of possession is a common theme across the three Brontës’ depictions of tyrannical boys.

¹³ Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Mothers of England: Their Responsibility and Influence* (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1843), p. 298.

¹⁴ Ellis, p. 300.

¹⁵ Sanders, *The Brother-Sister Culture*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Judith E. Pike discusses the modes of child-rearing dramatised in *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and their effect of producing ‘future tyrants’ (‘Breeching Boys: Milkshops, Men’s Clubs and Modelling of Masculinity in Anne Brontë’s *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*’, *Brontë Studies*, 37 (2012), 112-124, p. 112).

While Anne's Agnes Grey begins work as a governess in part out of idealised maternal motivations to 'make Virtue practicable, Instruction desirable, and Religion lovely and comprehensible', her eldest pupil, Master Tom Bloomfield, actively obstructs her efforts (p. 9). Despite his mother's assertions of his noble spirit and generosity, Tom is a vicious child who mistreats animals and women and whose conception of violence is linked to sexuality and possession (p. 15). On Agnes's first meeting with Tom, he forces her to watch his prowess on his rocking horse – 'he made me stand for ten minutes watching how manfully he used his whip and spurs' (p. 17) – and affirms he would be equally rough with his real pony. His solitary rocking and sadistic pleasure could well be masturbatory in nature; in making Agnes watch him, he forces her into the role of the voyeur.¹⁷ Immediately after this display, Tom raises his fist against his sister, illustrating the progression of violence feared by educational writers – from animals to sisters, perhaps later to wives and children. Tom argues he is 'obliged to [hit Flora] now and then to keep her in order' and sets himself up as patriarchal 'ruler' of the nursery, even using 'violent manual and pedal application' against both Flora and Agnes (pp. 17, 24).

The futility of Agnes's belief that she can 'work a reformation' on Tom is clearly illustrated in the nestlings episode, in which Tom looks forwards to murdering sparrows, outlining his past exploits and future plans: 'Sometimes I give them to the cat; sometimes I cut them in pieces with my penknife; but the next, I mean to roast alive' (p. 18). Agnes attempts to reason him out of his sadism by appealing to his sympathy, using her status as mother-surrogate. The attempt fails spectacularly, as Tom replies: 'I'm not a bird, and I

¹⁷ For a more detailed reading of violence, sexuality, and pornography in the Brontës, see Maggie Berg, "'Hapless Dependents": Women and Animals in Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey*', *Studies in the Novel*, 34 (2002), 177-198; and Ivan Kreilkamp, 'Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal,' *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 18.1 (Spring 2005), 87-112. Kreilkamp characterises the nestlings incident in *Agnes Grey* as inviting 'an undercurrent of voyeuristic fascination' in the reader, along with 'horror' and 'proper dismay' (p. 88). However, the disturbing voyeurism of Tom Bloomfield's violent sexual display is embedded even more deeply in *Agnes Grey*'s Bloomfield scenes than Kreilkamp suggests. Sally Shuttleworth comments on the links between Victorian concerns about abnormal child psychology and cruelty to animals in her introduction to *Agnes Grey*, ed. by Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. xi-xxviii (pp. xv-xvii).

can't feel what I do to them' (p. 18). And besides, torturing sparrows cannot be wicked because his mother approves of it (p. 19). Agnes has entered into a dysfunctional household in which the mother encourages juvenile male violence and the governess is unable to discipline her charge.

Anne Brontë gives Tom's anticipation of violence a sadistic, sexual colouring, echoing his stance on the rocking horse: '[he was] standing over [the bird's nest], with his legs wide apart, his hands thrust into his breeches-pockets, his body bent forward, and his face twisted into all manner of contortion in the ecstasy of his delight' (p. 44). Agnes uses her wits to interrupt Tom's gratification, asking Tom to detail his violent fantasies, while she acts as apparent voyeur again. Agnes then crushes the sparrows under a stone, frustrating his pleasure at its highest pitch. Tom's male role models encourage the boy's domineering attitude, as Mr Bloomfield says such torments are 'just what he used to do when he was a boy', and Uncle Robson laughs and says Tom is 'a fine boy' (pp. 18-19). Tom Bloomfield's status as the only son of a recently gentrified family is crucial, as his father and uncle demonstrate an extreme form of 'sturdy masculinity' in order to confirm their family's status as gentle-people and diminish the taint of trade.

Both *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* feature a boy's introduction into gentlemanly drinking as a masculinising activity that similarly challenges feminine authority, increases a boy's pride in his patriarchal authority, and 'make[s] a man of him' in the sense rejected by the Brontës across their novels.¹⁸ In *Tenant*, the scene of manly drinking is presided over by Mr Huntingdon and his friends, and these corrupting influences finally force Helen to plan her escape from her husband. Under the men's tutelage, Arthur 'learn[s] to tipple wine like papa, to swear like Mr. Hattersley, and to have his own way like a man, and sen[d] mamma to the devil when she tried to prevent

¹⁸ A. Brontë, *Tenant*, p. 296.

him' (p. 296). This community of male influences threatens to undo all of Helen's mothering, and thus, the novel authorises Helen's decision to leave her marriage for the sake of her son's soul. A similar disruptive ritual takes place in *Agnes Grey*, in which Uncle Robson teaches Tom Bloomfield to drink. The more Tom enjoys his liquor, 'the more he manifest[s] his bold and manly spirit, and [rises] superior to his sisters', according to his uncle (p. 43). Uncle Robson teaches the boy that drinking is not only a sign of manliness, but that it also elevates Tom within the domestic structures of power, further encouraging his incipient patriarchal mastery and giving him yet more reason to feel he can use physical force against his sisters, in particular, and women in general (p. 43).

The School vs Home Education Debate in *The Professor* (1846, 1857) and Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857)

In the final chapter of *The Professor*, Charlotte Brontë engages in the debate among educational theorists on the relative merits of home and public school education for middle-class boys, as William prepares to send Victor to his old school, Eton. Shuttleworth argues that William determines Victor must be 'crushed into the required state of class and gender subjectivity, whose defining attribute is deemed to be "the art of self-control"' by means of 'the most extreme form of institutional discipline'.¹⁹ William believes his wife Frances will be too lenient with Victor and 'will accustom him to a style of treatment [...] he will meet with from none else' (p. 222). Because William believes the wider world will give Victor 'kicks instead of kisses', the 'suffering' he will undergo at Eton will make him a 'wiser and a better man', one who practises self-control like William, rather than exercising 'spirit' like family friend Hunsden (p. 222). William knows Eton will be 'utter wretchedness' at first and will give Victor an 'agonized

¹⁹ Shuttleworth, *Victorian Psychology*, p. 147.

wrench'; Frances listens to William's proposals as if they were 'a fearful operation' (pp. 221-222). William's killing of his son's dog and his decision to send him away to school are presented as twinned acts of symbolic violence.

Parents at this time would be right to be concerned about their son's experience at school, because according to the conduct and educational books in circulation in the early nineteenth century, public school was believed to retard moral development. In the Reverend Legh Richmond's *Domestic Portraiture*, which 'strongly attracted, and strangely fascinated' Charlotte when she read it in 1837, the author argued against school education, warning that it bred men who became tyrants: 'the unheeded acts of oppression by the elder boys towards their juniors, have trained them to tyranny in riper years.'²⁰ The dangers of tyranny and moral corruption form a common theme in early nineteenth-century educational literature. In *Practical Education*, Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth warned that 'the lesson which experience usually teaches to the temper of a schoolboy is, that strength, and power, and cunning, will inevitably govern in society'.²¹ Similarly, Isaac Taylor's *Home Education* stated that '[i]n schools, and especially in large schools, the two lessons learned by boys – [...] often by the same individuals at different stages of their course, are the lesson of domination and the lesson of abject compliance with tyranny'.²² Home educated men, however, 'are wholly unprepared to cringe before arrogance and oppression [...] [T]hey are [...] equally disinclined either to exercise despotism, or yield to it.'²³ In fact, Legh Richmond wrote, 'a good home is the best of schools.'²⁴ Given this context, William Crimsworth's decision to send Victor to Eton looks like a deliberate attempt to shape Victor for a more

²⁰ Legh Richmond, *Domestic Portraiture* (London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1834), p. 16; C. Brontë, 'To Ellen Nussey, [early June 1837]', *Letters*, pp. 171-172 (p.172).

²¹ Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1798), I, p. 505.

²² Isaac Taylor, *Home Education*, 2nd edn (London: Jackson and Walford, 1838), p. 20.

²³ Taylor, p. 21.

²⁴ Qtd in Drew Lamonica, *'We Are Three Sisters': Self and Family in the Writing of the Brontës* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), p. 14.

combative form of manliness, especially as Victor already has a domestic situation ideally suited to his intellectual and moral education. He lives in the country and both his parents had been successful teachers in Brussels. William is making a calculated bid for his son's social and economic, rather than moral and domestic, success.

Charlotte had completed the fair copy of *The Professor* by June 1846; however, the novel was not published until 1857, the same year as Thomas Hughes' paean to Rugby, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. By this time the view that school education was morally dangerous was out of date.²⁵ The two novels sit awkwardly beside each other, brought into conversation by the accident of their publication history, but apparently espousing opposing notions of what makes a 'fine lad' and the role a public school education might have in forming Christian manliness in the decades surrounding the mid-century. *Tom Brown* functions as an apologetic for the reformed public schools, as set against the general feeling that pre-Victorian public schools were 'unremittingly barbaric'.²⁶ Hughes and other school story writers of the later nineteenth century realised that their middle-class readership needed to be presented with a new and more acceptable 'formulation of elite adolescence' and 'different methods of socialization'.²⁷ Hughes attempts to accomplish this feat by presenting public school as an environment which produces muscular Christian men through a fusion of manly physicality and traditionally feminine values of domesticity and morality, a very different presentation from Charlotte's ironised portrayal of William as a product of Eton's brutality.

Paternal relationships are the chief mechanism Hughes uses to shape Tom Brown into an ideal of Victorian masculinity. The Doctor (clearly a portrayal of Dr Arnold) inspires his students alternately with hero-worshipping reverence and terror, while also

²⁵ Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, ed. by Andrew Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²⁶ Jenny Holt, *Public School Literature, Civic Education, and the Politics of Male Adolescence* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2008), p. 25.

²⁷ Holt, pp. 82, 65.

seeking to create a domestic sphere within his own quarters, strategically inviting students for tea. The Doctor sees that Tom's moral faculties are deficient and gives him the superintendence of the delicate George Arthur, whom Tom must protect and learn from. The novel is full of these familial and hierarchical structures, even outside the school narrative. The veast held in Berkshire early in the novel symbolises Tom's father's authority as Squire, while the praeposters of the Sixth Form look out for the little boys, but also exact character-forming service from them under the 'fagging system'. This system becomes tyrannical and oppressive only when the Fifth Form bully Flashman and his cronies usurp the power of the praeposters and demand service from the little boys as well. Fatherhood is presented much more positively in this novel, whereas *The Professor* problematises William's paternal authority.

Charlotte Brontë's intention that the reader should not sympathise with William's actions – killing his son's dog and sending him away to Eton – would have been clear and sensible to her original readers, her sisters Emily and Anne. However, because the novel was not published until 1857, the published novel's first readers, while arguing that it compared negatively to 'Currer Bell's' other novels, especially *Villette*, might also have felt rather differently about William's decision to send Victor to school.²⁸ The debate over home vs. school education had shifted in the intervening years, and the taint of tyranny and immorality had begun to disappear from public school education. John Tosh notes that by the 1860s much of the earlier opposition had fallen away and the sons of professional fathers almost always attended public school.²⁹ In fact, Tosh writes that by 1872 the belief that 'educating boys alongside their peers retarded rather than advanced them was distinctly eccentric. The complaints of evangelical writers that

²⁸ For instance, E.S. Dallas in an unsigned review for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* declared the novel 'the poorest of all Charlotte Brontë's productions' and wrote of liking *Villette* much more ('Unsigned review, July 1857, lxxxii, 77-94', rpt. in Allott, pp. 358-363 (p. 361)).

²⁹ Tosh, p. 117.

schools taught boys to despise the weak and scoff at their sisters went largely unheeded'.³⁰ *The Professor* thus depicts the rationalisations of an almost pathologically self-controlled father in determining to send his son to Eton, knowing and expecting the damage it will cause.

Maternal Influence on Boys: 'That Dangerous Parent'

While Thomas Hughes emphasises the importance of maternal, moral influence in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, as highlighted by Tom's oddly erotic and spiritual meeting with George Arthur's mother, domesticity and maternal influence are rejected by William Crimsworth as dangerous to boys in *The Professor*. His son Victor appears to be an unproblematic child because he responds so well to the maternal influence which was meant to moderate boys' behaviour: '[Frances] folds him to her breast [...], then she reasons with him like any philosopher, and to reason Victor is ever accessible; then she looks on him with eyes of love – and by love Victor can be infallibly subjugated' (p. 222). William is concerned precisely because Victor can be calmed and reasoned with by his mother in her role as moral guide. Charlotte Brontë presents him as subscribing to the eighteenth-century view that feminine influence could cause young boys to become effeminate, such as that expressed by James Fordyce in 1779, when he described the mother as 'that dangerous parent'.³¹ William takes it upon himself to 'convey through [his] own conduct something of the harder world' beyond the Crimsworths' rural idyll, attempting to counteract his wife's feminine influence.³²

Chapter Three of Anne Brontë's second novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, 'A Controversy', contains a dialogue on child-rearing which emphasises a mother's moral influence, as found in advice books. Gilbert Markham and his mother strongly disagree

³⁰ Tosh, p. 109.

³¹ Qtd in Tosh, p. 112.

³² Tosh, p. 98.

with Helen Huntingdon's efforts to protect her son from vice, because they see this as threatening his manliness. Helen's priorities are different: worldly success is subordinate to the fate of her son's immortal soul, especially after the moral and physical collapse of her alcoholic husband. Mrs Markham argues that by educating Arthur herself and keeping him always with her, Helen's 'foolish fondness' will 'ruin him' and 'spoil his spirit', echoing William Crimsworth's fears for his son in *The Professor* (pp. 29, 25). This language of ruination was often reserved in this period to refer to a woman's sexual fall and the consequent destruction of her virtue, yet spoliation in this case refers not to female sexual sin but the threat of a boy becoming dangerously feminine. Helen's attempts to make both alcohol and worldly vice hateful to Arthur will make him 'the veriest milksop that ever was sopped', according to Mrs Markham, and in educating him herself, Helen will necessarily 'treat him like a girl' and 'indulge his follies and caprices' (p. 29). If manliness is formed from a young age as a result of family life and education, Mrs Markham's concern, reflective of a larger cultural anxiety, is that Helen will not fashion her son into a man at all, but a feminised, weak fop.

Gilbert Markham shifts the discussion to the larger issue of virtue, again not in relation to women's sexuality but rather the linguistically-related definition of manliness. In Gilbert's formulation, manliness and moral strength are tested and confirmed in battling worldly temptation, rather than scrupulously avoiding it. Gilbert, again, acting as a voice for cultural anxieties around effeminacy, feels Helen's mothering will rob Arthur of this manly virtue. Helen challenges the view that girls should be protected from vice to the point of ignorance, while boys should be flung upon the temptations of the world without knowing its dangers. Helen argues that both boys and girls should learn from others' mistakes and be prepared to meet them, and also notes that it would be presumptuous to believe *your* son will be the one to withstand temptation, when so many

others – including Mr Huntingdon – do not. Gilbert’s opposition to Helen’s management of her son is ironised in a retrospective statement made by Gilbert-as-narrator: ‘[p]erhaps, too, I was a little bit spoiled by my mother and sister [...] – and yet, I was by no means a fop’ (p. 321). The young Gilbert has been spoiled by indulgence and must overcome his faults in order to wed Helen, who in fact is presented as an ideal version of motherhood.

Where Victor’s and Arthur Jr’s behaviour can be positively influenced by motherly care, John Reed’s overweening sense of dominance seems inextricably linked to his mother’s spoiling in *Jane Eyre*. Mrs Reed does not inspire his confidence but rather alternately spoils him and turns a blind eye to his faults, even when he calls his mother ‘old girl’, ‘bluntly disregard[s] her wishes’ and ‘not infrequently [tears] and spoil[s] her silk attire’ (p. 15). Though Mrs Reed claims that she, like other evangelical parents in this period, desires to ‘up-root [...] bad propensities’, her son remains ‘her own darling’ and is neither ‘thwarted’ nor ‘punished’ (pp. 15, 20).

John Reed’s violence could spring from his experiences of the power structures existing among older and younger boys at school. However, when his tutor writes that John should eat less and Mrs Reed should desist in sending him sweetmeats, Mrs Reed pulls John out of school for the sake of his ‘delicate health’, thus robbing her son of a potentially positive male role model (p. 10). Domestic structures of spoliation and neglect, coupled with a brutalising school environment, work together to deform John’s character. He is later expelled from university, and though his uncles intervene in hopes that he might become a barrister, Bessie reports that ‘he is such a dissipated young man, they will never make much of him’ (p. 91). He is both dissolute, like Charles II, but also more literally ‘scattered’ or ‘wasted’.³³ None of his boyhood potential remains, and he ends in debt and suicide. John’s upbringing has failed to prepare him for life as either a

³³ ‘Dissipated, adj.’, 1a., 2., *OED*.

landed gentleman or middle-class professional. Charlotte presents Mrs Reed's lack of considerate mothering and the brutal environment of his school as the causes of his ultimate destruction.

Styles of Fathering

In *The Professor*, Charlotte structurally positions William Crimsworth's decisions and anxieties in order to explore the then ambivalent and precarious position of the father. Because killing the dog Yorke creates an incomplete, symbolic expulsion of Hunsden and his influence, the futility of William's plan to send his son to school is highlighted. Though Victor will be shaped in his father's image by attending his old school, William is also allowing Victor to pass out of his paternal control (one reason evangelical writers were concerned about school education) and into the influence of teachers and the schoolboy intimacies that could last a lifetime. By separating Victor from Hunsden's apparently threatening influence, William introduces him to other potentially negative influences and erodes his own long-sought powers of control.

Sanders notes that contrasting biological and non-biological father figures often appear in Victorian novels in order to determine what attributes make one a 'real father'. Examples include Silas Marner and Godfrey Cass in Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861) and the contrasting non-biological father-figures Joe Gargery and Magwitch in *Great Expectations* (1861).³⁴ These questions regarding 'true fatherhood' were important in Victorian culture, as the father's position had become increasingly ill-defined since the mid-eighteenth century and the patriarch continued to lose authority throughout the Victorian period. Sanders notes that 'Victorian fatherhood was in all aspects of its performance a seemingly stable idea under persistent attack by a combination of neglect,

³⁴ Sanders, *Victorian Fatherhood*, pp. 17-18.

complacency, shifting public opinion and legal reform'.³⁵ Until the mid-eighteenth century, the father had been firmly placed as God's representative within the home, with domestic literature addressed to or even written by the *pater familias*, such as Dr John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1761). However, the very same economic and industrial changes which led to men's work being removed from the home (and the household removed to the unpolluted suburbs), increased a father's absence from home and shifted domestic and moral authority from the man of the house to the 'Angel in the House' – the feminine, idealised embodiment of the wife and, chiefly, mother. Over the course of the nineteenth century, fathers slowly lost many of their legal custody rights (and moral supremacy) to the mother, a trend reflected in Anne's *Tenant*, even though the novel is set before the *Infant Custody Act* of 1839.

In the following section, I will follow Sanders's lead and consider such pairs of biological and non-biological fathers as Hindley and Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, and Arthur Huntingdon and Gilbert Markham in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. I will also examine the ways in which fatherhood can be acted out by the same man in different situations. For instance, in *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte represents Mr Rochester as the guardian of the illegitimate Adèle in a very different manner to her presentation of Mr Rochester as father to his legitimate son and heir. The Brontës' representations of fathers and non-biological father figures are overall quite negative, with all three sisters depicting abusive and controlling fathers or other patriarchal figures. However, the proliferation of lone fathers, widowers, and alternate father-figures suggests that the Brontës were intrigued by the ways in which lone fatherhood could challenge the traditional view of fathers as emotionally distant.

³⁵ Sanders, *Victorian Fatherhood*, p. 9.

Fatherhood, Abuse, and Control in *Wuthering Heights*

Wuthering Heights presents multiple, intriguing studies of male family relations, as it concerns three distinct generations of men and features a proliferation of fathers and father figures. Hindley Earnshaw, Edgar Linton, and Heathcliff are all widowed over the course of the novel and left to care for young children. Broughton and Rogers note that the widower ‘highlighted the structural fragility of divisions of labour within the household, and forced individuals and communities to reconsider the role of the father as caregiver’.³⁶ As the idealised mother was deemed to be the child’s chief hands-on caregiver, moral guide, and emotional support, the lone father could thus subvert Victorian paradigms of fatherhood by filling these roles himself. The Victorian father was often viewed as a ‘failed mother’, because he was deemed unable to provide the necessary domestic support for his children.³⁷

For this reason, many widowed fathers remarried, as Patrick Brontë attempted to do after the death of his wife. Three months after Maria’s death, Mr Brontë proposed marriage to the wealthy Elizabeth Firth, who was godmother to two of the Brontë children and had been close to the family when Patrick was curate in Thornton, but he only alienated and upset his intended bride.³⁸ He wrote letters to his old flame Mary Burder, which insulted her, perhaps because she could see that Patrick was principally seeking a step-mother for his children.³⁹ In the end, Aunt Branwell came to live with the family and gave the young girls their early educations and taught them domestic tasks.⁴⁰ She was, Branwell wrote after her death, the closest thing he had had to a mother.⁴¹

Despite this female presence, Mr Brontë was clearly an active and involved parental

³⁶ Broughton and Rogers, p. 22.

³⁷ Sanders, *Victorian Fatherhood*, p. 6.

³⁸ Barker, pp. 121-122.

³⁹ P. Brontë, ‘28 July 1823, To Miss Mary Burder’, *PB Letters*, pp. 47-48.

⁴⁰ Barker notes that Patrick Brontë could not marry Elizabeth Branwell because it was at this time illegal to marry the sister of one’s deceased wife (p. 122).

⁴¹ P.B. Brontë, ‘P.B. Brontë to Francis H. Grundy, 25 October 1842’, *Letters*, I, pp. 254-255.

figure in his children's lives, giving them free rein with their reading, sharing his passions and interests, providing his daughters with the education which would allow them to lead independent lives as adults and attempting to set Branwell up in a successful career. Mr Brontë's success as a father was aided by the fact that he worked within the home, across the hall from the children's dining room. He also benefited from his status as a representative of the Church, which made him more immune to the decline in spiritual authority suffered by other fathers during this period.⁴²

Heathcliff, for all his faults as a parent, and despite the revenge he seeks to enact in the second half of the novel, does not physically abuse the minors who come into his care: Hareton Earnshaw, Linton Heathcliff, and Cathy Linton (who becomes his daughter-in-law and virtual ward). Hindley Earnshaw, however, threatens violence against his son Hareton in his drunken rages. This destructive behaviour is presented by Nelly as the result of his bereavement following the death of his wife. Heathcliff perhaps leaves the bodies of his children alone because he had been the victim of Hindley's physical abuse.

Edgar Linton, like Hindley, suffers the early loss of his wife and must care for his only child, a girl, who is thus more vulnerable to patriarchal control than a son would be. Where Heathcliff seeks revenge, Edgar instead desires to protect Cathy from any knowledge of evil in the world – in this case, as embodied by Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights. She leaves home only to attend church in Gimmerton, and otherwise remains confined to the house and grounds. While Cathy is well-read and close to her father (and to Nelly, as housekeeper and maternal substitute), she is unaware of the neighbourhood gossip that would have kept her from falling into Heathcliff's clutches. In this way, though Edgar is usually seen as Heathcliff's more moral and civilised rival, Edgar is

⁴² Christine Alexander writes on Patrick Brontë's life and influence on his children in her essay 'Father of the Brontës: Romantic or Victorian?', in McKnight, pp. 13-33.

presented by Emily as a controlling father, recalling the imprisoning fathers of the eighteenth-century Gothic novel. In an age when innocence was a daughter's chief virtue, Emily exposes the dangers of enforced ignorance of the world, just as Anne does in *Tenant*.

Hareton and Linton, the male representatives of the second generation, are both raised by Heathcliff, whose explicit intention is to shape the young men into opposed but equally crippling forms of masculinity. Heathcliff brutalises Hareton as Hindley had done to him, when he took Heathcliff's education and family status from him, degrading him so that Catherine would no longer consider him as a marital match. Hareton is never taught to read or write, inherits the violence endemic to the house by hanging puppies off chairs (just as Heathcliff hangs Isabella's dog from a bridle hook on the night of their elopement), and is taught to 'scorn everything extra-animal as silly and weak' (p. 193). Joseph, as yet another father figure, further damages the ignorant child by 'instill[ing] into him a pride of name, and of his lineage' as the last Earnshaw, while neglecting his moral development entirely, in a manner that recalls Mrs Reed's lack of management of her son (p. 174). This overweening pride, combined with Hareton's intellectual ignorance, makes it easy for Linton and Cathy to insult and isolate him.

Where Heathcliff degrades Hareton, he aims to 'preserve the superior and the gentleman' in his own son Linton (p. 184). In practice, this means Linton is allowed to order everyone at Wuthering Heights to suit his desires, exploiting his delicate health to do so.⁴³ Like John Reed, Linton's status as the future owner of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange makes him cruel. He declares that all Cathy's books belong to him, anticipating John Reed's denying Jane the copy of *Bewick* in *Jane Eyre*. Linton thus expresses his domestic authority in owning all his wife's belongings, and even boasts of

⁴³ Heathcliff exploits his son's delicacy as well, driving him to gain Cathy's sympathies and convince her to marry him, guaranteeing that the Linton wealth and estates will pass to Heathcliff after his son's inevitable death.

his ability to control her inner life as well. In Linton, Heathcliff creates a miniature tyrant, who ends the prisoner of his own selfish whims.

Heathcliff's decision to raise such twisted versions of masculinity is born out of his own identification with each boy and his all-consuming desire for revenge. He degrades Hareton into a state worse than that of his own adolescence and thus sympathises 'with all his feelings, having felt them [him]self' (p. 193). Linton is Heathcliff's effeminate opposite, but he also serves as an extension of Heathcliff's revenge against the Earnshaws and Lintons, because he is Heathcliff's biological son and will inherit both estates. He also has the fair features and cultural capital Heathcliff envied in Edgar as a young man, for the gentility they represented. Despite having created two monsters of masculinity, Heathcliff sees through his constructions of brute physicality and hyper-sensitive gentility to their true characters: 'one is gold put to use as paving stones, and the other is tin polished to ape a service of silver' (p. 193). This assessment suggests the limits of both perfect parenting and deliberate abuse – both boys have innate qualities that Heathcliff's interference cannot obliterate. He believes, incorrectly, that Hareton will 'never emerge from his bathos of coarseness and ignorance' (p. 193). Hareton, unlike Linton, had Nelly's maternal care as an infant and benefits from Catherine's intellectual and moral tuition. As will be discussed in the next chapter, feminine, moral influence can serve as a transformative agent in men's moral development, though this burden of moral improvement is also challenged by the Brontës, especially in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.

Psychological abuse by fathers also appears in works by Anne and Charlotte. Mr Bloomfield in *Agnes Grey* cows his children into submission: 'The habitual fear of their father's peevish temper, and the dread of the punishments he was wont to inflict when irritated, kept them generally within bounds in his immediate presence' (p. 24). Mr

Bloomfield's domestic tyranny allows him to discipline, but also sets his son a damaging example of how to behave as head of the household. In Charlotte's *Shirley*, James Helstone is retrospectively described as abusive towards Caroline due to his drinking, which makes him much like Hindley:

[H]e went out early every morning, [...] and at night, when he came back, was like a madman, furious, terrible; or – still more painful – like an idiot, imbecile, senseless [...] [O]ne night when she was very sick, he had come raving into the room, and said he would kill her, for she was a burden to him. (*Shirley*, 87-88)

The novel does not dwell on Caroline's early experiences of emotional abuse and neglect, and the full enormity of her father's abuse comes to light only after Mrs Pryor reveals herself to be his fugitive wife, and Caroline's mother. In a novel which emphasises the importance of male stewardship in business and landowning, of sympathetic paternalism in the home and wider community, James Helstone's mistreatment of his only child hints at the dangers of solely male authority and power in the home and society more broadly.

The Father as Breadwinner

Because middle- and upper-class men were not expected in this period, or believed able, to provide the emotional support a mother could, their primary role as father was as the breadwinner. They provided money for boys' (and often girls') education, started them off in careers, and provided dowries and legacies. A father's failure to meet these standards was deeply dishonourable. Mr Helstone in *Shirley* is not often considered in his domestic role as the lone guardian of Caroline, his niece, perhaps because critics have been more interested by his militaristic side, demonstrated in his warlike confrontation with the Methodists on Whitsuntide. Helstone does not provide emotional support to Caroline; she must seek this emotional intimacy from Mrs Pryor, both before and after she is revealed to be Caroline's mother. When Caroline determines she would like to be a governess and asks her uncle's permission to do so, he responds by

offering to pay for a stay at a watering-place instead and wonders how she can be unwell: 'She has her meals, her liberty, a good house to live in, and good clothes to wear as usual' (p. 162). Helstone's notions of fatherhood have only extended to the consideration of material comfort. If Caroline became independent, he fears neighbours would think he had not fulfilled his duty towards her: 'I will not have it said that my niece is a governess [...] I have always meant to provide for you: I will purchase an annuity' (p. 163). Helstone's sense of his fatherly role is entirely bound up in his ability to financially support his niece, and all his proposed solutions to Caroline's complaint involve him spending more money on her, rather than providing the emotional support and guidance she craves.

In Anne's *Agnes Grey*, Mr Grey outwardly seems to be a good father and loving husband; however, he feels unmanned by his inability to keep his wife and daughters in the aristocratic style to which Mrs Grey had been accustomed before her marriage. Thus, he enters into unwise investments, leaving the family with little money. Due to this lack of funds, Agnes is given the agency to become more financially independent by seeking work as a governess, in part to support her family and in part to have a more adventurous and less petted life. The father's failure in *Agnes Grey* is born out of an inability to provide, but it spurs the action of the novel, echoing the real-life fates of many governesses who took to teaching after their fathers' financial collapse. In the end, Mr Grey is so hurt by his failure as a breadwinner that he sickens and dies, ultimately leaving his wife and single daughter with no means of support. Where he fails, his wife succeeds, setting up her own school and refusing Mr Weston's offer that she should come and live with him and Agnes after they are married.

Contemporary anxiety about a father's limited role in his children's lives also shapes Charlotte's construction of William Crimsworth's home atmosphere in *The*

Professor. It is important to remember that though the domestic section of the novel is striking in the eruption of its domestic idyll by William's violence, it is nonetheless very short. The rest of the novel focuses on William's professional travails, first as his brother's clerk (which will be discussed in more detail below) and then as a teacher in Brussels. The mid-section of the novel concerns itself with William's romantic, mentoring relationship with his future wife, Frances Henri, who is just as self-improving and ambitious as her husband. She begins the novel as a student and a teacher of lace-making, and ultimately sets up her own school in the Crimsworth home in Brussels, continuing to teach after marriage and motherhood. These facts alone make Frances stand out among Victorian novel heroines. Frances's professional success and her ability to earn her own money, however, make her more threatening to her husband, as he seeks to control his domestic circumstances. Though Frances continues to refer to her husband as her 'master', she narrows William's scope for authority within the home. Not only is she Victor's chief emotional and moral support, but she is also one of his financial providers, as the Crimsworths have retired to England using their joint savings and investments, accrued over a decade of working in Brussels as a dual income family (William, of course, earned much more than his wife, but he was not the sole breadwinner). William's role as a father has become slight, as he is confined to the feminine domestic sphere, is not the chief influence in his son's life, and is not his son's sole financial provider. He is no longer the professor or 'master' of the novel, but an ambivalently positioned father. He uses his remaining authority to make the apparently damaging decision to send his son to Eton, as the choice of a school is the last traditional responsibility left to him alone.

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall: The Emotionally Supportive Father and Breadwinning Mother

Anne's second novel features the most positive representation of fatherhood in the Brontë canon, that of Gilbert Markham. Gilbert acts as a caring father figure to Arthur Huntingdon, Jr., even before he becomes the boy's stepfather, and helps to undo some of the damage wrought by his biological father's neglect. In this way, Anne constructs ideal fatherhood as, at least in part, independent of blood ties, locating its virtues in play, physical intimacy, and emotional support. Sanders writes that in the Victorian period '[n]either parent was sufficient alone: mothers failed because they could not provide materially for their children, and fathers failed because they lacked the emotional tenderness of mothers'.⁴⁴ Anne's *Tenant* subverts this cultural view, first by casting Helen Huntingdon as sole parent and breadwinner. Structurally, the novel suggests that because Helen has taken on the financial responsibility for her son by selling her paintings, Gilbert is able to bypass this measuring stick of fatherly success. Gilbert's lack of financial contribution to the family unit is emphasised at the end of the novel, as Helen inherits her uncle's estate and holds her deceased husband's estate in trust for her son. Gilbert's role as step-father to Arthur has previously been discussed by critics as a sign that Gilbert will make a good second husband for Helen, which may well be true, but Anne's radical revision to the Victorian father's role makes this fathering significant in its own right.

When Gilbert first meets Arthur, he rescues him from being trapped in a tree, so the relationship is defined from the start by Gilbert's physical closeness to Arthur and the emotional protection he is able to offer. Gilbert lets Arthur ride with him on his horse and play with his dog Sancho, giving him a puppy of his own. Huntingdon, in contrast, rides out to the hunt and uses hounds to aid in his upper-class blood sports. Just as

⁴⁴ Sanders, *Victorian Fatherhood*, p. 14.

Gilbert and Helen discuss literature and intellectual topics, so, too, does Gilbert share his world with Arthur, looking at the pictures in his agricultural magazine with him, and surveying a book Arthur likes on his visit to Staningley. As in the scenes in which Cathy teaches Hareton to read in *Wuthering Heights*, these instances of shared reading between Arthur and Gilbert emphasise physical and emotional closeness, as well as Helen's sense of trust in Gilbert, as she has hitherto seen men only as a threat to her son. For instance, in Chapter Three, after the discussion of Helen's potential spoiling of her son, Arthur approaches Gilbert out of interest in the dog seated at his feet, and 'in a minute or two more, the little fellow was seated on my knee' (p. 26). When Helen calls Arthur away, Gilbert 'pleads' that he may stay: 'I am as much amused as he is' (p. 26). Gilbert takes real enjoyment in spending time with Arthur, independent of his growing interest in Helen. In the end, Gilbert helps Helen to run the estate at Staningley and becomes the biological father to her subsequent sons and daughters, but during the action of the novel, Anne depicts him as a father-figure and role model to Arthur. In this way, the novel challenges the figure of the cold, emotionless father. In the world of *Tenant*, a mother can financially provide for her son and a father can provide emotional support, as mothers and fathers, even in the middle classes, did during the Victorian period.⁴⁵

In the remaining fragment of Charlotte's final, unfinished novel *Emma*, the bachelor Mr Ellin displays an intriguing ability to divine the thoughts and feelings of the young child Matilda and to care for her in a fatherly way. When questioned about her identity after her abandonment by her 'father', Major Fitzgibbon, Matilda takes a fright, and Mr Ellin serves as her support in this time of distress: "Come my little one – have no fear," said he Reposing [sic] her head against him – she gradually became reassured –

⁴⁵ Broughton and Rogers note that working-class fathers were often presented, in fiction, the visual arts, and newspapers, as much more emotionally intimate with their children than middle- and upper-class fathers. Working-class mothers, of course, often had to work to provide for the family. A good example of the emotionally tender working-class father is Mr Barton early in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) (p. 14).

it did not cost him another word to bring her round – even that strong trembling was calmed by the mere effect of his protection’ (p. 242). Where Major Fitzgibbon abandoned Matilda to a school where she is widely disliked, Mr Ellin instead calms and protects the girl from the headmistress’s harsh questioning when Fitzgibbon is revealed as a fraud. In this way, the male figure from the Brontës’ *oeuvre* Ellin most resembles is Gilbert Markham.

In *Villette*, however, the emotionally intimate relationship between Mr Home and Polly is portrayed as dysfunctional, as Polly is cast in the role of wife-substitute and develops a warped sense of femininity. When Mr Home visits Bretton, Polly insists on serving his tea, even though ‘the sugar-tongs were too wide [...] and she had to use both [hands] in wielding them’ (p. 15). She attempts to hem a handkerchief for him, ‘pricking herself ever and anon, marking the cambric with a track of minute red dots’, an image of the violence necessary to shape a woman’s femininity and even body for the sake of men’s ‘comfort’ (p. 15). This masquerade of feminine perfection results in a conflict of Polly’s loyalties to her father and Graham Bretton when the latter begins to court her in adulthood. Her ‘nice perceptions and delicate instincts’ for Graham’s comfort are present even in the early chapters of the novel, when she refuses to touch the marmalade she procured for him from the tea table, in case she appears to be even minutely selfish, rather than utterly self-abnegating. Motherless, she has formed herself to be a substitute wife to Mr Home, a preparation for her marriage with Graham Bretton. And though she represents the ideal wife described by such writers as Sarah Stickney Ellis and Sarah Lewis (which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter), Lucy’s narration makes clear the degree to which this wifely nature is an aberration of girlhood by comparing the young Polly to ‘a good-sized doll’ (p. 15). Mr Home does not appear to realise the damage these structures of self-sacrifice and dependence cause in their relationship, or

the deforming work of ideology it embodies (p. 15). Polly's dependence on her father's approbation recalls the ways in which Edgar Linton makes the young Cathy dependent upon him for knowledge, affection, and education, effectively trapping her within the domestic sphere.

Broughton and Rogers have argued that, especially in large families, fathers could play many different paternal roles, both over time or with different children or sets of children.⁴⁶ This fact demonstrates the pliability of the role and the numerous complicating factors which shaped a given father's paternal style(s). A curious example of this fact comes in considering *Jane Eyre's* Mr Rochester as a father. Like Gilbert Markham, he is usually examined as a romantic lead within a heterosexual romance. However, like Gilbert, Rochester's roles as a father are crucial to the novel and to the way Charlotte Brontë presents his masculinity. Rochester is first represented as the guardian of Adèle, his young French ward, the daughter of his former mistress, Céline Varens. Rochester does not meet the standards of Anne Brontë's Gilbert Markham. Rochester pays for the girl's maintenance and gives her a home in Thornfield Hall (a home he is rarely resident in, so he conforms to the stereotype of the absent father found in writings on Victorian fatherhood). His chief method of relating to the child is to treat her as a miniature of her mother: to give her *cadeaux* to win her affection and loyalty. He also provides for her education, by hiring a governess. But that is the extent of his relationship with Adèle. She is a sign of his sexual sins and of the reformation he seeks but is failing to achieve.

Rochester is depicted in very different terms in the final chapter of the novel, when Jane discusses the birth of their son. This child is a boy, an heir linked to Rochester by legitimacy in marriage and blood ties. This son therefore takes on a much

⁴⁶ Broughton and Rogers, p. 19. The authors point to the Strachey family, whose children were born in the 1860s, 70s, and 80s.

greater symbolic weight than Adèle and grants Rochester authority as the father of a new generation. Rochester's son is also connected to the partial return of his sight: 'When his first-born was put into his arms, he could see that the boy had inherited his own eyes, as they once were – large, brilliant, and black' (p. 451). Rochester's returning sight and his legitimate son, who resembles him, are symbols of Rochester's continuing honourable, domestic manhood, very different from his former position as a serial womaniser and an attempted bigamist.

Brothers and Sibling Relationships

Of all the patterns of representation of male characters used by Charlotte Brontë in the early Angrian writings, that of the rival brothers most obviously continues into her mature novels. Charlotte's c.1840 novel fragment *Ashworth* recounts Edward and William Percy's abandonment by their father, Edward Percy, and the necessity for struggle in the masculine art of success and self-invention. The brothers are driven apart by the stress of their abandonment and by the divergent masculine styles each develops. Edward, the harder and more violent brother, is embittered by his experience of self-creation. Because he was rejected by his father in infancy, as a man he rejects his paternity, taking all responsibility for his own success and the formation of his character: 'let no-body talk to him of a father. He was the son of his own works. Who helped | him to set up business? Who gave him a capital when he first began piece-making?'⁴⁷ Entrepreneurial concern and Edward's manly identity are twined together in this formulation, with any paternal influence denied in both cases. The younger brother, William, embodies the much desired principle of self-government. Even at school, 'his

⁴⁷ C. Brontë, *Ashworth*, p. 87.

temper was cool and well con-trolled'.⁴⁸ The severity of the rivalry between these brothers is evident in Edward thrashing his young brother. Charlotte has maintained the antagonism present between the brothers from their very earliest appearances in Branwell's 1834 industrial tale 'The Wool is Rising'.⁴⁹ In this story, when William dares to challenge his brother's authority in the counting-house, Edward retaliates violently: 'Edward stood with a cold smile and as [William] passed him dealt such a blow on the temples as felled the young man like a shot. and gave ample evidence of the power of the dealers arm.'⁵⁰ Charlotte's own characters Arthur and Charles Wellesley, the fictionalised sons of the Duke of Wellington, also grew to be antagonists as adults. As a child and adolescent writer, Charlotte had used this theme to reflect on, and shape, her literary rivalry with her collaborator Branwell. Where the rival brothers appear in *Ashworth* and her published novels, she uses these troubled male relationships to demonstrate the conflicting styles of masculinity available at mid-century, and as a way to explore the intricacies of self-definition within a family unit. Masculinity itself is crucial to this theme, as relationships between sisters are much less fraught, as seen in the cozy domestic circle formed by Mary and Diana Rivers in *Jane Eyre* or the relationship between Jessy and Rose Yorke in *Shirley*.

Despite the fact that sibling relationships had changed a great deal over the course of the early nineteenth century, social historians and literary critics have pointed out that Victorian sibling relationships have rarely been studied. Siblings spent more time together within the home, and these ties were idealised as productive but safe, innocent, non-sexual relationships within their own class.⁵¹ These intra-generational relationships between boys and girls were highly complicated, as Sanders argues that 'The patterns of

⁴⁸ C. Brontë, *Ashworth*, p. 97.

⁴⁹ P.B. Brontë, 'The Wool is Rising', *Works*, II, pp. 24-91.

⁵⁰ P.B. Brontë, 'The Wool is Rising,' *Works*, II, p. 51.

⁵¹ Sanders, *The Brother-Sister Culture*, p. 4.

rivalry, envy and jealousy, on the one hand, and sexual fantasy, idealism, and sublimated devotion on the other, allowed novelists and poets to probe a vast range of intimate feelings that would have been taboo in standard heterosexual relations'.⁵² In the Brontës' works, brothers' relationships with brothers and sisters are represented at all stages of life – childhood, adolescence, and adulthood – though *Wuthering Heights* is the only novel to present the same set of siblings during all these life stages. In Charlotte's works, rival brothers appear in all her novels but *Villette*. Brothers are depicted across the Brontës' works in complicated, sometimes intimate, sometimes adversarial relationships with their sisters. The supportive, domestic brother is as rare in the Brontës' works as the emotionally present father, as only Frederick Lawrence, Gilbert Markham, and possibly Dr John could be seen to fill these positive roles.

Rival Brothers in Charlotte Brontë's Novels

As in *Ashworth*, the central conflict in the first section of *The Professor* is between brothers Edward and William Crimsworth. In William's working and brotherly relationship with Edward, he is outwardly 'slave' to his 'master's' will, ideas which define William's conceptions of manliness for the rest of the novel. Edward Crimsworth is frequently referred to as master – William's, his factory workers', his horse's, his wife's – and worse, a 'tyrant' (p. 26). Shuttleworth has argued that William's lack of social power, 'by robbing him of the essential attributes of the Victorian masculine gender identity – mastery and control – effectively feminizes him'.⁵³ Early in the novel, the only way William can attempt to preserve his self-identification as an independent, self-controlled masculine agent is by controlling and hiding his private feelings. By creating a self-contained, supposedly illegible private self and by assuring himself of his

⁵² Sanders, *The Brother-Sister Culture*, p. 10.

⁵³ Sally Shuttleworth, *Victorian Psychology*, p. 124.

superior, interior intellectual qualities, he believes he has mastery over himself and a defence against his brother.

Though Mr Rochester's transformation from master to blinded and maimed husband has been much discussed in the critical literature on *Jane Eyre*, few critics have considered the formative influence Rochester's brother had in determining his character by manoeuvring him into his disastrous marriage with Bertha. In his family pride, the elder Mr Rochester decided to keep the entire estate intact and settled his wealth on his elder son Rowland, making no provision for the younger, Edward Fairfax Rochester. Rowland, as his brother's adversary, plotted with his father to make a mercenary marriage for Edward, as the family credit would not be served by having an impoverished younger son. The Rochesters exchanged his 'good race' for Bertha Mason's thirty thousand pounds of West Indies wealth, and the Mason taint of hereditary madness was concealed by both father and brother. Within the patriarchal structure of primogeniture, the younger son Edward Fairfax is as much a feminised token of financial exchange as Blanche Ingram is when she later attempts to gain his attentions. This false courtship re-enacts in 'dumb show' the original tragic error, in which Rochester became besotted with a dark, flashy, superficially accomplished woman and married her. Rochester's later sufferings, as the husband of a woman 'both intemperate and unchaste' and as a rake careering through Europe, are presented as, at least in part, a result of his brother's betrayal.

In *Shirley*, the brothers Robert and Louis Moore represent different educational and professional types, as Robert has been raised in Antwerp to take over the Gerard Moore industrial concern and feels he must prove his manliness by rescuing it from debt and the setbacks caused by the Orders in Council. Louis has grown to manhood separately, having been privately educated in England from boyhood. Like William

Crimsworth in *The Professor*, he uses his education to gain posts first as a lowly-paid usher in a school and then as a private tutor. Despite their differences in education and profession, no rift has destroyed their relationship, as it did when Charlotte wrote of the Percy and Crimsworth brothers. Thus, the Moore brothers are more in concord than any others Charlotte depicted. Louis visits Robert's sickroom after he is shot; the brothers decide to emigrate together to the backwoods of America to start anew; and in the end, Robert busily makes plans to 'divide Briarfield parish betwixt' them, with Robert running a successful and more humane mill and Louis as master of Fieldhead and magistrate (p. 539). However, both brothers are suitors for Shirley Keeldar's hand, and thus rivals, though only Louis realises this, and the knowledge only creates a minor coolness. Charlotte uses the same, opposed masculine types she had used in the Angrian writing, and in *The Professor*, to compare masculine styles in *Shirley*, but these differences do not bring the brothers into conflict.

Brothers as Patriarchs: Financial Support of Dependent Sisters

Brothers are often shown to have patriarchal power over their sisters, particularly in the realm of financial support. I have closely explored the ways in which John Reed and Tom Bloomfield are shown to mistreat their sisters, and the way that Emily Brontë casts Linton Heathcliff as a miniature tyrant and brother-figure to both Hareton Earnshaw and Cathy Linton. These patriarchal characteristics can also be found to a less extreme degree in relationships between adult brothers and sisters. For instance, while some consideration has been given to the relationship between Robert and Louis Moore, their older, unmarried sister Hortense is seldom discussed, despite living in the mill cottage with Robert. Unlike her brothers, and many of the Brontës' heroines, Hortense has not been educated or trained for any profession but that of housekeeper. She is a 'dependent being', running Robert's house but having no say in the family business or apparently

any interests of her own. The narrator states, '[t]o her two brothers [...] she was very much attached' (p. 55). She teaches French and female accomplishments to Caroline Helstone, and she has some authority as a proud, exacting woman in control of her own home, but beyond that, her scope for independent action is very narrow. She is obliged to live in England, even though she is irked by its manners and customs, because, as she states, 'It is my duty to be happy where you are, brother' (p. 56). Hortense is similarly marginalised in her brother's imagining of the future of the parish at the end of the novel. Robert concocts positions of authority in the community for himself and Louis and for their respective future wives, Caroline and Shirley (running the Sunday School, a suitably feminine task). Hortense's future is not mentioned. It seems likely that she will shuttle between Hollow's Mill and Fieldhead, offering support to her brothers' households and helping to raise their children.

In the latter section of *Jane Eyre*, the Rivers family symbolically replaces the dysfunctional dynamic of the Reeds for Jane. Where the adult John Reed squandered his money, destroyed himself, and left his sisters adrift, the Rivers family demonstrates a different dynamic, with St John about to divorce himself from his domestic life in England for life as a missionary in British India. This inspires anxiety in his doting sisters: 'It would probably [...] be a parting for years: it might be a parting for life' (p. 356). St John leaves his sisters with no male protector or financial support beyond what they earn as governesses.⁵⁴ In the time before St John leaves England, Diana, Mary, and Jane make a welcoming family circle, which, though St John admires his sisters, he continually flees: 'St. John did not rebuke our vivacity; but he escaped from it' (p. 364). He does not seek to support his sisters financially, nor will he remain in England to marry and open up his house to one or both of them, as Robert does for Hortense in *Shirley*.

⁵⁴ Jane's sharing out of her inheritance from her Uncle Eyre in Madeira contributes greatly to the independence of all three Rivers siblings.

The curious combination of St John's sense of missionary call and worldly ambition will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

The women of the Hargrave family in Anne's *Tenant* experience extreme levels of dependence on the man of the house, Walter Hargrave. Walter is less debauched than Arthur Huntingdon's other friends, but he attempts to keep up with the style and pursuits of his friends' masculinity, even though this requires spending beyond his means. His sister Milicent is forced to marry for money because Walter has spent so much on himself that he can no longer properly support his mother and sisters. Her brother's financial irresponsibility is the direct cause of Milicent's abusive marriage to Mr Hattersley. Similar pressure to marry for money is placed on the younger daughter, Esther, but with Helen's counsel, she resists this course of action, and eventually marries Frederick Lawrence, Helen's brother and perhaps the ideal representation of masculinity in the novel. The Brontës' novels highlight the vulnerability of sisters to their brothers' poor choices. This, of course, is probably a reflection of the Brontës' personal experience, as Branwell had to be supported by his sisters in the last years of his life, rather than providing financial or emotional support to them as dependent, unmarried women. As Charlotte wrote to W.S. Williams shortly after Branwell's death, she did not suffer the usual sense of bereavement as 'there [was] no prop withdrawn, no consolation torn away, no dear companion lost'.⁵⁵

The Supportive, Protective Brother

The most obvious example of the caring, supportive brother in the Brontë canon is Frederick Lawrence in *Tenant*. Lawrence hides Helen and her child from Huntingdon, conceals her true identity from the neighbours (thus maintaining her disguise as a respectable widow), and gives her a much needed home in Wildfell Hall. In these ways,

⁵⁵ C. Brontë, 'To W.S. Williams, 2 October 1848', *Letters*, II, pp. 122-123 (p. 122).

Tara Macdonald argues that Frederick is an early forerunner of the ‘gentle, healing and compassionate’ ‘New Man’ she identifies as the *fin de siècle*’s counterpart to the New Woman.⁵⁶ Though Gilbert is childish in the early part of his narrative, he initially has a close, teasing relationship with his sister Rose and younger brother Fergus. When Gilbert marries Helen, he leaves the farm (which he had inherited as the oldest son) to his brother. Indeed, even the frame narrative of *Tenant* suggests that Gilbert maintains close relations with his siblings, as the novel is formed of two letters to Rose’s husband, Halford, whom, Gilbert notes, will be coming to stay soon. While Gilbert can be childish and impetuous, he is not a controlling brother, he does not abuse his power over his sister, and, unlike Rowland Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, he does not hold on greedily to the benefits of primogeniture.

Charlotte’s Dr John in *Villette* also acts as a caring and supportive brother, aided by his profession as a physician. Dr John was modelled at least in part on George Smith, Charlotte’s publisher at Smith and Elder in London. Charlotte stayed with George Smith, his mother, and sisters when she visited London in December 1849 and commented in a letter to Ellen Nussey: ‘I like him better even as a son and a brother than as a man of business.’⁵⁷ George Smith later identified his mother as the original of Mrs Bretton and believed Dr John to be based on himself.⁵⁸ I believe, however, that Dr John also has an antecedent in another literary man: the essayist Charles Lamb. In August 1848, Charlotte wrote to Miss Wooler having recently read Serjeant Talfourd’s edition of Charles Lamb’s letters, which revealed for the first time that Lamb’s sister, Mary, had experienced ‘periodical insanity’ and had murdered their mother and been sent to an asylum in

⁵⁶ Tara MacDonald, *The New Man, Masculinity and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015), p. 18.

⁵⁷ C. Brontë, ‘To Ellen Nussey, [?5 December 1849], *Letters*, II, pp. 299-301 (p. 299).

⁵⁸ Margaret Smith, *Letters*, II, p. 300n.

1796.⁵⁹ Lamb removed his sister from the madhouse and cared for her in his own home, giving up any hope of marrying. Charlotte praised Lamb for his care of his sister, describing it as: ‘An instance of abnegation of self scarcely, I think, to be paralleled in the annals of the “coarser sex.” They passed their subsequent lives together – models of fraternal affection [...] I thought it both a sad and edifying history.’⁶⁰ Though Charlotte indicates that this type of familial self-sacrifice is rare in men, the story provided her with a compelling example of brotherly support for a sister and clearly made an impact on her, as she recounts the story at some length in her letter. This model of brotherly love was thus available to Charlotte when she came to write *Villette*. Her depiction of Dr John’s care of Lucy Snowe following her mental and physical collapse during the Long Vacation echoes, to some degree, Lamb’s devotion to his sister. As is well known, Charlotte Brontë herself, increasingly depressed by her unrequited infatuation for M. Héger at the Pensionnat Héger, confessed to a Catholic priest at the end of the Long Vacation in 1843. Where *Villette* distinctly diverges from Charlotte’s personal experience is in the period of convalescence and domesticity Lucy experiences at La Terrasse, under the care of Dr John and Mrs Bretton. Even after Lucy returns to the pensionnat, Lucy is weekly invited to La Terrasse and amused by Dr John, who in his professional and brotherly capacity, desires ‘[t]o keep away the nun,’ the embodiment of Lucy’s hypochondria (p. 254). Charles Lamb’s example allowed Charlotte to consider brotherly love in a quite different way from the strains and stresses of Branwell’s last year, in which he was the sibling to be supported, not the sibling offering devotion and protection.

⁵⁹ C. Brontë, ‘To Margaret Wooley, 28 August 1848’, *Letters*, II, pp. 106-109 (p. 107).

⁶⁰ C. Brontë, ‘To Margaret Wooley, 28 August 1848’, p. 108.

This chapter has aimed to decrease the critical ‘invisibility’ of male characters in the domestic sphere of the Brontës’ novels, as they enact the roles of fathers, sons, and brothers. These roles are positioned by the Brontës as being deeply concerned with the re-inscription of certain styles of masculinity, some positive and nurturing, some negative and damaging. In *Tenant*, Helen keeps one of her portraits of Huntingdon, so she can check her son’s appearance against the likeness of his father, as a means of assessing whether Arthur Jr has inherited his father’s faults. But she also compares her son to her brother Frederick, and is pleased to see that Arthur is maturing to physically and morally resemble his uncle, more than his damaging father. Helen, like other fathers and mothers in the Brontës’ novels, eagerly seeks out the hereditary and acquired attributes that will indicate whether her son will grow to become gentlemanly and domestic, or tyrannical and controlling. The Brontës’ critiques of patriarchal power in the home and its effects on women are even more pronounced in their depictions of marriage and the ways in which male friends can disrupt the domestic sphere, the subject of Chapter Four.

Chapter Four: Intimates: Marriage and Male Friendships

One important truth sufficiently impressed upon your mind [the new bride's] will materially assist in this desirable consummation [a happy marriage] – it is the superiority of your husband, simply as a man. It is quite possible you may have more talent, with higher attainments, and you may also have been generally more admired; but this has nothing whatever to do with your position as a woman, which is, and must be, inferior to his as a man.¹

Such is Sarah Stickney Ellis's advice to new wives in one of her many conduct books for middle-class women of the 1830s and 1840s. At one level, this is a statement of the Christian dogma of the man's superiority within marriage, set down baldly by one of the chief proponents of Victorian domestic ideology. However, behind this veil of ideological certainty, Ellis critiques the unquestioning acceptance of masculine superiority within marriage and the home. Ellis admits that a wife may indeed be superior to her husband in many respects: talent, education, accomplishments, reputation. However, law and religion positioned even a highly flawed husband as superior to his wife, and the wife could be left to suffer under the many forms of domestic dominance possible within the home. This early Victorian ambivalence about masculinity is also registered in the Brontës' texts. The Brontës are less conservative than Ellis, and confront more directly the inequities that order gender roles within Victorian domestic ideology. This is nowhere clearer than in their various representations of men as husbands and friends. While the Brontës' novels are striking in their representations of domestic violence, I am also interested in how they represent the more varied, subtle, and insidious forms of male dominance within the home through these hetero- and homosocial relationships. The Brontës' novels engage with, reproduce, and critique the domestic

¹ Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Wives of England: Their Relative Duties, Domestic Influence, and Social Obligations* (London: Fisher & Co., 1843), p. 17.

conduct book's conceptualisation of a husband's role within marriage. For example, the Brontës enter into dialogue with the ideal of the wife as transformative moral influence on her world-corrupted and damaged husband, a key element of Ellis's works and of Sarah Lewis's *Woman's Mission* (1839), which states in the foreword to the second edition that the purpose of the short book is 'to prove the fundamental truth of the importance of woman's influence'.² The Brontës' novels also engage with the multiple, shifting Victorian ideals surrounding marriage, which created tensions between romance, sexual desire, companionship, and class allegiance.

This chapter also considers male friendship, a relationship that was supposed to exist *outside* the home, but which continually impinges on the domestic sphere in the Brontës' novels. In this analysis, I draw on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's model of triangulation in homosocial relationships, as well as Carolyn Oulton's discussion of substitution or expulsion within romantic friendships in the Victorian novel. I will use these models to consider male romantic friendships in *The Professor* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. This chapter will also fill a gap in Brontë criticism by considering the various factors which draw adult men into intimacies and alliances in these novels, beyond the framework of romantic friendship. I will end the chapter by giving particular consideration to the ways in which groups of male friends disturb the idealised private, feminine, moral space of the home.

² Sarah Lewis, *Woman's Mission*, 4th edn (London: John W. Parker, West Strand, 1839), p. iv. Charlotte was familiar with the works of both Ellis and Lewis. In an 1850 letter to W.S. Williams, she comments on Ellis's mixed praise for *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* in her miscellany, *Mrs Ellis' Morning Call*: 'she praises reluctantly and blames too often affectedly' ('To W.S. Williams, 10 January 1850', *Letters*, II, pp. 328-330 (p. 328)). Later that year, Charlotte wrote to Elizabeth Gaskell regarding a discussion of the 'Woman's Mission' she had read in the *Westminster Review*, noting 'the phrase is hackneyed', which suggests some familiarity with Lewis's views ('To Mrs Gaskell, 27 August 1850', *Letters*, II, pp. 456-458 (p. 457)).

Definitions of Marriage

In the early Victorian period, the ideal marriage mixed companionship and romantic love with class solidarity and practical virtues. Figures as diverse as the conservative Congregationalist conduct book writer Sarah Stickney Ellis and the radical journalist William Cobbett urged young women and men to make sure of their prospective marriage partner's temperament and virtues. If a woman does not know her husband's character before marriage, Ellis warns, 'you might as safely unite yourself with a being you had never seen before, as with one whom you had seen without having known or understood.'³ If a fiancé is discovered to have terrible faults – insanity, physical incapacity, intemperance – breaking one's engagement is preferable, advice Milicent Hargrave, the future beleaguered Mrs Hattersley, could benefit from in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. William Cobbett urges that no man should marry for money, but should ensure that his future bride exhibits chastity, sobriety, industry, frugality, cleanliness, knowledge of domestic affairs, good temper, and beauty.⁴ Charlotte Brontë is the only sibling for whom there is biographical evidence of an evolution in opinion on matrimony. In letters to Ellen Nussey as a young woman, Brontë was ambivalent, her views ranging from the bloodless and practical – 'I believe it is better to marry to love than to marry for love' – to the rather more romantic belief in the

³ Ellis, *Wives of England*, p. 7.

⁴ William Cobbett, 'Letter III. To a Lover,' *Advice to Young Men* (London: Printed by Mills, Jowett, and Mills, 1829), par. 89. Sarah Lewis is also very firm that one should not marry for money, though all the conduct book writers described here were writing for the benefit of a middle-class audience, or as the subtitle to Cobbett's book has it, those 'In the Middle and Higher Ranks of Life'.

necessity of ‘that intense attachment which would make [her] willing to die for’ her future husband.⁵

When faced with a serious proposal of marriage from her father’s curate, Arthur Bell Nicholls, in March 1852, Charlotte politely declined the match, while Patrick Brontë believed Nicholls’s advance outrageous and insulting. Charlotte wrote thus about the difference between their objections to Ellen Nussey:

I am afraid [...] that Papa thinks a little too much about his want of money; he says the match would be a degradation – that I should be throwing myself away – that he expects me, if I marry at all – to do very differently; in short – his manner of viewing the subject – is – on the whole, far from being one in which I can sympathize – My own objections arise from a sense of incongruity and uncongeniality in feelings, tastes – principles.⁶

Mr Brontë’s concerns were those of an elderly father for his daughter, as he wanted to know she would be comfortably taken care of by her husband after his death. The language Charlotte uses to describe her father’s sentiments is rather more passionate and violent than what one might expect. Charlotte had been proposed to by clerical men before; this would seem to be a good match, as her father had begun his professional and married life in the same role. Mr Brontë, according to Charlotte, instead almost echoes Cathy’s comments on why she cannot marry Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* by characterising Charlotte’s possible marriage to Mr Nicholls: ‘degradation’, ‘throwing myself away’. It is possible that after Charlotte’s success as a novelist, Mr Brontë had begun to set higher standards for her potential husband, hoping he would be better off financially or more intellectually inclined, someone more like Mr Taylor of Smith and Elder, who had expressed some interest in Charlotte the previous year. In Charlotte’s own early commentary on Nicholls’s proposal, she seems unconcerned with money – perhaps because she had the financial independence so rarely achieved by single middle-

⁵ Charlotte Brontë, ‘To Ellen Nussey, [2 November 1841], *Letters*, I, pp. 271-273 (p. 272); ‘To Ellen Nussey, 12 March 1839’, *Letters*, I, pp. 187-188, (p. 187).

⁶ C. Brontë, ‘To Ellen Nussey, 18 December, 1852’, *Letters*, III, pp. 94-95 (p. 95).

class women at this time. Instead, she cites the disjunction between her tastes and feelings and those of Mr Nicholls. As a confirmed ‘spinster’, Charlotte makes no reference to being willing to martyr herself for her potential husband in this later letter.

In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte makes a strong case for romantic marriage defined by both love and spiritual equality. Rochester identifies his great error in marrying Bertha as marrying where he neither loved nor had judged wisely, contravening every aspect of conduct book advice on marriage: ‘Oh, I have no respect for myself when I think of that act! [...] I never loved, I never esteemed, I did not even know her’ (p. 305). In fact, his father and brother made his choice for him, following the older landed ideal of marriage for interest, for wealth or political gain. During Rochester’s apparent courtship of Blanche Ingram, Jane is most disturbed by the mercenary nature of the supposedly imminent marriage: ‘[I]t was from this obvious lack of passion in his sentiments towards her, that my ever-torturing pain arose. I saw he was going to marry her for family, perhaps political reasons; because her rank and connexions suited him’ (p. 186). Jane identifies marriage for interest as a learned behaviour of the landed classes – ‘All this class held these principles’ – however, she contrasts her middle-class, domestic view of marriage for love against this, normalising and authorising her own opinion: ‘I felt sure all the world would act as I wished to act’ (p. 187). In the end, as many critics have noted, the Rochester marriage is not just based in romantic love but has a radical, Edenic equality, in which Jane is ‘absolutely bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh’ (p. 450).⁷

Jane’s extreme biblical evocation of sympathy and identification within her marriage could be seen as a delusive denial of the legal powers of coverture by which her newfound wealth and independence are absorbed by Mr Rochester as her husband. In her study on sympathy and the Victorian marriage plot, Rachel Ablow argues this

⁷ For instance, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn (1979; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 370.

language was used by commentators on marriage and novelists to conceal just such contradictions.⁸ Jane's biblical language anticipates Frances Power Cobbe's suggestion in her 1868 essay, 'Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors' that the 'Tarantula Spider' most fully embodies this level of mutual identification within marriage – by eating smaller specimens of his species, 'making him thus, in a very literal manner, "bone of his bone" (supposing tarantulas to have any bones) "and flesh of his flesh". The operation being completed, the victorious spider [...] may be understood to "represent the family" in the most perfect manner conceivable'.⁹ Ablow applies this pessimistic reading of coverture to *Wuthering Heights*, questioning Catherine Earnshaw's famous pronouncement that she 'is Heathcliff' and arguing that Cathy's madness and death are a direct result of her realisation that marriage has indeed consumed her identity. I would suggest, however, that Jane's statement of complete sympathy between herself and Mr Rochester at the end of *Jane Eyre* does not carry with it the dark irony Ablow identifies in Emily's depiction of Cathy. Charlotte positions Jane's voice within the novel in a different manner to the questionable authority of Cathy's voice in *Wuthering Heights*.

Ablow further argues that the domestic novel was seen during the period to play a role similar to that of a wife – by amusing and morally improving its reader – and through encouraging the reader's sympathy with the novel's characters.¹⁰ Here, *Jane Eyre* forms a useful case study, because the reader so readily sympathises with Jane, and because the reader is invited to do so through the narrator's direct addresses, particularly in the final chapter outlining the Rochester marriage. Instead of disappearing, Jane's marriage allows her greater voice and agency, as shown in her famous address, 'Reader, I married him,' in which she functions as subject and her husband as the object of the

⁸ Rachel Ablow, *The Marriage of Minds: Reading Sympathy in the Victorian Marriage Plot* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 45. Ablow does not discuss *Jane Eyre* in this study.

⁹ Qtd in Ablow, p. 12.

¹⁰ Ablow, p. 5.

sentence and sentiment. This syntactical reversal of the traditional power structure within marriage acts as a symbol of Jane's active choice and her physical advantage over Rochester, especially while he remains blind. Charlotte suggests to her readers, male and female, that an ideal marriage is one in which there is true sympathy, where either spouse may have the upper hand in different aspects of the marriage, and where both husband's and wife's talents and powers are complementary and various. Despite the legal structure of coverture, Brontë's fiction imagines a marriage which deviates from the domestic ideal in which a husband holds all the social and legal power, while a wife has only the hollow promise of moral suasion described by Ellis and other conduct book writers.

As in *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë's characters make direct statements about the nature of marriage and the roles husbands and wives ought to play. Helen Huntingdon, frustrated by her husband's treatment of her, writes in her diary:

[H]is idea of a wife, is a thing to love one devotedly and to stay at home – to wait upon her husband, and amuse him and minister to his comfort in every possible way, while he chooses to stay with her; and, when he is absent, to attend to his interests, domestic or otherwise, and patiently wait his return; no matter how he may be occupied in the meantime. (*Tenant*, 206)

It is important to note that this is Huntingdon's ideal of a wife, and thus characterised by Helen as a projection of the male mind, a fantasy of marital servitude entirely for the man's benefit, with no role for reciprocity and a strong suggestion that a husband is licensed even to commit sexual infidelity without any consequences. By suggesting that Huntingdon views a wife's role in this way, Brontë registers a critique of the domestic conduct book genre. The intense marital servitude suggested by this view echoes the language found in Ellis's *The Women of England*:

[I]t is necessary for [a woman] to lay aside [...] her very *self* – and assum[e] a new nature, which nothing less than watchfulness and prayer can enable her constantly to maintain, to spend her mental and moral capabilities in devising

means for promoting the happiness of others, while her own derives a remote and secondary existence from theirs.¹¹

Ellis's advice is authoritative and dogmatic, arguing it is 'necessary' for a married woman to become a different being from a single woman, having cast away her 'very *self*' to take on the responsibility for her husband's and children's happiness. Ellis seems to recognise how unnatural this state of constant surveillance and service is, because only 'watchfulness and prayer' will maintain it. Any hint of selfishness, within this formulation, would brand the woman as a failure, the fate Paulina Home fears in *Villette*. The wife's ability to abnegate herself for the sake of her husband, in a contradictory way, gives her a sense of identity.

Helen revolts against this expectation that a wife should provide this kind of marital service whether her husband merits it or not. This is symbolised in *Tenant* through the conflict that arises every time Huntingdon goes to London: he expects loving letters from Helen but seldom replies to hers and continually moves back the date of his return to Grassdale. If Helen leaves off writing, he rebukes her, seemingly desiring physical, written evidence of her care for him, 'no matter how he may be occupied in the meantime'. As Helen quickly discovers, Huntingdon amuses himself in London by drinking to excess, gambling, and conducting affairs. She is to accept the actions which are unsaid in his letters and conceal his errors.

In contrast, Gilbert Markham, her future husband, claims he would rather make his hypothetical future wife happy: 'I would rather give than receive' (p. 50). This view is opposite to his mother's, which accords with the extreme selflessness encouraged by conduct book literature: "[I]t's your business to please yourself, and hers to please you" (p. 50). In *Agnes Grey*, Rosalie Ashby, née Murray, offers another permutation on these

¹¹ Ellis, *The Women of England: Their Social and Domestic Habits*, 3rd edn (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1839), p. 45.

rhetorical structures of marital service, with rather different shadings. To Agnes's suggestion that she encourage her husband in better pursuits, she replies, 'And so you think I would lay myself out for his amusement! No, that's not *my* idea of a wife. It's the husband's part to please the wife, not hers to please him' (p. 183). Here, Anne seems to endorse the conduct book view of a wife's duty to her husband, first by having the morally upright narrator Agnes argue that a woman should be a positive moral influence on her husband's behaviour, and then by having Rosalie, positioned as disreputable, selfish, and unsympathetic, argue the opposite. Rosalie's expectation is both demanding and hollow, because the reader knows she has married Ashby only for his wealth and title. These differences between the presentations of a husband's role in *Agnes Grey* and *Tenant* provide strong evidence that Anne's criticism of domestic ideology intensified while writing her second novel, though even in *Tenant*, certain aspects of the conduct book ideal are upheld.

Domestic Violence

Undeniable domestic violence occurs in two Brontë novels: *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *Wuthering Heights*. These depictions, especially within middle-class and landed gentry homes, were shocking and ahead of their time. While writers such as John Stuart Mill and Frances Power Cobbe wrote about domestic violence later in the century, they chiefly discussed this in terms of working-class male violence.¹² When the Brontës were writing, the only representations of domestic violence occurred in police reports (which similarly located this violence in working-class homes) or in Parliament, as men debated possible grounds for divorce.¹³

¹² Judith E. Pike, "'My Name Was Isabella Linton': Coverture, Domestic Violence, and Mrs. Heathcliff's Narrative in *Wuthering Heights*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 64 (2009), 347-383 (p. 357).

¹³ Pike, p. 357.

While Arthur Huntingdon isolates and manipulates his wife, he is not physically violent towards her, though the suggestion of such violence permeates the text. In one particular instance, Lisa Surridge argues that physical violence comes close to the surface of the Huntingdon marriage. One evening, Huntingdon's spaniel Dash escapes his torments to take refuge with Helen. In retribution, Huntingdon throws a book at the dog and misses, hitting Helen's hand instead. Surridge argues that '[t]he scene positions Helen and Dash as joint recipients of Huntingdon's abuse. Violence is transferred from one to the other: while the man throws objects at the *dog*, the *woman* is injured'.¹⁴ This incident is a physical manifestation of the emotional and psychological abuse Helen suffers at Huntingdon's hands and illustrates the potential for physical violence within their marriage. Violence runs through the novel in the repeated spectacle of the hunting parties at Grassdale, Mr Hattersley's abuse of his wife, and his attempts to strike other male friends.

This displaced violence against Helen has a concerning echo in Gilbert's strikingly brutal attack on Frederick Lawrence, her brother, which occurs earlier in the novel (but later chronologically). Nicole Diederich has argued that Gilbert's attack, his handling of Helen's paintings, and his possessive language resemble Huntingdon in unsettling ways, which suggests that Gilbert may not be a good second husband.¹⁵ While Diederich's conclusion fails to take into account Brontë's narrative of Gilbert's maturation over the course of the novel, the substitution present in Gilbert's romantic friendship with Lawrence suggests that his attack may be a symbolic act of violence against Helen.¹⁶ Gilbert strikes Lawrence with his whip out of his anger at 'discovering'

¹⁴ Lisa Surridge, *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Fiction* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005), p. 77.

¹⁵ Nicole A. Diederich, 'The Art of Comparison: Remarriage in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*,' *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 57.2 (2003), 25-41.

¹⁶ Gilbert's attack on Lawrence will be discussed in more detail in the section below on male romantic friendship.

that Lawrence and Helen are having an affair, sully Gilbert's image of Helen and stoking his jealousy as a wounded, formerly hopeful suitor. At this point, he does not realise that the two are brother and sister, rather than lovers. In *Domestic Murder in Nineteenth-Century England*, Bridget Walsh discusses not only the murder of wives by husbands but also murders of love rivals. These murders suggest the displacement of the violence meant for the erring wife, as seen in Walsh's discussion of the protagonist of Wilkie Collins's novel *Basil* (1852), who attacks his adulterous wife's lover.¹⁷ Gilbert's attack on Lawrence could similarly be seen as a domestic attack, though he does not physically attack Helen for her perceived betrayal. This creates a disturbing though imperfect mirror of the scene Surridge analyses, in which the blow meant for the spaniel does in fact strike Helen.

Heathcliff's marriage to Isabella Linton in *Wuthering Heights* is also physically violent and, like Mr Rochester's and Helen Huntingdon's first marriages, illustrates yet again the dangers of marrying someone one does not know well. Isabella naively transforms Heathcliff into a romantic hero, with 'an honourable soul, and a true one' (p. 91). On learning of her regard, Heathcliff forecasts his abuse as her husband: 'You'd hear odd things, if I lived alone with that mawkish, waxen face; the most ordinary would be painting on its white the colours of the rainbow, and turning the blue eyes black, every day or two' (p. 94). This is an exceptionally detailed description of domestic abuse. Heathcliff sees Isabella as something less than human, with her 'waxen' face. Of the 'odd things' that would be heard if they married, the 'most ordinary' and apparently regular rumour would be the repeated bruising of Isabella's face, turning it 'the colours of the rainbow', a jarring image, as the rainbow evokes positive aesthetic and religious connotations. As Judith Pike argues in her close analysis of Isabella's marriage and

¹⁷ Bridget Walsh, "Monsters of Affection": The Male Domestic Murderer and Models of Masculinity,' *Domestic Murder in Nineteenth-Century England: Literary and Cultural Representations* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 93-121.

narration, Heathcliff actually restrains himself from these obvious acts of violence, so that neither Edgar, as magistrate, nor Isabella, as abused wife, is able to bring forwards legal action or sue for a separation.¹⁸ That Heathcliff calculates the degree of damage he can do to his wife without incurring legal action positions him as a heartless but rational villain, not a madman or demon as Isabella suggests in her letter to Nelly. The Gothic shadings of Isabella's captivity contribute to Emily's critique of mid-century marriage laws, which she depicts as Gothic in the extreme degree of cruelty and confinement a wife had to suffer before she had any legal recourse.

This Gothic atmosphere continues into the next generation as Heathcliff, in forming Linton from a boy to play the gentleman, also tutors him in the brutal control of his wife, encouraging his latent tyrannical streak: 'He says I'm not to be soft with Catherine – she's my wife, and it's shameful that she should wish to leave me!' (p. 247). Catherine's wish to escape *Wuthering Heights* to see her father garners the same response that Isabella's attempted escapes did: their husbands both invoke their legal right to confine and chastise their wives. Linton, at Heathcliff's urging, also becomes possessive of Cathy's property, responding to the news that Edgar Linton is dying in this way: 'I'm glad, for I shall be master of the Grange after him – and Catherine always spoke of it as *her* house. It isn't hers! It's mine – papa says everything she has is mine!' (p. 248). Linton signifies his pleasure in controlling the property and spaces Cathy had felt were her own. Heathcliff's control of women is replicated in his son's vindictive pleasure at seizing control of Thrushcross Grange as a means of controlling and punishing his wife.

The other obvious act of male violence in *Wuthering Heights* is performed by Lockwood, who, despite being outside the complex and deforming web of patrilineal

¹⁸ Pike, p. 368.

descent depicted in the novel, resembles the men of the Heights more than his outward southern gentility might suggest. Lockwood is not domestic and does not sympathise with women. He reports that his mother ‘used to say [he] should never have a comfortable home’, and he has proved his ‘heartlessness’ at the sea-side, when he recoiled ‘like a snail’ when the ‘goddess’ he had been admiring made the advance he had not been able to attempt (p. 3). The Gothic atmosphere of *Wuthering Heights* reveals the latent misogynist violence within men, as Lockwood assaults the waif-ghost of Catherine Earnshaw: ‘I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bed-clothes’ (p. 21). Emily’s portrayal of Lockwood, and the other men of *Wuthering Heights*, suggests that violent, possessive tendencies exist in all men, whatever their class and station, and that these attributes are in large degree countenanced or even encouraged by mid-century marriage laws. This would make Emily’s portrayal of masculinity in *Wuthering Heights* the most pessimistic and unflinching of the Brontë sisters.

Ablow’s work on the domestic novel as an instrument for creating sympathy suggests a motive for the vituperative critical responses to the Brontës’ novels, and to *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* in particular. Ablow argues that the Victorian domestic novel ‘did not just educate readers in the experience of their fellows [...]; it effectively retrained their ways of seeing, understanding and feeling’.¹⁹ Ablow argues that the initial critics of Emily’s novel could not find a moral purpose or sympathetic characters within it because *Wuthering Heights* did not fit their preconceived notions of novelistic structure and sympathy. However, I would also suggest that the vicious and often confused responses to *Wuthering Heights* and *Tenant* were a result of the reviewers’ intense discomfort not just with the passion, sexuality, and violence found

¹⁹ Ablow, p. 5.

in these novels, but also these novels' critiques of male power. Because the domestic novel in general, and the Brontës' novels in particular, were believed to have powerful effects on their readers, the frequent critical charge of 'coarseness' could have arisen from a desire to deny the novels their power as instruments for creating sympathy with a reading audience. This was especially true for female readers, who were warned against reading *Wuthering Heights*, as they were felt to be more susceptible to the emotions created by novel-reading. Thus, the seemingly vague term 'coarse' could stand as a symbol of critics' outrage against the Brontës' negative portrayals of masculinity, especially since critics early on believed the Bell brothers to be sisters. Worse yet, the sisters' critiques were not suitably veiled, as Ellis's subtle and contradictory critiques of domestic masculinity were in her conduct books.

Domestic Dominance

At the beginning of the third chapter of *The Wives of England*, 'Characteristics of Men', Ellis performs two interesting rhetorical moves. She first declares her ignorance of men's behaviour: 'In approaching this part of my subject, I cannot but feel that it is one which I have neither the understanding nor the skill to treat with ample justice.' She goes on to defend herself against claims that she is depicting men in an overly negative manner:

If [...] what I am compelled to say, should appear in any way disparaging to the dignity of men in general, my apology must be this – that it is the very peculiarities I am about to point out, which constitute the chief difficulties a married woman has to contend with.²⁰

Ellis claims she does not know enough about men to critique them with authority, but then proceeds to do so, protecting her femininity by cloaking her critiques under the mantle of domestic advice. These rhetorical strategies recall those used by other

²⁰ Ellis, *The Wives of England*, p. 64.

Victorian women writers who dared to stray into traditionally masculine territory, such as when Elizabeth Gaskell claimed to be ignorant of Political Economy in the preface to *Mary Barton* (1848). Charlotte Brontë used this rhetoric when writing to James Taylor, who had read the first two volumes of *Shirley* and criticised the depiction of its heroes: ‘In delineating male character I labour under disadvantages: intuition and theory will not always adequately supply the place of observation and experience.’²¹ It is notable that there is no trace of this humility in Charlotte’s later letter to W.S. Williams, after the publication of the novel. In response to reviewers’ suggestions ‘there [are] no such men as the Helstones and Yorkes’, she replied definitively: ‘Yes there are’ and appealed to the reality of the near-universally disliked curates of the first chapter.²² The Brontës aimed to represent and critique the problematic aspects of Victorian masculinity as they had carefully observed them from life and through reading, under the cover of their male pseudonyms. Once Charlotte’s masculine mask had dropped, with her publishers at least, she attempted to use the standard feminine excuse of ignorance of men’s behaviour, only later to revert to her authoritative stance as a critic of male dominance within the home.

The sisters highlight the negative effects of male selfishness on women, enhancing the critique of masculinity which can be found in the conduct book genre. For example, Lewis outlines the universality of male selfishness, which creates bad husbands and fathers: ‘That pugnacity which is so admired as proof of *spirit*, is the very embodiment of the selfish principles – a fighting for their *own* rights – an assertion of their *own* superiority.’²³ The symbolic language of male violence is embedded in this passage. The first syllable of ‘pugnacity’ derives from the same Latin root as ‘pugilism’ and recalls the physical blows suffered by Isabella in *Wuthering Heights*. Lewis argues that this male aggression has become linked in early Victorian culture to ‘proof of spirit’

²¹ C. Brontë, ‘To James Taylor, [?1 March 1849]’, *Letters*, II, pp. 187-188 (p. 188).

²² C. Brontë, ‘To W.S. Williams, 1 November 1849’, *Letters*, II, pp. 271-274 (p. 272).

²³ Lewis, p. 28.

and the symbolic ‘embodiment’ of men’s ‘selfish principles’, which are praised as a sign of male ‘superiority’. Like Ellis, Lewis condemns this masculine selfishness and sense of superiority, while also hinting at the emotional and psychological violence that could result from a man’s actions within the home.

In Anne’s *Agnes Grey*, for instance, Mr Bloomfield upbraids his wife for failing to choose a meat for dinner which suits their status as newly landed members of the commercial class, but will not allow the servants to eat it either. The argument is carried out in front of the governess and children, and is so severe that Agnes-as-narrator recalls, ‘I never felt so ashamed and uncomfortable in my life, for anything that was not my own fault’ (pp. 23-24). Anne clearly presents this domestic selfishness, pride, and verbal abuse as negative. Mr Bloomfield is portrayed as undermining the authority of his wife’s housekeeping, her particular sphere of influence.

This form of non-physical domestic control is also hinted at in Frances and William Crimsworth’s marriage in *The Professor*, as suggested by the metaphors Frances uses to describe marriage. Frances identifies the picture of Hunsden’s unrequited love ‘Lucia’ as a woman who ‘once wore chains and broke them’, specifying that in this case, at least, they were not matrimonial chains, but suggesting through implication that marriage could be imprisoning (p. 218). Elsewhere, Frances says that if she had married a tyrant, making her marriage ‘slavery’, she would leave her ‘torturer suddenly and silently’, anticipating the fugitive wives of *Wuthering Heights*, *Tenant*, and *Shirley* (p. 213). William presses her on these points and decides she would not make a good ‘patient Grizzle’, as in the folk tale of Patient Griselda: his wife refuses to suffer all the torments that Victorian marriage laws allowed. In these exchanges, Brontë hints at concealed tension in Frances’s relationship with William. These tensions remain below

the surface of the text, however, and William is not dramatised as breaking out in psychological or physical violence against Frances.²⁴

In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte develops her critique of male domestic dominance within the erotic structures of mastery found in all the romances she depicts. In his wooing of Jane, Rochester demonstrates that he believes he has the right to manipulate her feelings, both in his sham courting of Blanche and his attempts to make Jane reveal her innermost feelings to the fortune teller. Once Jane agrees to marry him, Rochester attempts to turn her into a lady, to alter her identity by weighing her down with family jewels and new social expectations for the presentation of class and femininity. Jane resists this course of action, arguing, '[Y]ou won't know me, sir; and I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin's jacket' (p. 259). Rochester not only tries to alter Jane's class identity, but also becomes possessive of her, as he did with his mistresses in his earlier life. Rochester here is famously likened to the problematic figure of the 'sultan' to Jane's 'slave'. He even playfully threatens to attach Jane to himself by means of his watch chain, a comparison which suggests intimacy but also diminishes Jane's status to that of a mundane possession which must be kept close to be useful (pp. 269-270).

The omniscient narrator in *Shirley* paints Mr Helstone as ill-fitted for both his profession as a priest and his earlier status as a husband to the 'monumental angel' Mary Cave:

Nature never intended Mr. Helstone to make a very good husband, especially to a quiet wife. He thought, so long as a woman was silent, nothing ailed her, and she wanted nothing [...] He made no pretence of comprehending women, or comparing them with men: they were a different, probably a very inferior order of existence; a wife could not be her husband's companion, much less his confidant, much less his stay. (*Shirley*, 45)

²⁴ The pedagogical structures of mastery in this relationship will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

This passage suggests that Helstone treated his wife much as he later treats his niece Caroline. He does not care for, or investigate, the emotional or psychological needs of either woman. The maintenance of social respectability and physical comforts is the limit of his ability to relate to women. Interestingly, Helstone deviates from the early Victorian ideal of the companionate marriage, seeing no role for his wife as his comforter, friend, or moral influence, because he believes women to be both inferior and dissimilar to men. Caroline reports that Helstone sees marriage as a ‘burden’ and regards married men as ‘fools[s], or, at any rate, as doing a foolish thing’ (p. 182). The novel suggests that the very qualities which make Helstone ill-suited for the Church also make him a poor husband: he is too aggressive, warlike, and selfish. Mary Cave is characterised by Helstone in much the same way as Millicent Hattersley is described by her husband in *Tenant*, when he admits that he mistreats her because she is uncomplaining. The echoes in the diction suggest that Charlotte meant the reader to suspect Helstone not only of ignoring or neglecting his wife’s needs, but also of more overt emotional or physical abuse.

Male Transformation and Women’s Moral Influence

In 1829, Mr Brontë presented a poem to the Brontës’ maid Sarah Garrs on her marriage to William Newsome, which encapsulates the ideal of the wife as moral influence on her inevitably erring husband, an ideal which would become more concrete in the early Victorian period:

They [husbands] have their humours and their faults — —
So mutable is man — —

Excuse his failings in your thoughts,
And hide them if you can.
'Tis not the way to scold at large,
To clamor, rage and boast,
For wives their duties most discharge

Who condescend the most.²⁵

In this short, didactic poem, Mr Brontë anticipates the trials of married life, trials specifically imputed to the husband, but with the only advice offered relating to the wife's response. The wife's moral nature is assumed and her indirect, positive influence on her husband, through 'condescension', upheld. The wife's only possible fault, apparently, would be to attempt to train her husband's morality more strictly, 'to scold at large, | To clamor, rage and boast'. In reality, the wife is to have little power in the relationship. She can excuse and forgive, but an ambiguity in line ten makes it unclear whether the wife's duty is to hide her husband's faults from others (a form of denial, a means of protecting the privacy of the domestic space) or whether the wife's duty is to hide her *thoughts* of her husband's shortcomings from her husband entirely. She may forgive, but he must never feel judged. This humble, simple inscription of domestic ideology tallies well with the advice found in domestic conduct books and suggests the universality of these structures for both critiquing nineteenth-century masculinity and upholding male domestic superiority.

Ellis states this domestic doctrine in even grander terms, arguing that a woman was to act almost as a 'second conscience' to her husband:

How often has man returned to his home with a mind confused by the many voices, which [...] have addressed themselves to his inborn selfishness, or his worldly pride; and while his integrity was shaken and his resolution gave way beneath the pressure of apparent necessity, or the insidious pretence of expediency, he has stood corrected before the clear eye of woman, as it looked directly to the naked truth, and detected the lurking evil of the specious act he was about to commit.²⁶

²⁵ P. Brontë, 'For Sarah Gars, POEM by the Reverend Patrick Brontë on the day of her wedding to William Newsome', *PB Letters*, p. 71 (ll. 9-16).

²⁶ Ellis, *The Women of England*, p. 58. Lewis similarly argues that women should act as a form of conscience for men: 'Let each mother then engrave upon the heart of her son such an image of feminine virtue and loveliness, as may make it sufficient for him to turn his eyes inward in order to draw thence a power sufficient to combat evil, and to preserve him from wretchedness' (p. 30).

Ellis here provides a good example of the complex and contradictory nature of the domestic conduct book's representations of masculinity. This passage first sets up the usual division between the two spheres, in which the husband returns to the domestic sphere from the corrupting atmosphere of the world of work. The man is said to be 'confused' by the many competing authorities and influences of his day-to-day working existence. The tone here is didactic and moralising but necessarily vague, as Ellis attempts to universalise male vulnerability and lack of 'integrity' and 'resolution', as masculinity is constantly bombarded by external pressures. The wife is imputed to have a near mystical degree of perception and influence, correcting her husband's faults much like a saint or religious leader. A wife is responsible for better fitting her husband for both the domestic sphere and for his roles as a good citizen and employee. This doctrine suggests a man's failings could become the responsibility of the insufficiently morally persuasive women in his life. Or, if such women are harmed by his selfishness and pride, this doctrine suggests such domestic dominance is the women's fault. The Brontës strongly critique both male domestic superiority and women's roles as moral influences on men, but this same female role is also upheld in the works of all three Brontës, suggesting the difficulties of thinking outside the ideological structures of the time.

This ideology is resisted in *Jane Eyre*, as among Rochester's many faults is a prideful belief that he can atone for his past sins by relying on Jane's morally reforming influence. Jane objects to this plan, which shifts responsibility from Rochester's shoulders: 'Sir, [...] a Wanderer's repose or a Sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature' (p. 219). Jane would have Rochester repent of his errors in the sight of God, rather than use her as his moral prop. Rochester, however, clings to the belief that a bigamous marriage to Jane will atone for itself and elide his past sins: 'But the instrument – the instrument! God, who does the work, ordains the instrument' (p.

219). Rochester's interpretation of the will of God privileges his own salvation and makes him believe he is beyond the reach of divine or worldly law. This egotistical presumption is but one manifestation of the domineering tendency which keeps Rochester from being a fit husband for Jane and necessitates the crisis which will transform his masculinity. Ironically, Rochester is transformed not by Jane but by the actions of his wife, Bertha. The novel positions Bertha's act of arson as instrumental, as the fire destroys Rochester's manor house, the symbol of his family credit and reputation and the scene of his sins against women. This event also results in the loss of Rochester's hand and eye, leading to his blindness. Karen Bourrier argues that the blinding of Rochester, and of Amyas Leigh in Charles Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*, 'is not merely a symbol of castration of the hero [...] [I]t is also a battle scar [...] a sign of his ability to endure suffering like a gentleman'.²⁷ Rochester's injuries are a symbolic, biblical punishment for his attempted adultery, and also a symbol of his heroism and redemption, as he attempted to save Bertha from the destruction of her own making.²⁸

Ellis names as the 'severest and most painful trials of married life' a husband's intemperance and infidelity.²⁹ Ellis advises in the first case that 'much may be done by making his home all that it ought to be to a husband, by receiving him on his return with cordial smiles, by amusing him with pleasant conversation' and by exercising wifely influence.³⁰ When Agnes visits Rosalie Ashby at the end of *Agnes Grey*, she provides conduct book-style advice to Rosalie as to the best means of convincing her husband to leave off 'sot[ting] over his wine' each night, but Rosalie refuses to follow it (p. 182). As I argued above, *Agnes Grey* is more aligned with conduct book advice than *Tenant*, for, in Anne's second novel, she delineates the sufferings of an abused wife from the

²⁷ Karen Bourrier, *The Measure of Manliness: Disability and Masculinity in the Mid-Victorian Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015).

²⁸ Gilbert and Gubar, p. 360.

²⁹ Ellis, *The Wives of England*, p. 186.

³⁰ Ellis, *The Wives of England*, p. 190.

wife's perspective and, perhaps for this reason, is more critical of the efficacy of such advice. Helen attempts to entertain Huntingdon in order to improve him: 'I do all I can to amuse him, but it is impossible to get him to feel interested in what I most like to talk about; while, on the other hand, he likes to talk about things that cannot interest me – or even that annoy me' (p. 176). Huntingdon is so set in his ways that no ill-defined 'influence' on the part of his wife will change his behaviour, especially as they have very different personalities, values, and interests.

Additionally, Ellis suggests that 'a husband should never be made the subject of reproach for transgressions of this nature', but that 'nothing but the utmost delicacy, forbearance, and gentleness' should be used by the wife.³¹ Any coaxing to better behaviour should be 'especially reserved for those occasions of fitful penitence, which often succeed to the most extravagant indulgence'.³² Helen waits for a season of penitence, when Huntingdon blames his flirtation with Annabella Lowborough on his consumption of wine, but she acts more decisively than Ellis suggests, opposing both Huntingdon's flirtation and his alcohol abuse at once, and drawing her husband's ire for her forwardness. Huntingdon only descends further into alcohol abuse and continues his adultery, despite Helen's subsequent 'gentle' warnings, cajolings, and bargaining. Anne's novel challenges the status of the woman as moral influence and shows that sometimes more drastic action is necessary – in this case, Helen flees her husband and takes her child, which she has no legal right to do.

On the topic of 'unfaithfulness', Ellis assures the reader it is rare in 'respectable families in the middle ranks' and that she refers not to 'extremes of moral delinquency', but rather 'slighter shades of the same character'.³³ She attempts to paint over the real suffering that occurred in marriages from which middle-class women could not escape.

³¹ Ellis, *The Wives of England*, p. 189.

³² Ellis, *The Wives of England*, p. 189.

³³ Ellis, *The Wives of England*, pp. 196-197.

Ellis delicately addresses a husband's 'attraction towards a different object', which is depicted as a shameful state of being for the wife (not the straying husband): 'there is nothing but uncomplaining loneliness, and utter self-abasement, for the portion of that wife who cannot keep her husband's heart!' (p. 200). The wife is told to unselfishly and calmly appeal to her husband over her new, piteous state, and to hope that he relents and casts off his mistress. The wife is then to forget the incident and be affectionate as usual, taking pride in the faithfulness of her own love, and hoping for heavenly consolation after death. Ellis has no advice for the wife whose husband is 'wholly depraved' and will not return his wife's affection and accept the confines and responsibilities of marriage (p. 204). As mentioned above, Helen acts more proactively than Ellis argues a wife should, and when she discovers Huntingdon's adultery, denies him his conjugal rights (unthinkable in an era in which marital rape did not exist as a legal concept), acting thenceforth only as mother to his child and manager of his home.

Despite Anne's critique of this domestic doctrine of moral influence, she positions Helen as playing a central role in reforming Huntingdon's violent friend Hattersley. While he initially desires a passive wife, Hattersley begins to tire of Milicent's constant yielding. As he says to Helen, '[S]he almost melts in one's hands. I positively think I ill-use her sometimes when I've taken too much – but I can't help it, for she never complains [...] I suppose she doesn't mind it' (p. 245). Hattersley finds it difficult to determine how to behave as a husband because she is 'always equally kind' (p. 247). If Milicent had protested against his behaviour, Hattersley believes he would have been able to modify his actions accordingly. Helen acts for Milicent, breaking her feminine veil of silence and passivity by showing Hattersley two of his wife's letters to convince him that his dissipated behaviour is harmful (p. 322). In this way, Helen allows Milicent to reprove her husband indirectly, since she will not oppose him to his face.

Hattersley determines to give up his friends and become a reformed man. Thus, Anne Brontë still authorises the role of woman as moral influence, even though the novel acts as a stringent critique of this ideal in its representation of the impossibility of Arthur Huntingdon's reform.

Another friend of Huntingdon's, Lord Lowborough, is variously addicted to gaming, drink, and laudanum and deliberately marries to remove himself from the temptation of his friends, in the belief that his wife's moral influence will help him to remain sober (p. 166). His first choice of wife is disastrous, as Annabella does not love him and is not concerned for his well-being. After their divorce, he marries again, this time more successfully, to a woman 'remarkable neither for beauty nor wealth, nor brilliant accomplishments' (as his first wife had been) but who has 'genuine good sense, unswerving integrity, active piety, warmhearted benevolence, and a fund of cheerful spirits' (rather than simply monetary funds) (p. 389). This, then, is the type of wife who could support a recovering alcoholic. More importantly, Lowborough marries her for her virtues, not for her superficial accomplishments, and is rewarded for entering into marriage on the right grounds. Here again Anne positions the influence of the correct type of woman – sensible, pious, cheerful – as ameliorating a man's morality, though in her domestication of Hattersley, she suggests that amusement and condescension are not appropriate tools. Rather, a woman must be honest and forthright to be an agent of moral change, which differs from the passivity endorsed by conduct book writers.

The question of whether or not Gilbert Markham is a suitable second husband for Helen has been much discussed in recent critical literature on *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Priti Joshi argues that Gilbert 'is [...] a disturbing hero and lover for our much

abused heroine'.³⁴ In support of this interpretation, Joshi cites Gilbert hitting Helen's brother, Frederick Lawrence, on the head with his whip and slandering Jane Wilson. As Diederich also points out, the reader never hears what Helen has to say about her second marriage.³⁵ While Gilbert has some serious faults as a young man, his style of masculinity changes greatly under Helen's tutelage. Early on, he would certainly be a poor choice as a second husband. He is spoiled and touchy, which he admits in his retrospective narration (p. 32). When Helen first rejects him, he is hurt and 'stimulated to seek revenge' (p. 62). Gilbert is also impulsive: when he thinks that Lawrence likes Helen, he immediately finds him 'detestable' and refuses to speak to him or shake his hand (p. 74). Crucially, the young Gilbert of the early part of the narrative is unable to enforce the requisite manly self-control. When Gilbert 'discovers' that Helen and Lawrence are having an affair, 'like a passionate child, [he] dashe[s] [him]self on the ground and l[ies] there in a paroxysm of anger and despair' (p. 91). The young Gilbert has all the self-control of a child and many of the faults highlighted by conduct book writers: selfishness and aggression. Anne, like Emily, could be commenting on the universality of these seeds of damaging forms of masculinity: men seem to differ only in degree in the world of *Tenant*.

Gilbert greatly matures during his relationship with Helen. Because Gilbert cannot openly woo Helen, he helps to create a deep friendship between them, one that will serve as a strong foundation for their eventual companionate marriage. When Helen expresses a dislike for Gilbert's character (she suspects him of being shallow like Huntingdon), he strives to improve himself for her sake: '[Her comments] only made me the more dissatisfied with myself for having so unfavourably impressed her, and the more desirous to vindicate my character and disposition in her eyes, and if possible, to

³⁴ Priti Joshi, 'Masculinity and Gossip in Anne Brontë's *Tenant*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 49 (2009), 907-924 (p. 914).

³⁵ Diederich, pp. 36-37.

win her esteem' (p. 56). When Gilbert attempts to court her, as Hargrave did before him, Helen rejects his advances and insists they remain only friends. Unlike Hargrave, Gilbert carefully restrains his passion. Gilbert is also influenced by Helen through reading her diary, which illustrates all the ghastly details of her first marriage. Immediately upon finishing Helen's narrative, Gilbert goes to Lawrence to apologise for attacking him and to try to initiate a friendship between them, and it is through Lawrence's mediation that Gilbert finally truly learns patience and self-control. In *Tenant*, Anne Brontë variously uses the figure of the woman as moral influence, at once challenging the idea that a wife can improve her husband, while simultaneously using Helen to transform other male characters, including her future husband.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë similarly critiques and supports the ideal of the woman as moral influence on men. For all Isabella's romanticising of Heathcliff, she is absolutely unable to stop her husband from abusing her and is forced to escape him. Elsewhere in the novel, Cathy's influence – partially moral, but primarily educational – is instrumental in lifting Hareton out of the brutishness Heathcliff has cultivated. Key to this transformation is Cathy tutoring Hareton in reading, which goes some way to reversing his utter lack of female influence, culture, and education, values aligned with each other in *Wuthering Heights*. When Hareton first attempts to learn how to read – initially to win Cathy's regard and to discover his birthright by reading his name over the lintel – Cathy mocks him, and elsewhere she assumes he reads aloud (badly) from her favourite books only to mock her. The subsequent scene of physical violence illustrates the damage done to Hareton, as he gives Cathy 'a manual check [...] to her saucy tongue' because a 'physical argument' is the only means he has of expressing his pain (p. 268). When the cousins are finally reconciled, Cathy takes on a curious hybrid role as both mother (as mothers often taught their young sons to read) and wife, administering kisses

and playful disciplinary slaps. Lockwood overhears Cathy's threats – 'Recollect, or I pull your hair!' – mixed liberally with Hareton's solicitation of rewards – '[K]iss me, for minding so well' (p. 273). This method rehumanises Hareton, giving him access to what Heathcliff systematically denied him as a boy, and enabling him to marry Cathy Linton, thus resolving the cycle of conflict and revenge which had gripped the Earnshaws and Lintons. In illustrating the impossibility of Heathcliff's reform, Emily Brontë challenges the notion of moral influence and amelioration in general, but she then goes on to show how a woman's influence transforms Hareton.

In the Brontës' depictions of male characters as husbands, they engage with contemporary Victorian domestic ideology and vigorously, though incompletely, critique its vision of the superior husband and morally influential wife. This critique also engages with Victorian ideals of marriage, privileging romance and friendship over concerns about class cohesion. All three sisters depict the realities of male domestic dominance within marriage (in *Jane Eyre* this occurs in a somewhat extreme form through Charlotte's revelation of Rochester's decade of marriage to Bertha). In a groundbreaking move for their time, the three sisters also depict instances of domestic violence and abuse, particularly in the case of Emily's *Wuthering Heights*. Despite their insistence on the potential negative effects of marriage and domestic ideology on women, the Brontës, in the end, uphold the image of the wife as moral influence on her erring husband and reify marriage as a positive social and personal institution.

Male Friendship

Victorian writers, including the Brontës, were concerned about the ways in which male friendships could create conflict with a man's domestic affections and duties. Romantic friendships were presented in Victorian literature as often springing from school intimacies, which either prepared men for matrimony or subverted heterosexual

structures through their threatening homoeroticism. Charlotte and Anne depict such threatening and constructive romantic male friendships in *The Professor* and *Tenant*, respectively. In 1876, a *Blackwood's* writer gave voice to some of the Victorian concerns about male friendship, admitting that 'for intercourse to be unremitting from youth to age without a breach is one of the rarest and most difficult feats of humanity' due to the interpersonal, domestic, and social pressures which act upon the relationship.³⁶ Charlotte problematises male friendship in *Shirley* and *The Professor* by representing it as bound up in political, professional, and personal concerns and alliances. Male friendships in the Brontës' novels also provide examples of the tensions in masculinity caused by moving between the public and private spheres, with the Brontës specifically depicting the damage groups of men can wreak within the domestic sphere.

Using Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's and Carolyn Oulton's models for analysing male homosocial relationships, this section examines the male friendships in *The Professor*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and *Shirley*. These friendships operate within complicated individual and group associations, within class and professional structures, and as relationships which can either form men for their domestic roles or destroy a home. All three Brontës write of destructive homosociality which threatens women's domestic and moral authority. In extreme cases, as depicted by Anne and Emily, male homosociality can, through violence and vice, divest a home of its feminine influence and, thus, its moral bedrock, creating a space utterly unfit for women or children.

³⁶ 'Some Aspects of Friendship', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 110 (March 1876), 297-313 (pp. 297, 301, 301-302).

Romantic Friendship in *The Professor* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

Sedgwick's consideration of male homosocial relationships uses the structure of triangulation, in which emotionally, socially, or economically freighted male relationships are cemented and negotiated through a woman.³⁷ This pattern appears in Charlotte Brontë's early writing, discussed in Chapter One, in which the passionate political and personal rivalry between the Duke of Zamorna and the Earl of Northangerland shifts as each man uses Mary Percy to harm or gain access to the other man, with little regard for her feelings. Carolyn Oulton draws on Sedgwick's work to formulate an alternative pattern for same-sex romantic friendships: substitution and expulsion. Oulton argues that romantic friendship between members of either sex in youth was considered useful by advice writers 'either in place of, or in preparation for, expected marriage'.³⁸ When one friend married, this attachment was expected to wane, with the marriage taking precedence as a man's most important relationship. The wife was thus the heteronormative substitution for the youthful friend. Percival Pickering writes that: '[m]arriage must, and in some degree should, interfere with friendship, and can generally supply the affections, and even understanding, far more than friendship can offer.'³⁹ Where one friend is sexually aggressive, or otherwise transgressive, Oulton argues, that friend will always be expelled from the narrative – as in the demise of Steerforth in *David Copperfield*. In her monograph, Oulton discusses the female romantic friendship in *Shirley*, in which 'Captain' Shirley Keeldar sometimes plays the courting gallant to Caroline Helstone's heroine. The novel ends in the standard, heteronormative fashion, with each woman marrying a Moore brother and each husband

³⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

³⁸ Carolyn W. De la L. Oulton, *Romantic Friendship in Victorian Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 30.

³⁹ Percival Pickering, *An Essay on Friendship*, (London: Henry Sotheran and Co., 1875), p. 48.

substituting for the earlier intimate female friend.⁴⁰ This chapter will apply Oulton's structures of substitution and expulsion to the male romantic friendships found in *The Professor and Tenant*.

School was a key environment for the development of romantic male friendships, as suggested by Benjamin Disraeli's panegyrics on school friendship in *Coningsby* (1844):

At school, friendship is a passion. It entrances the being; it tears the soul. All loves of after-life can never bring its rapture, or its wretchedness; no bliss so absorbing, no pangs of jealousy or despair so crushing and so keen!⁴¹

In the frame letter to an old Etonian friend that begins *The Professor*, the narrator William Crimsworth inscribes a denial of such emotions: 'certainly I never experienced anything of the Pylades and Orestes sentiment for you, and I have reason to believe you, on your part, were equally free from all romantic regard to me' (p. 5). William dissociates himself from these sentiments by specifically denying any similarity in feeling to that associated with Pylades and Orestes, who, with the biblical Jonathan and David and Greek Damon and Pythias, acted for the Victorians as short-hand models of true male friendship.⁴² Throughout *The Professor*, Crimsworth's narration proves him to be startlingly self-deceptive or simply unreliable regarding his own desires and emotions, as he strives for superiority, self-control, and containment. William could well be

⁴⁰ Charlotte, of course, complicates her conventional ending to her marriage plots in the final chapter of the novel by depicting Shirley's unwillingness to marry. Shirley and Caroline's romantic friendship is discussed by Oulton, by Pauline Nestor in *Female Friendships and Communities: Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), and by Tess Cosslett in *Woman to Woman: Female Friendships in Victorian Fiction* (Brighton: Harvester, 1988).

⁴¹ Qtd in Oulton, p. 33.

⁴² Greek male friendships became increasingly problematic as the century progressed and they became associated with the *pederasta* or 'Greek love' of Plato's *Symposium* and the Oxford curriculum. In 1875, Percival Pickering offered a slightly defensive assurance: '[t]hat such friendships in Greece and Rome existed with perfect purity of thought [...] can hardly be doubted' (p. 18). Male friendship 'aroused [...] a desire for all that is good and honourable in man. It existed too with all manly energy and courage' (p. 2). While such suspicions of romantic friendship in the Greek mode were not current at mid-century, the enthusiasm of youthful friendship could be problematic if carried on into adulthood, because it did not suit a mature man and could interfere with his more important domestic relationships (Oulton, p. 29). Linda Dowling discusses Greek love and its use as a homosexual counterdiscourse in late-Victorian Britain in *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

disclaiming a youthful attachment as an adult because the dependence and enthusiasm of such a relationship embarrasses him in retrospect. This could further explain why William puts on a closed, defensive posture in his dealings with Yorke Hunsden, in order to avoid repeating that same experience of dependent attachment as an adult.

Hunsden and William's relationship is complex, bound up in expectations concerning professionalism and mentorship, gender and sexuality, nationalism and class loyalty. William sometimes embraces Hunsden's attributes – enjoying his 'point-blank mode of speech' and his manner which 'pique[s his] curiosity' (p. 41). William admits (or would like to believe) that Hunsden, alone among men, can read his character correctly: 'it was evident he *did* see right down to my heart' (p.42). This is a much more vulnerable position for William than his straightforwardly antagonistic relationship with his brother Edward, in which William believes his face to be a metaphorical 'casque with the visor down', a barrier against scrutiny and exploitation (p. 17).⁴³

But William at other times rejects Hunsden's attempts at creating intimacy, because his worldview operates according to 'market logic', as Jennifer Ruth terms it, in which he cannot depend upon anyone else, unless he can make an adequate return.⁴⁴

When William first meets Hunsden at his brother's birthday party, he feels immediately at a disadvantage, appearing (he thinks) 'weary, solitary, kept-down' in the gender- and class-compromised positions of 'some desolate tutor or governess' (p. 20), while Hunsden is his 'superior', by virtue of his greater age, wealth, and status as a mill-owner. Because their initial social positions are so far opposed, William can never truly enter into an intimacy with Hunsden (p. 30). He tells himself their 'minds could not assimilate' even if they were on the same level, and that he must not 'hope [...] to gather

⁴³ Sally Shuttleworth discusses phrenological discourse and the power structures associated with the acts of reading and analysing character in her chapter on *The Professor in Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴⁴ Jennifer Ruth, *Interested Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in the Victorian Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), p. 49.

the honey of friendship out of that thorn-guarded plant' (p. 33). But William is the one guarded by thorns here, refusing to enter into a deeply felt friendship with Hunsden, even though he attempts to aid William against the harsh treatment of his brother and gives him advice on how best to make his way professionally in Belgium. Indeed, it is Hunsden's ability to help William, who is at a disadvantage, which makes William prickly and distant: he cannot allow himself to feel inferior.

Paradoxically, Hunsden is both a more attractive ally than William's brother Edward, and a more threatening figure, but not in the same sense as the physically violent and tyrannical Edward. Sally Shuttleworth has suggested that for William, Hunsden is a disturbing hybrid of class, gender, and national identities.⁴⁵ He is impossible to place racially, despite his Yorkshire credentials, having 'a dash of something Gallic' and 'no English shyness', according to William (p. 24). Hunsden is also, for William, disturbingly androgynous: 'I was surprised now, on examination, to perceive how small and even feminine were his lineaments' (p. 29). These ambiguous attributes are threatening to William because they reflect the ambiguities in his own class status, his regional identity, and his incompletely formed style of adult masculinity. Like Hunsden, who is a mill owner but also from an old family stem, William's class loyalties are divided between his aristocratic mother and uncles and his commercial father and brother. Like Hunsden, William's regional identity is conflicted, as he has been educated in the south but attempts to work as a clerk in Yorkshire. These nationalistic tensions become more pronounced for William after he emigrates to Brussels to work, as he feels superior in his Englishness to the sexually-tainted Catholicism of the French and Belgians.

⁴⁵ Shuttleworth, p. 28.

William's attraction to and repulsion from the more established Hunsden lies in the unfinished nature of his own masculinity. He has been a privileged schoolboy at Eton, but is also quiet, self-contained, and less physically impressive and masculine than his older brother. His education at a pre-reform public school suggests not just the passionate friendship of *Coningsby* or *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, but also possibly homosexuality and the dreaded scourge of masturbation.⁴⁶ It is important to note that until William begins teaching at Zoraïde Reuter's pensionnat in Brussels, his adolescence and young adulthood have involved little contact with women, beyond his remembered, idealised vision of his deceased mother. He has had no chance to assert his normative heterosexuality, so his sexuality and emotional intimacy become bound up in Hunsden, which threatens to expose the unfinished and ambiguous nature of William's ideal vision of his masculinity: self-contained, self-improving, hard-working, and mastering. As I discussed in Chapter One, Charlotte had played with effeminate characters in her Angrian stories (the early Marquis of Douro, Charles Townshend, and William Percy) and even same-sex attraction, in the antagonistic and violent emotional connection between the Duke of Zamorna and Northangerland. In a way, it seems a suitable continuation of Charlotte's early writings for her first novel, and the one with the greatest Angrian inheritance, to feature a highly vexed romantic friendship between two men.

Thus, it is significant that William's move into teaching in Brussels allows him to take on his desired dominant role in an erotically-charged relationship with his female

⁴⁶ Shuttleworth discusses nineteenth-century concerns that intellectual over-pressure or idleness could lead to masturbation, particularly in the all-boys setting of boarding school in *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 140. Jenny Holt argues that Thomas Hughes shifts any fear of effeminacy in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* to the figure of the 'miserable little pretty white-handed curly headed boys, petted and pampered by some of the big fellows' (p. 233), problematising the public school's reputation for homosexual conduct, while painting Tom and George Arthur's romantic friendship as innocent and domesticating (*Public School Literature, Civic Education and the Politics of Male Adolescence* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008)).

student, Frances Henri, whom he intellectually shapes in his image.⁴⁷ Because Frances is his creature in a way that Hunsden never could be, she is the perfect woman to place between the two friends and rivals (at least, rivals in William's competition-focused mind), as a way to distance William from his early benefactor. When Hunsden visits Brussels, William first tricks him into thinking Frances is a mere lace-mender and then allows her to enter into heated, passionate dialogue with Hunsden, proving herself a match for him with her passion and originality, if not logic. This configuration recalls Sedgwick's triangulation, as William places Frances between himself and Hunsden, proving his independence, maturity, and worldly success through her, without having to engage the passionate feelings of attraction and repulsion associated with Hunsden. This is also the beginning of the pattern Oulton identifies: by marking Frances as his intended, William means to send a message to Hunsden that any intimacy between them will be funneled into William's marriage. Yorke Hunsden remains a disruptive presence at the end of the novel precisely because he intrudes into William's family life after his marriage and return to England, not willing to accept that his place has been filled by Frances.

In William's rejection of school friendship specifically, and romantic friendship generally, Charlotte presents male intimacy in a more complicated manner than in other fictional commentaries on these types of homosocial relationships, especially in relation to physicality. Romantic friendship is praised as a form of moral training in Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, for example, and in this later novel of muscular Christianity, collective identity and masculinity are fundamentally formed through the physical exertion of games at Rugby. In *The Professor*, William Crimsworth never ruminates on games at Eton, as he attempts to work his way through life by virtue of his

⁴⁷ Charlotte's use of the mentor-pupil relationship, especially in her depiction of male teachers, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

intellectual qualities. However, at the crucial moment when he and Hunsden leave Frances's apartment, the two friends wrestle in the streets of Brussels:

[H]e swayed me to and fro; so I grappled him round the waist; it was dark; the street lonely and lampless; we had then a tug for it, and after we had both rolled on the pavement and with difficulty picked ourselves up, we agreed to walk on more soberly. (*The Professor*, 203)

The two men engage in homoerotic physical intimacy at the moment William is attempting to deny their emotional intimacy and his dependence on Hunsden's guidance.

The emotionally intimate relationship between Gilbert Markham and Frederick Lawrence in *Tenant* is presented in a more positive, constructive, and domesticating manner than William and Hunsden's in *The Professor*. However, this romantic friendship is unique in that it develops in the aftermath of one of the most brutally graphic scenes of violence in any of the Brontës' novels:

He said no more; for, impelled by some fiend at my elbow, I had seized my whip by the small end, and – swift and sudden as a flash of lightning – brought the other down upon his head. It was not without a feeling of savage satisfaction that I beheld the instant, deadly pallor that overspread his face, and the few red drops that trickled down his forehead. (*Tenant*, 98)

Gilbert describes this experience as resulting from the influence of a 'fiend', causing 'savage satisfaction', ascribing the error to an external evil, a barbaric strain of humanity. As discussed above, this act of violence against Frederick has posed a challenge for those critics who argue that Gilbert is a suitable second husband for Helen, and not a potential abuser like Huntingdon or Mr Hattersley. As I suggested in my discussion of marriage, the unexpectedly brutal acts of violence committed by both Lockwood and Gilbert seem to suggest that the Brontës, to a greater degree than the conduct book writers, could be surprisingly negative regarding men's behaviour. It is a crucial aspect of Helen's indirect moral training of Gilbert through her diary that it impels him to visit Lawrence and make amends. He gradually becomes able to take responsibility for his ill-treatment and assault, admitting it was 'brutality' and his 'fault' (p. 348). In a sense, this is Gilbert's

first step away from masculine domineering and towards the moral behaviour which will allow him to be a good husband and father and to create meaningful male friendships, as the reader sees reflected in the novel's frame letter by Gilbert to his brother-in-law Halford.

For Gilbert, Lawrence quickly becomes a romantic, emotional surrogate for Helen, who has returned to Grassdale to nurse her husband. Lawrence is able to correspond with Helen, while Gilbert must prove his restraint by communicating with her only after a long interval of silence. The physicality of Gilbert's attraction to Lawrence is expressed through pressing 'those slender, white fingers, so marvellously like her own', carefully observing 'the passing changes in his [...] features', and 'detecting resemblances' to Helen's expressions (p. 351). Gilbert may sense there is something in this new love that is inappropriate, feeling 'more than [he] liked to express' and indulging in 'secret delight' in physical contact (p. 351). Lawrence's features are not necessarily feminine but they are 'like' Helen's (p. 358). These similarities lead to Gilbert projecting his love for Helen onto her brother, as her representative. Gilbert's friendship with Lawrence rearranges Sedgwick's triangle structure. Both men care for Helen and, eventually each other, but Lawrence is the point through which Gilbert attempts to negotiate access to Helen – rather than Helen being the fulcrum through which both men manipulate or cement alliances to each other. Lawrence agrees to act as a mediator between the lovers only in a restricted sense, which – like Helen's diary and the story of her disastrous first marriage – serves to train Gilbert's youthful impulsivity and passionate nature. Gilbert notes that while he is surly in his depression to those around him, he is 'most humanized in [his] demeanour to' Lawrence first, and his mother second.

Having first substituted Lawrence for the absent Helen, Gilbert becomes the male friend subsequently displaced by Lawrence's marriage to Esther Hargrave. Gilbert attends Lawrence's wedding by accident, having been told Helen was to be married, so that symbolically, the siblings take each other's places in his mind. After the wedding, Gilbert finds himself in the absurd position of being squeezed into the wedding carriage with the bride and groom directly following the wedding, effectively pushed out of any further romantic intimacies with Lawrence. Lawrence is truly displaced and the intensity of their male friendship dissipates when Gilbert marries Helen. Unlike William's intimate relationship with Hunsden in *The Professor*, Anne's depiction of romantic male friendship suggests that this relationship can be emotionally and morally beneficial. She also suggests that this is only possible if both men are bachelors. The epistolary structure of the novel is built upon Gilbert's less intimate friendship with Rose's husband Halford, with no mention of Frederick in the 1847 portion of the narrative.

Professional Friendships in *The Professor* and *Shirley*

Both *The Professor* and *Shirley* examine the forces which bring middle-class men together within small, closed communities. Despite the proliferation of male friendships in *Shirley*, these male homosocial ties have been particularly neglected by critics. Relationships based on professional or political allegiance – mentorships or alliances – are not necessarily depicted as opportunistic in these novels, but they are built upon more unstable foundations than other relationships between men in the Brontës' works. Cyril Hall and Louis Moore's friendship differs from the other male relationships in *Shirley*, because their intimacy derives from more deeply held values and admiration. All these friendships are intimately linked to Charlotte's male characters' experiences of domesticity and marriage.

William Crimsworth is hampered in his ability to form friendships with Yorke Hunsden and other men in part because the self-making doctrine William takes up after throwing off the ‘burden’ of his uncles’ aristocratic patronage requires him to use other men for his own self-advancement, while crediting only his own exertions for his professional progress (pp. 6, 7). He thus subverts the advice William Cobbett prescribes in *Advice to Young Men* (1829): ‘Happiness [...] is to be found only in *independence* [...] [L]ook not for success to favour, to partiality, to friendship, or to what is called *interest*: write it on your heart, that you will depend solely on your own merit and your own exertions.’⁴⁸ Despite Charlotte Brontë’s desire that her ‘hero should work his way through life as [she] had seen real living men work theirs’ (p. 3), William must in fact rely on the appointments and recommendations provided by a number of older, more experienced men in order to work his way into independence. First, Edward Crimsworth provides his younger brother with a job as a clerk, while denying him any warmer brotherly feeling. Yorke Hunsden engineers William’s sacking by criticising, in a public forum, Edward’s treatment of his brother, which releases William from his brother’s tyranny. William pretends to be angry about being sacked, to protect himself from feeling the weight of the debt he owes Hunsden (p. 41). Hunsden also places William in contact with a M. Brown in Brussels, who finds him a position as a tutor of English and Latin at M. Pelet’s school for boys. M. Pelet acts in a fatherly fashion towards William, at least superficially, and is almost certainly responsible for William’s additional teaching post in Zoraïde Reuter’s girls’ pensionnat next door, as Mdlle Reuter is in fact Pelet’s fiancée. Finally, William applies to M. Vanhuten, a wealthy businessman whose son William once conveniently saved from drowning, for help finding a new position after he leaves Pelet’s school. He is finally rewarded with a lucrative position teaching at

⁴⁸ Cobbett, ‘Letter I. To a Youth’, in *Advice to Young Men*, par. 14.

the university, having relied on other men every step of the way. Hunsden speaks an uncomfortable truth early in the novel when he suggests William is ‘interested and mercenary’ and only bears with his brother’s despotic treatment ‘because [he] expect[s] to make something eventually out of [Edward] Crimsworth’ (p. 30). William’s self-respect depends on his simultaneously believing that he is an independent actor, improving his situation by his own talents and exertions, while denying that he is using the socially superior men he comes into contact with, as this would be inimical to his self-making project. William cannot truly befriend any man he sees as his superior; he can only use him to serve his own interests.

At the beginning of *Shirley*, Robert Moore and Mr Helstone are initially ‘united in one cause’ in defending Robert’s mill against the mob and machine-breakers (p. 33). When the mill is attacked, Helstone gladly joins Robert and bears arms to uphold Tory values of honour and private property, fulfilling his ‘missed vocation’ by playing soldier (p. 32). However, Robert sows discord between them as a ‘bitter Whig’ who desires the end of the war and the obstructive Orders in Council for the sake of ‘his own interest’ (p. 30). Robert ‘like[s] to infuriate Helstone by declaring his belief in the invincibility of Bonaparte’ (p. 33). These conflicts lead to a ‘decisive rupture’ after a public meeting and ‘pungent’ letters in the papers (p. 144). Moore and Helstone’s friendship is based on shared beliefs about the importance of ownership and property, which override any concerns about workmen’s suffering and rage. Their intimacy is also, importantly, based on family ties (as the Moores are cousins of Caroline Helstone), but it disintegrates in the face of political differences, particularly Robert’s praise of Napoleon, which echoes Becky Sharpe’s sympathy for the conqueror in Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, similarly set during the Napoleonic wars and completed the year before *Shirley*.

Robert then develops an intimacy with Mr Yorke, who subscribes to a more radical politics. As a mill owner, he joins in Robert's desire to remove obstructions to trade. Mr Yorke is opposed to Mr Helstone not just politically – despising parsons, establishments, and Tories – but personally, as Helstone married the woman Yorke had loved as a young man and, he believes, caused her premature death. Charlotte Brontë mixes the domestic and political, the professional and the personal throughout *Shirley*, so that men's private conduct informs their political and economic conduct, and vice versa.⁴⁹ Mr Yorke also introduces the bachelor Robert into his home, where Robert becomes a special favourite with Mr Yorke's spirited daughters, Rose and Jessy, based on Mary Taylor and her sister Martha. Mr Yorke makes it a point of pride to make sure Robert is well-cared-for in his home after Robert is shot at Rushedge. In this way, male friendship provides an opportunity for the younger single man to observe the workings of family life and the comforts of the domestic sphere.

Another important male friendship in *Shirley* is that between the rector of Nunnely, Mr Cyril Hall, and Louis Moore, who is isolated in his position as tutor to Henry Sympson and new to Briarfield. The narrator notes that 'a spontaneous intimacy seemed to have arisen' between Louis and Mr Hall, 'the result, probably, of harmony of views and temperament' (p. 370). Louis and Mr Hall go walking in the Lake District, and with Henry, pay visits to the impoverished cottagers. Mr Hall has only good things to say about Louis, praising his 'odd, quiet, out-of-the-way humour' and telling Caroline, '[h]is understanding and tastes are so superior, it does a man good to be within their influence; and as to his temper and nature, I call them fine' (p. 384). Louis, both in his friendship with Cyril Hall and his nursing of Henry Sympson, is depicted as having positive feminine qualities. Friendship with the older clergyman provides Louis with a

⁴⁹ This will be discussed in more detail in Chapters Five and Six, which will examine, in part, how Robert and Louis Moore's personal and professional identities interact.

source of intimacy outside Fieldhead and his own family, and allows him access to the domestic spaces of the workers' cottages in the company of Hall, a clergyman, just as Robert is able to create domestic relationships at the Yorkes' home. Though this does not seem to be a romantic friendship, as the intimacy between the two men does not arise during youth or from passion, it is positioned, perhaps, to prepare Louis for his future marriage, as this homosociality is based on shared values and personality, as the ideal companionate marriage was supposed to be. Cyril Hall ends the novel as a well-loved family friend and the presiding cleric at the double wedding of the Moore brothers and their brides.

Louis's other close male friend is his pupil, the invalid Henry Sympson. This is a rare inter-generational relationship, in which Louis plays an almost mothering role, nursing Henry through his illnesses, and caring for him in ways Mr and Mrs Sympson cannot. This close friendship is threatened slightly by the romantic interest both the older and the younger man have in Shirley. Henry is of course too young to act as a real sexual threat to Louis, and this relationship echoes the structure of another example of triangulation in *Shirley*: the strange relationship between Caroline Helstone, Martin Yorke, and Robert Moore at the end of the novel. When Caroline discovers that Robert is convalescing from his gunshot wound at Mr Yorke's home, she desires to learn of his condition and visit him. Young Martin, who previously had no time for 'womenites', acts out a romantic fantasy by acting as go-between for the lovers. Martin both forestalls and facilitates Caroline's attempts to see Robert, reflecting the structures of authority and seniority which shape many of the Brontës' depictions of male relationships, particularly those involving women (p. 135).

Groups of Friends

The Brontës also show an interest in depicting the dynamics of groups of male friends, who can have a destructive impact upon the home and men's relationships with women. In *Shirley*, the three curates of Briarfield, Stillbro', and Nunnely – Donne, Malone, and Sweeting – appear to be friends. While their rectors would prefer the young men to do 'dull work' – that is, superintending schools and visiting the sick – the curates would rather pay each other visits (p. 6). The narrator tells the reader that despite this socialising, '[i]t is not friendship; for whenever they meet they quarrel' (p. 6), and their disputes are violent and nationalistic, with the Irish Malone set against the English Donne and Sweeting: 'He reviled them as Saxons and snobs at the very top pitch of his high Celtic voice [...]; they spoke of rags, beggary, and pestilence. The little parlour was in an uproar; you would have thought a duel must follow such virulent abuse' (p. 10). This 'friendship' illustrates the nationalistic and regional conflicts present in the novel, between England and Ireland, the Belgian-English Moores and the novel's Yorkshire characters, the south and the north. The curates' landladies 'affirm that "it is just for nought else but to give folk trouble"' that the three curates come together socially (p. 6). As 'undesired guests', they intrude themselves at Briarfield rectory and Fieldhead for tea, interrupting the processes of the domestic sphere and demanding the women's hospitality (p. 93). Furthermore, Donne and Malone antagonise Caroline and are unwilling to assist with the social requirements of serving the tea: 'neither of them, she knew, would be of any mortal use, whether for keeping up the conversation, handing cups, circulating the muffins, or even lifting the plate from the slop basin' (p. 98). These guests do not contribute to the social ceremony either through discourse in the mixed group or in the basic requirements of gracious service to the other participants. Shirley, as a pseudo-masculine figure, is the only woman in the novel who claims the right to discipline the

curates for their social crimes, berating Donne for his rudeness to the people of Yorkshire and expelling him from her home. The three friends' exploitation of their landladies' and hostesses' hospitality is figured as a mundane invasion of the domestic sphere, problematic because of the entitlement it suggests and its abuse of social expectations surrounding the entertaining of clerical men. This constant tea-taking also aligns the curates as passive, feminine figures.

In the case of *Tenant*, the personages, rituals, and ethos of the London club intrude upon Grassdale each time Huntingdon's friends descend for the shooting season.⁵⁰ Anne presents Huntingdon's friendships as having been formed within the club culture of the Regency, which Amy Milne-Smith argues resembled the Hellfire clubs of the eighteenth century. These were scenes of 'mischief, if not all-out debauchery [...] [Y]oung men were encouraged to break free of familial confinement and push their boundaries in a wider world'.⁵¹ Huntingdon's friends represent themselves as a perverse sort of community or family of bachelors and berate Huntingdon when he becomes engaged and abandons them for matrimony: 'I am the first to break up the jovial band [...] I was the very life and prop of the community' (p. 153). This second, masculine family is essentially anti-domestic, as Huntingdon's friends keep him in London, away from his wife, and induce him to drink and prove he is not, in fact, 'a wife-ridden fool' (p. 192). Walter Hargrave faces similar pressures in maintaining 'his reputation as [...] a respectable fellow among his own lawless companions' (p. 195). Notions of masculine friendship, respectability, and right behaviour are turned on their heads within the carnivalesque world of the club, with friendship transmuted into manipulation and abuse, respectability deformed into the performance of vice.

⁵⁰ Oulton, p. 29.

⁵¹ Amy Milne-Smith, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), p. 22.

This upside-down quality is seen especially in the contradictory descriptions of the club itself. In the ironically-titled chapter 'Traits of Friendship', Huntingdon tells Helen the story of Lord Lowborough's various addictions, and the role of Huntingdon and his friends in exacerbating these sorrows within the space of the club. Huntingdon describes the club's activities first as 'orgies', then, for Helen's sake, 'high festivals', with both terms suggesting an atmosphere of pagan, Roman decadence (p. 163). Huntingdon speaks of returning the alcoholic, gambling-addicted Lowborough to the 'bosom of the club' (p. 164), while Lowborough himself characterises the space as a '*devil's den!*' (p. 166). The club thus becomes a space empty of feminine influence or true friendship, as the members press Lowborough to take up his destructive habits again.

When Huntingdon's friends come to Grassdale, they bring the culture of the club into the home, a violation of women's authority over this space. In the chapter 'Social Virtues', titled, yet again, with pointed irony, this violence even infiltrates the ladies' tea in the drawing room after dinner. Helen hears the invasion coming from the dining room:

[M]y heart failed me at the riotous uproar of their approach; and Milicent turned pale and almost started from her seat as Mr. Hattersley burst into the room with a clamorous volley of oaths in his mouth, which Hargrave endeavoured to check by entreating him to remember the ladies. (*Tenant*, 232)

Hattersley's 'volley of oaths' unfit for ladies' ears marks just the first attack on the women and the space. Further violations include Hattersley throwing his wife from him; striking her brother when he tries to intervene in the private relations of husband and wife (nonetheless being played out publicly, leading to Milicent's suggestive plea for privacy: 'Remember, we are not at home' (p. 236)); trying to drag Lowborough from the room; and finally, throwing household objects at Huntingdon to draw him out from his drunken stupor. Meanwhile, Grimsby ruins the sugar and tea in his state of over-consumption. Anne's depictions of drinking and gambling at the club, hunting parties, and the rituals of

high society could have been drawn from a reading of the silver fork novel, which I discussed in Chapter Two, especially as Helen's narrative is set during the Regency. Anne's depiction of fashionable life, however, is neither aspirational nor satirical but is played in all its brutal realism and filtered through Helen's distinct moral consciousness, in her position as a woman at risk.

Similarly, in *Wuthering Heights*, after the death of his wife, Hindley gives 'himself up to reckless dissipation' and turns the Earnshaw home into a den for drinking and gambling (p. 57). With his 'bad ways and bad companions', Hindley makes the house utterly unfit for women, children, and servants. The reader is never informed what class of companions Hindley entertains, but the general atmosphere is so 'degrading' that the 'curate drop[s] calling' (p. 58). When Isabella arrives at the Heights after eloping with Heathcliff, the only space set aside for her is Heathcliff's bedroom and she has no maid, a fact which makes her immediately *déclassé*. The consequence of this masculine invasion of the home in both *Tenant* and *Wuthering Heights* is that the feminine and moral are squeezed out of the domestic space altogether, and thus no longer a *home* within the terms of domestic ideology.

The Brontë novels' complex and, at the time, shocking depictions of male characters posed a key challenge to reviewers who attempted to determine the sex of the writers behind the 'Bell' brothers' works. James Lorimer argued 'that if [the novels] are the production of a woman, she must be a woman pretty nearly unsexed', which suggests that the Brontës had gone far beyond the customary scope of feminine authorship in their depictions of abusive, controlling, and dissipated husbands and their male associates.⁵² At first glance, the reviewer for *Sharpe's London Magazine* thought Anne's *Tenant* must

⁵² James Lorimer, 'From an unsigned review, *North British Review*, August 1849, xi, 455-93', rpt. in Allott, pp. 111-116 (p. 116)

have been written by a man, as ‘none but a man could have known so intimately each vile, dark fold of the civilized brute’s corrupted nature’.⁵³ This is an interesting description of Arthur Huntingdon, who is figured as both ‘civilized’ and ‘corrupted’, which seems to acknowledge the role contemporary modes of socialisation had in creating brutish men. The reviewer then argues that the author could be a woman, because ‘no man would have made his sex appear at once coarse, brutal, and contemptibly weak, at once disgusting and ridiculous’.⁵⁴ This reviewer’s detailed consideration of Anne’s male characters indicates that some critics accepted even the Brontës’ most negative representations as accurate. The Brontës presented their male characters’ actions within the domestic sphere in ways male authors either could not or would not. Through fiction and the cover of male pseudonyms, they were able to critique the threatening models of domestic masculinity present in early Victorian culture more effectively than other women writers. Nonetheless, in the Brontës’ nuanced depictions of men’s choices of marriage partner and friends, relationships which in part defined in their adult male identities, the sisters exhibit their fascination with all the styles of masculinity available at mid-century.

⁵³ ‘From an unsigned review, *Sharpe’s London Magazine*, August 1848, vii, 181-4’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 263-265 (p. 265).

⁵⁴⁵⁴ ‘From an unsigned review, *Sharpe’s London Magazine*’, p. 265.

Chapter Five: Professional Masculinity: Teachers, Clergymen, and Doctors

During the Victorian period, the old professions of the Church, law, and medicine were joined by occupations such as teaching, engineering, journalism, and others.

Professional associations were set up to examine and licence members and to maintain social prestige. The professional man thus carved out a space in society distinct from the landed gentleman or working-class labourer, as this new working man was engaged in service-oriented, intellectual labour. Late in the century, Alfred Marshal of Cambridge famously described professionalism as requiring ‘cool heads and warm hearts’, a mix, Susan Colón argues, of materialist elements drawn from Benthamism, economic rationality, material reward, and the processes of meritocracy, as well as idealist components concerning character, moral agency, vocation, and ‘the service ethic’.¹

As discussed in Chapter One, the Brontës’ interest in the professions and professional masculinity is evident even in the earliest Glass Town stories, which are peopled with military men, journalists, doctors, and politicians. Professional masculinity continues to be significant in the Brontës’ published novels, with their many representatives of teachers, clergymen, and doctors, who are often depicted both at home and on the job. The Brontës’ approaches to professional masculinity grapple with manliness, professional success, and the accompanying terror of failure, as well as professional ethics and self-control.

Despite this deep interest in the professions and their relationship to the construction of masculinity which is manifest throughout the Brontës’ works, only

¹ Susan Colón, *The Professional Ideal in the Victorian Novel: The Works of Trollope, Gaskell, and Eliot* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 13-14.

Charlotte's *The Professor* and *Shirley* have received much critical attention in studies of professionalisation and Victorian literature.² Susan Colón argues that though the professional class is present in the Brontës, the professional ideal is not examined in a self-critical way.³ The Brontës' depictions of professional masculinity have perhaps been neglected by critics until now because their methods of representation are, for the most part, less obvious than Trollope's dramatisation of Church politics in the *Chronicles of Barsetshire* or George Eliot's examination of male vocation in *Middlemarch*. The Brontës' analysis of professional masculinity considers the intensely personal factors that influence professional and gender performance: self-control, sexuality, and fear of failure and emasculation. In this chapter, I will offer the first in-depth repositioning of the Brontës' representations of professional masculinity by exploring the complex interconnections between larger social and professional structures and gender performance. This reading will form a significant turn away from the usual method of reading the Brontës' male characters through their domestic or erotic roles, or by 'domesticating' their professional lives. In this way, Chapter Five expands the discussion of domestic masculinity and sexuality outlined in Chapter Four, especially in my consideration of how the workplace, especially in Charlotte's novels, is eroticised as a scene for romance.

² For instance, out of recent studies, Laura Fasick briefly cites *Shirley* in the introduction to *Professional Men and Domesticity in the Mid-Victorian Novel* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), while Jennifer Ruth discusses only *The Professor* in *Novel Professions: Interested Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in the Victorian Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2006). Alfred D. Pionke discusses Trollope, Thomas Hughes, Thackeray, George Eliot, and Dickens in *The Ritual Culture of Victorian Professionals: Competing for Ceremonial Status, 1838-1877* (Ashgate: Farnham, 2013), but not the Brontës.

³ Colón, p. 4.

Puffing, Sputtering, Sinking: Barriers to the Professional World and Adult Manliness

Though the Victorian age ushered in a significant shift into professional culture, entry was very difficult, and since a young middle-class man's independence and masculine identity depended on his achieving a professional career, the stakes were very high. The problems arising from this new pressure on middle-class sons to enter the professions was recognised by the periodical press. In 1842, William Makepeace Thackeray provided this lively description of these men's dire prospects in *Fraser's Magazine*:

[S]uch is the glut of professionals, the horrible cut-throat competition among them, that there is no chance for one in a thousand, be he ever so willing, or brave, or clever: in the great ocean of life he makes a few strokes, and puffs, and sputters, and sinks, and the innumerable waves overwhelm him and he is heard of no more.⁴

Thackeray's humorous prescription sees most young men coming to nothing in their quest for a professional career and in their struggles to achieve autonomous manhood in Victorian society. Failure meant emasculation for the young man, and disappointment for his family.

Elsewhere in both *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's*, writers cautioned against the risk of oversaturation in various professional markets. This was a particular fear of parents: they might commit their son to the long (and expensive) study and training necessary to become a barrister or physician, only to discover later a lack of positions due to an overstocked market. In March 1847, just months before the Brontë sisters became

⁴ [William Makepeace Thackeray], 'Professions by George Fitz-Boodle: Being Appeals to the Unemployed Younger Sons of the Nobility,' *Fraser's Magazine*, 26 (July 1842), 43-60 (p. 43).

published novelists, George Henry Lewes declared in *Fraser's* that '[l]iterature has become a profession', but then warned of its potential degradation:

It should be a profession, just lucrative enough to furnish a decent subsistence to its members, but in no way lucrative enough to tempt speculators. As soon as [...] parents think of it as an opening for their sons, from that moment it becomes vitiated. Then will the ranks, already so numerous, be swelled by an innumerable host of hungry pretenders. It will be – and indeed, is, now fast approaching that state – like the army of Xerxes, swelled and encumbered by women, children, and ill-trained troops. It should be a Macedonian phalanx, chosen, compact, and irresistible.⁵

This analysis of the state of the literary profession (and the professions more generally) points to a particular professional ideal: that it should be gendered male and be manly, not 'encumbered with women', a fact Lewes emphasises by use of military analogy. This description also points to the desperation guiding parents' and sons' investigations into which professions had openings and would provide the desired level of remuneration.

Elsewhere, the barrister Samuel Warren praised John William Smith for 'practis[ing] his profession in the spirit of a GENTLEMAN, disdaining all those vulgar and degrading expedients now too often resorted to, for the purpose of securing success at the bar'.⁶ It was not enough merely to rise above one's fellows in the competition for professional position. One must also do so with the requisite degree of gentlemanliness – a term couched in both class status and standards of behaviour. This standard for manly achievement was also reflected in the address Sir Astley Cooper, as President of the College of Surgeons, would give to those who successfully passed their professional examination:

⁵ [George Henry Lewes], 'The Condition of Authors in England, Germany, and France,' *Fraser's Magazine*, 35 (March 1847), 285-295 (p. 285).

⁶ Samuel Warren, 'Memoirs of the Late John William Smith, of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 61 (February 1847), [132]-161 (p. 161).

Now, gentlemen, give me leave to tell you on what your success in life will depend.

Firstly, upon a good and constantly increasing knowledge of your profession.

Secondly, on industrious discharge of its duties.

Thirdly, upon the preservation of your moral character.

Unless you possess the first, KNOWLEDGE, you ought not to succeed, and no honest man can wish you success.

And unless you preserve your MORAL CHARACTER, even if it were possible that you could succeed, it would be impossible you could be happy.⁷

Cooper enforces a view of professional masculinity which positions success and happiness as the natural outcomes of knowledge, hard work, and moral character. The professional man must maintain gentlemanly qualities, even while facing keen competition for appointments and income. But such a man's class status was highly precarious due to competition and other structural barriers to entry.

Blackwood's also contained more anxious responses to this sudden rash of professionals, suggesting that this new class of worker was not universally welcomed. In October 1841, humorist John Fisher Murray despaired that 'nobody will condescend to work but with their heads' and writes that 'in a little time we shall have neither butcher, nor baker, nor tinker, nor tailor, nor sempstresses, nor cooks [...] As it is, every third man you meet is sure to be one of those worse than useless creatures called professional gentlemen'.⁸ This commentary suggests a cultural anxiety concerning the separation of real gentlemen from upstarts. Murray disparages the new class of clerks as 'useless creatures', the men who would formerly have been 'butcher' and 'baker', but now have entered the lower-middle class. This pressure on the professional ideal from below

⁷ Qtd in [Samuel Warren], 'Sir Astley Cooper,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 65 (April 1849), 491-508 (p. 494). Astley Cooper was known to the Brontë children, with Branwell choosing him to be one of his 'chief men' in the play of the Islanders, as Charlotte recorded in 1829 ('The Origin of the Islanders', *EEW*, I, p. 6).

⁸ [John Fisher Murray], 'The World of London', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 50 (October 1841), 477-489 (p. 482). Earlier this same writer also commented on the competition among the professions: 'it is when we descend to the professions that competition becomes most desperate and produces the most fatal results; we say *descend* to the professions, for what is a profession (*per se*) in the competition of London life, but a passport to poverty, and probably starvation?' (p. 482). This writer is surprisingly cynical throughout, while reflecting common themes of concern regarding the professions.

required the most eminent professions to create exclusionary mechanisms in order to maintain the scarcity that justified the value of the professional man's intellectual services.⁹

Professional Success and Failure in the Brontë Parsonage

Within the Brontës' household, the sisters witnessed two entirely different professional arcs: their father's success and their brother's failure. The Reverend Patrick Brontë experienced an almost ideal rise from son of an Irish agricultural family to school teacher, to Cambridge undergraduate, to perpetual curate of the Church of England. He accomplished an impressive feat of masculine self-making (as evidenced by his changing his surname from Brunty to Brontë at Cambridge, taking on Nelson's title as the Duke of Brontë). This rise was possible only because Patrick Brontë had access to powerful evangelical networks within the Church of England, including his patron the Reverend Thomas Tighe in County Down and his connection to St John's College, Cambridge, which trained many future evangelical clergymen. Some evangelicals, including the vaunted William Wilberforce, provided financial assistance to Patrick during his Cambridge studies.¹⁰ He also benefited from evangelical networks when seeking his clerical livings, especially as evangelical clergymen were seen to be necessary to stem the tide of Dissent in the North. Personal capacity, luck, and access to professional networks helped Patrick Brontë in his rise into professional, middle-class masculinity.

Branwell, as the only son of a newly professional family, was always expected to pursue a professional career, especially as he seemed to be 'a boy of remarkable promise, and, in some ways, of extraordinary precocity of talent'.¹¹ However, with little money and lacking the professional connections which had aided his father, Branwell – like

⁹ Pionke discusses the use of ritual and ceremony as exclusionary mechanisms among Victorian professionals (p. 7).

¹⁰ Barker, pp. 12-13.

¹¹ Gaskell, *Life*, p. 64.

many of Charles Dickens's sons, and like Richard Carstone of *Bleak House* or Trollope's Bertie Stanhope – became a masculine type: the multiply-failed professional. The literariness of his fate is especially apparent in Elizabeth Gaskell's characterisation of Branwell in her *Life*, making him emblematic of a cultural script surrounding professional and manly failure. Gaskell highlights this script in her conclusion that Branwell was unable to enter a profession, and thus attain mature middle-class manliness, due to his 'many failings in moral conduct'.¹² In passing this judgement on Branwell, Gaskell drastically simplifies the forces which made a successful career and settled life impossible for the only Brontë son.

Branwell briefly considered attending the Royal Academy in 1835, when, as a young man of eighteen, he knew he had to 'do something for himself'.¹³ His career, however, was comprised of short, disjointed periods of employment. In 1837 or 1838, he briefly set up a portrait studio in Bradford; then in 1839-1840 he worked as a tutor at Broughton-in-Furness. Following this, he was a railway clerk until 1842, leading Charlotte and Emily to concur that, 'it looks like getting on, at any rate.'¹⁴ Branwell's final position was as tutor at Thorp Green until 1845, when, to the horror of his family, he was sacked once his affair with Lydia Robinson was discovered.

While Branwell's sacking from the Thorp Green post was certainly due to his 'failings in moral conduct', more generally his professional failures are best viewed in

¹² Gaskell, p. 105.

¹³ P. B. Brontë, 'To William Wordsworth, 10 January 1837', *Letters*, I, pp. 160-162 (p. 160). Branwell most likely did not go to London, and so never fell into dissolute behaviour, wasting his father's money there. Juliet Barker notes that this apocryphal Brontë story first originated in Mrs Ellis H. Chadwick's *In the Footsteps of the Brontës* (London, 1914), and was the basis for Winifred Gérin's 'long and elaborate account of Branwell's supposedly disastrous trip to London' in *Branwell Brontë* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1961), which was 'accepted unquestioningly by all subsequent biographers', until Barker clarified the story (pp. 264, 1036n).

¹⁴ C. Brontë, 'To Emily J. Brontë, [?2 April 1841]', *Letters*, I, pp. 251-252 (p. 251). Barker suggests that Branwell was dismissed from his position at Broughton-in-Furness when he was discovered to have fathered an illegitimate child in the village (pp. 390-392). Branwell was dismissed from his second clerking post at Luddenden Foot when a shortfall was discovered in the ledger; though not accused of fraud, Branwell was 'morally and officially' responsible for the missing money (Barker, pp. 439-440).

light of the larger historical shifts towards professional culture and the institutional barriers which made it nearly impossible for many men to gain these highly desirable positions. However, Branwell's struggles do reflect the personal, subjective sources of difficulty regarding work and manliness which the Brontë sisters explore in their fiction. These factors played out within the Brontës' home and across Victorian culture and literature more generally.

After Branwell's final professional failure, he remained at home for the concluding years of his life, failing to gain work, pining for his mistress, habitually indulging in drink and opium, and running up debts. He behaved in a fashion that paralleled that of fictional sons sunk into failure and debauchery. In 1846, Charlotte wrote to her former Roe Head teacher, Margaret Wooley, that 'he never thinks of seeking employment and I begin to fear he has rendered himself incapable of filling any respectable station in life, besides, if money were at his disposal he would only use it to his own injury – the faculty of self-government is, I fear almost destroyed in him.'¹⁵ Charlotte's harsh commentary on Branwell's lack of self-control, his all-consuming appetite, and self-destructive bent anticipates some of the more extreme characters the Brontës would be criticised for depicting in their novels: Hindley Earnshaw, Heathcliff, Arthur Huntingdon. By the middle of 1846, Charlotte reported much worse: 'Branwell declares now that he neither can nor will do anything for himself – good situations have been offered more than once – for which by a fortnight's work he might have qualified himself – but he will do nothing except drink, and make us all wretched.'¹⁶ Branwell, in Charlotte's eyes, has now committed the capital failure of ceasing to *try* to improve his lot, after a year's unemployment, despite being a burden on his sisters and ageing father. Charlotte's distinct lack of sympathy for Branwell may stem from her own professional

¹⁵ C. Brontë, 'To Margaret Wooley, 30 January 1846', *Letters*, I, pp. 447-448 (pp. 447-448).

¹⁶ C. Brontë, 'To Ellen Nussey, 17 June 1846', *Letters*, I, pp. 477-479 (pp. 477-478).

experiences in the months leading up to this June letter to Ellen Nussey – the failure of the sisters’ plan to run their own school, and Charlotte’s inability to find a publisher for *The Professor*.

Branwell analysed his own position in letters to his old friends Francis Grundy and J.B. Leyland, in which Branwell’s tone veers between extreme melancholy and delusive insistence on Mrs Robinson’s continuing love for him; from apologies for his egotism to hopes for work and literary production. Shortly after his disgrace, Branwell wrote to Grundy that ‘he would not wish to live if he did not hope that work and change may yet restore him’.¹⁷ Branwell’s curious reference to himself in the third person suggests the degree of self-alienation he was experiencing at the time. Work is seen here by the unemployed and despairing Branwell as a restorative to manliness and respectability. Though, as his 10 September 1845 letter to J.B. Leyland illustrates, Branwell had not been entirely idle during the weeks following his dismissal. He had been on a voyage to Liverpool and sailed past Wales. As a result of his journey, he had a poem inspired by the peak Penmaenmawr published in the *Halifax Guardian* on 20 December 1845. He had also written what he estimated to be the first volume of a three-volume novel – the fragment known as *And the Weary Are at Rest*, discussed in Chapter Two.¹⁸

Later he would again assert that ‘active employment would be [his] greatest cure and blessing’, and still later wrote, ‘I know, only that it is time for me to be something when I am nothing.’¹⁹ While Branwell did eventually sink into despair and addiction, even in early 1847 he still held out hope for the masculinising power of work to turn his life around. In these statements redolent of his perceived emasculation, Branwell seems

¹⁷ P.B. Brontë, ‘Branwell Brontë to Francis Grundy, [October 1845]’, *Letters*, I, pp. 427-428 (p. 428).

¹⁸ P.B. Brontë, ‘Branwell Brontë to J.B. Leyland, 10 September [?1845]’, *Letters*, I, pp. 423-424 (p. 423).

¹⁹ P.B. Brontë, ‘Branwell Brontë to J.B. Leyland, [?25 November 1845]’, *Letters*, I, pp. 439-440 (p. 439); ‘Branwell Brontë to J.B. Leyland, [24 January 1847]’, *Letters*, I, pp. 512-514 (p. 513).

to echo Thomas Carlyle's Gospel of Work, by which men are made manly through labour: 'All work, even cotton-spinning is noble; work alone is noble.'²⁰ If a man cannot work, 'he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled.'²¹ Branwell, it would seem, was repeatedly unable to fulfill his destiny as a man, and was unable to act, to become 'something' in the end. Like so many young men – real and fictional – he instead 'puff[ed]', 'sputter[ed]', and sank into Thackeray's 'great ocean of life'.²²

Surrounded as they were by this larger professional culture and having so closely witnessed examples of success and extreme failure by their father and brother, respectively, the Brontës were understandably preoccupied with masculinity and professional challenges. Charlotte wrote of William Crimsworth's struggle to identify, if not a vocation, then a career that would allow him to exercise his strengths, while *Jane Eyre*'s bully John Reed is a debauched young man who, even with the help of his father's friends, does not have the self-control necessary to succeed as a barrister. Emily writes of the twisted way in which Linton Heathcliff, effeminate and a scion of the hated Lintons, cannot possibly live up to Heathcliff's paternal expectations. More commonly, the Brontës write about male anxieties caused by the close link between gender identity, social position, and work. Even once a man achieves a professional or other position, constant fear of bankruptcy (in the case of Robert Moore in *Shirley*) or emasculation (as in the case of his brother Louis), or lack of fulfilment (in the cases of William Crimsworth, St John in *Jane Eyre*, and Anne's Gilbert Markham of *Tenant*) inevitably create tension between men and the masculine ideals they are expected to fulfill.

²⁰ Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, ed. by Chris R. Vanden Bossche, Joel J. Brattin, and D.J. Trela (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 155.

²¹ Carlyle, p. 157.

²² [Thackeray], p. 43.

This chapter examines the Brontës' depictions of teachers, clergymen, and doctors in their published novels.²³ Teachers feature distinctively in the Brontës' novels, certainly due to the three sisters' personal experiences as school teachers and governesses. From William Crimsworth in *The Professor* to Louis Moore in *Shirley* and M. Paul Emanuel in *Villette*, Charlotte depicts male teachers struggling to assert their masculinity in a low-status occupation. In these representations of male teachers, the schoolroom becomes an arena for the exercise of masculine dominance over students. The medical profession is also well-represented in the Brontës' novels by the physician Dr John Graham Bretton, whose name was inspired by Dr Thomas John Graham, the author of *Modern Domestic Medicine*, which was owned and heavily annotated by Patrick Brontë. The novels also feature numerous other medical men, ranging in social status from the lowly apothecary who sees to the young Jane Eyre, to Dr Kenneth, and to the country surgeon in *Wuthering Heights*, to the physician who sees Caroline Helstone in *Shirley*.

Pedagogical Mastery: The Male Teacher in Charlotte Brontë's Novels

Charlotte's long-standing interest in professional men finds expression in her first novel, *The Professor*. According to the Author's Preface, this novel is deeply concerned with work and professional masculinity:

I said to myself that my hero should work his way through life as I had seen real living men work theirs – [...] that no sudden turns should lift him in a moment to wealth and high station – that whatever small competency he might gain should be won by the sweat of his brow – [...] As Adam's Son he should share Adam's doom – Labour throughout life and a mixed and moderate cup of enjoyment. (*The Professor*, 3)

²³ Professionalisation and paternalism within the landowning and industrial classes will be discussed in the next chapter.

While Sara Pearson is correct in asserting that the Preface sets the stage for a ‘novel of vocation’, the fact remains that this authorial statement of purpose is not a very accurate preparation for the novel to come.²⁴ Brontë wrote the Preface retrospectively and commented as a published author, so she was in part responding to critics who had found fault with *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, while also reconstructing her original motivations for writing.²⁵ Possibly, Charlotte had even shifted her ‘intentions’ to soften the more subversive edges of her first novel. She comments on using a ‘set of principles’ for her narrative that would be approved of in theory, presumably by her moralistic, conventional critics (p. 3). William Crimsworth is defined as the ‘hero’ of the piece, and could be seen in the light of a self-improving protagonist.²⁶ In other ways, he is much more ambivalent and repressed than Mr Rochester, who even sympathetic Victorian critics had found difficult to identify as a romantic hero.²⁷ Brontë appeals to the realism of her novel in citing the ‘real living men’ who labour as her protagonist labours, while at the same time identifying work as a male-gendered vocation. This is curious, given that the truly revolutionary depiction of work in the novel is that of Frances Henri, who continues to work after marriage and motherhood.

Where Charlotte’s description diverges most from the novel she has, in fact, written, is in her disavowal of ‘sudden turns’ leading to her hero’s advancement. William Crimsworth benefits from many ‘sudden turns’, and because the novel compresses his working life, the reader cannot help but feel his ascent into the upper echelons of Brussels teaching has been accomplished with surprising ease. This is one of

²⁴ Sara Pearson, ‘Constructing Masculine Narrative: Charlotte Brontë’s *The Professor*’, in *Women Constructing Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters, 1750-2000*, ed. by Sarah S.G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010) pp. 83-99 (p. 84).

²⁵ The Preface was probably written in late 1849 or early 1850, shortly after the publication of *Shirley*. The manuscript of *The Professor* was probably completed in June 1846.

²⁶ Heather Glen argues that *The Professor* is deeply influenced by the Brontës’ experience of the early Victorian culture of self-improvement in *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁷ See for example A. W. Fonblanque, ‘From an unsigned review’, *Examiner* (27 November 1847): 756–7’, rpt. Allott, pp. 76–78 (p. 77).

several ambiguities thrown up by the novel. Another offered by the Preface is the insistence that William's success is won by the 'sweat of his brow', which suggests a kind of physicality is inherent in William's mental labour as a teacher. Ruth argues that Victorian professionals tried to present their work as 'real labour', even when it was accomplished with primarily mental resources. For instance, Ruth argues that Dickens seeks to legitimise David Copperfield's career as an author by equating writing to deadline with working under 'the reliable clock time of industrial labour'.²⁸ These strategies of equating mental toil with physical labour and factory time, respectively, attempt to shore up the professional's status as a true worker, in answer to critics such as the 1841 *Blackwood's* writer who was so disparaging towards those who 'will [not] condescend to work but with their heads'.²⁹

The least accurate aspect of Charlotte's Preface is the prescription that her hero will '[l]abour throughout life' (William and Frances retire at about thirty) with 'a mixed and moderate cup of enjoyment'. At the novel's surface level, Charlotte seems to focus only on William's staggering professional and financial success. Submerged within this narrative, however, are hints that William still suffers from internal turmoil regarding his self-control, even after he has laid down his professional cares. He directs his need to master others towards his son and, structurally and metaphorically, towards Hunsden, who represents a threat to his control over his son and the equilibrium of William's sexuality and self-control, conflicts discussed in Chapters Three and Four of this study. These issues also deeply inform Charlotte's depictions of the tutor Louis Moore and teacher M. Paul. In this section, I will compare Charlotte's three male teachers, considering the intersections between their teaching, individual psychology, and romantic relationships.

²⁸ Ruth, p. 72.

²⁹ [Murray], p. 482.

As a narrator, William Crimsworth is something of an oddity in the way he recounts the business of his day-to-day life. He rarely reports on his lessons or his students' progress.³⁰ And he most certainly does not ruminate on what an 1856 number of *The School and Teacher* defined as 'that contact of mind with mind, of heart with heart, that electric living, loving, sympathy without which he [the teacher] cannot truly teach or train the charge committed to him'.³¹ Rather, through William's highly selective narration, he presents himself in the act of disciplining students. In his first class teaching boys at M. Pelet's school, his initial thinking that he must 'at once [...] take up an advantageous position' resembles the stratagem of a military tactician more than that of a teacher (p. 53). He uses language as a tool of dominance and makes the students read in English from *The Vicar of Wakefield*, after which poor performance, he pronounces their work hideous. He reports that the students 'were impressed, and in the way I wished them to be' (p. 53). Presumably, they have learned to expect and, in future, attempt to avoid, the scorn of their teacher. William then proceeds to cement his superiority in the classroom by giving his own reading of the passage in his native English, an easy feat for him, but impossible for his Belgian students to replicate (p. 53).

William appears deficient as a teacher, seeking only to cow his students, rather than enlighten them. When situated within early nineteenth-century attitudes towards school teaching, however, his stance takes on a different complexion. In the early- to mid-nineteenth century, teaching was only just beginning to professionalise. The schoolmaster had been viewed with derision, and teaching had been seen as a last resort

³⁰ The exception to this rule is William's careful observation of Frances Henri's progress under his tutelage, but this notably takes place within the context of his grooming her to be his future wife.

³¹ J. C. Miller, 'The Teacher's Mission: A Sermon Preached at St Martin's Church, Birmingham Before the Associated Body of Church Schoolmasters, on Thursday, December 27, 1855', *The School and the Teacher*, 3 (March 1856), 39-44 (p. 43).

after failure in other careers, or as a result of deformity, illness, or enfeeblement in age.³² H. Byerley Thomson, a jurist, suggests in *The Choice of a Profession* (1857) that while impecunious barristers, clergymen, or surgeons could still be considered genteel, any man ‘though a gentleman by birth, education, and profession, who makes himself independent and useful by keeping a school [...] will be thought, even by his best friends to have lost caste’.³³ Idle or bankrupted men in the law, medicine, or the Church are thus accorded gentility on account of their social standing, while an autonomous and ‘useful’ teacher is seen as emasculated and *déclassé*. Schoolteachers were further criticised for using corporal punishment to bring order to unruly classrooms.³⁴ Furthermore, William’s initial position as an usher or assistant teacher was disdained. In 1834, *The Quarterly Journal of Education* suggested that ‘[a]ny one who can command a decent suit of clothes, a guinea or two for the school-agent, and a sufficient degree of boldness and impudence to answer a few paltry questions, may get a situation *somewhere* as a school-assistant’.³⁵ William is the perfect illustration of this assertion, having no training as a teacher and only his English fluency and Yorke Hunsden’s recommendation in his favour. From this low position, William must employ special measures to ensure others interpret him as a professional and a gentleman.

William Crimsworth, Louis Moore in *Shirley*, and M. Paul Emanuel in *Villette* reflect the larger professionalising movement within teaching at mid-century. The journal *The School and the Teacher* aimed to distance the mid-century teacher from ‘the incompetent pedagogues of a bygone day’, and asserted a teacher’s right to claim

³² Marianne A. Larsen, *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher: A Comparative New Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 63.

³³ H. Byerley Thomson, *The Choice of a Profession* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857), p. 320.

³⁴ Larsen, pp. 64-66. Marianne Thormählen notes that while educational theorists were united in their condemnation of corporal punishment, a large gap existed between theory and schoolroom practices on this point (*The Brontës and Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 182).

³⁵ ‘English Boarding-Schools’, *Quarterly Journal of Education*, 7 (January-April 1834), 36-47 (p. 40).

gentlemanly status and to see himself as part of a larger, respected profession in the future:

It is no strange thing that men who in education, tastes and habits have all the qualifications of ‘gentlemen’ should regard themselves as worthy of something very much higher than the treatment of a servant and the wages of a mechanic. What in short the teacher desires is that his ‘calling’ shall rank as a ‘profession’; that the name of the schoolmaster shall ring as grandly on the ear as that of ‘clergyman’ or ‘solicitor’.³⁶

The negative early Victorian social constructions of the teacher, in combination with practitioners’ hopes that one day they would be accepted as gentlemen, inform Charlotte’s depiction of the three male teachers in her work, and the ways these men seek to master themselves as part of a performance of masculine professionalism.

Like William Crimsworth, Louis Moore in *Shirley* must demonstrate masculine mastery. Louis’s role as a tutor places him in a position similar to that of a governess and thus feminises him, strips him of his class status, and makes him next-to-invisible to the members of the genteel Sympson family. Louis exists ‘outside’ the ‘family circle’, acting instead as a ‘satellite [...] connected, yet apart; ever attendant – ever distant’ (p. 379). To the Sympson daughters, his professional role allows him neither personality nor sexuality: ‘the daughters saw in him an abstraction, not a man [...] The most spirited sketch from his fingers was a blank to their eyes: the most original observation from his lips fell unheard on their ears’ (p. 379). His role also denies him the trappings of mature, autonomous manliness, forcing him to ‘sit habitually at another man’s table’, to be a mere ‘appendage of a family’, rather than head of his own (p. 514). In some ways, Louis’s role is more disadvantaged than William’s as an usher, because Louis is not respected by his employers and has no real hope of advancing or finding fulfilment in his

³⁶ ‘On Cultivating a Taste for Literature’, *The School and the Teacher*, 3 (January 1856), 1-5 (p. 1), qtd in Ruth, p. 40. A number of teachers’ journals were established around this time: *The Quarterly Journal of Education* (from the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge) was established in 1831, the London School Society’s *The Scholastic Journal and Magazine of Education* in 1840, *The English Journal of Education* in 1843, *The Educational Record* (by the British and Foreign School Society) in 1848, *The Educator; or, Home, The School, and the Teacher* in 1851, and *The School and the Teacher* itself, in 1854.

work, while William does gain hard-earned respect for his teaching. Louis's livelihood, rather than conferring class status and social authority, dehumanises him to all members of the Sympson family except for his pupil, Henry, and Shirley.

Villette's Paul Emanuel is likewise characterised as a controlling teacher, with 'a love of power, [...] an eager grasp after supremacy, [...] like Bonaparte' (p. 349). Unlike William Crimsworth and Louis Moore, he does not act in this way to assert masculine authority unavailable to him in his professional role. Rather, because M. Paul is robbed of agency in his personal life, he uses his professional reputation and grandiose manner to reclaim his sense of self-control. He lives in a boys' college rather than his own home, because he still financially supports the family and confessor of his long-dead betrothed, Justine-Marie. For this reason, M. Paul confirms his status through institutional rituals of his own devising, such as his taking on the direction of the play for Madame's fête and the ceremony in which the students and teachers present him with flowers for his own fête. Pionke argues that Victorian doctors, lawyers, clergymen, and parliamentarians used ritual and ceremony to confirm their social status and to differentiate between levels within a profession.³⁷ M. Paul, as a member of a professionalising occupation, and a disempowered individual, must create his own rituals to achieve this confirmation of his social standing and masculine identity. He embraces publicity, such as when he gives the *discours* on the occasion of a royal birthday. This is an opportunity to perform control and self-confidence and thus obscure his barren personal life, which has been sacrificed to the institutional structures of the Roman Catholic Church. In his teaching and public life, M. Paul 'detest[s] spur or curb: against whatever [is] urgent or obligatory, he [is] sure to revolt' (p. 324). Lucy reports that, contrary to the ideals of masculine behaviour in this period, 'suppression was not much in [M. Paul's] habits', which on a surface level

³⁷ Pionke, p. 8.

makes M. Paul a very different character from the strictly self-controlled teachers William Crimsworth and Louis Moore. However, by giving vent to his passion and frustrations at school, M. Paul is reacting to the sacrifices demanded of him by the Church and the family of Justine-Marie. Furthermore, M. Paul's mercurial tendencies have a pedagogical purpose.

Classroom Management and Pedagogical Systems

Charlotte Brontë's male teachers exhibit their mastery most obviously in their acts of managing students in the classroom and their teaching methods, though they differ significantly in their pedagogical systems. Because William is in a low-status career but desires to maintain both his sense of independence and gentlemanliness, he aims to control his classroom through personal authority. For these reasons, William is little concerned with his students' progress. While education theorists, such as Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, cautioned against making learning too easy – 'how will he [the student] feel when he must force his way through thorns and briars' in life? – William 'smooth[es] to the utmost the path of learning, remove[s] every pebble from the track' (p. 56).³⁸ Because William decides his Belgian students have 'generally weak' intellectual capabilities and 'feeble reflective powers' but strong 'animal propensities', he does not challenge his students unduly, so as to avoid the 'insubordination' which had undone previous English masters. Here is his own description of his method:

When I had brought down my lesson to the lowest level of my dullest pupil's capacity, when I had shewn myself the mildest, the most tolerant of masters, a word of impertinence, a movement of disobedience changed me at once into a despot – I offered then but one alternative; submission and acknowledgement of error or ignominious expulsion. (*The Professor*, 56-57)

³⁸ Maria and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 2 vols (London: J. Johnson, 1798), I, p. 54. The Edgeworths remained important pedagogical influences at mid-century. In contrast to Crimsworth's manner, Anne's Agnes Grey refuses to make education too easy. Though Mrs Murray expressly commands Agnes to 'prepare and smooth the path of learning till [Matilda] could glide along it without the least exertion to herself, Agnes notes, 'I could not, for nothing can be learnt to any purpose without some little exertion on the part of the learner' (*Agnes Grey*, p. 64).

William's system has a limited pedagogical value. Marianne Thormählen writes in *The Brontës and Education* that many nineteenth-century educational theorists stressed the importance of a teacher gaining his or her students' obedience as a first step towards guiding the students through specific subject learning. It is this first pedagogical step – creating tractable students – which, Thormählen argues, Anne's Agnes Grey never accomplishes with the Bloomfield children, to her cost.³⁹ William masters his classroom early on, but he does not go much further. He does not attempt to improve the character of his reportedly lazy and stupid pupils, nor does he attempt to stretch their intellectual capabilities. His system is constructed solely to confirm his status as 'master' of the classroom. While he remains 'mild' and 'tolerant', he has the personal enjoyment of being just as condescending as he had earlier felt Yorke Hunsden had been towards him on their first meeting (p. 22). William's only alternative role is to play a 'despot' who demands 'submission' or 'expulsion', which recalls William's earlier descriptions of his brother Edward as a 'tyrant' and his former submissive relationship to him in his hated role of underling (pp. 55, 26). William's experience as a factory 'slave' is reflected in distorted form as he takes on a professionally-sanctioned form of tyranny over his students.

Louis Moore's teaching methods vary depending on whether he is teaching the lamed and sensitive Henry Sympton or the rebellious Shirley. Louis has formed a close bond with Henry, whom he teaches thoughtfully, perhaps because like Louis, he will have to depend on his wits for his success in life. Henry is heir to Sympton Grove and the Sympton fortune, but cannot participate in the traditional physical, militaristic pursuits of a landed gentleman.⁴⁰ The only time Louis treats Henry sternly is when his pupil praises Shirley overmuch, in a way that might suggest a rival: 'Mr Moore looked

³⁹ Thormählen, p. 171.

⁴⁰ His mother intends him to be a clergyman; Shirley encourages him to become a poet (pp. 379, 388).

and spoke sternly – sourly. Henry knew this mood: it was a rare one with his tutor; but when it came he had an awe of it: he obeyed’ (p. 392). Louis’s manner with Shirley is more combative because of the sexual tension between them and his constant desire to curb her rebelliousness. During the action of the novel, Shirley has come into her wealth and is no longer Louis’s pupil. By inviting Shirley to practise her French with Henry, Louis attempts to practise a nostalgic pedagogy, to recreate the more obvious mastery by which Louis had ruled Shirley in her schooldays.

M. Paul, ‘the school autocrat’, chiefly assumes mastery of his students by inspiring fear and confidence by turns (p. 153). For example, Lucy reports that Ginevra Fanshawe ‘used to profess herself frightened almost into hysterics at the sound of his step or voice’ (p. 129). His mastery is proven by the otherwise apparently lazy and unwholesome students’ fear of misbehaving in his presence. During the dancing at Madame Beck’s fête, Lucy reports ‘they no more dare betray their natural coarseness in M. Paul’s presence, than they [would] [...] laugh in his face during a stormy apostrophe, or speak above their breath while some crisis of irritability was covering his human visage with the mask of an intelligent tiger’ (p. 143). M. Paul’s idiosyncratic method of teaching is best seen in Lucy’s description of how he taught her arithmetic. While she struggled with her task at the commencement of his tuition, he ‘was very kind, very good, very forbearing [...] words can hardly do justice to his tenderness and helpfulness’ (p. 351). Once Lucy begins to master her subject, however, M. Paul’s ‘kindness bec[omes] sternness’: ‘Sarcasms of which the severity amazed and puzzled me, harassed my ears [...] I was vaguely threatened with, I know not what doom, if I ever trespassed the limits proper to my sex, and conceived a contraband appetite for unfeminine knowledge’ (p. 351). Despite the apparent bullying in M. Paul’s manner and his supposedly misogynistic views on the attainments suitable to women, his change in

manner spurs on his newly confident pupil, as Lucy thereafter reports: ‘Yet, when M. Paul sneered at me, [...] his injustice stirred in me ambitious wishes – it imparted a strong stimulus – it gave wings to aspiration’ (p. 351). By challenging (and insulting) Lucy, M. Paul has in fact given her a motive to work hard, in order to oppose him. Thus, both kindness and veritable cruelty seem to have their uses with pupils at different stages of learning when applied by M. Paul, who, perhaps alone of Charlotte Brontë’s male teachers, seems to have a true vocation for instruction.

Pupil-Teacher Romance and Erotic Pedagogy

All three male teachers romantically pursue their students and these romances occur chiefly within the schoolroom, the space controlled by the teacher, which in Charlotte’s novels is highly eroticised.⁴¹ The power structures of these romances are based on dominance and submission, and relate to the teacher’s primary professional duties on every point. For instance, the male teacher in Charlotte Brontë’s novels requires the existence of ‘faults’ within the intended beloved, so that he may have the privilege of correction, in a sense creating his own ideal woman, as in the myth of Galatea and Pygmalion.⁴² William Crimsworth is initially attracted to his employer Zoraïde Reuter because he perceives her to be faulty and thus requiring a moral re-education: ‘Supposing she were to marry an English and Protestant husband, would she not [...] quickly acknowledge the superiority of right over expediency, honesty over policy? It would be worth a man’s while to try the experiment’ (p. 91). Louis Moore confesses to his

⁴¹ In discussion of *The Professor*, Carl Plasa uses the term ‘marital pedagogy’ to describe William Crimsworth and Frances Henri’s relationship. I have borrowed and broadened the term to apply to the similar relationships in *Shirley* and *Villette* and to emphasise the sexual, pre-marital training which seems to me an integral element of these relationships (*Critical Issues: Charlotte Brontë* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 77).

⁴² *Shirley* and *Louis* make reference to this myth in *Shirley*. Patricia Menon discusses Pygmalion and Galatea in *Austen, Eliot, and Charlotte Brontë and the Mentor-Lover* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). She also outlines the eighteenth-century development of the pupil-teacher relationship in texts such as *Sir Charles Grandison*, which we know Charlotte read.

notebook that Shirley's 'faults, or at least her foibles' appeal to him 'for a most selfish, but deeply-natural reason: these faults are the steps by which I mount to ascendancy over her [...] [S]he must be bent [...] she must be curbed' (p. 437). Similarly, in *Villette*, M. Paul likes to find fault with Lucy, and she knows it, reporting that 'a knot of blunders, was sweet to him as a cluster of nuts' (p. 349). He also strangely criticises Lucy, arguing she needs to be 'kept down', which is curious, considering that she appears cold and self-contained to the other characters in the novel. M. Paul perceives Lucy's potential for imagination and passion, and, in his contrary way, tries to coax her into acting on it. Even though arguments with M. Paul often upset Lucy and sometimes drive her to tears, this combativeness over her 'faults' acts as sexual sparring for both parties. In all these cases, the male teacher takes on the role of the correcting, dominant master, with heightened erotic energy.

Pleasurable tension within this erotic power structure seems necessary in order for the male teacher to reconfirm his mastery. For instance, Lucy reports that, like Bonaparte, M. Paul 'was a man not always to be submitted to. Sometimes it was needful to resist; it was right to stand still, to look up into his eyes and tell him that his requirements went beyond reason – that his absolutism verged on tyranny' (p. 350). M. Paul requires a certain degree of energetic repulse from Lucy so that he may then make a show of asking forgiveness and righting his wrong.

These pupil-teacher relationships rely on the teacher's surveillance, in which his expected watchfulness over his students is translated into the male gaze. This level of observation (or spying) is possible because teachers are expected to be watchful within the compass of the school room. William's attempted courtship of Zoraïde fails in large part because she is his employer and controls the space in which he works. William has more success in his courtship of his student Frances Henri, who is willing to let him be

her master. William cultivates a newly ambitious Frances and watches her change, intellectually and physically, ‘much as a gardener watches the growth of a precious plant’ (p. 123).⁴³

Louis similarly watches Shirley, partly out of jealousy, as he fears she will accept the hand of one of her aristocratic suitors. Within the schoolroom, he draws on his old control of Shirley to authorise his attentions to her. The ownership of space is problematic in this novel, because while the schoolroom is Louis’s domain, it is encased within Fieldhead, Shirley’s country seat. Access to smaller domestic and intellectual spaces is mutually combative. Henry and Caroline ransack Louis’s desk, revealing that he has kept Shirley’s old copy-books, while Shirley is forced to show an interest in Louis by opening the lock of his portfolio – a lock she had spoiled in the past (perhaps in trying to unlawfully break into this private, creative space). Later, Louis steals Shirley’s unattended keys, so that she will have to come to him to ask for them back.

On Lucy’s return to the pensionnat after her nervous collapse, she discovers she is surveilled not only by Madame Beck, but also by M. Paul, whom she deems a ‘male spy’: ‘as I looked up a cap-tassel, a brow, two eyes filled a pane of that window; the fixed gaze of those two eyes hit right against my own glance: they were watching me’ (p. 231). M. Paul is depicted as a disembodied watching presence, chiefly signified by his two eyes, which meet Lucy’s with violence. M. Paul’s watching is of course later revealed to be a sign of his affection for Lucy and his envy of her preference for Dr John. Furthermore, while M. Paul’s manliness is challenged by his poverty and the fact that he has no real home, the windows of his rooms overlook the garden of the pensionnat and serve ‘virtually for a post of observation’, which allows M. Paul knowledge of Lucy’s movements (pp. 363, 365).

⁴³ In an interesting textual echo, Lucy makes a point of mentioning that M. Paul is a keen gardener in *Villette* (pp. 410-411).

To a greater degree than either Louis Moore or William Crimsworth, M. Paul has control over space in the pensionnat. He owns his classroom, moves freely throughout the school, and even takes possession of Lucy's desk, a fact she conceals for a significant portion of the narrative, just as she had earlier concealed her knowledge of Dr John's identity. When she reveals that M. Paul has long had access to her possessions, it becomes clear this is not a violation but rather an integral aspect of their courtship:

[H]e left signs of each visit palpable and unmistakeable [...] I saw the brownie's work, in exercises left overnight full of faults, and found next morning carefully corrected: I profited by his capricious good-will in loans [of books] full welcome and refreshing [...] Impossible to doubt the source whence these treasures flowed [...] – *they smelt of cigars*. (*Villette*, 343)

M. Paul is here compared to a helpful fairy, and the gifts he leaves Lucy are partially an act of continuing education, as he leaves new books for her to read and corrects her exercises. However, Lucy shortly afterwards reveals that he also leaves her sweets, so romance and instruction are thoroughly intertwined. Equally, the mention of the smell of cigars has a sexual cast, because this is a uniquely masculine scent in a girls' school.

The male teacher in Charlotte Brontë's novels requires access to the mind of his intended, which is accomplished in all three novels by the writing or performance of the *devoir*. The teacher also exercises dominance through knowledge of his native tongue, which is superior to that of his female student, who must struggle to compose in a second language. William Crimsworth intends to judge the quality of Frances's inner, intellectual qualities by means of her first English *devoir*: 'Now [...] I shall see a glimpse of what she really is; I shall get an idea of the nature and extent of her powers [...] if she has any mind, here will be a reflection of it' (p. 110). The female student's writing thus becomes an entry point to intellectual attributes otherwise inaccessible to the teacher.

In most appearances of the *devoir*, Charlotte foregrounds the act of performance, in part because the reader nearly always experiences the male scrutiny that accompanies

the revelation of psychology from the female protagonist's point of view. In *Shirley*, Charlotte creates a degree of mutuality between heroine and hero in the *devoir* scene, in which Louis recites for Shirley her old *devoir* 'The First Blue-stocking'. Power, authority, and voice pass back and forth between male and female protagonists in this highly charged scene. Shirley must recite Bossuet's 'Le Cheval Dompté', which had once been a punishment piece to learn by heart, but she can only do so successfully after listening to Louis recite it in French: 'She took the word up from his lips: she took his very tone; she seized his very accents; she delivered the periods as he had delivered them: she reproduced his manner, his pronunciation, his expression' (p. 412). In this way, Shirley 'reproduces' Louis's performance, proving her skill in his language. She not only replicates Louis's performance, she also finds 'lively excitement in the pleasure of making his language her own' (p. 413). They exchange the roles of performer and audience, though Louis always retains ultimate control over the nostalgic schoolroom scene he has orchestrated.

In *Villette*, M. Paul's decision to include Lucy in the school's public examinations has negative consequences and is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of Lucy's character. M. Paul thrives on publicity, performance, and external validation, which is why his role as teacher suits him so well. Through the public examinations each year, he receives reflected, indirect confirmation of his labours through his pupils' performance. M. Paul desires to display Lucy as the product of his tuition and careful grooming. He also, mistakenly, believes that she will enjoy sharing her accomplishments with others and will give a virtuoso performance, as she had done when playing the fop at Madame's fête. However, Lucy cannot perform spontaneously (even her performance at the fête was the result of coaching and memorisation, however compressed the period of practice had been), and must perform for the men who had harassed her on her first night in

Brussels. She ends by writing an impromptu piece on Human Justice, which illustrates a figure of female rage surrounded by anarchic, immoral humanity, suggesting Lucy's view of her wrongs. This use of the *devoir* creates a greater intimacy between Lucy and M. Paul, not because of the access he has gained to her inner thoughts and feelings, but because he adjusts his expectations of her.

Fasick suggests that male teachers in the Victorian novel are worthy of study because their 'ambiguous, often *in loco parentis* relationship with their students makes them compellingly liminal figures between domesticity and professionalism'.⁴⁴ For Fasick, the teacher appears to be an ideal masculine profession because, within her Carlylean framework, 'work is best when it most resembles and most encapsulates the values of an idealized domesticity'.⁴⁵ In Charlotte's *The Professor* and *Shirley*, however, teaching does not embrace idealised domesticity. Rather, I would argue that the 'ambiguous', 'liminal' nature of the male teacher's role as father figure within a homelike school (or indeed another man's home) instead makes his alienation from both a respected professional status and domestic masculinity more pronounced in these novels. Just before the proposal scene at the end of *Shirley*, Shirley and Louis have an illuminating exchange which demonstrates this alienation. Shirley begins by berating Louis for his suggestion that she could improve Sir Philip Nunnely once married: '[I]t is like a tutor to talk of the "satisfaction of teaching" – I suppose *you* think it the finest employment in the world [...] If you were a woman you would school Monsieur, *voire mari*, charmingly: it would just suit you; schooling is your vocation' (p. 518). Louis feels that Shirley is disparaging his status as an impoverished tutor, while mocking his interest in her and refusing to reciprocate. While tutoring is certainly not Louis's 'vocation', his true vocation, it appears, is as husband to Shirley, where he can apply the mastery

⁴⁴ Fasick, p. 176. Fasick only briefly discusses teachers in her monograph's conclusion.

⁴⁵ Fasick, p. 7.

necessitated by his role as tutor to correcting Shirley's 'faults' and 'foibles' for the rest of his life. Louis later declares his intentions while also defining his own masculinity: '[F]or the first time I stand before you *myself*. I have flung off the tutor, and beg to introduce you to the man: and remember, he is a gentleman' (pp. 520). Louis must 'fling off' the emasculated role of tutor to stand before Shirley and ask her to marry him as 'a man', a sexual being, with at least the potential for autonomy. Louis reminds Shirley quite pointedly that he is also a 'gentleman', a term, as shown earlier, deeply implicated in Victorian class, gender, and professional status. Louis feels he cannot marry Shirley as a tutor, even though this role – its power dynamics, its necessary proximity and intimacy – facilitated their courtship.

For William Crimsworth, his role as fatherly guide within the classroom is undercut by his need for absolute dominance. William, like Louis, uses pedagogical romance as a means of yoking professional mastery and male sexuality together as a way of escaping from the role of teacher for the (apparently) more stable masculine roles of husband and father. In Louis's case, the mastery born out of his teaching also spills over into his future social role as landowner and magistrate upon his marriage to Shirley, just as William Crimsworth applies his controlling tendencies to his son's upbringing.

It is only in Charlotte's final novel *Villette* that she depicts a male teacher for whom teaching is a vocation and a profession that can be wedded to domestic tendencies. Unlike William and Louis, M. Paul does not willingly abandon teaching, but rather must give it up in order to marry Lucy. Teaching has given M. Paul the resources and rituals necessary to consolidate his masculine identity and to court Lucy. He must make his fortune in the colonies, however, in order to free himself from the Roman Catholic *junta* who would keep him impoverished, and finally begin his own family life. It is in M. Paul's teaching and his gift to Lucy of a school and home that the true rewards of

teaching and domesticity are presented in Charlotte's fiction. Elsewhere, teaching is seen as emasculating, but for these male characters pedagogical romance is presented as a productive means of escape from a career structure which, in the early Victorian period, did not yet provide the respect, masculine status, or social capital to be found in fully professionalised roles.

Clergymen and Physicians

It is curious that two of Charlotte's most intriguing professional men have seldom been compared: St John Rivers, the parish priest-cum-missionary of *Jane Eyre* and Dr John, the vain, petted son who nonetheless selflessly serves the poor of Brussels in *Villette*. Both these male characters are the conventionally attractive foil for the novels' more unconventional romantic heroes: Mr Rochester and M. Paul. Both men's professional careers are highly vexed, especially in relation to women, whom they rely on for their sense of masculine, professional authority. St John and Dr John find their professionalism threatened by their sexuality.

In the following section, I will use these two male characters to consider how Charlotte and Anne Brontë positioned their clerical and medical characters during the early Victorian period of professionalisation.⁴⁶ At this time, clergymen and doctors shared some key social roles and challenges, and each used language associated with the other profession in attempting to define the purpose of their own. For instance, in the 1850 Hunterian Oration, Frederic Skey positioned doctors as having the high calling to *minister* to the body and mind, using the medical tools of science and morality:

⁴⁶ *Wuthering Heights* will not feature in this section because Emily only briefly mentions the curate who teaches Cathy and Heathcliff. Dr Kenneth, as the only representative of the medical profession, serves primarily as a harbinger of death in his few walk-on appearances.

Into his [the doctor's] charge, the father resigns the health of his wife and children. Into the privacy of his dwelling [...] he is admitted at all hours, [...] where he may exercise even a more than parental authority [...] He becomes a familiar, an adviser, and a friend. His ear is the deposit of private histories and family secrets; he has extensive rights and peculiar privileges [...] Such are the intellectual, and such the moral requisites of our profession – such the qualifications, and such the duties of his who, beyond any competitor, ministers to the physical and moral sufferings of humanity.⁴⁷

Skey emphasises the doctor's privileged access to the domestic sphere and his responsibilities of paternal care, as well as an 'even more than parental authority'. Not mentioned is the fact that the father himself, the head of household, must also resign his own care into the hands of the doctor if he falls ill, assuming a feminised, passive position. Skey magnifies the duties of the profession by universalising this single family sphere, attesting to the doctor's duty to 'minister' to humanity writ large, 'beyond any competitor', presumably clergymen, whose traditional remit – the soul – the physician was beginning to claim. This is echoed in the anonymous volume *Prayers for the Use of the Medical Profession* (1842), with an even stronger religious colouring. Take for instance the prayer 'For Kindness towards the Sick': 'that I may perform all the works of healing seriously and piously; [...] that the duties of our calling may be [...] healthful to the Church and State'.⁴⁸ Whilst suggesting a mixture of pious duty to God and professional conduct, this prayer also allies the writer with the powerful structures of both the church and state. As I will discuss below, medical language and metaphors similarly appear in clerical handbooks.

In Charlotte's and Anne's novels, doctors' and clergymen's access to the homes of their patients and parishioners gives them unparalleled access to the bodies and inner selves of those they serve and influence. This freedom of movement can, however, lead to a problematic fragmentation of a man's sense of self as a professional, a family man,

⁴⁷ [Frederic Skey], 'The Hunterian Oration for 1850', *Examiner* (16 March 1850), 165 (p. 165).

⁴⁸ *Prayers for the Use of the Medical Profession* (London: Rivingtons; Churchill, 1842), p. 28.

and lover, with different responsibilities towards the people in each sphere of his life. The other danger, encountered by both Dr John and St John Rivers, is the overlap of their personal and professional dealings with women, which opens up possibilities for abuse of their professional authority. I will also consider how the other clergymen in Charlotte's and Anne's novels are depicted, particularly in their professional relationships with women.

The concept of vocation or 'calling' binds these two professions together, as both the Church and medicine deal in idealised conceptions of service. This issue becomes significant when examining St John's decision to become a missionary, and Mr Helstone's lack of clerical vocation in *Shirley*. In St John's case, it is significant that his character has seldom been considered within the specific context of English missionary endeavours, an area which has been largely under-studied in both historical and literary considerations of religion in the Victorian period.

The Brontës knew the personal and professional characters of Anglican clerics well, as they were responsible for entertaining their father's numerous curates over the years. It is not surprising, therefore, that many clergymen appear in the Brontës' novels. However, they are not depicted within the highly politicised and institutional worlds of Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire novels or George Eliot's fiction, which may explain why there is comparatively little criticism on the Brontës' depiction of this figure.⁴⁹

At mid-century, these professions were consciously linked through language and metaphor by doctors and clergymen themselves, as in Skey's Hunterian Oration. When

⁴⁹ Critical work on the clergy in George Eliot's works includes Oliver Lovesay's *The Clerical Character in George Eliot's Fiction* (Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, University of Victoria, 1991). Jill Durey's study, *Trollope and the Church of England* also addresses the role of clergymen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). There is of course a great deal written on the Brontës' engagement with religion in their novels, but little on clergymen, especially within a professional context. Exceptions include Marianne Thormählen's chapters on clergymen generally in the Brontës and St John Rivers specifically in *The Brontës and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Diana Peschier's *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses: The Case of Charlotte Brontë* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); and Jennifer M. Stolpas's article 'Preaching to the Clergy: Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey* as a Treatise on Sermon Style and Delivery', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 31 (2003), 225-240.

describing the clergyman's duty to visit the sick, writers of clerical handbooks often resorted to the medical language of diagnosis and treatment. In his manual for parish work, W. Weldon Champneys noted that '[f]aith in the physician is a very important element in the cure of the patient. We cannot obey thoroughly those whom we do not thoroughly trust, and the sick man should trust his spiritual physician in order to get good from him'.⁵⁰ Champneys even suggested that careful notes should be made of the treatment of idiosyncratic cases, just as a doctor would make.⁵¹ Samuel Best wrote of the clergyman 'divid[ing] and apply[ing], promptly and aptly, the word of God, the pharmacy from whence all his medicines must be derived', while Ashton Ovenden exhorted clergymen to '*follow up*. It is not one prescription that cures the patient; he needs, perhaps, a periodical repetition of the remedy, or of at any rate, some modification by it'.⁵² This use of medical language borrowed the doctor's new social authority and took on the associated notion of scientific and professional objectivity.⁵³

Interestingly, later commentators emphasised the differences between the two professions, as each solidified its standing in society. Charles Kingsley, in a sermon titled 'The Physician's Calling', preached for St George's Hospital, argued that this overlap in physician-like clergymen and clerical physicians 'may be useful in exceptional

⁵⁰ W. Weldon Champneys, *Parish Work: A Brief Manual for the Younger Clergy* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1856), p. 35. Brian Heeneey cites a number of other examples in *A Different Kind of Gentleman: Parish Clergy as Professional Men in Early and Mid-Victorian England* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1976), pp. 53-54.

⁵¹ Champneys, p. 44.

⁵² Samuel Best, *Parochial Ministrations* (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1839), p. 104; Ashton Ovenden, *The Pastoral Office: Its Difficulties, Privileges, and Prospects* (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1857), p. 176. Other examples of this metaphoric usage can be found in James Henry Blunt's *Directorium Pastorale: Principles and Practice of Pastoral Work in the Church of England* (London: Rivingtons, 1864), pp. 194 and 211, and Alfred Gatty's *The Vicar and His Duties* (London: George Bell, 1853), p. 23.

⁵³ Though as M. Jeanne Peterson notes, neither profession's authority was inspired by proven results: 'The demonstrable efficacy of medical practice was not the source of the profession's prestige and authority, any more than the status of the Anglican clergy derived from the demonstrable effectiveness of prayer and ritual' (*The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 4).

cases – in that, for instance, of the missionary among the heathen’.⁵⁴ Otherwise, he argued that ‘experience has decided that in a civilized and Christian country [...] the great principle of the division of labour should be carried out [...] It has saved the doctor from one great danger – that of abusing, for the purposes of religious proselytizing, the unlimited confidence reposed in him’.⁵⁵ Charlotte Brontë’s novels suggest there were significant dangers inherent in the ‘unlimited confidence’ the public placed in both the Church of England clergyman and the physician, and that these dangers extended beyond the threat of proselytising. Kingsley’s preference for the ‘division of labour’ is an intriguingly utilitarian echo of factory specialisation in relation to professionalism, which did not enter into the Brontës’ earlier views of professional masculinity.

The Brontës would have seen evidence of the mixing of clerical work and medicine in their father’s career. For instance, Patrick Brontë owned and extensively annotated Thomas John Graham’s *Modern Domestic Medicine* (1826), which was intended as ‘a Medical Guide for the Use of Clergymen, Families, and Students in Medicine’, according to its colophon.⁵⁶ In an 1838 letter to Mr Milligan, a young Keighley surgeon, Mr Brontë noted, ‘I profess, to have no great skill in Medicine, though I have studied it, both at the University, and since I left it – Yet I feel confident, that I can soon discriminate between scientific Medical men, and mere pretenders.’⁵⁷ Three years later, in a letter to the editor of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, he recommended the use of brandy and salt, arguing that ‘every genuine Minister of the Gospel should, of course with all due precaution, venture occasionally to recommend to his poor hearers

⁵⁴ Charles Kingsley, ‘The Physician’s Calling’, in *The Water of Life, and Other Sermons* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1867), pp. 18-34 (p. 22). I am indebted to Sarah Hanks for sharing this sermon with me.

⁵⁵ Kingsley, ‘The Physician’s Calling’, p. 22.

⁵⁶ Haworth, West Yorkshire, Brontë Parsonage Research Library, *Modern Domestic Medicine*, by Thomas John Graham (London, 1826), bb210, Bonnell 210, annotated by Patrick Brontë.

⁵⁷ Patrick Brontë, ‘9 October 1838, To Mr Milligan’, *PB Letters*, pp. 117-118 (p. 117).

especially, some proper medicinal measures for the body as well as for the soul'.⁵⁸ Additionally, he used his role as clergyman to encourage a sort of proto-psychiatric treatment for Enoch Thomas, a churchwarden who suffered from severe depression following his involvement as a witness in a forgery case. Mr Brontë wrote to George Taylor, another of his churchwardens, with instructions to ask Thomas for tea, because '[h]is mind, which is, in a very disordered state should be diverted, as much as possible, from his present way of thinking'.⁵⁹ This intervention suggests Père Silas's and Dr John's attempts at treating Lucy Snowe's hypochondria in *Villette*, a blending of professional spheres of influence which will be discussed in more detail.

Mr Brontë's clerical duties also included spearheading an important public health intervention in seeking to improve Haworth's water supply. A meeting was held on this subject in 1844, and in 1849 Patrick Brontë, Arthur Bell Nicholls, and the local surgeons Mr Hall and Mr Wheelhouse, organised a petition to the Board of Health. On 4 April 1850, Inspector Benjamin Herschel Babbage (eldest son of mathematician Charles Babbage) investigated the matter and afterwards wrote a damning report. A new reservoir was not constructed until 1858, after the deaths of all Patrick Brontë's children.

St John Rivers: Cold Ambition and Christian Sacrifice

I burnt for the more active life of the world – for the more exciting toils of a literary career – for the destiny of an artist, author, orator; anything rather than that of a priest: yes, the heart of a politician, of a soldier, of a votary of glory, a lover of renown, a luster after power, beat under my curate's surplice [...] God had an errand for me; [...] skill and strength, courage and eloquence, the best qualifications of soldier, statesman, and orator, were needed: for these all centre in the good missionary. (*Jane Eyre*, 361-362)

St John movingly describes to Jane the despair he suffered when his desire for a worldly profession was frustrated. These feelings of failure and constriction dissipate when he

⁵⁸ P. Brontë, '30 January 1841, To the Editor of the *Leeds Intelligencer*,' *PB Letters*, pp. 124-125 (p. 125).

⁵⁹ P. Brontë, '29 February 1844, To George Taylor Esqr.,' *PB Letters*, pp. 168-169 (pp. 168-169).

feels he is ‘called’. As noted above, Kingsley later argued that a mixture of the clergyman’s and doctor’s responsibilities were needed in a missionary. But for St John, the missionary’s role would allow him to embody many respected, professional roles, fulfilling his earlier dreams for manly action in the world. St John has transferred his secular professional frustration into an idealised spiritual and professional vision of success as a missionary.

Charlotte positions St John as wildly idealising the qualifications necessary and the renown possible for a missionary during this period. *Jane Eyre* was written before missionary training colleges were instituted and before the cementing of the image of the idealised muscular Christian, which was formed primarily by Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes in the 1850s and 1860s.⁶⁰ St John’s character perhaps anticipates aspects of this masculine ideal, but Charlotte shapes his masculinity by drawing inspiration from the early Victorian evangelical and Calvinist wings of the Church of England and from figures in her own life. In 1853, following Charlotte’s rejection of Arthur Bell Nicholls’s proposal of marriage, Nicholls decided to become missionary in Australia for the Gospel Missionary Society. Patrick Brontë’s letter of recommendation focused on much more practical and pragmatic attributes than St John Rivers cites:

He has been my curate for seven years, and during that time has behaved himself, wisely, soberly, and piously – He has greatly promoted the interest of the National, and Sunday Schools; he is a man of good abilities, and strong constitution – He is very discreet, is under no pecuniary embarrassment, that I am aware of, nor is he, I think, likely to be so, since, in all pecuniary and other matters, as far as I have been able to discover, he is wary, and prudent – In

⁶⁰ Rhonda Anne Semple comments on the qualifications necessary for missionary workers following 1865. Almost all male missionaries were ordained at mid-century, and in the latter half of the century missionary training colleges were set up to provide professionalised qualifications (*Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism, and the Victorian Idea of Christian Mission* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003), p. 191). Helpful studies on muscular Christianity include David Alderson’s *Mansex Fine: Religion, Manliness, and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century British Culture*, which briefly discusses St John Rivers’s and Jane’s different senses of Christian sacrifice ((Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 40); and Donald E. Hall’s edited collection *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

principles, he is sound and orthodox – and would I think, under Providence, make an excellent Missionary.⁶¹

Patrick Brontë highlights Nicholls's suitability as a teacher, the hardiness of his health, his ability to manage his own money (and presumably that of institutions he may be involved in running), and his orthodox theological standing. Charlotte was similarly pragmatic, but also rather derisive, when she commented on Henry Nussey's desire to become a missionary in 1843: 'his notion of being a Missionary is amusing – he would not live a year in the climates of those countries where Missionaries are wanted.'⁶²

Henry Nussey had in 1839 proposed to Charlotte and invited her to take on the post of schoolmistress in his parish, a proposal which she turned down due to her lack of romantic love for Nussey and perhaps disgust at the way he meant to instrumentalise her for his own professional success.⁶³ This distaste for Henry Nussey, his loveless marriage proposal, and his missionary call (which came to nothing in the end), suggests readers should be more critical of both St John's description of his missionary call and Jane's later evaluation of his success in this role.

The Gospel Missionary, a periodical for children published by the Gospel Missionary Society, expressed a number of different views of missionary work at mid-century. In a piece titled 'A Few Words to Mothers at Home About Missions Abroad' (1855), the missionary calling was described in both professional and idealised terms,

⁶¹ P. Brontë, '31 January 1853, To the Revd W.J. Bullock', *PB Letters*, p. 215 (p. 215).

⁶² C. Brontë, 'To Ellen Nussey, [?late June 1843], pp. 324-326 (p. 325). Charlotte wrote a more straightforwardly glorifying poem about missionary labour in 1845, which was published as 'The Missionary' in *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (1846). In this poem, the speaker has just left England and undergoes internal conflict over the domestic and romantic ties he has left behind and the godly work yet to come in India. St John could be a more cynical reworking of this figure, as St John marries his sense of religious duty to his professional ambitions, and, unlike the speaker, seems to have few qualms about abandoning his domestic life in England (*CB Poems*, pp. 291-294).

⁶³ For Charlotte's rejection of Henry Nussey see 'To Revd Henry Nussey, 5 March 1839', *Letters*, I, pp. 185-186; for Charlotte's explanation to Ellen Nussey see 'To Ellen Nussey, 5 March 1839', *Letters*, I, pp. 187-188.

echoing St John's conception of his great work.⁶⁴ The lack of missionaries in the field was 'a heavy charge against us, that we cannot supply a sufficiency of devoted, sober-minded, and well-trained young men, rejoicing to feel that the LORD has called them to become His honoured instruments'.⁶⁵ The focus here is both religious and professional, with practical manly qualities and the focus on the excess capacity of the profession highlighted. No concerns about a glutted market are visible here, as there were in other commentators' writings on professionalisation at this time. The plea is directed towards mothers, presumably because they would read the periodical with, or to, their children and influence both their spiritual upbringing and the choice of a profession (though this was usually seen as a father's responsibility): 'The fond mother, seeking for some future profession for her son, turns, it may be, to the army or navy – how is it that the Missionary's calling is so often forgotten?'⁶⁶ The risk of a son's premature death abroad is raised obliquely here, suggesting that the army and navy – also risky professions – are often chosen by English parents for their sons over missionary work, a preference due to 'selfish and [...] worldly' desires for their son's acclaim.⁶⁷ While the article positions missionary work as a viable profession in practical terms, it also idealises the labours of these men (women did not become missionaries in their own right until later in the century).⁶⁸ Missionaries are described as 'warriors of the Cross, in fighting the Lord's battles against the foes of His truth, in those heathen lands, now the strongholds of Satan's power'.⁶⁹ Spiritual warfare, acted out on a colonial battlefield, replaces worldly conflict and achievement in this conception.

⁶⁴ 'A Few Words to Mothers at Home About Missions Abroad', *The Gospel Missionary*, 52 (April, 1855), 60-63.

⁶⁵ 'A Few Words to Mothers', *The Gospel Missionary*, p. 60.

⁶⁶ 'A Few Words to Mothers', *The Gospel Missionary*, p. 61.

⁶⁷ 'A Few Words to Mothers', *The Gospel Missionary*, p. 61.

⁶⁸ Single women did not become missionaries until the 1860s, and female relatives of male missionaries were unpaid (Semple, p. 197).

⁶⁹ 'A Few Words to Mothers', *The Gospel Missionary*, p. 61.

Elsewhere in this periodical, missionary work is presented by a missionary's wife in India in domestic, diminutive terms ('I do not know a nicer little Mission'; 'They look up to the Missionaries as parents'), which reflects the aspects of St John's English life he is trying to escape, as I will discuss in more detail below.⁷⁰ In another article in the same issue, an anonymous writer defines the 'true Missionary' against the orientalist strain present in St John's determination to serve in India, which echoes the desires of the young English men who had sought their fortunes in the imagined West Africa of the early Glass Town stories:

The scenes of Missionary labour most commonly dwelt upon, lead us to think of countries beautiful and glorious in tropical vegetation [...] But the true Missionary is not guided by such thoughts as these; he follows the path that Providence points out to him, wherever that may lead.⁷¹

It is no coincidence that St John chooses to become a missionary in an adventurous, exotic, imperial place, even though his labours might be quite similar to his work in England: visiting parishioners, setting up and running schools and hospitals. All this suggests that he is not in fact a 'true Missionary', especially as the novel never attempts to position him as a 'true lover of souls'.⁷² Those who worked in the missionary field echo St John's idealised images of Christian warriors and exoticism, while also suggesting that missionary work required practical skills and the ability to interact with others in domestic, humane terms, without hoping for worldly glory or recognition. These facts suggest that St John's 'call' to missionary work is being positioned by Charlotte Brontë as a move that will not actually fulfill his desire for heroic professional accomplishment.

Furthermore, St John's vexed relationships with women and the domestic sphere conflict with his missionary desires in significant ways. St John denies his love for

⁷⁰ 'Recollections of India. (By a Missionary's Wife.) Letter VIII', *The Gospel Missionary*, 57 (September 1855), 129-133 (pp. 131, 132).

⁷¹ 'Missions of Newfoundland,' *The Gospel Missionary*, 57 (September 1855), 133-143 (pp. 133-134).

⁷² 'Missions of Newfoundland', p. 134.

Rosamond Oliver and his affection for his sisters because this sympathy would pull him away from his ambition:

‘[S]he could sympathize in nothing I aspired to – cooperate in nothing I undertook. Rosamond a sufferer, a labourer, a female apostle? Rosamond a missionary’s wife? No!’

‘But you need not be a missionary. You might relinquish that scheme.’

‘Relinquish! What – my vocation? My great work? My foundation laid on earth for a mansion in heaven? [...] Must I relinquish that? It is dearer than the blood in my veins. It is what I have to look forward to, and to live for.’

(*Jane Eyre*, 374)

St John feels he must deny his feelings for Rosamond because he has desecrated that she would not be useful to him as a wife in seeking to fulfill his missionary vocation. He diminishes her by characterising her as an unfit tool. St John further assures Jane he is experiencing a ‘mere fever of the flesh’, not ‘a convulsion of the soul’, minimising his feelings for Miss Oliver (p. 375).

Where St John denies his sexuality, he forms an aesthetic ideal of Greek manliness for Jane, since he is more conventionally good-looking than Rochester: ‘his face riveted the eye: it was like a Greek face, very pure in outline; quite a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin’ (p. 345). His beauty draws Jane’s painterly appreciation, even if he is like a ‘statue’ (p. 344). In becoming a missionary, St John oddly twines his own spirituality and sexuality together, as missionaries were described in sexualised terms, such as Charlotte Yonge’s physically detailed description of her cousin, the missionary John Coleridge Patteson – ‘He was tall and of a large and powerful frame, broad of the chest and shoulders [...], with [...] sheer muscular strength and power of endurance’ – which J.A. Mangan suggests puts in ‘undisguised sexual terms [...] the attractive “physicality” of the athletic clergyman in Empire’.⁷³

⁷³ Qtd in J.A. Mangan, ‘Christ and the Imperial Playing Fields: Thomas Hughes’s Ideological Heirs in Empire’, in *Muscular Christianity in Colonial and Post-Colonial Worlds*, ed. by John J. MacAloon (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 77-104 (p. 81).

St John's proposal of marriage to Jane encompasses his sexuality (as Jane is sure 'he would scrupulously observe' what she terms 'all the forms of love'), his sense of spiritual call, his desire to sacrifice himself, and an attempt to turn Jane into the instrument of his missionary success, like a 'good weapon' to be wielded by a soldier (p. 405). For St John, marriage to Jane will further his aims as a missionary, by giving him a partner in his labours. Marrying Jane would also be a masochistic act of self-sacrifice, as this would forever bar him from marriage to Rosamond Oliver – the 'rose of the world' – in the service of his spiritual campaign. Having a wife will also allow him to morally exercise his sexuality. But, just as Jane had warned Mr Rochester not to use her as the instrument of his moral reformation, so, too, does she refuse to enter into a marriage without love, in which St John's domineering will would shape her in the image of the missionary wife he desires. Where Jane had once promised to play missionary and free the slaves in Rochester's imagined harem, with St John she refuses to sacrifice her mental freedom and health – probably her life – to further his professional aims as a missionary (p. 269). Jane's sense that St John would crush her individual identity should influence our reading of St John's apparent success as a missionary at the end of the novel. As the reviewer for the *Christian Remembrancer* noted, St John's character encompasses 'self-denial strangely shot with selfishness – earthly pride and restless ambition blending and alternating with heaven-directed zeal, and resignation to the duties of a heavenly mission'.⁷⁴ This reviewer critiqued St John's missionary zeal and vocation, noting the selfish and ambitious nature of his vocational goals. Readers should be attuned to the language Charlotte Brontë uses to describe St John in *Jane Eyre*, and able to situate him within the history of Victorian missionary labour and constructions of gender and vocation. I argue below that this focus can help us to differentiate St John

⁷⁴From an unsigned review, *Christian Remembrancer* XV (April 1848): 396–409, rpt. in Allott, pp. 88-92 (p. 91).

from other clerical characters in the Brontës' works and provide a new way to read his role in the ending of *Jane Eyre*.

Clerical Visiting

Visiting the poor and afflicted was a professional duty shared by the clergyman and the doctor during this period. In *Wives and Daughters* (1865), Charlotte Brontë's friend and biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell depicts the new vicar's resistance to visiting the poor, even offering money to the country surgeon, Dr Gibson, to distribute to those who need it. Dr Gibson refuses and must counsel the vicar in his duties. The writers of clerical handbooks moved beyond Gaskell's egalitarian vision to encourage pastoral visiting as a systematic mode of social influence. Samuel Best specifically referred to the programme of visiting as 'surveillance' and advocated making up a register of information on the religious status of every family in the parish.⁷⁵ James J. Blunt argued that death-bed visitations were prime opportunities for convincing distressed family members to become better churchmen and women: 'You have the chance of offering the weightiest admonitions to others through the mouth of their dying friend [...] You have the season for *getting within* people.'⁷⁶ The Brontës depict clerical visiting primarily with a shade of suspicion, due to the social power implicated in this '*getting within*' people's homes and minds.

In *Jane Eyre*, St John, ironically, enters others' homes to escape from the natural affections and feminine qualities of his own, as I suggested in Chapter Three. While he is dedicated to visiting the sick and poor, Jane is never sure whether he does this out of duty or inborn sympathy, which St John is gradually revealed to lack. He even views

⁷⁵ Best, pp. 98-99, 107.

⁷⁶ Blunt, pp. 225-226. In his novella *The Maid of Killarney*, Patrick Brontë provides examples of a number of death-bed visits by Albion and Flora, who act as lay clergy in the way they distribute charitable offerings and advice. They interrogate a number of characters on their religious beliefs and preparation for death, attempting to instil Protestant doctrine among Captain Loughlean's primarily Catholic tenantry ([P. Brontë], *The Maid of Killarney; or, Albion and Flora: A Modern Tale; In Which are Interwoven Some Cursory Remarks on Religion and Politics* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1818), pp. 12-16.

visiting in adverse weather as proof that he will be able to undergo the challenges of his future missionary work.

Anne Brontë provides both positive and negative illustrations of parish visiting through Agnes's discussions with the cottager Nancy in *Agnes Grey*. The young, evangelical curate Mr Weston is much better at parochial visiting than the High Church rector Mr Hatfield (pp. 88-94). Champneys argued that clergymen 'ought to desire to be able to take some passage of Scripture and explain it simply and interestingly', which Weston can do but Mr Hatfield signally fails to do. Mr Hatfield instead rebukes Nancy for failing to attend church and refuses to explain his lesson in any way that makes sense. Negative pastoral visiting is also suggested in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. When Helen defends her decisions to protect her son from harm and from alcohol to Gilbert and his mother, Mrs Markham threatens to send the rector, Mr Millward, to speak to Helen. In this way, clerical pastoral visiting is punitive and tied up in a community-wide regime that attempts to inculcate a particular, prescribed masculinity.

In *Shirley*, the Reverend Helstone also uses pastoral visiting as an excuse to exercise masculine authority when he accuses Shirley of being too radical in her politics and religion. He requires her to repeat the Apostles' Creed and then attempts to make her recite the stricter Athanasian Creed. Shirley must defend herself by arguing that Mrs Pryor has raised her to be a Tory and a High Churchwoman. Mr Helstone, as the rector, feels he has the right to challenge Shirley's religion and politics because of his professional position and greater age, though Shirley as heiress is the largest landowner in the neighbourhood.

Vocation and Social Status

Mr Helstone is also a significant figure because the narrator clearly identifies him as lacking a clerical calling: 'I am aware, reader, [...] that it is a dreadful thing for a

parson to be warlike [...] he had missed his vocation' (p. 32). The narrator further notes that Helstone and others like him (St John Rivers, perhaps, toiling away as a country parson) may suffer this fate: 'It seems to me, reader, that you cannot always cut out men to fit their profession, and that you must not curse them because their profession sometimes hangs on them ungracefully' (p. 32). Helstone should have been a soldier, and his 'warlike' spirit does indeed prove helpful when he faces down the marching Dissenters at Whitsuntide and when he aids in the defence of Hollow's Mill.⁷⁷ Like St John Rivers, he seems to lack a fund of sympathy which would truly fit him for his profession.

In visiting each other and inviting themselves to others' homes, the three problematic curates of *Shirley* neglect 'a diligent superintendence of the schools, and [...] frequent visits to the sick of their respective parishes', which they feel to be 'dull work' (p. 6). This desire to be in society rather than obeying duty explains why two of the three curates, Malone and Donne, end badly, as recounted in the ironic closing chapter, 'The Winding Up'. The narrator states that he cannot possibly say what happened to Malone, as the story would be deemed 'untrue' or 'inartistic'. The original of Malone, one of Patrick Brontë's curates, James William Smith, had disappeared leaving debts behind him.⁷⁸ Donne, meanwhile, becomes talented in the showier parts of his clerical role. He is good at begging money for improvements to his church and the erection of church schools. However, the narrator notes that 'if uniformity and taste in architecture had been the same thing as consistency and earnestness in religion, what a shepherd of a Christian flock Mr Donne would have made!' (pp. 530-531). Donne clearly still lacks the spiritual vocation expected in a clergyman. The new Irish clergyman, Mr Macarthey

⁷⁷ Patrick Brontë's fascination with the Duke of Wellington and the Battle of Waterloo may have influenced Charlotte's decision to create a warlike parson.

⁷⁸ Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten, eds., 'Explanatory Notes', *Shirley*, p. 571n. For Charlotte's explanation to Ellen Nussey, see 'To Ellen Nussey, [26 February 1848], *Letters*, II, pp. 33-34 (p. 33).

(a fictional version of Charlotte's future husband Arthur Bell Nicholls) is active in the parish and has only 'proper, steady-going, clerical faults': 'The circumstance of finding himself invited to tea with a Dissenter would unhinge him for a week' (p. 532). His religious and philanthropic service are good, but the narrator (and no doubt Charlotte) gently mocks his intolerance.

Both clergymen and doctors had a certain degree of social cachet and, in *Shirley*, Miss Ainley pays homage to clergymen no matter what their personal qualities, because of the office they fill. The novel creates a troubling disjuncture between Miss Ainley's unquestioning respect and the offensive actions of both Malone and Donne, who certainly do not deserve it: 'The clergy were sacred beings in Miss Ainley's eyes: no matter what be the insignificance of the individual, his station made him holy' (p. 227). The narrator challenges this view throughout *Shirley* by means of satire and irony, particularly with reference to the three curates.

Sermons and Public Performance

One of the chief professional functions of an Anglican clergyman is the performative speech act of composing and delivering the sermon, as well as reading the lesson from Scripture. The Brontës' novels afford the contemporary reader analysis of three fictional sermons, each given from a different type of clerical masculinity.⁷⁹ In *Agnes Grey*, Agnes's first knowledge of Mr Weston comes through his professional acts of reading the lesson and preaching the sermon: 'He read the lessons as if he were bent on giving full effect to every passage [...] he read as if he were not reading at all, but praying, earnestly and sincerely from his own heart' (p. 79). Champneys argues that the text of the service and prayers 'should be carefully studied, that they may be, I will not

⁷⁹ Stolpas analyses the sermons given by Mr Hatfield and Mr Weston in *Agnes Grey* in 'Preaching to the Clergy'. Laura Fasick discusses clergymen in *Professional Men and Domesticity in the Mid-Victorian Novel*, but does not discuss the Brontës' characters.

say *well* read, but, *devoutly prayed*'.⁸⁰ Further, he suggests that '[a]nything artificial or theatrical in our style of reading is entirely out of place'.⁸¹ When Mr Weston gives the sermon, Agnes is similarly pleased with the 'earnest simplicity of his manner' and the 'clearness and force of his style' (p. 81). Patrick Brontë's description of Mr Burnet in his 1818 novella *The Maid of Killarney* reflects this ideal simplicity: 'He is a very faithful preacher, and speaks so plainly, that people of the narrowest capacities may comprehend him.'⁸² In Patrick's sermon at William Weightman's funeral, he notes that sermons should be composed using 'such plain terms that whatever they were, they might be understood without the aid of extraordinary learning'.⁸³ It is probable Anne was familiar with *The Maid of Killarney* and that she broadly agreed with her father's sentiments regarding the construction of sermons. Seen in this light, Mr Weston's performance of his sermon is masterful, so that even his working-class parishioners will understand the message. A priest's performance in the pulpit must not be a piece of false theatre, but rather should enact the manly and evangelical ideals of simplicity and moral sincerity.

All this forms a vast contrast to Mr Hatfield's High Church manner of proceeding, as he 'harangues' the congregation in his 'rich silk gown' after 'mount[ing] the pulpit like a conqueror ascending his triumphal car', an image which suggests the corruption of the later Roman emperors rather than the teaching of a man of God (p. 81). Additionally, like Tom Bloomfield's Uncle Robson, who earlier in the novel is noted to wear stays, Mr Hatfield has a vain, dandyish side signified by his lavender gloves.⁸⁴ Hatfield delivers 'a composition which, as a composition, might be considered good,

⁸⁰ Champneys, p. 15.

⁸¹ Champneys, p. 12.

⁸² [P. Brontë], *The Maid of Killarney*, p. 99.

⁸³ P. Brontë, *Two Sermons Preached in the Church of Haworth By the Rev. P. Brontë*. (Kirkgate: R. Brown, Bookseller and Stationer), p. 5.

⁸⁴ Sally Shuttleworth notes that lavender gloves act as a shorthand for dandy masculinity in Thackeray's *Pendennis* as well (Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, ed. by Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden, Introduction by Sally Shuttleworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 187n.)

though far too studied and artificial to be pleasing' (p. 81). The studied nature of Mr Hatfield's sermon goes directly against the advice current in pastoral handbooks, which counseled that '[e]loquence [...] never comes of an over-attention to the choice of words, or construction of sentences – pulpit eloquence least of all'.⁸⁵ Mr Hatfield's vain and artificial mannerisms are linked inextricably to his High Church theology: 'His favourite subjects were church discipline, rites and ceremonies, apostolical succession, the duty of reverence and obedience to the clergy, [...] and, occasionally, [...] the necessity of deferential obedience from the poor to the rich' (p.81). From Agnes's point of view, these qualities are negative because they ignore the chief emotional and spiritual concerns of evangelicalism and deal only in issues of worldly power and vanity. These qualities in turn reflect badly on Mr Hatfield as a man, as he is dandyish (a style of masculinity that had clearly gone out of fashion by mid-century, even if the novel is set slightly earlier), overbearing, and insincere. His pulpit performance, his cruelty towards animals (he kicks Nancy's cat), and his lack of sympathy for the cottagers mark his inadequacies as a clergyman and make him impossible to admire as a man.⁸⁶

Critics have not yet taken the opportunity to contrast Anne's depiction of these two clergymen and their sermon delivery against the analysis Jane makes of a sermon preached by St John Rivers in *Jane Eyre*:

It began calm – and indeed, as far as delivery and pitch of voice went, it was calm to the end: an earnestly felt, yet strictly restrained zeal breathed soon in the distinct accents, and prompted the nervous language. This grew to force – compressed, condensed, controlled. The heart was thrilled, the mind astonished, by the power of the preacher: neither were softened. (*Jane Eyre*, 352)

St John's sermon reflects his inner missionary zeal, but also his strictly self-controlled responses to the necessity of doing his duty until such time as he can fulfill his 'call'.

⁸⁵ Blunt, *The Duties of the Parish Priest: The Acquirements and Principal Obligations of the Parish Priest* (London: John Murray, 1856), p. 170.

⁸⁶ Agnes does exhibit concern for him as a respectable, honest man when Rosalie Murray intends to trifle with his affections, however (pp. 112-125).

The quiet, cold, controlled tone also reflects the repression of his desire for Rosamond Oliver and his natural affection for his sisters. The power of his personality is revealed through his pulpit performance, the strength of which Jane fears will constrict her if she becomes his wife. It is significant that neither mind nor heart is ‘softened’ by St John’s preaching, as this suggests that he is not performing as an evangelical minister ought and that he does not inspire his listeners. This lack suggests, again, that he may not be suited to the practical duties of preaching and philanthropy he will carry out as a missionary. Jane further interprets St John’s inner character and professional manliness on the basis of this sermon: ‘it seemed to me – that the eloquence to which I had been listening had sprung from a depth where lay turbid dregs of disappointment – where moved troubling impulses of insatiate yearnings and disquieting aspirations’ (p. 352). St John’s professional frustrations, though he attempts to hide them, affect the commission of his clerical duties.

St John’s Ending

A more resolute, indefatigable pioneer never wrought amidst rocks and dangers. Firm, faithful, and devoted; full of energy, and zeal, and truth, he labours for his race: he clears their painful way to improvement; he hews down like a giant the prejudices of creed and caste that encumber it. He may be stern; he may be exacting; he may be ambitious yet: but his is the sternness of the warrior Greatheart. (*Jane Eyre*, 452)

Marianne Thormählen argues that while critics have accepted St John’s ‘glorious ending’, as suggested by the letter which ends *Jane Eyre*, this is ‘not presented as an achieved consummation’.⁸⁷ This language suggests St John’s delusive belief both in his ability to do good and in the sacrifice of his anticipated (but perhaps not actual) death. As always, it is important to remember that *Jane Eyre* was written after *Agnes Grey* and *Wuthering Heights*. The language of ‘divine consummation’ strangely echoes Heathcliff’s language just before his death in *Wuthering Heights*. He will only have

⁸⁷ Thormählen, *Religion*, pp. 205, 206.

achieved his 'heaven' if he is reunited in death with Cathy's ghost, but the existence of ghosts is left ambiguous. So, too, in his own way does St John desire death, so he may become a glorious Christian martyr. But crucially, *Jane Eyre*, while strongly suggesting this as the outcome of St John's missionary labours, as a counterpoint to the Rochesters' romantic-domestic 'consummation', does not confirm St John's death. St John's martyrdom is only suggested. Just as Charlotte had earlier derided Henry Nussey's 'call' to become a missionary and cast doubt on his physical ability to survive in a tropical climate, so, too, perhaps does Charlotte deride St John's ambition and desire to sacrifice himself for the greater glory of God. Maybe he will die, but only in vain, having severed all affective ties in England, an ending very different from that of the extended family circle of Jane and the Rivers sisters. St John's repressed physical passion for Rosamond Oliver, and perhaps for Jane, is thus channelled into a spiritual battle and sacrifice as part of an idealised performance of missionary heroism and English colonial masculinity.

One might argue that because Jane praises St John's labours and Christian devotion, comparing him to Greatheart from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the reader can trust her judgement of his accomplishments. Thormählen argues that St John 'devotes all he has and is to the practical improvement of humanity under the auspices of Christianity' and that '[h]owever impure his motives may have been, his choice was doubtless the right one'.⁸⁸ However, Jane is working at second hand, from St John's letters, and it is significant that the language she uses is vague and abstract. Charlotte could have had Jane enumerate the size of St John's congregation or the number of his converts or name the educational or other institutions he has founded or helps to run, but she does none of these things. In contrast, the omniscient narrator at the end of *Shirley* details in specific terms the improvements Mr Donne makes in his parish, and how he

⁸⁸ Thormählen, pp. 213, 212.

raises the funds to do so. At the end of *Jane Eyre*, the reader has no real way to evaluate what St John has accomplished as a missionary, either as a Christian warrior, an imperial agent, a teacher, or a philanthropist. Brontë leaves the reader with a lacuna, not a divine consummation.

Dr John: The Case of Lucy Snowe

Dr John Graham Bretton's various names give the reader a sense of how his masculine identities function in the different professional and personal spaces of the novel. At home, he is known as Graham, the name used by his future wife Paulina. This is a pet name of sorts, and represents the filial love Paulina quizzes Lucy about when she asks for 'the home-side' view of him. Lucy's answer highlights that, above all, Graham is a good son, which suggests that he will also make a good husband one day: 'He is a fine-hearted son; his mother's comfort and hope, her pride and pleasure' (p. 372). Isidore is the mantle he next appears under in the novel, as Ginevra's secret lover. The real problem is that Dr John – indicating his professional capacity – acts as Isidore at the same time he is meant to be acting as the pensionnat's doctor.

While St John Rivers denies his sexuality in his refusal to consider Rosamond Oliver as a wife, Dr John in *Villette* falls into the opposite trap of allowing his medical visiting and his sexuality to intermix, resulting in a grave lapse of professional ethics. Lust was a known temptation a male doctor might face: *Prayers for the Use of the Medical Profession* contains two prayers for chastity including one with a form of confession:

We have sinned with lust, and have loosed the reins of wicked desires [...] O strengthen us by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may live in chastity and modesty, and

that in healing the diseases of women we may be mindful both of Thy commandment and of our vows, and may keep ourselves pure and holy.⁸⁹

Charlotte uses Dr John as an exemplar for the ways sexuality can challenge a doctor's moral bearing and professional ethics when he becomes doctor to the 'demi-convent' pensionnat. Lucy recounts the outcry this causes on the part of the pupils' parents, which is only assuaged when Madame Beck assures them that she uses the doctor for her own children (pp. 100-101).

Madame Beck attempts to exploit the necessary intimacy a physician shares with the families he serves, in her hopes of making him her second husband. The American writer, Worthington Hooker, describes the nature of this trust, particularly between doctors and female patients in *Physician and Patient* (1849):

[M]ost persons have the feeling that their physician is a sort of confidant, and on that ground they are willing that he should see and hear [...] what would be improper to be seen and heard without the confidence of intimate friendship [...] Especially is this so when the patient is a female. In her case the confidence reposed is of the most sacred character. And shame be to the physician who dares to trifle with it – who dares to offend in any way the delicacy of a patient.⁹⁰

After Madame Beck's matrimonial hopes are disappointed, she views Dr John as more of a sexual threat to the virginal girlhood in her care. At the dance during the fête, she keeps him away from the students once the dancing has begun. Lucy notes 'that Dr John was at first permitted to walk at large through the classes; there was about him a manly, responsible look, that redeemed his youth, and half-expiated his beauty' (p.144). His professional character and bearing make him look less threatening, but Madame knows better, calling him a 'wolf' in 'sheep's clothing' who must 'quit the fold' (p. 144). Lucy also desires closer intimacy with Dr John through his professional visits, but discovers that, in a sense, the parents' fears are well-founded, as Dr John makes use of his position

⁸⁹ *Prayers*, p. 45.

⁹⁰ Worthington Hooker, *Physician and Patient; or, a Practical View of the Mutual Duties, Relations and Interests of the Medical Profession and the Community* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849), pp. 383-384.

to continue courting Ginevra, though in a strictly gentlemanly and chaste fashion. Ironically, Lucy judges Ginevra to be the party conducting herself badly in this courtship, as she receives gifts from Isidore without ever intending seriously to marry him. Dr John comes into contact with all the young women in his life through his medical practice, first meeting his future wife, Paulina Home de Bassompierre, when she is injured following a fire at the theatre. He crosses ethical boundaries as a doctor, but more than once this medical intimacy is manipulated by women.

Elsewhere, when focused only on his work, Dr John is highly regarded, especially for his medical visiting among the poor in the Basse-Ville:

[H]is errands there were as much those of the philanthropist as the physician. I understood presently that – cheerfully, habitually, and in single-minded unconsciousness of any special merit distinguishing his deeds – he was achieving amongst a very wretched population, a world of active good. (*Villette*, 197)

Dr John's good works in the community mark him out as a highly laudable physician, a credit to the professional ideal's service ethic. His 'active good' echoes Worthington Hooker's argument that a doctor's labours should draw out positive masculine qualities. Medicine should not blunt the feelings nor lead to effeminate displays, but should result in 'active sympathy':

He may seem to be devoid of sympathy, [...] performing his duties with an unblanched face, a cool and collected air, and steady hand [...] Yet there *is* sympathy in his bosom, but it is *active*. It vents itself in the right way – in doing. There *is* feeling there. It is not destroyed, but its manifestations are *under control*.⁹¹

Dr John's professional activities marry active sympathy and self-control, a mix of manly emotion and professional coolness which prepares him for his future domestic role as a husband.

However, Lucy immediately follows this description of Dr John's philanthropic goodness with an address to the reader regarding the divergent aspects of his personality

⁹¹ Hooker, p. 386.

based on his public and private roles. As Dr John, his selfless service to the poor marks him as a sincere and caring physician, which differentiates him from St John Rivers in *Jane Eyre*, who does his ‘rounds’ only out of duty and frustrated ambition. Dr John has a strong relationship with his mother, but nonetheless is vain and full of pride, key faults in a domestic man who is aware of his centrality to the home circle and his authority as the man of the house. While Lucy praises Graham as a son, she hides from Paulina his more troublesome ‘fire-side’ faults. Lucy judges him in her narration, but keeps the cause of her bitterness secret from Paulina, as she has personally suffered due to Dr John’s inability to see her as a potential marriage partner.

Confession: Clerical and Medical

The clergyman and doctor were alike in their ability to delve into the bodies, minds, and souls of their parishioners or patients and to pronounce with authority upon what they found. For the doctor, the examination and interrogation of the patient, along with authoritative pronouncements of diagnosis and prescription were key aspects of his professional role, but could be open to abuse. The clergyman accomplished this through varying degrees of confession, which could be viewed with more or less suspicion, especially as Roman Catholic forms of confession returned to England at mid-century with the popularity of John Henry Newman’s and Edward Bouverie Pusey’s Oxford Movement. By 1864, James Blunt noted that it is ‘a subject which would a few years ago have been thought by many clergymen to be altogether beyond the pale of a volume treating the principles of pastoral work *in the Church of England*’ but goes on to say that if he excluded it from his handbook he ‘should be justly charged with omitting to notice that which many holy, far-sighted, and experienced clergymen look upon as a very valuable part of the pastor’s work’.⁹² Hannah More, in *Moral Sketches* (1819), warns

⁹² Blunt, *Directorium Pastorale*, p. 253.

that young women should not share their cares with a number of men as ‘confession’ for the purposes of admiration or attention.⁹³ However, More notes the importance of the clergyman’s role as psychological and spiritual advisor:

He who considers that the soul is liable to diseases as well as the body, will allow the necessity for a spiritual as well as bodily physician. Now if a patient must, in order to obtain relief, tell his case to a practitioner for the body, is it to be forbidden that the languishing and dejected soul should lean for advice on a moral counsellor?⁹⁴

Patrick Brontë marked the second sentence of this passage, thus indicating, for him at least, that his role was similar to a doctor’s and that he expected to be consulted by his parishioners about their spiritual and psychological ills. Confession and consultation were central ways a clergyman or doctor might help a patient with a mental health problem.

In *Jane Eyre*, St John’s marriage proposal functions as a confession because Jane must answer either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the proposition of becoming his wife and serving out the rest of her days in India.⁹⁵ St John frames his offer in terms of uncovering a missionary spirit Jane does not even know she has. When she protests that her heart is ‘mute’, he takes charge and ‘must speak for it’ – he projects his desire for Jane’s missionary service onto her, protesting that ‘God and nature intended [her] for a missionary’s wife’ and transferring this ‘knowledge’ of her unknown vocation into the language of possession: ‘I am claiming you – not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign’s service’ (p. 402). He does not care that Jane protests she has ‘no vocation’, but rather creates one for her, all the while disclaiming his desire for her body, even though this clearly actuates his proposal.

⁹³ Haworth, West Yorkshire, Brontë Parsonage Research Library, *Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners Foreign and Domestic: with Reflections on Prayer*, by Hannah More, 3rd edn, (London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1819), annotated by P. Brontë, pp. 232-234.

⁹⁴ More, p. 235.

⁹⁵ Mr Brocklehurst’s catechising of Jane early in *Jane Eyre* also has a confessional air, as Brocklehurst attempts to make Jane admit to her inherently sinful nature.

The only instance of true, Catholic confession in the Brontës' novels occurs in *Villette* as a result of Lucy's hypochondria, caused by her solitary long vacation at the pensionnat, and her struggles to care for a disabled student. Diana Peschier argues that though *Villette* has long been seen as an anti-Catholic text, its treatment of Catholic confession is more moderate than one might expect. It differs from the wider field of mid-century anti-Catholic texts in that it draws on the anti-Catholicism of the eighteenth-century Gothic novel but does not use these elements for sensational or pruriently voyeuristic ends. Rather, Peschier suggests that the real purpose of depicting confession is to further discussion of Lucy's painful mental state.⁹⁶ Lucy gains comfort from human contact in the act of confession, describing 'the mere relief of communication in an ear which was human and sentient, yet consecrated' (p. 162). Afterwards, she comments that if she had been weaker in her Protestant principles and gone to visit Père Silas the next day, she might have ended by 'counting [her] beads in the cell of a certain Carmelite convent', but she also writes that the priest 'was kind when I needed kindness' (p. 163). The next morning Lucy finds herself instead at La Terrasse, in the hands of Dr John.

Dr John appropriates the language of confession when he examines Lucy for signs of mental illness. He invokes the spectre of Père Silas and Lucy's desperate act of Roman Catholic confession.⁹⁷ He says: 'You may trust me as implicitly as you did Père Silas. Indeed, the doctor is perhaps the safer confessor of the two' (p. 249). Dr John displaces the priest's role in curing mental illness and emulates the priest's tactics. This displacement is concerning, as Sally Shuttleworth argues that Protestant Victorians saw

⁹⁶ Peschier, p. 138.

⁹⁷ Charlotte drew on her own experience of Catholic confession in Brussels in 1842. She describes the experience in a letter to Emily ('To Emily J. Brontë, 2 September 1843', *Letters*, I, pp. 329-331).

Catholic confession as predicating a sexual fall for women who confessed.⁹⁸ If the doctor has become the new priest, with powers to cure or to confine, Lucy may not be any safer with Dr John, a physician with a weakness for women.

When she admits her mental troubles to him, he diagnoses her as ‘highly nervous’ and suffering from ‘a case of spectral illusion [...] following on and resulting from long-continued mental conflict’ (p. 248). He speaks performatively from the objective and authoritative stance of Dr John, not her god-brother Graham: ‘in my professional character: I look on you now from a professional point of view, and I read, perhaps, all you would conceal’ (p. 248). Dr John freely admits that his doctoring can only approach an understanding of mental illness, but still he tries to provide early psychiatric counselling, taking the place of the clergyman’s spiritual care: ‘[A nervous system disorder] disables me from helping you by pill or potion. Medicine can give nobody good spirits. My art halts at the threshold of Hypochondria: she just looks in and sees a chamber of torture, but can neither say nor do much’ (p. 183). Dr John’s role as physician gives him the sole authority to prescribe, an authority challenged by the psychological nature of Lucy’s complaint: ‘Happiness is the cure – a cheerful mind the preventative: cultivate both’ (p. 250). This advice is unhelpful, as the narrator Lucy informs the reader: ‘No mockery in the world ever sounds to be so hollow as that of being told to *cultivate* happiness’ (p. 250). Elsewhere, apparently unaware of Lucy’s lack of funds or support, he prescribes ‘[c]hange of air – change of scene’ (p. 185), advice not at all helpful to a portionless young woman. Dr John’s advice lacks authority, even as it tries to inculcate a norm of mental health. While Victorian doctors were beginning to enlarge the scope of their field to include the maladies of the mind – previously the clergyman’s territory – the lack of medical science made true treatment impossible. Dr John helps

⁹⁸ Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 40-42.

Lucy best in his role of Graham, the supportive and engaged brother-figure discussed in Chapter Three, not as a fragmented professional self at all.

The Brontës' explorations of professional masculinity were published before Anthony Trollope's examinations of Church hierarchies in the *Chronicles of Barsetshire* (1855-1867) and politics in the Palliser novels (1865-1880) and prior to George Eliot's novels, with their various depictions of doctors, lawyers, and other professions. Because many of the professional men depicted in the Brontës' novels are quite junior and move within local, provincial spheres, they operate without the aid of larger professional institutions and structures, unlike professional men in later works. This lack contributes to the instability of these men's professional statuses, which were already fragile as the professional ideal attempted to redefine work as both deeply fulfilling and remunerative. Only M. Paul, Edward Weston, and St John Rivers see their work as a vocation (though the latter case is questionable). Many of the Brontës' male characters, as will be discussed in the next chapter, voluntarily give up their work, and seek alternative ways to mark their masculine identities. The Brontës perhaps questioned the professional ideal because, as women, they were barred from this form of self-definition. Until their publication as novelists, their only hope for independence was to open a school. Branwell, in the reverse of his sisters' experiences, was early on able to pursue his vocation for painting, which in the end came to nothing, the first of a long string of professional failures. Where Branwell failed as an artist, his sisters succeeded as novelists, one of the only achievable professions for women at this time because it was based on merit, and less tied to masculinity, though the Brontës faced the world as the 'Bell' brothers.

Chapter Six: Paternalism and Professionalisation: Landowners, Captains of Industry, and Men of Leisure

[T]ry your fortune in a somewhat higher family – in that of some genuine, thorough-bred gentleman; for such are far more likely to treat you with proper respect and consideration than those purse-proud tradespeople and arrogant upstarts. (*Agnes Grey*, 52)

In *Agnes Grey*, the protagonist's potential employers are evaluated by the vintage and source of their wealth in a domesticated version of the Victorian masters and men plot. In searching for an employer who will treat Agnes fairly, her mother argues that a 'thoroughbred gentleman', with old money, will be most likely to treat her with 'proper respect and consideration'. Mrs Grey is drawing on the assumption that a great landlord will have experience in looking after his employees and tenants in a benevolent, paternalist manner. Agnes's previous employer, Mr Bloomfield, had been in trade, and presumably had not learned how to look after the interests of his workers. What Agnes's mother desires in an employer is a fusion of traditional paternalist duties and the new, morally-inflected professional ideal of the middle classes, as discussed in the previous chapter. Both industrialists and landed gentlemen grappled with the challenge of revising the methods of conducting their work and overseeing labour in a manner that melded old and new conceptions of working masculinity. In this chapter, I aim to interrogate the Brontës' novels to discover how landowners and mill owners embody, resist, or integrate both the new Victorian professional ideal and older conceptions of landowning paternalism.

‘A Just and Liberal Landlord’: Manliness, Work, and the Landed Gentleman

The Brontës’ depictions of landowners are rife with ambiguities, particularly as these men are seldom presented at work in their traditional roles as landlord and magistrate. When Jane asks Mrs Fairfax for an account of Mr Rochester’s character, she learns that he is ‘considered a just and liberal landlord by his tenants’, despite the fact that he is seldom at Thornfield (pp. 104-105). Conceptions of the landed gentleman’s masculinity which obscure his social functions are encapsulated in Blanche Ingram’s proclamation that ‘as to the gentlemen, let them be solicitous to possess only strength and valour: let their motto be: — Hunt, shoot, and fight: the rest is not worth a fillip’ (p. 179). These older models of elite masculinity were becoming distasteful in the Victorian period, with their focus on violence, excess, sexuality, and unproductive leisure.

The landed gentleman might seem anomalous in a discussion of professional masculinity, as his status was partially predicated on not having to work for money. However, both the professional ideal and traditional conceptions of paternalist care affected the range of duties associated with the landed gentleman and the ways this class was viewed by middle-class commentators. This was particularly true after the passage of the 1832 Reform Act, during the inequalities of the Hungry Forties, and with the growing public awareness of the Irish tenant and landlord problem. I will examine the Brontës’ complicated depictions of the landed gentleman by considering how this figure was written about in contemporary periodicals, and how *Jane Eyre*, *Agnes Grey*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* engage with expectations for both the figure’s traditional roles and behaviours, and new, professionalised models of land owning, which were more acceptable to the increasingly powerful middle class. The Irish tenant and landlord

problem, also covered extensively in the periodical press, shaped Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* in a profound way: the novel forms (in part), I will argue, an as yet unacknowledged reworking of Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800). Finally, I will consider the ways landed gentlemanliness is presented as a performance of masculinity, and thus a contested category, in the Brontë sisters' novels.

Of the three sisters, Charlotte is most likely to praise the landed gentleman and his traditional paternalism, as this 1839 description of her employer Mr Sidgwick shows:

One of the pleasantest afternoons I have spent here [...] was when Mr. Sidgwick walked out with his children, and I had orders to follow a little behind. As he strolled on through his fields with his magnificent Newfoundland dog at his side, he looked very like what a frank, wealthy, Conservative gentleman ought to be. He spoke freely and unaffectedly to the people he met, and though he indulged his children and allowed them to tease himself far too much, he would not suffer them grossly to insult others.¹

Mr Sidgwick forms an ideal of landed gentlemanliness for Charlotte, which is based partly on image – he *looks* like a gentleman – and partly on the social and domestic relationships he fosters through his ‘unaffected’ conversations with his neighbours (presumably his tenants) and his friendly ‘indulgence’ of his children. He walks through his fields, maybe purely for pleasure, but perhaps also as a means of checking the crops or the condition of walls, drainage, tenants’ cottages, and so on. It is worth noting that Charlotte gave both the Duke of Zamorna and Mr Rochester Newfoundland dogs, a potent sign for her of gentlemanly status.

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have argued that the landed classes were largely seen to be idle, licentious, avaricious, and irresponsible by middle-class commentators in the mid-Victorian era, and as having shirked their traditional duties.² Thomas Carlyle's call for an ‘aristocracy of merit’ in *Past and Present* (1843) is a prime example of this criticism, as he lambastes the current state of the English aristocracy:

¹ C. Brontë, ‘To Emily J. Brontë, 8 June 1839’, *Letters*, I, pp. 191-193 (p. 192).

² Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 21.

‘Aristocracy has become Phantom-Aristocracy, no longer able to *do* its work, not in the least conscious that it has any work longer to do.’³ In Carlyle’s vision, this work is that of the baronial ideal, whereby loyalty and protection are mutually assured in the relationship between master and vassal. Elsewhere, in the radical *Westminster Review* of 1836, a writer offered this judgement of aristocratic political power: ‘to set up a class or order of men, by giving them powers which they may use for their own advantage, at the expense of the rest of the community, is to set up a body of enemies to that rest of the community.’⁴ Landed privilege is here seen as the initiating factor in class conflict.

However, appearing alongside these analyses in the periodical press were more moderately critical or laudatory voices. This tone is especially prevalent in the more conservative periodicals the Brontës read, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* and *Fraser’s Magazine*. For instance, in a *Fraser’s* review of Benjamin Disraeli’s *Sybil* (1844), the reviewer praised the depiction of the unsympathetic Lord Marney, the elder brother to the protagonist: ‘Hard, selfish, griping, mean, he is the personification of that class of our English nobility which, though happily few in number, yet render themselves, wherever they appear, odious, and bring odium on their order. Even he, however, is exaggerated.’⁵ The reviewer defends landowners by singling out those like Lord Marney as being a minority, and then suggests that even this fictional character’s faults are exaggerated beyond those of real-life landowners. Thomas de Quincey, writing on ‘The Aristocracy of England’ in *Blackwood’s* in 1843, was full of praise for the English gentry (as opposed to French, Spanish, and Portuguese gentlemen, who are seen as effeminate):

England [...] possesses a gentry, the noblest that the world has seen, who are the natural leaders of intrepid commonalty [...] But why? How and in what sense

³ Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, ed. by Chris R. Vanden Bossche, Joel J. Brattin, and D.J. Trela (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 142.

⁴ [James Mill], ‘Art. I. Aristocracy,’ *The Westminster Review*, 2.4 (January 1836), 283-306 (p. 295).

⁵ ‘Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P.’, *Fraser’s Magazine*, 31 (June 1845), 727-737 (p. 731).

qualified? Not only by principle and by *honour* – [...], but by a physical robustness superior to that of any other class taken separately; and, above all, by a scale of accomplishments in education, which strengthen the claim to command.⁶

De Quincey argues that the physical strength and education of the gentry make England's elite men manly and capable to lead in politics and the military.

Elsewhere, the Brontës would have come across more careful, measured responses to the perceived indolence of the landed classes. Agricultural writers, for instance, saw a landowner's improvement of his land and his tenants' conditions as central to his role as a landlord. In an 1854 review of an agricultural pamphlet, J.S. Barty argues that the landowner has a role beyond making money from rents:

[T]he landowner [according to some recent economists] is taught to look upon his land as a mere article of commerce, and that the great question with him ought to be to discover how, with the least possible outlay, he can raise from it the greatest possible revenue [...] If the accursed commercial element is henceforth to be the sole ruling motive in the management of landed property, the country gentleman will speedily sink to the level of a commercial gentleman.⁷

Here, the landowner is compared with the money-grubbing 'commercial gentleman', who is not gentlemanly at all. In this vision, land is not a money-earning property, but something to value and respect. This is set in contrast to the images of urban poverty and the factory system associated with the 'commercial gentleman', and in turn suggests that a mill or other business concern should be viewed in a more responsible, paternalist fashion, after the example of the traditional landowner.

Calls for landowners to take up more responsibility and to deal more justly with their tenants are intermixed with the new rhetoric of professionalism. For instance, in an 1849 *Blackwood's* review of Henry Stephens's *Book of the Farm* (1844), John Finlay

⁶ Thomas De Quincey, 'The Aristocracy of England', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 54 (July 1843), 51-66 (p. 52). Similarly positive arguments in favour of the aristocracy as natural leaders in British society can be found in the unsigned 'The Aristocracy of Rank: Is it the Aristocracy of Talent?', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 34 (August 1846), 159-166.

⁷ [J.S. Barty], 'News from the Farm', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 75 (March 1854), 329-345 (pp. 334-335).

Weir Johnston quoted at length from a section calling for the reconfiguration of the landowner as a professional role and vocation:

Is it not strange that [a country gentleman] should require inducements to learn his hereditary profession, – to become familiar with the only business which can enable him to enhance the value of his estate, and increase his income? Does it not infer infatuation to neglect becoming well acquainted with the condition of his tenants, by whose exertions his income is raised, and by which knowledge he might confer happiness on many families [...]? It is in this way too many country gentlemen neglect their moral obligations.⁸

In this passage, Johnston, an agricultural chemist and scientific lecturer, makes it clear that he sees the landed male's duty to his land as his 'hereditary profession', an interesting mixture of inherited privilege and the middle-class, Carlylean Gospel of Work. Both the materialist and service aspects of the professional ideal are present in this description. The landowner is urged to take an interest in his land and tenants, first for the sake of increasing his income and the value of his land. The writer also encourages landowners to improve conditions for their tenants, for their sakes, as part of the 'moral obligation' of landlords, reflecting their traditional duties of care and responsibility.

One traditional role a landowner played was that of the magistrate, a legal and administrative position. The only magistrate clearly identified in the Brontës' novels is Edgar Linton, who gives up his traditional obligations after Catherine's death. Nelly tells Lockwood that '[g]rief [...] transformed him into a complete hermit: he threw up his office of magistrate, ceased even to attend church, avoided the village on all occasions, and spent a life of entire seclusion within the limits of his park and grounds' (p. 162). Edgar withdraws from his social responsibilities for the remainder of his life, and cuts himself off from communication with his tenants and neighbours. The strangeness of this is not readily apparent in the novel, as its focus is so circumscribed throughout.

⁸ [James Finlay Weir Johnston], 'Scientific and Practical Agriculture', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 65 (March 1849), [258]-274 (p. 262).

Through Helen's socialisation of her second husband, Gilbert Markham, *Tenant* demonstrates how the landed male of the Regency era might become a successful Victorian husband and landowner, who fulfills both his domestic and professional obligations. Gilbert identifies himself as a gentleman farmer and actively manages his own land and workers. The twenty-four-year-old Gilbert of the early part of the narrative chafes at this role and its responsibilities, which tells the reader a great deal about his initial immaturity:

I, by [my father's] express desire, succeeded him in the same quiet occupation, not very willingly, for ambition urged me to higher aims, and self-conceit assured me that, in disregarding its voice, I was burying my talent in the earth, and hiding my light under a bushel [...] He [...] exhorted me, with his dying breath, to continue in the good old way, to follow his steps, and those of his father before him, and let my highest ambition be, [...] to transmit the paternal acres to my children in, at least, as flourishing a condition as he left them to me.

(*Tenant*, 10-11)

Clearly the Markham family holds some status in the neighbourhood as landowners, yet Gilbert longs for a more exciting career (recalling St John Rivers' desire for worldly action in *Jane Eyre*), and he uses biblical references which underpinned the doctrine of self-improvement to support his personal ambitions. His father, on the other hand, holds the view that family reputation and traditional, 'paternal' land ownership are key aspects of manliness and even fatherhood. Gilbert goes on to rationalise the value of his 'hereditary profession':

Well! – an honest and industrious farmer is one of the most useful members of society; and if I devote my talents to the cultivation of my farm, and the improvement of agriculture in general, I shall thereby benefit, not only my own immediate connections and dependants, but in some degree, mankind at large: – hence I shall not have lived in vain. (*Tenant*, 11)

Gilbert's subsequent justifications of the worth of his work reflect the view he *should* take of farming, as this work gives a man a chance to be useful, to cultivate the land and his own faculties, and to improve his neighbours' lot. This reflects the views of the agricultural writers cited above in their encouragement of moral and active land

management, a marriage of traditional paternalist ideals and new doctrines of professionalisation.

Gilbert thinks more highly of the value of working on the farm by the time he is a mature father and husband, and comments on the good effects farming had on his younger brother, whose love for his future wife ‘had roused his latent virtues and stimulated him to the most surprising exertions, [...] to render himself worthy of her, in his own eyes, as well as in those of her parents’ (pp. 416-417). Gilbert’s commentary forms an interesting contrast to his comments on his own later life, which say nothing of superintending the estate which was held in trust for Helen’s son by her first marriage or managing the estate inherited by Helen through her uncle. His final words consider only his domestic happiness, not his new duties as a great landowner.

In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Helen’s brother Frederick Lawrence is presented as an ideal landlord, though his personality and moral qualities do more to convey this image than any sense of his actual labour. The only context in which the reader sees Lawrence enacting his traditional duties is in his role as Helen’s landlord, as she hides from her abusive husband in the titular Wildfell Hall. In this role, just as Wildfell Hall is opposite to Wuthering Heights (a place of shelter and female domesticity, rather than a violent, patriarchal space), Lawrence acts as Heathcliff’s opposite: a landlord who is fraternal and sheltering, rather than misanthropic and vengeful.

Wuthering Heights, the Irish Tenant and Landlord Problem, and Maria Edgeworth’s Castle Rackrent

Criticism of the landowning classes was most often present in discussions of the Irish tenant and landlord problem during the 1840s, which was widely covered in the periodical press. Ireland figured largely in the Brontës’ lives, in part because Patrick Brontë hailed from County Down and kept up a degree of correspondence with his

family there, and in part because there was traffic between Yorkshire and Ireland among people they knew. Charlotte lost a chance to be a governess in Ireland; Mr Brontë's curate Mr Grant went on from Haworth to Ireland; and, of course, Arthur Bell Nicholls came to Haworth from Ireland. The risk of violence in Ireland was particularly high after the 1845 famine and the revolutions of 1848. Both Charlotte and Patrick Brontë spoke out against violent insurrection and calls for independence there in their 1848 letters.⁹

The Brontës would have read articles favourable to both sides of the tenant and landlord question in *Blackwood's*. For instance, the *Blackwood's* writer John Fisher Murray, an Irishman, disparaged Irish absentee landlords in London:

[T]hey complain as bitterly of the state of their country as if its pre-eminently wretched condition is not in a great measure attributable to their desertion and neglect [...] [The English landowner] does not consider that the whole duty of the tenant consists in making the rent, and the sole obligation of the landlord in spending it as soon as he gets it.¹⁰

This passage reflects a trend in criticism of Irish landowners, in that it compares their failings against the better conduct of their British counterparts. The absentees have abandoned their country and tenants, like so many army deserters. These Irish landlords seem to resemble the 'commercial gentlemen' cited above, because they care only for how much money they can make, with no regard for their old moral obligations to their tenants.

Perhaps surprisingly to a modern reader, *Blackwood's* also printed a number of defenses of Irish landlords. John D. Brady argued that the Irish landlords of forty or fifty years before had deserved British scorn: 'Then, unquestionably, the landlord could do

⁹ See P. Brontë, '29 July 1843, To the Editor of the *Halifax Guardian*', *PB Letters*, pp. 144-145; P. Brontë, '20 November 1843, to Mr Hugh Brontë', *PB Letters*, pp. 155-156; C. Brontë, 'To Margaret Wooler, 31 March 1848', *Letters*, II, pp. 47-49.

¹⁰ [John Fisher Murray], 'The World of London. Part VII', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 50 (December 1841), 767-778 (pp. 769-770).

almost any thing; *then*, no doubt, he could with impunity set the law at defiance.’¹¹ It is worth noting that this is just the period when *Wuthering Heights* is set. Like other writers, Brady compared Irish and British landowners, but did so for the sake of illustrating why Irish landlords were not to blame for their neglect due to differences in Irish and English laws:

[T]he English landlord can do much which the Irish one durst not attempt: [...] he may prevent his land from being damaged by bad husbandry, or a succession of the same crops being taken from it until it is rendered useless; – all this he may do by enforcing his covenants, and no one blames him.¹²

Because Brady argues that Irish landlords must not be blamed, the improvidence of the Irish peasants becomes the real problem, not the landlord’s absenteeism or neglect. This argument echoes those made by some commentators on the improvidence of the mill ‘hands’ in industrial cities, as will be shown below. Because the Irish landlords were vulnerable to attack by the “‘Thugs” of Tipperary’, Brady asked: ‘How can we be surprised at Irish absenteeism?’¹³ Such a position, as I have illustrated, was opposed by other *Blackwood’s* writers and especially those of more radical publications.

The Brontës would have been exposed to more critical assessment of the Irish situation in their reading of the *Leeds Mercury*, a liberal paper the Brontës took, alongside its more conservative rival, the *Leeds Intelligencer*. An 1846 article on Ireland quotes from a report made by the special correspondent for the *Morning Chronicle*:

[T]he landowners fulfil their loudly-vaunted promise to take care of the peasantry on their own estates in a mere mockery [...] On one estate of a landlord of princely fortune, the tenantry are compelled to go up to the Great House every morning, with a collection of pots and pans, to receive as a dole a quart or so of hot water in which turnips have been boiled. This is called soup.¹⁴

¹¹ [John D. Brady], ‘Ireland. – The Landlord and Tenant Question’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 55 (May 1844), 638-664 (p. 640).

¹² [Brady], p. 649.

¹³ [Brady], p. 652. This defense of the landlords and blame of the Irish tenantry is also present in Brady’s later article ‘Ireland – Its Condition – The Life and Property Bill – The Debate, And the Famine’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 59 (May 1846), 572-603.

¹⁴ ‘Ireland’, *The Leeds Mercury*, 2 May 1846, n.p.

The mocking author of this report is strongly critical of the neglect and outright abuse of tenants by their Irish landlords. Emily Brontë may have absorbed the criticisms directed against the Irish landlords and reflected this sense of unease with landed power and masculinity in *Wuthering Heights*, in which the Irish context is especially crucial to consideration of Heathcliff, as a possible Irish orphan.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë reworks aspects of Maria Edgeworth's novel *Castle Rackrent* (1800), which details the generations of the Irish Rackrent family, their servants, and their tenants. Unlike Edgeworth's novel, Emily does not provide a larger social picture of the world around the Earnshaws and Lintons, but rather constructs a tightly focused family romance through which Edgeworth's themes of legitimacy and usurpation, manliness, and legal process play out. Emily distorts and rearranges the linear chronology of Edgeworth's novel and partially shifts the focus onto women's lives through her decision to foreground Nelly, as the primary narrator of the family's history, a figure quite different from the Rackrents' male steward, and narrator of the novel, Honest Thady.

Critics have rarely connected Edgeworth's novel with Brontë's. In her biography of Emily Brontë, Winifred Gérin compares Edgeworth's and Brontë's similar narratorial strategies but does not discuss the similarities between the novels in any more depth.¹⁵ Kathleen Constable cites *Castle Rackrent* in her post-colonial discussion of Charlotte Brontë's Irishness, setting *Jane Eyre* within the context of the Anglo-Irish Big House genre. Constable sees Charlotte as the sibling most influenced by the family's Irish

¹⁵ Winifred Gérin, *Emily Brontë: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 225. Ruth Bienstock Anolik, in writing about maternal absence in the Gothic novel, includes both *Wuthering Heights* and *Castle Rackrent* in the genre, despite the comedic aspects of the latter, because 'the central action within *Rackrent* follows the dissolution of degenerate dynasty and the final loss of the estate'. However, Anolik does not directly connect the two novels ('The Missing Mother: The Meanings of Maternal Absence in the Gothic Mode', *Modern Language Studies*, 33.1/2 (Spring-Autumn, 2003), 24-43 (p. 37)). Notably, though Terry Eagleton discusses both *Wuthering Heights* and *Castle Rackrent* in his monograph *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger*, he does not compare or connect the two novels in any way (London: Verso, 1995).

heritage. However, Constable does not seem to realise that *Wuthering Heights*, with its ‘isolated and decaying house’, its ‘blurring of social distinctions’, and its decline into ‘lawlessness; drunkenness; imprisonment of wives who were married for their money; [...] and, of course, madness’ is a much better candidate for influence by *Castle Rackrent* and the aforementioned Big House genre.¹⁶

While there is no direct evidence that Brontë read Edgeworth’s novel, the Brontës’ connection to Ireland and their love of Scott (who praised Edgeworth’s Irish novels), suggest that Emily Brontë could have done so.¹⁷ Specific details from the narrative suggest this very strongly. It has been a major critical oversight that these parallels have never been analysed before. The action of *Castle Rackrent* takes place in Ireland during the mid-to-late eighteenth century, which lines up closely with the dates for *Wuthering Heights*. *Castle Rackrent* was published in 1800, one year before Lockwood arrives at Wuthering Heights, 1801, which is also the year the Acts of Union between Ireland and Great Britain came into force. Terry Eagleton, among others, has posited that Heathcliff might be an Irish orphan of the famine, but the famine began in 1845 and so of course cannot be a chronologically accurate factor in the plot of Emily’s novel.¹⁸ Instead *Wuthering Heights* functions as a historical novel in similar fashion to Charlotte’s *Shirley*, which was partially inspired by the Chartist upheaval and the Woman Question in the 1840s, but interrogates these issues within the historical setting of the

¹⁶ Kathleen Constable, *A Stranger Within the Gates: Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Irishness* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), p. 112.

¹⁷ Clifford Whone’s listing of books in the Keighley Mechanics’ Institute library includes four volumes of Edgeworth’s *Tales* (the title is unspecific), while Bob Duckett’s revised catalogue for the private library at Ponden Hall includes Edgeworth’s *Poetry explained for the use of young people* (1802) (Whone, ‘Where the Brontës Borrowed Books: The Keighley Mechanics’ Institute,’ *Brontë Society Transactions*, 9 (1950), 344-358, p. 355; Duckett, ‘The Library at Ponden Hall,’ *Brontë Studies*, 40 (2015), 104-149 (p. 128)). Duckett notes that the Ponden Hall library did not include much recent fiction, but that the Brontës clearly had access to a circulating library and quite likely the six booksellers known to be operating in Keighley in 1847 (p. 125).

¹⁸ Eagleton notes that, strictly speaking, Heathcliff could not be a famine orphan because the chronology for the beginning of the famine and Branwell’s visit to Liverpool do not mesh. When Eagleton writes of Heathcliff, he boldly states that in his essay ‘Heathcliff is Irish, and the chronology is not awry’ (p. 11).

Napoleonic wars and Luddite revolts. As Marianne Thormählen argues, ‘the Brontës’ fiction is both “historical” and involved in the problems of early Victorian Britain, displaying stereoscopic properties as past and present coalesce.’¹⁹ However, Thormählen argues that unlike in *Shirley*, ‘there is no sense that the action is unfolding alongside recognizable historical events and processes’ in *Wuthering Heights*.²⁰ While the focus of the novel is limited to the isolated neighbourhood of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, I argue that Emily’s novel does reflect the gender and class conflicts of the late 1840s by setting them in ‘stereoscopic’ relation with political and class upheavals taking place in Ireland, imaginatively transplanted from her father’s homeland into Yorkshire. *Wuthering Heights* thus reflects the specific regionalism of Edgeworth’s and Scott’s novels but uses the tradition to create a literature of Yorkshire, which could explain why so many southern reviewers (as well as Elizabeth Gaskell) could not appreciate the novel when it was first published.

Wuthering Heights and *Castle Rackrent* share a Gothic thematic deeply concerned with the masculinity of the landed classes. In both novels, a social upstart seeks revenge on and disinherits a drunken, spendthrift landlord. In *Castle Rackrent*, this revolutionary role is played by Jason Quirk, the son of the narrator, the Rackrents’ ageing steward Thady. Jason is a lawyer and becomes land agent to the Rackrents. He first purchases a house on Rackrent land for a pittance because Sir Condy requires ready money. Later, to his father’s apparent dismay, Jason enters into partnership with a wine merchant who has purchased all of Sir Condy’s debt. Between the two of them, they demand Sir Condy’s holdings, including Castle Rackrent. In *Wuthering Heights*, this plot plays out through the outsider Heathcliff, who dispossesses Hindley of Wuthering Heights by taking on the mortgage and exploiting Hindley’s grief-stricken alcoholism

¹⁹ Marianne Thormählen, ‘The Brontë Novels as Historical Fiction’, *Brontë Studies*, 40 (2015), 276-282 (p. 276).

²⁰ Thormählen, p. 277.

and gambling. Heathcliff, like Jason Quirk, makes use of his own money (mysteriously acquired in Heathcliff's case) and the legal system to dispossess his old master. As Honest Thady comments, 'I could not but grieve for my poor master's estate, all torn by these vultures of the law.'²¹ Critics such as Charles Sanger have commented on Emily's detailed knowledge of Victorian law surrounding inheritance, marriage, and property and her use of these mechanisms in *Wuthering Heights*.²² Edgeworth also makes clear the revolutionary upheaval embedded in Jason becoming the owner of Castle Rackrent, as Old Thady notes that the tenantry are affrighted by this turn of events: 'the people one and all gathered in great anger against my son Jason, and terror at the notion of his coming to be landlord over them.'²³ Heathcliff, as a possible Irish peasant and absolute outsider, represents an even greater threat to the social hierarchy when he becomes the owner of *Wuthering Heights*.

Interestingly, Mr Brontë's own version of the 'big house' novel, his 1818 novella *The Maid of Killarney*, plays out rather differently.²⁴ Much of the action takes place at the home of Captain Loughlean and his daughter Flora, who are seen as exceedingly generous landowners. The Loughleans are unfairly attacked by 'Whiteboys' or Irish Levellers, an eighteenth-century agrarian secret society which attacked landlords for unfairly high rents and tithes, as well as evictions.²⁵ The assault recalls the attack on Robert Moore's mill in *Shirley*, but ends with little violence when Flora rings an old watchman's rattle. Patrick Brontë upholds the rights and morals of these particular Irish landlords, making his examination of landowning much more idealised than Emily's.

²¹ Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*, ed. by George Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 62. Thanks are due to Sarah Hanks for suggesting this Edgeworth novel to me.

²² C.P. Sanger, *The Structure of Wuthering Heights* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1926).

²³ Edgeworth, p. 79.

²⁴ P. Brontë, *The Maid of Killarney; or, Albion and Flora: A Modern Tale; In which are interwoven some cursory remarks on Religion and Politics* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1818).

²⁵ For more on White Boys and Irish Levellers see J.S. Donnelly's 'Irish Agrarian Rebellion: The Whiteboys of 1769-76', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, 83C (1983), 293-331.

Both Brontë's and Edgeworth's novels depict the problems caused by close and miserly landlords. In *Castle Rackrent*, the stingy Sir Murtagh takes the estate over from Sir Patrick who had been famously generous and given to entertaining the neighbourhood. Murtagh's successor, Sir Kit, deals with the lack of funds by marrying a rich heiress at Bath, but locks his wife in her room for seven years because she refuses to give him her diamonds, in a parody of Gothic confinement. *Wuthering Heights* repeats this in Heathcliff's miserliness as a landlord, as Nelly comments that '[t]he villagers affirmed Mr. Heathcliff was *near*, and a cruel hard landlord to his tenants' (p. 174). Heathcliff keeps Isabella as a virtual prisoner, in a bid to make Edgar suffer, and keeps young Cathy locked up at Wuthering Heights until she agrees to marry his son Linton.²⁶ He does not use women for their money, but he certainly manipulates them as holders of property for his own gain. The reader learns of his cruelty to his tenants at third hand and never sees his relations with this mass of people, who have no individual identity in the novel. The wider public world and the tenants have become a faceless chorus casting judgement on Heathcliff. We are left to infer Heathcliff's cruelty and hard-heartedness to his tenants from his abuse of Isabella, Cathy, Hareton, and Linton. The wider public has been erased by Emily, because the focus of her novel is on the specifics of the households of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. These are the small arenas she uses to act out the drama of landed masculinity. She has rewritten Edgeworth's more public consequences and relationships at the level of the domestic sphere.

Emily's changes also include the structure of the narration, with the reader's first contact with the inhabitants of the two households coming from the point-of-view of a

²⁶ *Castle Rackrent* also parallels some of the other romances and marriages found in *Wuthering Heights*. Sir Condy originally falls in love with Judy, a young relation of Honest Thady, but marries Jane, the daughter of a wealthy neighbour instead (after her own father locks her up to keep them separate). This incident recalls Catherine's decision to marry Edgar rather than Heathcliff, and Edgar's confinement of his daughter Cathy. Additionally, Sir Kit Stopgap leaves Ireland for Bath (leaving his affairs in the hands of a cruel middle man) and brings his wife back from there, recalling Hindley's introduction of the outsider Frances into the household at Wuthering Heights.

fallible, male outsider, the southern gentleman Mr Lockwood. Unlike Nelly Dean, he lacks understanding of the families at the centre of the novel, and as such, acts partly as a surrogate for the reader. Rather than one family, *Wuthering Heights* circles around two, as members marry from one into the other and property passes from father to son and wife to husband. Emily's novel thus has a greater sense of conflict than Edgeworth's. What Emily also emphasises in her close focus on the members of these families is masculine inheritance of, and education in, patriarchal control and authority. This power is transmitted through the generations, alternately challenged, subverted, or upheld through abuse and revenge. Emily provides a radical rewriting of Edgeworth's material, and uses it to create a Gothic, pointed criticism of the excesses and violence of landowning masculinity, both challenged by and reproduced in Heathcliff.

Performance and Legibility: 'Playing the Country Gentleman'

The ability to read the markers of one's class affiliation (and style of masculinity) is challenged in Emily's *Wuthering Heights* by the ambiguities present in Lockwood's and Heathcliff's class status and origins. The reader is never privy to Lockwood's family lineage, source of wealth, or place of regular abode. However, we do know that he has time for leisure, as he has recently been to the seaside, and that he has access to funds, as he plans to spend six months in London after his short stay at Thrushcross Grange, only returning to the neighbourhood later on a hunting trip with friends. His status as tenant makes it difficult for the reader to determine where to place him in Victorian society. This pattern of social illegibility is complicated by Lockwood's own failed attempts to read the social relations at *Wuthering Heights*. The 'house' at *Wuthering Heights* suggests its owner is 'a homely, northern farmer', but Heathcliff's home does not accord with his status as a country gentleman, as signalled by his 'dress and manners', which themselves are in discord with his physical appearance as 'a dark-skinned gypsy' (p. 3).

Lockwood's confusion as to Heathcliff's class status is representative of more pressing issues regarding the legibility of status, the social origins of landowners in this period, and the performance of landed masculinity.

When Helen desires Huntingdon would take on a masculine role that did not glory in its social uselessness in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, she wishes 'he had something to do, some useful trade, or profession, or employment [...] If he would play the country gentleman, and attend to the farm [...], or if he would take up some literary study, or learn to draw or to play' (p. 191). The notion of 'playing the country gentleman' suggests this role might in fact not require any real work, but is rather a version of leisured work, or mere, artificial performance. In Helen's case, she wishes her husband would realise his role as landowner comes with moral and social responsibilities. At the very least, she wishes he could engage in an artistic or intellectual pursuit, which suggests that any activity at all – even in the traditional feminine accomplishments – would make Huntingdon a better husband and father. In her desire that he take up a 'trade' or 'profession', Helen really wishes away her husband's landed status and the destructive, misogynistic style of masculinity it embraces. If her husband did have a profession, he would by definition be a middle-class gentleman, presumably with a middle-class man's accompanying values and morality.

Huntingdon's friend Hattersley is the most violent man in the novel, and has the most excessive appetite for drink. As the son of a banker, he is over-acting the part of the landed gentleman, to make it clear to his friends that he belongs to their class. Out of all the elite males in the novel, only he successfully 'plays' the country gentleman after his reformation as a husband:

[H]e continued to pass his life in the country immersed in the usual pursuits of a hearty, active country gentleman; his occupations being those of farming, and breeding horses and cattle, diversified with a little hunting and shooting, and influenced by the occasional companionship of his friends [...], and the society of

his happy little wife [...] and his fine family of stalwart sons and blooming daughters. (*Tenant*, 390)

Hattersley fuses his gentlemanly sports with active labour as a farmer and horse and cattle breeder, and Gilbert Markham recounts the tale of his reformation with praise and a jovial tone. This reformed and professionalised model of landowning masculinity is the role Anne believes the landowning classes must fill if they are to survive the post-Reform century. Huntingdon, and his similarly debauched friend Grimsby, do not change their useless styles of masculinity and are both destroyed by their excesses, with their deaths attributed to alcohol abuse and cheating at cards, respectively.

In *Shirley*, Charlotte Brontë's depiction of 'Captain' Shirley Keeldar suggests that playing the country gentleman might be a gendered performance facilitated in large part by titles and offices normally only accessible to men. Shirley proclaims grandiloquently:

I am an esquire: Shirley Keeldar, Esquire, ought to be my style and title. They gave me a man's name; I hold a man's position: it is enough to inspire me with a touch of manhood [...] really I feel quite gentlemanlike. You must choose me for your churchwarden, Mr. Helstone, the next time you elect new ones: they ought to make me magistrate and a captain of yeomanry. (*Shirley*, 172)

Shirley identifies herself as possessing a number of symbolic male signifiers: her name, her role as major landowner in the parish (and owner of a mill, by extension).

Additionally she feels 'quite gentlemanlike', suggesting a kind of gender fluidity not seen elsewhere in the Brontës' published works, though as Sara Lodge argues, Charlotte had previously played with this in her depiction of Jane Moore's self-presentation as gentleman in the *The Duke of Zamorna*.²⁷ Because Shirley bears a number of signs of landed masculinity, she appeals to the rector to be given more of the traditional roles (churchwarden, magistrate, captain of yeomanry) and their accompanying authority.

This is a challenge to the gendered divisions of labour within the landed classes.

²⁷ Sara Lodge, 'Masculinity, Power and Play in the Work of the Brontës,' in *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 1-30 (p. 4).

Shirley's grand assertions of her own masculinity and authority suggest in turn that Charlotte may be mocking the pretensions to power by men of this class, suggesting that their titles and offices are only husks, devoid of real work towards ameliorating the lives of the working classes. In any case, Shirley succeeds in her performance as landlord only because other men are willing to deal with her on businesslike terms when she initiates a programme of relief for Robert Moore's unemployed mill workers and their families, which Bodenheimer sees as an act of female paternalism.²⁸ Shirley does not desire a professional status, but a traditionally philanthropic, paternalist one.

Captains of Industry and the Subversion of the Professional Ideal in *The Professor and Shirley*

In recent criticism on *Shirley*, Robert Moore's reformation as a mill owner and his decision to marry for love rather than money has been explained as a twinned process of domestication. Susan Zlotnick exemplifies this position, writing that Charlotte 'domesticate[s] the industrialist and replace[s] [her] hero[']s [...] ruthless industrialism and fierce economic competition with a version of the family's tangled web of interdependent relations'.²⁹ Jessica L. Malay conducts a similar reading, concluding that Robert Moore requires 'tempering by feminine influence' to effect his transformation from 'pure mercantile thinking' into 'the recognizable equivalent of the traditional paternalistic squire'.³⁰ Whilst Robert certainly takes on the pseudo-feudal, Carlylean role of Clothier to his brother Louis's position as Squire within Briarfield parish at the end of *Shirley*, I argue that it is more productive to consider Robert's reformation in light of the

²⁸ Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 48.

²⁹ Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 72.

³⁰ Jessica L. Malay, 'Industrial Heroes: Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë's Constructions of the Masculine', in *Performing Masculinity*, ed. by Rainer Emig and Antony Rowland (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 41-59 (p. 41).

emergent professional service ideal and the ways in which industrialists embraced the paternalism traditionally associated with landowners. By adopting these professional values and paternal qualities, Robert becomes a version of Thomas Carlyle's ideal of the Captain of Industry or Samuel Smiles's Man of Business.

For instance, the scene in which Caroline Helstone makes Robert read *Coriolanus* as part of a project to make him a better mill owner and man could be interpreted as an aspect of professional education, rather than a domesticating one. Caroline takes the liberty of pointing out the negative points of Robert's character when he sympathises early on with Coriolanus, 'that proud patrician' (p. 78), but does not sympathise with his suffering fellow men. She uses Robert's emotional (not intellectual) responses to explicate his own failings, which is apparently successful, for as Robert reads on, 'he forgot to criticize [...] and, stepping out of the narrow line of private prejudice, began to revel in the large picture of human nature [...]' (p. 78). Caroline uses Robert's newfound 'feeling' to argue her point: 'you must not be proud to your work-people; you must not neglect chances of soothing them' (p. 79). She then translates her advice directly into a domestic analogy: 'I know it would be better for you to be loved by your work people than be hated by them, and am sure that kindness is more likely to win their regard than pride' (p. 80). Caroline's education of Robert Moore, especially as it is couched in these domestic terms, has been presumed by critics to be necessarily domesticating. However, this scene could act as a lesson in professionalism. As Lauren M. E. Goodlad argues, with reference to Dickens's *David Copperfield*: 'male professionals may be seen to have waged their own struggle for status and power by aligning *themselves* with the domestic ideal.'³¹ Rather than being feminised or domesticated, Robert has instead taken on a new style of masculinity in becoming a professionalised Captain of Industry. Caroline's use of

³¹ Lauren M. E. Goodlad, "'A Middle Class Cut into Two': Historiography and Victorian National Character,' *English Literary History*, 67 (2000), 143-178 (p. 163).

Coriolanus could be professional in its own way by assimilating Robert into a paternalist, familial view of professional ethics and employer-worker relations.

Captains of Industry

In *Past and Present*, Thomas Carlyle calls on heroic Captains of Industry to forge a new order for industrial Britain, while drawing on nostalgia for feudal social relations based on loyalty and protection. This is evident in his descriptions of the relationship between the Feudal Baron and his men:

No Working World, any more than a Fighting World, can be led on without a noble Chivalry of Work [...] The Feudal Baron had a Man's Soul in him [...] He felt it precious [...] to have men round him who in heart loved him; whose life he watched over with rigour yet with love; who were prepared to give their life for him, if need came.³²

Carlyle suggests that the feudal past, which he nostalgically presents as being governed by affective social hierarchies, provided more mutual loyalty and protection than unregulated Victorian industrial capitalism, which was governed instead by self-interested competition, which Carlyle mocks as the Gospel of Mammonism. This pessimistic view lies behind the characterisation of the mill owners in Victorian industrial novels, such as Elizabeth Gaskell's Mr Carson in *Mary Barton* (1848) and John Thornton in *North and South* (1855), prior to their own reformations, as well as Mr Bounderby in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854). Carlyle also argues for a 'Chivalry of Work', in which morality makes work manly and admirable, and which will restore the broader social structures that the nineteenth century lacked. Thus, Carlyle argues that the commercial classes must take on the mantle of moral leadership and professionalism.

Samuel Smiles is commonly seen as the evangelist for the self-helping entrepreneur, but his conception of the ideal Man of Business suggests that he casts even

³² Carlyle, pp. 268-269.

this figure, so associated with rampant industrial capitalism, in a professional light.³³ Smiles, in fact, defends this breed of men and the value of their work, writing: ‘Of course, there are narrow-minded men of business, as there are narrow-minded scientific men, literary men, and legislators; but there are also business men of large and comprehensive minds, capable of action on the very largest scale.’³⁴ He goes on to say: ‘Indeed, of no other pursuit can it so emphatically be said, as of this, that “Business makes men”’, and ‘[i]t is not the calling that degrades the man, but the man that degrades the calling. All work that brings honest gain is honourable, whether it be of hand or mind’.³⁵ In this defense of the manly value of *all* work, Smiles recalls Carlyle’s Gospel of Work: ‘All work, even cotton-spinning, is noble; work alone is noble.’³⁶ Smiles radically rewrites Carlyle’s moral hierarchies, however. Rather than being degrading and narrowing, business, when conducted properly, can in fact be as manly as any other career, requiring the same skills as other professions praised elsewhere in *Self-Help*. Smiles does, nonetheless, acknowledge that business can be more challenging to a man’s morals than other types of work: ‘It must be admitted, that Trade tries character perhaps more severely than any other pursuit in life [...] [M]en of business who pass through such trials unstained are perhaps worthy of as great honour as soldiers who prove their courage amidst the fire and perils of battle.’³⁷ In a way, Smiles makes the honest and admirable businessman even more praiseworthy by delineating the challenges he must face. This

³³ Though *Self-Help* was not published until after Brontë’s death, Heather Glen notes in *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (2002) that ‘the lectures that formed the basis of [*Self-Help*] were first delivered to a young men’s mutual improvement society in Leeds in 1845 – the year in which very probably, only a few miles away, *The Professor* was conceived’ ((Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 35).

³⁴ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help*, ed. by Peter W. Sinnema (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 221.

³⁵ Smiles, p. 221.

³⁶ Carlyle, p. 155.

³⁷ Smiles, p. 238. He follows with this affirming statement: ‘And, to the credit of the multitudes of men engaged in the various departments of trade, we think it must be admitted that on the whole they pass through their trials nobly’ (p. 238).

discourse also links Smiles's conception of the ideal businessman to the martial and chivalric language used by Carlyle to describe the Captain of Industry.

For Robert's part, having been severely counselled by both Shirley and Caroline during the novel, especially when Shirley scolds him for daring to mix business and matrimony by proposing marriage when he does not love her, he gains further knowledge from his experiences in Birmingham and London. He explains his realisations concerning poverty and suffering thus to Mr Yorke:

Something there is to look to, Yorke, beyond a man's personal interest: beyond the advancement of well-laid schemes; beyond even the discharge of dishonouring debts [...] Unless I am more considerate to ignorance, more forbearing to suffering than I have hitherto been, I shall scorn myself as grossly unjust. (*Shirley*, 454)

Robert truly reforms as a mill owner after observing the plight of his fellow man in industrial urban centres, which occurs offstage in the novel. After his transformation, Robert would still exact justice if attacked, but he would do so out of paternal concern for the 'ignorant' and 'suffering' men who had been misled into violent action. Robert has learned how to 'render [...] justice to his fellow-men', while embracing an identity which fuses the new professionalism and landowning paternalism (p. 454)

Other voices at this time were more or less supportive of Robert's views of what was owed by manufacturers to their operatives. John Ruskin cast the Honourable Merchant of *Unto this Last* in the role of the father in order to illustrate an ideal attitude towards workers:

[T]he only means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinates as he would with his own son [...] This is the only effective, true, or practical RULE which can be given on this point of political economy.³⁸

³⁸ John Ruskin, 'The Roots of Honour', *Unto This Last*, in *Unto this Last and Other Writings*, ed. Clive Wilmer (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1997), pp. 155-228 (p. 178).

Ruskin's 'rule' for conduct draws on an ideal vision of fatherhood that would have been difficult to maintain in practice.

W.R. Greg, an industrialist, blames the operatives' own 'improvidence' for their condition in life, opposing the model of class conflict portrayed in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, which he reviewed for *The Edinburgh Review*. Greg argues that the manufacturing class is not to blame for the ills of the working class, and that their improvement lies entirely in themselves:

Endow the wealthy employers of labour with all power and all knowledge, imbue their hearts with the kindest affections, let them call in legislative aid without measure and without stint; and all combined would still remain as incompetent as at present.³⁹

The tone here is surprisingly patronising, while eschewing paternalism, making Greg's view of the matter quite different from Charlotte Brontë's, as *Shirley* indicates that a mill owner's philanthropy is a partial solution to the problems caused by trade depressions. Though Brontë's narrative sympathy is with the middle-class manufacturers and opposed to working-class agitators, her novel does not suggest that the hands are at fault for their problems, or that Robert is blameless for his early neglectful responses to their suffering. Greg also argues that though manufacturers do not starve in basement hovels as out-of-work operatives do, they suffer severely in their own way:

[P]icture, however cursorily, the position of those employers who [...] have seen the accumulations of years of patient and honest industry suddenly swept away, and who [...] have had to set to work to reconstruct the shattered fabric of their fortunes – and of those who, compromised more deeply still, find [...] their objects defeated, and their occupation gone.⁴⁰

Here, Greg perceptively outlines the internal conflict suffered by men like Robert Moore, who fear the emasculating loss of a family concern. Again, even though Charlotte's sympathies lie with the middle-class characters (the chief difference between *Shirley* and

³⁹ W.R. Greg, 'Mary Barton; a Tale of Manchester Life,' *The Edinburgh Review*, 89 (April 1849), 402-435 (p. 421). Thanks to Sarah Hanks for alerting me to Greg's comments on labour relations.

⁴⁰ Greg, p. 415.

Mary Barton, which had focused on the sufferings of the Manchester poor), *Shirley* does not suggest that Robert's inner torments are greater than the physical wants endured by his unemployed workmen and their families.

David Power envisioned the ideal manufacturer in yet another manner, this time based on cooperation between masters and workers. Power, though he differed from W.R. Greg on many points, likewise emphasised the importance of mental culture and self-improvement among the operative class, but saw the employer's role as central in making educational opportunities available. Power described attending an entertainment given by the Ironfounders Ransom and May in Ipswich, which was attended by the owners, their apprentices, workers, and the workers' wives, where this address from a delegation of the work people was given:

Nothing [...] can more tend to the prosperity of any business [...] than a reciprocal kind feeling between masters and servants, and when the master attends not only to the pecuniary interests of those under them by a fair compensation for their labour, but also endeavours to promote their intellectual and moral improvement, [...] thus to dignify the pursuit of business as a hallowed means of establishing an affectionate and social relation between employers and employed.⁴¹

In this ideal vision, the manufacturer and the workers cooperate to create a fulfilling work environment and opportunities for the workers' continued self-improvement. This is a less paternalistic vision than Greg's or Carlyle's feudal slant, as it requires the masters and men to work together to improve their business and relationships. This type of cooperation does not appear in *Shirley*, as Robert focuses only on improving his paternalistic, top-down philanthropic efforts after his reformation. This version of mill owning would appear, however, in Gaskell's *North and South*, as the reformed John Thornton provides materials for a dining hall at the request of his workers, who provide

⁴¹ [David Power], *On the Responsibilities of Employers* (London: William Pickering, 1849), pp. 4-5.

the funds themselves. The model is still paternalistic, but less one-sided than the ideal suggested by Charlotte in *Shirley*.

Yorke Hunsden and Hiram Yorke: The Critique of the Radical Mill Owner

If Robert is positioned as successfully taking on his professional and paternalist duties as a reformed mill owner (which the narrative presents with some ambivalence, as I discuss below), Charlotte presents other, problematically paternalist, mill owners in *Shirley* and *The Professor* in the characters of Hiram Yorke and Yorke Hunsden. Both are based to some degree on Joshua Taylor, the father of Charlotte's school friend Mary. Mr Taylor is described by Elizabeth Gaskell as 'a man of remarkable intelligence, but of strong, not to say violent prejudices, all running in favour of Republicanism and Dissent'.⁴² Like Mr Taylor, both Mr Yorke and Hunsden preach egalitarianism, while also acting out Ruskin's model of the Honourable Merchant, who employs fatherly concern in all his relations with his workers. However, this fatherly concern, which suggests an inherent patriarchal control and desire for hierarchies, leads in practice to an oppressive method of dealing with subordinates. Mr Yorke and Hunsden's radical politics are thus presented as hypocritical, a possible reflection of Charlotte's own disagreements with Joshua Taylor's political and religious views. Through these two characters, Charlotte delineates the limitations of professional paternalism, suggesting that it degrades into the self-interested maintenance of masculine authority and economic power.

Mr Yorke is portrayed as an excellent father and respected leader in the community, in part because he manages his employees with a paternalist approach, accepting more responsibility than Greg argued a manufacturer should:

⁴² Gaskell, *Life*, pp. 121-122.

He was much beloved by the poor, because he was thoroughly kind and very fatherly to them. To his workmen he was considerate and cordial: when he dismissed them from an occupation, he would try to set them on to something else. (*Shirley*, 42)

However, Mr Yorke's paternalist approach is problematised and made contradictory by its combination with his apparently egalitarian politics: 'if [...] any individual amongst his "hands" showed signs of insubordination, Yorke – who, like many who abhor being controlled, knew how to control with vigour – had the secret of crushing rebellion in the germ, of eradicating it like a bad weed' (pp. 42-43). As Rosemarie Bodenheimer argues, these metaphors '[relish] the violent potential of Yorke's fatherliness'.⁴³ When Yorke's men show signs of restiveness, they become metonymic, depersonalised 'hands' whose unrest must be 'crushed', because as a man in a powerful but vulnerable social position, Mr Yorke cannot bear the thought of being controlled by his workers.

Yorke Hunsden's character and radical politics are similarly undermined in *The Professor*. He is critical of William Crimsworth's aristocratic background, while taking pride in his own family stature and lineage: 'The Hunsdens were of an old stem [...] in his secret heart he well knew and fully appreciated the distinction his ancient, if not high lineage conferred on him' (p. 24). Although Hunsden criticises others for belonging to a corrupt, indolent ruling class, he piously believes in the worth of an old family name in changing times, having no qualms later in the novel when he inherits the ancestral family home.

Additionally, Hunsden meddles in other people's business, out of a need for paternalist control but under the cover of 'reform'. Hunsden urges William to stand up to his brother's tyrannous treatment, even if it is not in his best interest. Furthermore, he intervenes on William's behalf with his brother for his personal satisfaction: '[the Hunsdens] have fine noses for abuses, we scent a scoundrel a mile off, we are reformers

⁴³ Bodenheimer, p. 43.

born, radical reformers, and it was impossible for me to live in the same town with Crimsworth, to come into weekly contact with him, to witness some of his conduct to you' (p. 41). Hunsden seems to be using his friend's situation to assert his own standing in the community by opposing Edward Crimsworth, as a rival mill owner.

Charlotte's novels include only one depiction of an entirely unreformed, Mammon-worshipping mill owner. In William's working relationship with his brother Edward Crimsworth, he is outwardly a 'slave' to his 'master's' will. Edward Crimsworth is frequently referred to as a master and, worse, a 'tyrant' (p. 26). When trade declines, Edward loses his wealth, his family home, and his wife, but he does not suffer long as an industrial failure. When the economy picks up again, he becomes 'richer than Croesus by railway speculations' at a time when investment was viewed suspiciously, as the wealth it created was divorced from honest labour (p. 223). In Charlotte's first novel, Edward's relative prosperity has absolutely no reference to his moral or professional status, but rather depends entirely on to the unregulated Victorian market.

Charlotte thus depicts industrialists as being profoundly shaped by their ability to control themselves and others in order to exploit favourable market conditions or avoid being ground down by trade depressions. In *Shirley*, Robert Moore is constantly threatened with bankruptcy and masculine failure, especially as he runs a family business that puts more than his personal honour at stake. He reforms his initially hard-hearted treatment of his hands and sets aside his lust for money for his love of Caroline Helstone. Superficially, these personal and moral changes allow him to succeed in turning his mill business around. But Charlotte also complicates this personal narrative of professional reform and benevolent paternalism. By setting *Shirley* during the Napoleonic wars, she makes it clear that, because the repeal of the Orders in Council in 1812 allows trade to resume, it is the acts of legislators and the uncontrolled economy that allow Robert to

succeed professionally and romantically. He is able to marry because political movements have created the conditions under which he can support a wife. None of these larger shifts have any causal connection with Robert's individual amelioration. The novel appears to authorise his course of self-improvement, while subtly undermining its efficacy and significance. Additionally, Charlotte problematises the possibility of fusing disinterested professionalism and paternalist labour management by depicting both Mr Yorke and Yorke Hunsden as unable to resist exerting control through their dealings with their work people and in their personal affairs. Ultimately, although Robert is rewarded with marriage, better trade conditions, and new status as a Carlylean Captain of Industry, the cynical meditations on industrial blight and destruction at the close of *Shirley* undercut Robert's success, especially in the narrator's evocation of 'the manufacturer's day-dreams embodied in substantial stone and brick and ashes—the cinder-black highway, the cottages, and the cottage gardens; [...] a mighty mill, and a chimney ambitious as the tower of Babel' (p. 541). In her two industrial novels, Charlotte seriously subverts the notion that success should, or even can, keep step with morality, principle, or professionalism, especially when married with more traditional notions of paternalist rule from the landowning classes.

Post-Work Masculinities: Retirement and Romantic Withdrawal

While the Brontës were fascinated by the professions and their effects on and possibilities for masculine identity, the sisters returned again and again to the concepts of retirement and domestic withdrawal, which strongly suggest they saw domesticity as a key factor in a unified masculinity. These choices reflect the thematic and structural limitations of the Victorian novel, as no available genre or structure could successfully

reconcile an industrial plot or a narrative of professional development without reference to the harmonising sphere of domesticity. Thus, in Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, the titular protagonist gains professional success as a writer and makes a happy second marriage, while *North and South* only partly reconciles masters and men and focuses on Margaret Hale's marriage to John Thornton, an alliance of landed and industrial interests.

The Brontës dramatise many of their male characters setting aside their professional identities and entering forms of early retirement, or voluntary labour. These withdrawals from work and society act out the twinned operations of domestic ideology and social paternalism identified by Catherine Gallagher, who writes that in social novels 'the family must be isolated and protected from the larger social world. The family in these novels is often presented as society's primary reforming institution'.⁴⁴ These domestic retreats are most notable in Charlotte's industrial novels, but this pattern is also present in almost all the other Brontë novels, as professionals give up their work and landlords retreat from their traditional duties, so that the endings of the novels represent a varied intertwining of social paternalism and apparently unworldly domesticity.

Two of Charlotte's male teachers make this move, in *Shirley* and *The Professor*. Louis Moore, who had felt trapped in his position as tutor, and William Crimsworth, who had risen to teaching at the university in Brussels, both relinquish their teaching careers and retire to rural settings which recreate the nostalgia for the paternalist social structures seen in Thomas Carlyle's critiques of Victorian industrial society. After ten years of hard work and judicious investment, William and Frances give up their labours and leave Belgium for England, having decided that 'Mammon was not our Master' (p. 215). After conforming to bourgeois ideals of self-improvement and dutiful working (for both husband and wife), the Crimsworths return to a non-industrialised patch of England and

⁴⁴ Catherine Gallagher, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 114-115.

live, it would seem, as landed gentry, not working, but still with enough capital to send their boy to Eton.

In *The Professor* and *Shirley*, Charlotte Brontë creates domestic units and parishes symbolically withdrawn from larger social structures or industrial reality, with the former middle-class professional playing the role of benevolent liege lord. For instance, having given up paid work, William Crimsworth notes that he and his wife still have the funds ‘on hand which properly managed by right sympathy and unselfish activity might help Philanthropy in her enterprises and put solace into the hand of Charity’ (p. 215). The charitable exercise of these funds is described in purely emotional terms, rather than financial ones. They use their professional earnings to meet their new paternalist responsibilities as small landowners.

At the end of *Shirley*, Louis Moore finds himself in a post-professional leadership role in Briarfield parish after he becomes engaged to Shirley. Robert forecasts near the end of the novel that Louis will be made a magistrate and that he will work for the benefit of the parish, as he ‘will not bury his talents’, using the same biblical and self-improving rhetoric Gilbert Markham deploys in *Tenant*. Louis is ‘a benevolent fellow’, with ‘an intellect [...] of no trifling calibre’, qualities which were inadequately used in his role as tutor, but will come forth in his role as magistrate and landowner (p. 539). Robert suggests that ‘all will feel [Louis’s] quiet influence, and acknowledge his unassuming superiority’ and he will be ‘universally esteemed, considered, consulted, depended on’ (p. 539). Robert describes Louis’s future role not in terms of the tasks he will accomplish or the duties he will assume, but in terms of the emotional perceptions of his personality and authority that will apparently be felt by all those in the district. This is curious, because Robert explains his own future plans in great detail: tearing down trees, building cottages, expanding the mill; but Robert does remain in paid work as mill-

owner, running the family concern. The two brothers will serve as dual rulers of the parish, supported by their wives – Shirley and Caroline – who will oversee their own charitable activities in managing, not teaching in, the Sunday school and future day school. Robert ends by noting that ‘the Squire and Clothier’, that is, Louis and him, in medieval terminology, ‘shall give a treat once a quarter,’ the height of masterful benevolence and paternalism (p. 540).

Though both Louis Moore and William Crimsworth find themselves in land-owning positions, their professional training has different significance for each man. Louis is considered by Robert to have the qualities necessary for the role of magistrate because he developed those talents through his professional service. Samuel Smiles observes that influence ‘is the result of proved honour, rectitude, and consistency’ and will ‘command the general confidence and respect of mankind’.⁴⁵ While Louis voluntarily relinquishes his professional status in marrying Shirley and joining her class, the gentlemanly qualities of service and good character he brings to his new role as landowner are a direct result of the tutoring work he found unfulfilling and emasculating. Any service he enacts for his community after becoming a landlord is that of a professionalised landowner (just as his brother Robert has become a professionalised ‘Captain of Industry’). However, this service is in many ways divorced from his wage (derived from rents he will gain no matter whether he is a good landlord or not) and from larger social movements and structures, since his energies will be directed towards his home parish and set within a feudal, paternalistic frame of reference. The value of such professionalised landed-industrialist rule of Briarfield is ultimately subverted by Charlotte’s ending to *Shirley*. As Bodenheimer argues, this ending represents Charlotte’s ‘stubborn refusal to accede to any of the romantic fantasies that emerge in the narrative

⁴⁵ Smiles, p. 314.

as potential havens of harmony, as stories of resolution'.⁴⁶ In the end, the two brothers' careful labour has succeeded and led to environmental blight and ruin. The narrator, presumably speaking from the present-day 1840s, notes that the Moore brothers are no longer in the neighbourhood, nor do they seem to have left behind any descendants, suggesting a domestic barrenness to mirror the environmental damage their works have caused.

William Crimsworth has come full circle, in a way, as the son of a manufacturer father and aristocratic mother. Having endured taunts from Hunsden about his resemblance to the soft, indolent aristocracy, Crimsworth ends the novel as a new breed of gentleman: owner of land purchased with the wages of professional labour and surprisingly profitable investments. William's domestic life is troubling, however, because his role as husband and father seems to be based on the dominance he had cultivated in his early days as a teacher with little power, except over his ignorant and otherwise powerless students. William has absorbed the language of self-help in his reliance on only himself and his ability to maintain punishing levels of self-control and containment, which make him a problematic husband and father.

Charlotte depicts the ways in which work, even professionalised, less alienated work, can be unfulfilling for men. Yet at the same time she supports the belief that it is necessary for a middle-class man to engage in labour for the sake of his class identity and the qualities of integrity, honour, and self-help, developed through professional service, which serve, in turn, to define the Victorian model of moral masculinity emerging at the same time as the professional ideal itself.

While landowners are seldom seen at work in their traditional or professionalised roles in the Brontës' works, each sister also plays with the concept of the complete social

⁴⁶ Bodenheimer, p. 39.

withdrawal of the landowner into the domestic sphere. This occurs as part of the fulfilment of the romance plot at the end of *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, a curious pattern which draws all three sisters together in terms of their presentation of landowning masculinity. At the end of *Jane Eyre*, Jane and Rochester live out their married life at Ferndean, with few servants, and their only outside relationships are those with the Rivers siblings. Their withdrawal from society not only creates a closed domestic sphere, but also signals a retreat from landowning masculinity and responsibility. The Brontës' repeated depictions of men who withdraw from the world of work suggest that they are challenging the identification of men with their work, perhaps as a privileging of a man's domestic identity. At the end of *Jane Eyre*, Mr Rochester is no longer defined as a gentleman or landlord, but more positively as a rejuvenated and redeemed husband and father.⁴⁷

At the end of *Wuthering Heights*, the combined fortunes and land holdings of the Earnshaws and Lintons fall to Hareton, who moves his housekeeping to the more genteel Thrushcross Grange. There is no word of his taking up the old Linton role of the magistracy, or of his new role as landlord or his intercourse with his tenants. Rather, the novel's focus remains solely on Cathy and Hareton as a harmonising force, 'who would brave Satan and all his legions' (p. 300). In this way, the reader never learns if Hareton becomes a close, hard-hearted landlord like Heathcliff or if his new gentility and domesticity spill over into his social role. However, the novel challenges the notion that the passions and vengeance of the first generation will be reconciled in the marriage of Cathy and Hareton, by suggesting Catherine and Heathcliff are unquiet in death.

⁴⁷ In *Villette*, Charlotte seems most interested in the fate of Lucy Snowe, which M. Paul engineers but never has a chance to share. M. Paul almost certainly dies at sea before he can return home with his new wealth and wed Lucy. He has, however, been providing precious emotional support from afar while he toils in the West Indies. Charlotte's narrative sacrifice of M. Paul, an acerbic but domestic man, allows Lucy to maintain her long-sought independence, but also serves as an additional loss and trauma for the troubled protagonist.

Similarly, Gilbert Markham becomes the caretaker for Arthur Huntingdon's former estate, as well as the owner of Helen's uncle's land and wealth, yet the matter of the frame letter that bookends the novel is focused purely on domestic relations: his children with Helen, Arthur Jr's marriage to Milicent and Hattersley's daughter, the expected visit from Halford and his sister Rose. As in *Wuthering Heights*, the same hint of ambiguity imbues Helen and Gilbert's marriage, as Helen's views are unspoken, and Gilbert, like Edward Rochester and Hareton Earnshaw, retains all the legal powers Arthur Huntingdon had abused as a husband.

Only Anne Brontë's first novel suggests a productive interlocking of professional and domestic roles and responsibilities for men. At the end of *Agnes Grey*, Agnes, writing of her husband Mr Weston, notes that despite 'whatever his faults may be as a man, (and no one is entirely without,)', she 'def[ies] anybody to blame him as a pastor, a husband, or a father' (p. 198). Mr Weston has succeeded as a professional man, a husband, and a father, with his masculine identity positioned by Anne as a three-fold, mutually-supporting web of home and professional responsibilities. In this way, at her most optimistic, Anne presents an ideal early Victorian masculinity which combines useful work and domestic nurturing. This melding of domesticity and professionalism allows for a form of masculinity which is more positive and productive for both men and women, discouraging overweening pride or dominance in the home, abuses of power in the apparently corrupting world, or physical or psychological violence towards other men, or women and children. This is the only Brontë novel which seems able to imagine a fully integrated male identity, in which a man's professional and domestic roles attain any degree of balance. By the time Anne came to write *Tenant*, her critique of the negative aspects of dominant masculinity had sharpened and her narrative, like those of her sisters, was no longer able to envision such a straightforward fusion of masculine

styles and ideals, examining instead the possibilities for socialising a new generation in a less stunting manner.

Conclusion

You ask me if I do not think that men are strange beings – I do indeed, I have often thought so – and I think too that the mode of bringing them up i[s] strange.¹

Charlotte Brontë wrote the above passage in a letter to her old Roe Head teacher, Margaret Wooler, in part to address Branwell's continuing failure to find work. She candidly discussed with her old mentor her view that 'men are strange beings' and that they are socialised in a destructive manner, not protected from vice as women are but thrust upon the world with no preparation. The letter anticipated the discussion Anne presented in the early part of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, in which Helen critiques the conventional attitude towards bringing up boys, which all the Brontës viewed as problematic. The Brontës' novels present the strangeness of masculinity, but also its fascinations, as they explore in their works an extraordinary range of models of masculinity, from forceful, passionate, and violent to controlled professional and domestic men. Charlotte Brontë wrote this letter at the time she was composing her first novel and it is a measure of the distance she felt from both her earlier romantic Angrian productions, and also her old partner, Branwell. Branwell's shadow, as he moves from beloved brother and creative producer to a problematic specimen of masculinity, lies behind all the Brontës' works, as they seek to establish themselves as independent literary voices (albeit in male guise).

The arresting impact of the Brontës' configurations of masculinity was felt not only at the time of publication, but also by successive generations of writers. In *Brontë Transformations* (1996), Patsy Stoneman has detailed how the Brontës' depictions of

¹ C. Brontë, 'To Margaret Wooler, 30 January 1846', *Letters*, I, pp. 447-449 (p. 448).

women in particular were reimagined in later works.² I would suggest that more study should be given to the influence of the Brontës' depictions of masculinity on later Victorian authors, particularly women writers. For instance, despite Dinah Mulock Craik's more orthodox depictions of Christianity and morality, her representations of problematic forms of masculinity in *Olive* (1850) seem to have been strongly influenced by both *Jane Eyre* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.³ Olive's emotionally abusive and adulterous father, Mr Rothesay, resembles both Arthur Huntingdon and Mr Rochester (especially as he fathers a daughter on his West-Indian mistress), while Olive must achieve her independence through painting, as Helen Huntingdon does in *Tenant*. The vicar and love interest, Harold Gwynne, recalls St John Rivers not only in his coldness, but also in his spiritual and professional turmoil regarding his vocation, which are magnified by Harold's atheism. The novel is a swift and immediate response to the Brontës' works, suggesting how far they opened up imaginative possibilities for their successors.

Later in the century, that most cerebral of novelists, George Eliot, clearly draws on *Villette*: the Tertius Lydgate and Rosamond Vincy marriage plot in *Middlemarch* (1871- 1872) suggests an alternative, painful outcome for Dr John's courtship of Ginevra Fanshawe. Rebecca N. Mitchell has argued that the 'Rosamond plots' in *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch* indicate how Brontë and Eliot handled self-knowledge and the alterity of the other in personal relationships through St John's rejection of Rosamond Oliver and Lydgate's misguided decision to marry his own Rosamond.⁴ However, despite the mirroring of the women's names, I would suggest that the Lydgate plot more closely resembles Dr John's experience in *Villette*, and not just because the two men are

² Patsy Stoneman, *Brontë Transformations: The Cultural Dissemination of Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights* (London: Prentice Hall, 1996).

³ Dinah Craik, *Olive*, ed. by Cora Kaplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁴ Rebecca N. Mitchell, 'The Rosamond Plots: Alterity and Unknown in *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 66 (2011), 307-327 (pp. 307-308).

physicians. Dr John and Lydgate are both in professional positions where a wife would help to confirm their manly status. Rosamond Vincy and Ginevra Fanshawe share a similar conventional beauty and charm, and both are looking to rise in the world socially. In Brontë's version of the plot, Dr John is unmanned (but also saved a great deal of grief) when Ginevra passes him over for her effeminate Count de Hamal. Eliot does not spare Tertius Lydgate the awkward, badly matched marriage Dr John avoids but presents him following through on his infatuation for Rosamond and depicts the struggles which follow, leading to the breakdown of any mutual sympathy and the destruction of Lydgate's financial prospects and professional vocation for medical research. Like Anne in *Tenant*, Eliot is interested in painting the consequences of choosing one's marriage partner unwisely.

This sketch of parallels only begins to suggest the degree to which other women writers took inspiration from the Brontës' divisive representations of masculinity.⁵ The troubling, subversive men of the Brontës' mid-century novels authorised the women writers of the next decades to depict domestic, sensational, and professional masculinities unavailable to the Victorian novel before the Brontës' ground-breaking works, which themselves grew from the siblings' early writings of the late-Romantic 1830s.

In an 1870 review of a new edition of Carlyle's works, John Morley re-evaluated Carlyle's cultural impact in contrast to that of Byron in starkly gendered terms, asserting

⁵ Other possible intertexts include Caroline Clive's proto-sensation novel, *Paul Ferroll* (1855), which reimagines Heathcliff as a true psychopath and domestic murderer. Elsewhere in the sensation genre we find figures from *Jane Eyre* gender-swapped, for example in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's female bigamist of *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) (and thus a cuckolded George Tallboys), and in Charles Reade's *Hard Cash* (1863), the incarcerated lunatic is figured for the first and only time in Victorian fiction as a passive, feminised man, a figure the reading public was deeply uncomfortable with, as Sarah Wise argues (*Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England* (London: Bodley Head, 2012), pp. 199-200). Elizabeth Gaskell rewrites the mill-owning masculinity found in her own *Mary Barton* and in Charlotte's *Shirley* in *North and South* (1855).

that 'Carlylism is the male of Byronism'.⁶ Byronism was seen by Morley as merely rebellious, while Carlylism was deemed to be both expansive and productive.⁷ But the differences went deeper than that, as Byronism was clearly positioned as effeminate, no longer a suitable masculine ideal for the mid-Victorian period. Morley positioned Byron and Carlyle as twin examples of manliness, one Romantic and the other firmly Victorian and normative. Between Byron's death and Morley's retrospective evaluation lie the Brontës' works, which transfigured the Romantic masculinities of their early youth into literary forms of masculinity which interpreted, reconfigured, and critiqued the new forms of masculinity emerging in the Victorian period.

Both the Byronic hero and proto-Carlylean notions of hero-worship had fundamentally shaped the Angrian and Gondal writings of the four Brontë children. Carlyle's critiques of Byronism and the silver fork dandy were reflected in the satirical and gloomy presentations of Branwell's and Charlotte's primary Byronic heroes later in the 1830s. In 'Characteristics' (1831), Carlyle had identified a coming shift in masculine types, writing that '[t]he old ideal of Manhood has grown obsolete, and the new is still invisible to us, and we grope after it in darkness, one clutching this phantom, another that; Werterism, Byronism, even Brummelism, each has its day'.⁸ James Eli Adams has explored how these new masculine styles were interpreted and constructed by Carlyle and other male Victorian writers. However, it is equally important to examine how the Brontës and other women writers both engaged with and critiqued these new models of manliness. In their novels, the Brontës melded the positive and threatening attributes of Byronic heroism with new expectations for moral conduct, domesticity, and professionalism. In *Jane Eyre*, Mr Rochester's Byronic romance was attractive but also

⁶ [John Morley], 'Carlyle', *The Fortnightly Review*, 8 (July 1870), 1-22 (p. 11).

⁷ [Morley], p. 12.

⁸ James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 1.

threatening, so the structure of the novel engineers his domestication. By the ending, he fulfils many of the moral values embodied in Carlyle's heroes. Byronic subjectivity is married with a critique of the abuses of the landed gentleman in *Wuthering Heights*, while in Anne's *Tenant*, Mr Hattersley must throw off Regency licence for productive Carlylean paternalism and hard work. The Brontës' multiple and hybrid forms of Romantic and Victorian masculinity are imaginative attempts to marry incompatible aspects of masculine identity, which can become thoroughly disturbing in their embodiment of both old and new forms of male dominance. Each Brontë, in her own way, exposed problems at the heart of competing, early Victorian definitions of manliness and suggested alternative conceptions of what it might mean to be a husband, father, or brother; a teacher, clergyman, or landowner. Their works have profoundly shaped the ways in which literary masculinity has been constructed ever since.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

All archival sources belong to the Brontë Parsonage Research Library, Haworth, West Yorkshire.

Brontë, Charlotte, '[Four Years Ago]', Hatfield Transcription 10

An Earnest Address to the Working Classes of Old England ... by a Poor Man (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1836) bb23, annotated by Patrick Brontë

Graham, Dr. Thomas J., *Modern Domestic Medicine* (London, 1826), bb210, Bonnell 210, annotated by Patrick Brontë

Mangnall, Richmal, *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the Use of Young people, with a Selection of British and General Geography* (London: 1813), bb215, Bonnell 43, annotated by Charlotte Brontë

More, Hannah, *Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners Foreign and Domestic: with Reflections on Prayer*, 3rd edn, (London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1819), annotated by Patrick Brontë

Primary Sources

Alexander, Christine, ed., *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

[Alison, Archibald], 'The Historical Romance', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 58 (September 1845), 341-356

Allott, Miriam, ed., *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974)

'The Aristocracy of Rank: Is it the Aristocracy of Talent?', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 34 (August 1846), 159-166

[Barty, J.S.], 'News from the Farm', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 75 (March 1854), 329-345

Best, Samuel, *Parochial Ministrations* (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1839)

Blunt, James Henry, *Directorium Pastorale: Principles and Practice of Pastoral Work in the Church of England* (London: Rivingtons, 1864)

- , *The Duties of the Parish Priest: The Acquirements and Principal Obligations of the Parish Priest* (London: John Murray, 1856)
- [Bowdich, Sarah], 'Going to Sea, And the Ship's Crew', in *Friendship's Offering: A Literary Album, and Christmas and New Year's Present for MDCCCXXIX* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1829 [1828]), pp. 361-372
- Braddon, Mary Elizabeth, *Lady Audley's Secret*, ed. by David Skilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- [Brady, John D.], 'Ireland – Its Condition – The Life and Property Bill – The Debate, And the Famine', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 59 (May 1846), 572-603
- , 'Ireland. – The Landlord and Tenant Question', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 55 (May 1844), 638-664
- Brontë, Anne, *Agnes Grey*, ed. by Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *Agnes Grey*, ed. by Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden, introduction by Sally Shuttleworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- , *The Poems of Anne Brontë: A New Text and Commentary*, ed. by Edward Chitham (London: Macmillan, 1979)
- , *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, ed. by Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Brontë, Charlotte, 'Ashworth: An Unfinished Novel by Charlotte Brontë', ed. by Melodie Monahan, *Studies in Philology*, 80.4 (Autumn 1983), 1-133.
- , *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Christine Alexander, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987-1991)
- , *Five Novelettes*, ed. by Winifred Gérin (London: The Folio Society, 1971)
- , 'L'Ingratitude', trans. by Sue Lonoff, *The London Review of Books*, 34.5 (2012), 12
- , *Jane Eyre*, ed. by Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Margaret Smith, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995-2004)
- , *The Poems of Charlotte Brontë: A New Text and Commentary*, ed. by Victor A. Neufeldt (New York: Garland, 1985)
- , *The Professor*, ed. by Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *Shirley*, ed. by Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

- , *Tales of Angria*, ed. by Heather Glen (London: Penguin, 2006)
- , *Villette*, ed. by Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , and Emily Brontë, *The Belgian Essays: A Critical Edition*, trans. by Sue Lonoff (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996)
- [—, Emily, and Anne, Brontë], *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (London: Aylott and Jones, 1846)
- Brontë, Emily, *The Poems of Emily Brontë*, ed. by Derek Roper with Edward Chitham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)
- , *Wuthering Heights*, ed. by Ian Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- [Brontë, Patrick], *A Brief Treatise on the Best Time and Mode of Baptism, Chiefly in Answer to a Tract of Peter Pontifex, Alias the Rev. M. S—, Baptist Minister* (Keighley: Printed by R. Aked, Bookseller, Low-Street, 1836)
- [—], *The Maid of Killarney; or, Albion and Flora: A Modern Tale; In which are interwoven some cursory remarks on Religion and Politics* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1818)
- , *The Letters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë*, ed. by Dudley Green (Stroud: Nonsuch, 2005)
- , *Two Sermons Preached in the Church of Haworth By the Rev. P. Brontë*. (Kirkgate: R. Brown, Bookseller and Stationer)
- Brontë, Patrick Branwell, *The Works of Patrick Branwell Brontë*, ed. by Victor A. Neufeldt, 3 vols (London: Garland, 1997-1999)
- Bulwer, Edward, *Pelham; or the Adventures of a Gentleman*, 3 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1828)
- Carlyle, Thomas, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. by Michael K. Goldberg, Joel J. Brattin, and Mark Angel (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993)
- , *Past and Present*, ed. by Chris R. Vanden Bossche, Joel J. Brattin, and D.J. Trela (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)
- , *Sartor Resartus*, ed. by Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Champneys, W. Weldon, *Parish Work: A Brief Manual for the Younger Clergy* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1856)
- Clive, Caroline, *Paul Ferroll* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Cobbett, William, *Advice to Young Men* (William Cobbett: Fleet-Street, 1829)

- ‘The Covenanters’, in *Friendship’s Offering*, pp. 113-142
- Craik, Dinah, *Olive*, ed. by Cora Kaplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- ‘Daddy Davy, The Negro: A True Tale’, in *Forget Me Not*, pp. 35-50
- [Dallas, E.S.], ‘Unsigned Review, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1857, lxxxii, 77-94’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 358-363
- De Quincey, Thomas, ‘The Aristocracy of England’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 54 (July 1843), 51-66
- Dickens, Charles, *David Copperfield*, ed. by Nina Burgis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *Great Expectations*, ed. by Margaret Cardwell and Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *Hard Times*, ed. by Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Disraeli, Benjamin, *Coningsby, or, The New Generation*, ed. by Sheila Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)
- , *Sybil*, ed. by Sheila Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *Vivian Grey*, 3rd edn (London: 1827)
- Edgeworth, Maria, *Castle Rackrent*, ed. by George Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980)
- , and Richard Lovell, *Practical Education*, 2 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1798)
- Ellis, Sarah Stickney, *The Mothers of England: Their Responsibility and Influence* (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1843)
- , *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits*, 3rd edn (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1839)
- , *The Wives of England: Their Relative Duties, Domestic Influence, and Social Obligations* (London: Fisher & Co., 1843)
- Eliot, George, *Middlemarch*, ed. by David Carroll (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *Silas Marner*, ed. by Terence Cave (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- ‘Emigration to the Cape of Good Hope,’ *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 5 (1819), 523-527
- ‘English Boarding-Schools’, *The Quarterly Journal of Education*, 7 (January-April 1834), 36-47

- ‘A Few Words to Mothers at Home About Missions Abroad’, *The Gospel Missionary*, 52 (April 1855), 60-63
- ‘The Five Nights of St Albans’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 26 (October 1829), [563]–566
- [Fonblanque, A. W.], ‘From an unsigned review,’ *Examiner* (27 November 1847): 756–7’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 76–78
- [—], ‘From an unsigned review, *Examiner*, 3 November 1849, 692-4’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 125-129
- Forget Me Not: A Christmas, New Year’s, and Birth-Day Present for MDCCCXXXI*, ed. by Frederic Shoberl (London: R. Ackermann, 1831 [1830])
- Friendship’s Offering: A Literary Album, and Christmas and New Year’s Present for MDCCCXXIX* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1829 [1828])
- ‘From an unsigned review, *Atlas*, 3 November 1849, 696-7’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 119-121
- ‘From an unsigned review, *Christian Remembrancer* XV (April 1848): 396–409’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 88-92
- ‘From an unsigned review, *Era* 9 (14 November 1847): 9’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 78–80
- ‘From an unsigned review, *Sharpe’s London Magazine*, August 1848, vii, 181-4’, rpt. in Allott, pp. 263-265
- Gaskell, Elizabeth, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, ed. by Angus Easson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- , *Mary Barton*, ed. by Shirley Foster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *North and South*, ed. by Angus Easson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *Wives and Daughters*, ed. by Angus Easson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Gatty, Alfred, *The Vicar and His Duties* (London: George Bell, 1853)
- [Gleig, G.R.], ‘The Brothers’, in *Friendship’s Offering*, pp. 37-58
- ‘Glen-Lynden’, in *Friendship’s Offering*, pp. 19-35
- Gordon, George, Lord Byron, ‘The Prisoner of Chillon’, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Susan J. Wolfson and Peter J. Manning (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 400-411
- Greg, W.R., ‘*Mary Barton; a Tale of Manchester Life*,’ *The Edinburgh Review*, 89 (April 1849), 402-435
- Hooker, Worthington, *Physician and Patient; or, a Practical View of the Mutual Duties, Relations and Interests of the Medical Profession and the Community* (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849)

- Hughes, Thomas, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, ed. by Andrew Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Hunt, Leigh, 'Byron and Some of his Contemporaries', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 23 (March 1828), 362-408
- 'Ireland', *The Leeds Mercury*, 2 May 1846, n.p.
- 'Irish Absenteeism (From the *Liverpool Times*)', *The Leeds Mercury*, 16 January 1847, n.p.
- [Johnston, James Finlay Weir], 'Scientific and Practical Agriculture', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 65 (March 1849), [258]-274
- Kingsley, Charles, 'The Physician's Calling', in *The Water of Life, and Other Sermons* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1867), pp. 18-34
- [Lewes, George Henry], 'The Condition of Authors in England, Germany, and France,' *Fraser's Magazine*, 35 (March 1847), 285-295
- Lewis, Sarah, *Woman's Mission*, 4th edn (London: John W. Parker, West Strand, 1839)
- Lorimer, James, 'From an unsigned review, *North British Review*, August 1849, xi, 455-93', rpt. in Allott, pp. 111-116
- Maginn, William, 'The Dominie's Legacy', *Fraser's Magazine*, 1 (April 1830), 318-335
- [—], 'Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer's Novels; and Remarks on Novel-Writing,' *Fraser's Magazine*, 1 (June 1830), 509-532
- Martineau, Harriet, *Deerbrook*, ed. by Valerie Sanders (London: Penguin, 2004)
- [Mill, James], 'Art. I. Aristocracy,' *The Westminster Review*, 2 (January 1836), 283-306
- Miller, Rev. J. C., 'The Teacher's Missions: A Sermon Preached at St. Martin's Church, Birmingham Before the Associated Body of Church Schoolmasters, on Thursday, December 27, 1855', *The School and the Teacher*, 3 (March 1856), 39-44
- 'Missions of Newfoundland,' *The Gospel Missionary*, 57 (September 1855), 133-143
- 'Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P.', *Fraser's Magazine*, 31 (June 1845), 727-737
- Mitford, [Mary Russell], 'The Election: A Tale', in *Friendship's Offering*, pp. 8-18
- [Morley, John], 'Carlyle', *The Fortnightly Review*, 8 (July 1870), 1-22
- [Murray, John Fisher], 'The World of London', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 50 (October 1841), 477-489
- , 'The World of London. Part VII', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 50 (December 1841), 767-778

- Newman, John Henry, *The Idea of a University*, ed. by Frank M. Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996)
- ‘Noctes Ambrosianae’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 25 (March 1829), 371-400
- ‘On Cultivating a Taste for Literature’, *The School and the Teacher*, 3 (January 1856), 1-5
- Ovenden, Ashton, *The Pastoral Office: Its Difficulties, Privileges, and Prospects* (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1857)
- Pickering, Percival, *An Essay on Friendship*, (London: Henry Sotheran and Co., 1875)
- [Power, David], *On the Responsibilities of Employers* (London: William Pickering, 1849)
- Prayers for the Use of the Medical Profession* (London: Rivingtons; Churchill, 1842)
- Reade, Charles, *Hard Cash* (London, 1863)
- ‘Recollections of India. (By a Missionary’s Wife.) Letter VIII’, *The Gospel Missionary*, 57 (September 1855), 129-133
- Richmond, Legh, *Domestic Portraiture* (London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1834)
- Richardson, David Lester, ‘The Disgraced Soldier’, in *Friendship’s Offering*, p. 310
- Ruskin, John, ‘The Roots of Honour’, *Unto This Last*, in *Unto this Last and Other Writings*, ed. Clive Wilmer (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1997), pp. 155-228
- Skey, Frederic, ‘The Hunterian Oration for 1850’, *Examiner* (16 March 1850), 165
- Smiles, Samuel, *Self-Help*, ed. by Peter W. Sinnema (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- [Smith, William Henry], ‘Warren’s Law Studies’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 58 (September 1845), 300-311
- ‘Some Aspects of Friendship’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 110 (March, 1876), 297-313
- ‘Surprises; or, the Return Home’, in *Friendship’s Offering*, pp. 152-160
- Taylor, Isaac, *Home Education*, 2nd ed. (London: Jackson and Walford, 1838)
- [Thackeray, William Makepeace], ‘Professions by George Fitz-Boodle: Being Appeals to the Unemployed Younger Sons of the Nobility,’ *Fraser’s Magazine*, 26 (July 1842), 43-60
- , *Vanity Fair*, ed. by Helen Small (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)
- Thomson, H. Byerley, *The Choice of a Profession* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857)

- Warren, Samuel, 'Memoirs of the Late John William Smith, of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 61 (February 1847), [132]-161
- [—], 'Sir Astley Cooper,' *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 65 (April 1849), 491-508
- [White, James], 'Fortune-Hunting Extraordinary', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 71 (June 1852), 685-702
- 'The World We Live In. No. XII', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 42 (October, 1837), 506-525

Secondary Sources

- Ablow, Rachel, *The Marriage of Minds: Reading Sympathy in the Victorian Marriage Plot* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007)
- Adams, James Eli, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995)
- Adburgham, Alison, *Silver Fork Society: Fashionable Life and Literature from 1814 to 1840* (London: Constable, 1983)
- Alderson, David, *Mansex Fine: Religion, Manliness, and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998)
- Alexander, Christine 'Charlotte Brontë, Autobiography, and the Image of the Hero', *Brontë Studies*, 36 (2011), 1-19
- , *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983)
- , 'Father of the Brontës: Romantic or Victorian?', in *Fathers in Victorian Fiction*, in McKnight, pp. 13-33.
- , 'Imagining Africa: The Brontës Creation of Glass Town and Angria', in *Africa Today: A Multi-Disciplinary Snapshot of the Continent in 1995*, ed. by Peter F. Alexander, Ruth Hutcherson, and Deryk Schreuder, pp. 201-219
- , 'The Legacy of Sir Walter Scott on Youthful Artists and Writers', in *The Shadow of the Precursor*, ed. by Diana Glenn (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), pp. 106-123
- , 'Play and Apprenticeship: The Culture of Family Magazines', in Alexander and McMaster, pp. 31-50
- , and Juliet McMaster, eds. *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- , and Margaret Smith, *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

- Anolik, Ruth Bienstock, 'The Missing Mother: The Meanings of Maternal Absence in the Gothic Mode', *Modern Language Studies*, 33.1/2 (Spring-Autumn 2003), 24-43
- Armstrong, Nancy, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Barker, Juliet, *The Brontës* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1994; rev. edn London: Abacus, 2010)
- Barsham, Diana, *Arthur Conan Doyle and the Meaning of Masculinity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000)
- Beaver, Donald deB., 'Lee, Sarah (1791–1856)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2007
- Berg, Maggie, "'Hapless Dependents": Women and Animals in Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey*', *Studies in the Novel*, 34 (2002), 177-198
- Bock, Carol, *Charlotte Brontë and the Storyteller's Audience* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992)
- Bodenheimer, Rosemarie, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988)
- Bourrier, Karen, *The Measure of Manliness: Disability and Masculinity in the Mid-Victorian Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015)
- Broughton, Trev Lynn and Helen Rogers, eds., *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- Butcher, Emma, 'Napoleonic Periodicals and the Childhood Imagination: The Influence of War Commentary on Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Glass Town and Angria', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48 (2015), 469-486
- Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990)
- Chadwick, Mrs Ellis H., *In the Footsteps of the Brontës* (London, 1914)
- Colón, Susan E., *The Professional Ideal in the Victorian Novel: The Works of Disraeli, Trollope, Gaskell, and Eliot* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- Conover, Robin St. John, 'Creating Angria: Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Collaboration', *Brontë Society Transactions* 24 (1999), 16-32
- Constable, Kathleen, *A Stranger Within the Gates: Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Irishness* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000)
- Copeland, Edward, *The Silver Fork Novel: Fashionable Fiction in the Age of Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

- Cosslett, Tess, *Woman to Woman: Female Friendships in Victorian Fiction* (Brighton: Harvester, 1988)
- Davidoff, Leonore, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century English Siblings', *Journal of Social History*, 39 (2005), 411-428
- , and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)
- Diederich, Nicole A., 'The Art of Comparison: Remarriage in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*,' *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, 57.2 (2003), 25-41
- Donnelly, J.S., 'Irish Agrarian Rebellion: The Whiteboys of 1769-76', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, 83C (1983), 293-331
- Doody, Margaret Anne, 'Jane Austen, that Disconcerting "Child"', in Alexander and McMaster, pp. 101-121
- Douglas, Paul, 'The Madness of Writing: Lady Caroline's Lamb's Byronic Identity', *Pacific Coast Philology* 34.1 (1999), 53-71
- Dowling, Linda, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994)
- Duckett, Bob, 'The Library at Ponden Hall,' *Brontë Studies*, 40 (2015), 104-149
- Durey, Jill, *Trollope and the Church of England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)
- Eagleton, Terry, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995)
- Elfenbein, Andrew, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Emig, Rainer and Antony Rowland, eds., *Performing Masculinity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 2010
- Fasick, Laura, *Professional Men and Domesticity in the Mid-Victorian Novel* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003)
- Furneaux, Holly, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Gallagher, Catherine, *The Industrial Reformation of English Fiction, 1832-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975)
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn (1979; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)

- Gilmour, Robin, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981)
- Gérin, Winifred, *Branwell Brontë* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1961)
- , *Emily Brontë: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
- Gillingham, Lauren, 'The Novel of Fashion Redressed: Bulwer-Lytton's Pelham in a 19th-Century Context,' *Victorian Review*, 32.1 (2006), 63-85
- Gilmour, Robin, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981)
- Glen, Heather, *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Goodlad, Lauren M. E., "'A Middle Class Cut into Two': Historiography and Victorian National Character,' *English Literary History*, 67 (2000), 143-178
- Hall, Donald E., ed., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Harman, Claire, *Charlotte Brontë: A Life* (London: Viking, 2015)
- Heeney, Brian, *A Different Kind of Gentleman: Parish Clergy as Professional Men in Early and Mid-Victorian England* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1976)
- Henry, Nancy, *George Eliot and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Holt, Jenny, *Public School Literature, Civic Education, and the Politics of Male Adolescence* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2008)
- Hyam, Ronald, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992)
- Joshi, Priti, 'Masculinity and Gossip in Anne Brontë's *Tenant*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 49 (2009), 907-924
- Kestner, Joseph A., *Sherlock's Men: Masculinity: Conan Doyle, and Cultural History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997)
- Kramp, Michael, *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007)
- Kreilkamp, Ivan, 'Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal,' *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 18 (2005), 87-112
- Lamonica, Drew, *'We Are Three Sisters': Self and Family in the Writing of the Brontës* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003)
- Larsen, Marianne A., *The Making and Shaping of the Victorian Teacher: A Comparative New Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

- LeGette, Casie, 'The Lyric Speaker Goes to Gaol: British Poetry and Radical Prisoners, 1820-1845', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 67 (2012), 1-28
- Lodge, Sara, 'Masculinity, Power and Play in the Work of the Brontës,' in *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 1-30
- London, Bette, *Writing Double: Women's Literary Partnerships* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999)
- Lovesay, Oliver *The Clerical Character in George Eliot's Fiction* (Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, University of Victoria)
- MacDonald, Tara, *The New Man, Masculinity, and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015)
- Malay, Jessica L., 'Industrial Heroes: Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë's Constructions of the Masculine,' in Emig and Rowland, pp. 41-59
- Mangan, J.A., 'Christ and the Imperial Playing Fields: Thomas Hughes's Ideological Heirs Empire', in *Muscular Christianity in Colonial and Post-Colonial Worlds*, ed. by John J. MacAloon (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 77-104
- Markwick, Margaret, *New Men in Trollope's Novels: Rewriting the Victorian Male* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)
- McKnight, Natalie, ed., *Fathers in Victorian Fiction* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011)
- Mellor, Anne K., *Romanticism and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1993)
- Menon, Patricia, *Austen, Eliot, Charlotte Brontë and the Mentor Lover* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)
- Meyer, Susan, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996)
- Miller, Andrew H. and James Eli Adams, eds., *Sexualities in Victorian Britain* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996)
- Miller, Lucasta, *The Brontë Myth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001)
- Milne-Smith, Amy, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011)
- Mitchell, Rebecca N., 'The Rosamond Plots: Alterity and Unknown in *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 66 (2011), 307-327
- Nelson, Claudia, *Invisible Men: Fatherhood in Victorian Periodicals, 1850-1910* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1995)

- Nestor, Pauline, *Female Friendships and Communities: Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985)
- Neufeldt, Victor A., 'The Child is Parent to the Author: Branwell Brontë', in Alexander and McMaster, pp. 173-185
- Oulton, Carolyn W. De la L., *Romantic Friendship in Victorian Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)
- Pearson, Sara, 'Constructing Masculine Narrative: Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*', in *Women Constructing Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters, 1750-2000*, ed. by Sarah S.G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 83-99
- Peschier, Diana, *Nineteenth-Century Anti-Catholic Discourses: The Case of Charlotte Brontë* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)
- Peterson, M. Jeanne, *The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978)
- Pike, Judith, 'Breeching Boys: Milksops, Men's Club's and the Modelling of Masculinity in Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*,' *Brontë Studies*, 37 (2012), 112-124
- , "'My Name Was Isabella Linton': Coverture, Domestic Violence, and Mrs. Heathcliff's Narrative in *Wuthering Heights*,' *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 64 (2009), 347-383
- Pionke, Albert D., *The Ritual Culture of Victorian Professionals: Competing for Ceremonial Status, 1838-1877* (Ashgate: Farnham, 2013)
- Plasa, Carl, *Critical Issues: Charlotte Brontë* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)
- Poovey, Mary, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (London: Virago, 1989)
- Roberts, Andrew Michael, *Conrad and Masculinity* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000)
- Ruth, Jennifer, *Novel Professions: Interested Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in the Victorian Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2006)
- Sanders, Valerie, *The Brother-Sister Culture in Nineteenth-Century Literature: From Austen to Woolf* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)
- , *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Sanger, C.P., *The Structure of Wuthering Heights* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1926)
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Between Men: Male Homosocial Desire in English Literature* (1985)

- , *Epistemology of the Closet* (London: University of California Press, 1990, rev. edn 2008)
- Semple, Rhonda Anne, *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism, and the Victorian Idea of Christian Mission* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003)
- Shuttleworth, Sally, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
- , *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Stolpas, Jennifer M., 'Preaching to the Clergy, Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey* as a Treatise on Sermon Style and Delivery', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 31 (2003), 225-240
- Stoneman, Patsy, *Brontë Transformations: The Cultural Dissemination of Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights* (London: Prentice Hall, 1996)
- Strychacz, Thomas F., *Dangerous Masculinities: Conrad, Hemingway, and Lawrence* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007)
- Surridge, Lisa, *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Fiction* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005)
- Sussman, Herbert, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Thormählen, Marianne, 'The Brontë Novels as Historical Fiction', *Brontë Studies*, 40 (2015), 276-282
- , *The Brontës and Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- , *The Brontës and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Tosh, John, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999)
- , *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (London: Pearson, 2005)
- Walsh, Bridget, *Domestic Murder in Nineteenth-Century England: Literary and Cultural Representations* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014)
- Walton, Sarah, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge's Models of Manliness* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)
- Weaver, Stewart A., 'Sadler, Michael Thomas (1780–1835)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Whone, Clifford, 'Where the Brontës Borrowed Books: The Keighley Mechanics' Institute', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 11 (1950), 355–358

Wilson, Cheryl, *Fashioning the Silver Fork Novel* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012)

Wise, Sarah, *Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England* (London: Bodley Head, 2012)

Zlotnick, Susan, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)