

Mapping Corrective Itineraries

Charlotte Brontë and Education

Marie Flognfeldt Jones



A Thesis Presented to
The Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages
University of Oslo
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the MA Degree

Autumn 2016

Mapping Corrective Itineraries

Charlotte Brontë and Education

Marie Flognfeldt Jones

Copyright Marie Flognfeldt Jones

2016

Mapping Corrective Itineraries: Charlotte Brontë and Education

Marie Flognfeldt Jones

<http://www.duo.uio.no>

Print: Reprosentralen, University of Oslo

Abstract

Despite the fact that Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in particular is praised by many as a proto-feminist work of fiction, there is general consensus amongst literary critics and Brontë biographers as to the socially uncharged nature of her authorship at large. This view may seem largely substantiated by and is often anchored in Brontë's own claim that her works touch 'on no matter of public interest'. Those who argue that her novels in fact are politically and socially engaged, highlighting detrimental aspects of society, concede that she does not offer any constructive solutions. This thesis seeks to contest this view, arguing that Charlotte Brontë's works present an active social agenda. The nineteenth century saw the emergence of a literary trend where fiction critiqued and attempted to correct educational abuses, making the public aware of detrimental practices and, most importantly, of the fact that these practices could be overturned. This thesis explores Charlotte Brontë's novels as such corrective schemes. It examines the educational settings of Brontë's novels as more than romantic catalysts or evidence of her tendency to base her novels on life experiences. This thesis demonstrates that an alternative educational paradigm emerges from her scenes of education, comprising the ideal modes of instruction, school structure and ideal pedagogues.

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my supervisor Erika Johanna Kvistad for her kindness, invaluable insights and most thorough feedback. I sincerely thank you for challenging and encouraging me.

I would also like to thank my parents, John and Mona, and the rest of my family, my fellow students, and the love of my life, Even, for all of their guidance and support – and for bearing with me over the course of the last year. Thanks for all the coffee breaks.

I dedicate this thesis to Charlotte Brontë on the occasion of the bicentenary of her birth. You have enriched my life with your words, and I hope you will not judge the following too harshly.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
1 Ideal Educational Methods	11
1.1 Corporal Punishment and Public Shaming.....	11
1.2 Rote Learning and the Imperfect Nature of Man	23
1.3 Conversation: The Dialogic Format of Instruction.....	29
1.4 The Essay: Assessment and Empowerment	36
1.5 Concluding Remarks	39
2 The Ideal School.....	41
2.1 Arrangements for the Well-Being of One’s Scholars.....	42
2.2 Religious Education: ‘Re-Enacting the Part of Eutycus’	47
2.3 Roman Catholicism and Cultivation.....	53
2.4 Reading for Its Own Sake.....	60
2.5 Concluding Remarks	70
3 The Ideal Pedagogue	71
3.1 The Mother: Love and Domesticity.....	71
3.2 The Master: Tough Love and Education as Combat	77
3.3 The Informal Tutor: Friendship.....	87
3.4 Concluding Remarks	94
4 Conclusion.....	96
5 Works Cited.....	100

Abbreviations

CB = Charlotte Brontë

GS = George Smith

JE = *Jane Eyre*

Leader I = 'The Pope, or Free Thought'

Leader II = 'Justice for Catholics'

Letters I = *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 1829-1847*, vol. 1

Letters II = *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 1848-1851*, vol. 2

Letters III = *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 1852-1855*, vol. 3

RHJ = Roe Head Journal

S = *Shirley*

TP = *The Professor*

TL = *The Life*

V = *Villette*

Introduction

‘I will say a word on the system I pursued with regard to my classes. My experience may possibly be of use to others’ (*The Professor* 50)

All of Charlotte Brontë’s (1816-1855) novels are concerned with education. The first novel she wrote, *The Professor* (1857), is told from the perspective of a male teacher and deals with his experiences teaching in Brussels. Brontë’s first published novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847), describes the narrator’s own learning and teaching experiences at Lowood School, her time as a governess in a household, and as a teacher and superintendent at Morton girls’ school. Although Brontë’s third novel, *Shirley* (1849), is less engaged with formal education than her other works, this fact is in itself of significance in the novel: the topic of education resounds in Caroline Helstone’s feelings of inadequacy due to her lack of a formal education, and in her plight for social and intellectual stimuli and a meaningful occupation. The topic of education is also present in Caroline’s attempt at morally reforming her cousin, Robert Moore, as well as in the tutor-pupil dynamic between Louis Moore and Shirley Keeldar, the namesake of the novel. Like *The Professor*, Brontë’s final novel, *Villette* (1853), focuses on the experiences of a teacher at a Continental European boarding school.

Charlotte Brontë has largely been acknowledged as a proto-feminist author. At its publication, *Jane Eyre* struck contemporary readers as a feminist manifesto. Many were startled or in awe by its female protagonist’s display of ‘unsettling individualism’ (*The Examiner* quoted in Allott 20), and the novel’s overall defiance of ‘the powers that be’ (*The Christian Remembrancer* quoted in Allott 23). Yet, it was most notably Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) that brought Brontë’s works into modern feminist literary studies. In spite of this, there is a widespread belief among literary critics and biographers alike in Brontë’s own claim that *Villette*, for instance, ‘touches on no matter of public interest’, and that it would in general ‘be of no use trying’ to ‘write books handling the topics of the day’ (*Letters* III 75). Acclaimed biographer Juliet Barker, for example, views *Shirley* as ‘emphatic proof’ of these statements. Barker recognizes ‘the whole story [as] an exploration of the ‘Woman Question’’, and a ‘fiercely argued case for women to have an independent and valued existence outside marriage’ (712). However, she considers Brontë to refrain from addressing the rights and suffering of mill workers, and to have ‘lacked the courage of her convictions [by ending] her book in the conventional manner[,] ... providing

both her heroines with a husband' (712). As a result, Barker does not regard that particular novel as socially or politically engaged.

Similarly to the works of Charles Dickens, it would seem that Brontë's novels are seen to lack a social and political dimension largely due to their alleged want of a resolution. George Orwell contested the fact that Dickens' works were radical and socialistic, arguing that despite his many 'attacks [on] the law, parliamentary government, the educational system and so forth', Dickens never in fact 'clearly suggest[s] what he would put in their places' (4). His critique of society is as a result 'almost exclusively moral', in Orwell's view, due to the fact that Dickens 'displays no consciousness that the *structure* of society can be changed' (Orwell 8, italics in original). Similarly, Barker appears to contend that Brontë counteracts and undermines *Shirley*'s advocacy of a valuable existence for women outside of marriage by ending the novel with the classical double wedding. Author of *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived* (1976), Helene Moglen, is admittedly not of the perception that Brontë's works are *devoid* of a social dimension. Conversely, she accuses Brontë biographies and 'clumsy' criticism of underestimating 'the power of Brontë's social vision', '[b]lind to its subtlety' (679). Moglen has nevertheless stated that while Brontë may highlight problematic societal aspects, and even call for change, she does not proffer concrete and preferable alternatives to societal practices she presents as detrimental (679). The aim of this thesis is to contest this last notion, and to demonstrate that, while they do not necessarily suggest who is to blame¹, Charlotte Brontë's novels do present concrete alternatives to the practices they represent as ineffective or harmful—especially when it comes to education.

The last few decades have seen a rejuvenation in the study of nineteenth-century women's social and political writings. Julie Melnyk's research on Victorian women's writings has found that many female authors dealt with being barred from pulpit, university, and from writing in the traditional genres by resorting to alternative means of expression, such as letters, journals, poems, and novels (xii). While Victorian women's theological writings are thought not to exist, Melnyk's *Women's Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* 'identif[i]es and analyze[s] Victorian women's theological thought in all its diversity, demonstrating the ways that women revised, subverted, or rejected elements of masculine theology, in creating theologies of their own' (xii). From the mid-nineteen-nineties, the works

¹ When *Shirley*'s Caroline asserts her belief that 'single women should have more to do' and 'better chances of interesting and profitable occupations than they possess now', she in fact stresses the fact that 'nobody in particular is to blame, that I can see, for the state in which things are' (397).

of Augusta Webster (1837-1894) and Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) have moreover been historically recovered, and included in the theoretical discourse of the dramatic monologue, a genre first and foremost associated with Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) and Robert Browning (1812-1889). Critics have also explored Webster's and Rossetti's political and social dimension². Glennis Byron and Kate Flint have argued that the reason why the works of these particular authors have not been recognized as dramatic monologues, or politically or socially engaged, is the prevailing association of 'women poets with the personal and confessional' (Byron 79). This preconception can also be said to have affected readings of Charlotte Brontë's literature.

Charlotte Brontë has achieved critical acclaim as an author largely due to her ability to write powerfully honest and passionate depictions of rich inner lives rather than for her engagement with the external worlds of her protagonists. Margaret Smith, editor of the Clarendon editions of Brontë's works, and compiler of her letters³, has defined Charlotte Brontë's novels as characterized by a sort of drama within the mind; they are more concerned with the private than the public, the 'inner conflict culminating' in her protagonists rather than 'outward event[s]' (xviii). It was Brontë's novels' engagement with 'an intense private world of imagination and feeling' that secured her immediate success with the reading public, according to Smith (vii, v). One could indeed argue that Brontë's novels appear more concerned with describing the reactions of their protagonists than with the actual events that provoke these reactions. *Shirley* has been recognized as Brontë's attempt (and indeed, by most, failure) to widen her scope to encompass contemporary issues (cf. Kucich 39; Moglen 679; Barker 712; Lewes 165). In spite of this, and the fact that it is written in the third and not first person, *Shirley* can all the same be said to place more emphasis on characters' reactions to the Luddite riots of the early nineteenth century, for example, than describing the events themselves or their underlying causes. This is in fact a leading argument against the interpretation of *Shirley* as a social novel: John Kucich has argued that despite the fact that Brontë 'aspire[d] to address "the warped system of things"' in *Shirley*, her 'angle of vision always returns to the narrow atmosphere of the personal' (39). However, this thesis will argue that despite their occupation with the inner lives of their protagonists, Brontë's novels

² Christina Sutphin and Susan Brown have considered Webster's choice of genre in particular to have enabled her to question women's sexuality, and to engage in the nineteenth-century debate on prostitution, and the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s.

³ *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, vol. I (1995), II (2000), and III (2004).

also engage with their external worlds and social backdrops, highlighting detrimental aspects in English nineteenth-century culture.

Marianne Thormählen's *The Brontës and Education* (2007) is an exploration of the ways in which the novels of Anne, Emily and Charlotte Brontë react to the debates about the education of their day. This book was written to 'enrich the reading experience of present-day audiences by increasing their understanding of dimensions in the Brontë fiction that are otherwise easily overlooked' (1). This thesis will use Thormählen's work as a point of departure. It is my contention that Charlotte Brontë's authorship not only makes reference to and comments upon the educational debate of her day; her novels can also be seen to present an alternative educational paradigm.

According to Elizabeth Gargano, the nineteenth century saw the emergence of a trend among authors to 'map trajectories between coercive and idealized school practices' in their novels, warning contemporary readers of unsettling developments in education, and reassuring them that school abuses could be corrected (47). Gargano argues that *Jane Eyre*, *Villette* and *The Professor* all 'map a corrective itinerary' by 'replacing the unsatisfactory schools where their protagonists teach with the benignant and domesticated academies they later found and operate' (48). This thesis will explore Charlotte Brontë's novels as part of the aforementioned trend and examine the way in which they "correct" the educational system of early-to-mid-nineteenth-century England. I will argue that Charlotte Brontë's authorship at large, including *Shirley*, offer corrective schemes.

However, her works' reformatory value lies not only in their depiction of the schools the protagonists (in all but one of Brontë's novels) later establish and run. *The Professor* does represent the school that its protagonists eventually found as a positive contrast to his former place of employment, Madame Reuter's boarding school. Yet, the novel does not go into detail as to what makes it ideal or how it differs from Reuter's. *Jane Eyre* describes in broad strokes how Lowood Institution is run after its patron Mr Brocklehurst's role has been curtailed. The novel also devotes a page to Jane Eyre's resolution to fight any prejudice she may harbour against farmers' daughters before her first lessons at Morton school. Yet, it too is sparse when it comes to details concerning Morton's school structure and lesson format. Nor does it intimate that Jane will strive to be the reverse of Brocklehurst. In *Villette*, the glimpse we see of Lucy Snowe's eventual school is only of its interior. This is before it has been opened or before an outline or curriculum has even been created, for all we know. The focal point of this thesis is therefore not predominantly the establishments or administrations that replace Brocklehurst's Lowood in *Jane Eyre*, Madame Reuter's or Madame Beck's

Pensionnats de Demoiselles in *The Professor* and *Villette*. The thesis will rather demonstrate how Charlotte Brontë's writings evaluate and replace ineffective modes of instruction *throughout* their narrative. It is my contention that her novels' corrective agenda first and foremost comes across in their representation of scenes of education, in the rhetoric employed in these instances, and most importantly in its characters' reactions to various educational practices. Despite the fact that literary descriptions of characters' inner lives are by definition introvert, they also describe feelings provoked by external events. This thesis will demonstrate that Brontë's characters' reactions to external events are essential guideposts to her novels' corrective scheme.

There is a strong tendency in Brontë studies to explore the autobiographical nature of her novels. This is understandable considering that there are many striking similarities between Brontë's protagonists and plots and Brontë's own person and life experiences. In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë wrote about a charitable school quite like the one she herself attended between 10 August 1824 and 1 June 1825. *The Professor* and *Villette* both describe Continental European *Pensionnats de Demoiselles* not unlike the one at which Brontë studied and taught between 1842 and 1844. The protagonists in *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* are moreover both small in stature and plain in features. The obituary announcing 'the death of Currer Bell' mentioned that in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë sought to create 'a heroine as plain, and as small as myself' (*Daily Alta California* 1). Elizabeth Gaskell, author and friend of Brontë, noted in her biography, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), that Lucy Snowe of *Villette* was no less than 'the truest picture we possess of the real Charlotte Brontë' (479). Many biographers have argued that Brontë's novels were confessions (cf. Harman 18) and means by which she could vent her loneliness, her grief at losing her siblings, and the frustration she experienced at being severed from her married former professor, Constantin Héger: 'Through the medium of her creation, Charlotte was at last able to articulate all the pent-up emotion which had been fermenting in her soul for the last four or five years', writes Juliet Barker. 'She could not declare her love for Monsieur Héger in such shameless terms, but her heroine could and would' (602).

As Barker is a Brontë biographer, it is not surprising that she links Charlotte Brontë's works to people and events in the author's own life. Yet, the autobiographical reading of Brontë extends to the criticism of her works. In defence of the supposed fragmented structure of *Shirley*, many are inclined to explain this as a result of Brontë losing three siblings while writing the novel, as Moglen too has argued in her chapter on 'Shirley: Power and Feminism'. Many have advanced 'the needless apology of tragic circumstance', as Moglen

phrases it, instead of viewing *Shirley*'s complexity and fragmented structure as an active choice on the author's part. By solely reading Charlotte Brontë's works as autobiographical, one risks eclipsing other interesting nuances in her works. While Sally Shuttleworth views Brontë's choice of a Continental European setting in *The Professor* and *Villette*, for example, as a means of creating an 'alien' atmosphere (226), the location is most often regarded as a strand of the autobiographical and tied first and foremost with Brontë's own life experiences. It is presumed that Charlotte Brontë lived in Belgium for a time and therefore chose to use this setting or places inspired by it in her novels. Some might view the Belgian or Belgian-esque backdrops in *Villette* and *The Professor* as reinforcements of the claim that Brontë's novels were confessions, and ventilators for the frustrations of the woman scorned, or mouthpieces for improper love. Terry Eagleton argues that the foreign setting functions as a 'blank surface on to which private fantasies may be feverishly projected' (67). Brontë's choice to consistently feature the topic of education throughout her oeuvre has likewise been predominantly interpreted as circumstantial, evidence of her tendency to write semi-autobiographical novels. Barker has deemed *Jane Eyre* 'a blazing indictment' of the regime of Brontë's alma mater (Barker 141), but does not elaborate on the function of her educational setting. The Lowood narrative is most often conceived as a critique and caricature of the poor living conditions at the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, and an attempt to publicly condemn those responsible for the deaths of the real Helen Burnses, Maria and Elizabeth Brontë⁴. The Lowood section is not usually viewed as commentary on the pedagogical and disciplinary methods employed at similar institutions or as a plea for charity schools in general to make proper arrangements for pupils' physical welfare.

With a few notable exceptions, such as Sue Lonoff, Thormählen and Gargano's Brontë studies, Charlotte Brontë's educational setting is most often used to highlight other themes in her novels, critics using it as a springboard for carrying out Marxist or sex-radical readings of Brontë's works, for example. In *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (1975), Terry Eagleton interprets Charlotte Brontë's representations of education as indicative of her novels' general ideological ambiguity, speaking as they do of resistance and

⁴ While there is much evidence to suggest that Maria Brontë was the sole model for Helen Burns, Elizabeth Brontë was, similarly to Helen, allowed to rest in Cowan Bridge's superintendent's bed when ill, and was also said to have endured great suffering 'with exemplary patience' (cf. *TL*: 62). Both sisters were casualties of the poor standards of that particular institution, and one would imagine the passing of both to have prompted Charlotte Brontë to write a 'blazing indictment' of her alma mater in *Jane Eyre*.

self-assertion, and the ‘delights of being ruled’ (Eagleton xvii). In ‘The Point of Agony: Sex and Power in Charlotte Brontë’ (2012), Erika Kvistad reads Brontë’s tutor-pupil relations—the tutor’s oppressive behaviour, and the pupil’s apparent submission to the tutor’s power—as expressions of Brontë’s tendency to renegotiate power relations, sexual and otherwise, in her novels.

This thesis will explore the educational setting of Charlotte Brontë’s novels as something more than an expression of her tendency to write semi-autobiographical novels, and to argue that it in fact presents an active social agenda. I will read Brontë’s scenes of education in pedagogical terms and not in applied senses. My purpose is to examine Charlotte Brontë’s representation of scenes of education and demonstrate that these representations not only analyze nineteenth-century educational paradigms and modes of instruction, but that they present preferable alternatives to the harmful practices outlined in her novels. This thesis will show that Brontë’s novels create an outline of the ideal modes of instruction, the best way to structure an educational establishment, as well as sketching the ideal pedagogues. While Brontë almost exclusively describes scenes of female education, however, William Crimsworth’s lesson at a boys’ school being one of the few exceptions, and although she might first and foremost have experienced frustration at the present lax conditions of women’s education, this thesis will argue that her authorship represents an educational paradigm independent of gender.

Yet, Charlotte Brontë herself claimed not, as we have seen, to write on ‘matters of public interest’. In a letter to her publisher George Smith, she stated that, ‘though I honour Philanthropy ... I cannot write books handling the topics of the day’, and it would be ‘of no use trying’ to do so (*Letters III* 75). She declared that *Villette*, for example, could ‘not for an instant pretend’ to be of any ‘social use’ (*Letters III* 104). In light of this, an exploration of Charlotte Brontë’s *active* social agenda might seem unfounded. In relation to the statements above, Brontë is in fact most often taken at her word. In *The Impact of Africa Upon Major British Literary Figures, 1787-1902* (1977), Judith Hochstein Livingstone states that like Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë ‘chose deliberately not to emphasize matters of public interest in her novels’ (97). Following the publication of *Villette*, Brontë paid visits to the prisons of Newgate and Pentonville, Bedlam (London’s hospital for the mentally ill), as well as the Founding Hospital for orphans, wanting to experience the ‘real [rather] than the decorative side of Life’ (*Letters III* 108). Barker views these somewhat unusual excursions as indicative of Brontë’s guilt for having neglected the ‘real’ in favour of the ‘decorative’ in her own writing – especially at a time when the social novel was very much in fashion (714).

Biographer Claire Harman considers these outings as possible preparation on Brontë's part for addressing contemporary issues in future (323). While she toys with the idea that Brontë's agenda, or rather lack thereof, might have changed at this point, Harman appears to second the fact that Brontë's authorship had not addressed contemporary issues in the past.

However, one could argue that Brontë's claims to the socially and politically uncharged nature of her own writing can be read as expressions of false modesty, in line with the traditional *apologia*. Like the first page of *Shirley*, where the narrator urges the reader to 'Calm your expectations' and 'reduce them to a lowly standard' (1), Brontë can be seen to downplay her capacities in her evaluation of her own work, and attempt to calm the reader's expectations. Carolyn Vellega Bergman indeed argues that 'Brontë's negation invites us to consider what it denies: how her fiction does touch on "matters of public interest"' (144). When read in context, Brontë's summary of her works is moreover not as unequivocally in support of their arguable apolitical reality as they might otherwise appear. When Brontë states that *Villette* 'cannot for an instant pretend' to be of any 'social use', for example, this statement is part of a letter to her publisher, George Smith, urging him to defer *Villette*'s publication so that it does not coincide with and potentially overshadow the issuance of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853). Brontë wrote this letter at the behest of Gaskell herself, arguing that *Villette* indeed 'has no right to push itself before "Ruth"' (*Letters III* 104). Brontë regarded *Ruth* as characterized by 'a goodness, a philanthropic purpose – a social use ... to which [*Villette*] cannot for an instant pretend' (*Letters III* 104). Gaskell's novel is a sympathetic portrayal of the life of a "fallen woman", and confronts Victorian conceptions of sin and illegitimacy. When compared with *Ruth*, *Villette* may indeed seem less socially engaged, thus arguably warranting Brontë's devaluation of her own novel. Or, the phrasing in her letter to Smith might, at the very least, suggest that she felt the publication of Gaskell's novel to be more pressing than that of her own in that it could be of clearer social import.

When Brontë claimed that *Villette* 'touches on no matter of public interest' and that she could not write 'books handling the topics of the day', she was in this instance in fact juxtaposing her own literary accomplishments with those of Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896). Brontë stated that by taking up 'a philanthropic scheme' herself, she would have to 'veil [her] face before such a mighty subject as that handled in Mrs Beecher Stowe's work—"Uncle Tom's Cabin"' (*Letters III* 75). *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century (second only to the Bible) and recognized by many as having 'helped lay the groundwork for the Civil War', forcing political debate into the popular consciousness of the US and Europe (Kaufman 18-19). Brontë's seemingly self-deprecating

words, and her alleged testimony to the politically uncharged nature of her own literature can, in short, be translated into: write what you know. She continues, in her letter to Smith, with the statement that in order to ‘manage these great matters [such as slavery and racism] rightly they must be long and practically studied’ and ‘their bearings known intimately and their evils felt genuinely’ (*Letters III* 75). Authors must, in other words, write what they know, and what they know to be true, for their work to be of value. Brontë regarded all else as ‘trading-speculation’ (*Letters III* 75). While she had not perhaps known the bearings, or felt the evils of slavery and racism, or the stigma of mothering an illegitimate child, and would as such not be capable of, in her own words, managing such great matters rightly in a novel, she would and could be able to do justice to other matters closer to her heart and situation.

Charlotte Brontë did write what she knew: her novels feature her own alma maters, or establishments strikingly similar to the ones she herself had attended. Brontë’s heroines often voice their ardent wish for social and intellectual stimulation, and a field in which they can occupy and realize themselves and which can enable them to gain independence. Brontë herself encouraged her acquaintance to educate their daughters, declaring education to be a ‘priceless advantage’, and a means by which women could become independent and make ‘their way honourably through life’ (cf. *Letters II* 226). Despite the fact that Brontë’s correspondence on the whole represents teaching as the lesser of many evils, and expresses Brontë’s own wish to live off her pen first and foremost, Charlotte Brontë was a teacher. At one point, she moreover sought to establish a school with her sisters. Her alleged reason for travelling to Brussels and obtaining an education abroad was in fact to ‘[attain] superiority’ and be able to compete on the education market (cf. *Letters I* 268). There are, in other words, grounds for stating that Brontë had given thought to how to structure both lessons and educational establishments.

Charlotte Brontë’s first novel was intended as a realistic portrayal of a working man’s ‘ascent of “the Hill of Difficulty” ... by the sweat of his own brow’ (Brontë in Preface to *TP* vi). Here, Brontë in fact has her protagonist William Crimsworth ‘say a word on the system [he] pursue[s] with regard to [his] classes’. His purpose in doing so is that his ‘experience may possibly be of use to others’ (50). This statement expresses a consciousness about method and implies that Crimsworth has a system of his own. The fact that he wishes to share an experience-based account of his pedagogical practice is moreover in line with twenty-first century pedagogical writing. However, the quotation above does not convey Brontë’s own words, but those of the narrator. In him, Brontë does not appear to have envisioned an ideal pedagogue. Yet, Crimsworth’s statement is emblematic of Brontë’s authorship: as the

ensuing chapters will demonstrate, her texts engage with education in practical terms, dealing with systems and ideal practices.

The work of Julie Melnyk has revealed that many nineteenth-century women dealt with being prevented from writing sermons and treatises by resorting to other, less conspicuous genres. However, the aim of this thesis is not to argue that Charlotte Brontë's novels in reality were treatises on education or to imply that Brontë resorted to the novel genre because she was denied the opportunity of writing treatises. Nevertheless, it is my contention, regardless of authorial intent, that Brontë's novels can be seen to present an active social agenda. This thesis will demonstrate that an alternative educational paradigm emerges from Charlotte Brontë's scenes of both formal and informal education.

I will divide my exploration of this educational paradigm into three sections: modes of instruction, school administration, and tutors. The first chapter will deal with Charlotte Brontë's engagement with modes of instruction and discipline. It will explore her novels' depiction of her contemporary period's prevailing educational paradigms, most notably corporal punishment, public shaming, and rote learning. It will demonstrate the fact that Brontë in many respects echoes the views of Catherine Macaulay (1731-1791) and John Locke (1632-1704) by representing corporal punishment and shaming as counterproductive and, in some instances, morally degenerating. It will also show that Brontë's authorship at large, and *Jane Eyre* in particular, is more favourably inclined towards methods of the past, or indeed of the future, such as conversation or the dialogic format of instruction. The second chapter will examine Brontë's engagement with school structures and her representation of less and more ideal ways to structure a school, with regard to curriculum, arrangements for pupils' well-being and self-culture. It will prove that while her novels stress the importance of making proper arrangements for pupils' comfort, they also underline the importance of coupling such arrangements with moral education or cultivation, and encouragement of self-culture. The final chapter of this thesis will discuss Brontë's depiction of ideal pedagogue, and argue that her novels envision education as dynamic and divided into several stages, each of which requires a different pedagogical approach.

1 Ideal Educational Methods

This chapter will explore the ways in which Charlotte Brontë's works not only critique certain practices in nineteenth-century English education, but also present preferable alternatives to the established educational paradigms of her day. The first part of this chapter (1.1-1.2) will deal with how her works critique and evaluate her society's prevailing educational practices, such as corporal punishment, public shaming, and rote learning. The second part (1.3-1.4) will deal with the educational modes she presents as favourable alternatives, namely essay-writing and the dialogic format of instruction. I will be basing my argument on how the narration and characters of her novels describe and react to the methods employed in various educational settings at English institutions, school- and home-based, as well as Continental European ones. In this thesis, an 'educational method' refers to a mode of instruction or the means by which a teacher helps her pupils attain new knowledge.

By exploring the subversive potential of her narration, I am not equating Brontë's narrators with Charlotte Brontë herself. As education experienced great changes during Brontë's lifetime, however, and was a central topic for her contemporary society, it is hard to imagine that she would have her heroines, or other characters her narrative represents in a positive way, voice opinions on education contrary to her own. I will therefore be looking at the rhetoric of her narrators as well as that of other relevant characters. I will explore Charlotte Brontë's overall portrayal of her characters' reactions and apparent stances in relation to the educational practices within their respective fictional world. While my focus within this chapter will primarily be on the Brontë texts themselves, I will also be looking to documentation of the state of English, early nineteenth-century education, of boarding schools in Yorkshire in particular, as presented by later historians as well as by Charlotte Brontë's contemporaries.

1.1 Corporal Punishment and Public Shaming

The novel *Jane Eyre* is in part renowned for its exposé of the true living conditions at English boarding schools funded largely by charitable donations, popularly known as 'charity schools' or 'cheap-schools' (Barker). The novel's depiction of the fictional Lowood Institution added to the multitude of literature addressing charity schools, causing public scrutiny into and subsequent reform of the standards of similar institutions. Critics have

regarded Brontë's portrayal of Lowood as 'a blazing indictment of the regime' of her former school, the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, written with a 'raw passion' and a 'burning sense of injustice' (Barker 141, 138). At the heart of this indictment is the condemnation of the many privations the inmates of Lowood are subjected to: the measly proportions and low quality of their meals, their insufficient clothing and poorly insulated dormitories and, most importantly, the institution's practice of corporal punishment and public shaming.

At early nineteenth-century boarding schools in Yorkshire, England, misdemeanours, such as failing in class, were punished by for example having to learn Bible verses or dictionary excerpts by heart. A substandard pupil could also be made to wear a cap with the word 'dunce' imprinted on it (Barker 136). Graver offences, such as obstinacy, lying, or stealing, warranted whipping (Barker 136). Whipping was, on the one hand, considered a punishment, but also a means of correcting faults and reforming pupils. Corporal punishment and public shaming are not educational methods per se, in that they are not means of instilling new knowledge in pupils. Yet, both corporal punishment and shaming were considered vital by many in the *moral* education or cultivation of children, and considered *disciplining methods*, or integral parts of class management. In Charlotte Brontë's day, many social commentators deemed moral edification the primary purpose of education (cf. 'On Politeness' ; Watts). By this logic, corporal punishment and public shaming could be construed as educational methods.

In *Jane Eyre*, however, both practices are described in unequivocally negative terms. The narrator outright condemns the practice and conception of violence or humiliation as aids for improving children. The act of striking a child is described as 'flogg[ing]', and it appears 'disgraceful' to *Jane Eyre*'s young protagonist to be 'flogged', or made to 'stand in the middle of a room full of people', on a 'pedestal of infamy' (cf. *JE* 66, 79). Corporal punishment is depicted as not only a despicable practice, but also redundant and degenerating in its effect. The treatment of the character Helen Burns can be said to exemplify the meaninglessness of corporal punishment: Helen can be seen as the angel of the place, pious, innocent, and accepting of her lot while being subjected to physical abuse and shaming for having dirty fingernails and difficulties concentrating. The narrator presents these faults as 'spots' that exist even on 'the clearest planet' (*JE* 80), and therefore not worth penalizing – especially not to the extent they are by Miss Scatcherd, one of the teachers at Lowood. By making Helen a victim of corporal punishment, Charlotte Brontë is able to convey the contemptible nature of that practice and present it as blind violence.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries represent a period of educational experimentation and the reformulation of educational principles (Ipfling and Chambliss; Thormählen 156). Many British educationalists were during this period influenced by currents from the Continent, most notably the ideas evoked by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's treatise on Education, *Émile* (1762): this work emphasizes understanding the child's mind, and the importance of seeing matters from a child's perspective (Ipfling and Chambliss). However, the domestic tradition as represented by John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1692) also had a strong hold during this period (Thormählen 6). In *Thoughts*, Locke opposes the view of corporal punishment as reformative, arguing that violence and constant threats are not conducive to the cultivation of children and the endeavour to instil in them 'the true principle': the inclination to do the right thing (57.26). He considers beatings and 'all other sorts of slavish and corporal punishments' unfit for 'the education of those we would have wise, good, and ingenuous' (52.24). Nevertheless, many did see violence, or threats of violence, as effective tools for teaching children about boundaries and distinguishing between right and wrong. Yet, Catherine Macaulay (1731-1791), ardent critic of corporal punishment and shaming, and in many ways Lockean in her approach, noted that too many relied too heavily on and indeed misinterpreted the term 'spare the rod, spoil the child' (cf. *Letters on Education* X, 98). She entreated parents not to interpret Solomon's words in a literal sense, but to read them as a warning against *overindulging* one's children (*Letters* X, 99). It was moreover Macaulay's belief that corporal punishment and public shaming, the latter to be 'reprobated yet more than the rod', only 'serve to foster malignity, and blunt the feeling of shame': 'for when the mind has once lost its sensibility, there is no acting upon it with any success' (*Letters* XI, 110). Macaulay, in other words, went beyond Locke in that she not only contended that violence and rebukes would soon 'lose their force when grown too common' (cf. *Thoughts* 57.26), but that they in fact 'foster malignity', and *prevent* sound instruction.

Charlotte Brontë can, like Catherine Macaulay, be seen to present corporal punishment as a source of malignity and mutiny, and as detrimental to earning the respect of pupils. In response to Miss Scatcherd's treatment of Helen – and 'the day [Jane] saw her flog her pupil' (*JE* 65) – Jane declares that if she were in Helen's place, she should resist her; 'if she struck me with that rod, I should get it from her hand; I should break it under her nose' (*JE* 66). Jane concludes her speech by saying that, 'When we are struck at without reason, we should strike back again very hard ... so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again' (*JE* 68). Here, corporal punishment can be seen to engender feelings of revolt. While

Helen presents Jane's aggressive sense of injustice as immature, stating that she is but a child who will hopefully outgrow her rebellious ways (*JE* 68), Jane herself is convinced of the rightness of her anger. She does admittedly concede that 'a child cannot quarrel with its elders' and 'give its furious feelings uncontrolled play ... without experiencing afterwards the pang of remorse and the chill of reaction (*JE* 45). However, she is also adamant that 'we *should* strike back' when 'struck at without reason' (italics mine).

Brontë also represents shaming and corporal punishment as sources of resignation. Even though Helen admits that she sometimes, like Jane, 'cannot *bear* to be subjected to systematic arrangements', she understands that Miss Scatcherd will 'find a new [birch rod] soon enough' if a pupil were to break it, and that Helen herself would get expelled if she rebelled, which, she relates, would be no way to repay the generosity of her benefactors (*JE* 67). Helen concludes that even though Jane considers it disgraceful to be flogged, 'it would be your duty to bear it, if you could not avoid it' (*JE* 66). Although Helen herself regards Miss Scatcherd's methods as 'severe', she also states that 'it would be weak and silly to say you *cannot bear* what it is your fate to bear' (*JE* 66, italics in original). Yet, while she appears to forgive Miss Scatcherd her violent behaviour, in that 'she does it to improve' her (*JE* 67), Helen does not condone her actions. Helen can admittedly be seen to emulate the teachings of the New Testament by indeed returning 'love for evil', and 'bless[ing] them that curse ... and despitefully use you' – Jane is in fact taken aback by 'the forbearance Helen expresse[s] for her chastiser' (cf. *JE* 67). Yet, Helen also appears to lament her own circumstances, exhibiting signs of resignation when she makes it clear to Jane that neither of them can do anything to change the regime at Lowood, especially not by fighting fire with fire, as Jane suggests (cf. *JE* 67).

It would seem that Helen can only escape her circumstances and effect a change by dying. Helen's premature death can be regarded as a fulfilment of her martyrdom, in that it coincides with a turning point for Lowood: giving a face to the many children dying at Lowood, her death does engender critical awareness of the students' living conditions and a subsequent reform of the way in which the institution is run. After the living conditions and number of deaths have been made public, Lowood does experience great improvement. Although the patron of Lowood, Mr. Brocklehurst, remains treasurer after the epidemic due to his wealth and connections, a committee is appointed, consisting of 'gentlemen of rather more enlarged and sympathizing minds' (*JE* 99). Brocklehurst's duties are shared by those who know how to 'combine reason with strictness, comfort with economy,' and 'compassion

with uprightness' (*JE* 100). As a result, Lowood in time becomes 'a truly useful and noble institution' in the eyes of the narrator (*JE* 100).

However, Helen's untimely death can also be construed as the final nail in the coffin for the practice of corporal punishment and shaming. It can be seen as the argument that rounds off Brontë's critique of these assumed disciplining methods: the way in which Helen has been treated at Lowood and 'despitefully use[d]' both physically and mentally, is to blame for her premature death. The 'unsuffed candle' dimly burning on Helen's bedside during her final hours can be seen as a metaphor for the way in which Helen has been mistreated at Lowood and abandoned by her fellow beings. An unsuffed candle was a popular icon in Victorian literature and is itself, as Simon Eliot explains in *Reading and the Victorians* (2015), 'a neglected candle' (28). The act of neglecting a candle will 'finally cause guttering in which much of the burnable tallow [will] simply flow away unused' (Eliot 28). In the Victorian period, the unsuffed candle was a metaphor for 'consumption', or tuberculosis, the infection from which Helen in fact suffers and to which she finally succumbs. However, the candle on Helen's bedside is suggestive of more than her illness and a foreboding of her approaching death: it is also an indicator of her unrealized potential, or 'unused tallow', and the way in which she, her health and suffering, has been neglected by those commissioned to look after her. Her death by consumption is, in short, not merely brought on by '[s]emi-starvation and neglected colds', as Jane rightly suggests, but also the result of Lowood's disciplining methods, which slowly but surely *consume* her.

Like Macaulay, Brontë's works also present corporal punishment and shaming as not only detrimental to the body and spirit, but also to the improvement of children, through her depiction of Helen's situation. Helen understands Miss Scatcherd's reasons for striking and chastising her, that it enables her to give vent to her frustration at Helen's untidiness, and that she employs both practices with the intention of ridding Helen of her faults (*JE* 67). Helen nevertheless also concedes that Miss Scatcherd's methods cannot reform her. In her case, corporal punishment and shaming not only have no positive effect; they appear to worsen Helen's alleged faults. Marianne Thormählen has commented on the irony of resorting to violence and shaming in the attempt to cure a girl of her distractedness and seeming inability to keep her things in order: 'The untidiness which incurs Miss Scatcherd's wrath', Thormählen argues, 'and which Helen freely acknowledges as a fault – is fundamentally due to the girl's living in a world of her own, and she copes with her humiliation by retreating still further into it' (184).

Yet, Helen also admits that Miss Temple's mild yet decisive manner cannot reform her either. She regards the superintendent of Lowood as 'full of goodness', gently telling her of her errors if she sees any, giving Helen her 'meed liberally' if she does anything worthy of praise. In spite of this, Miss Temple's pedagogy cannot entice Helen to 'make [an] effort' (*JE* 68). Helen considers it a 'strong proof of [her own] wretchedly defective nature' that even Miss Temple's expostulations, 'so mild, so rational', cannot influence her. Even Miss Temple's praise, though Helen values it most highly, cannot stimulate her to 'continued care and foresight' (*JE* 68). Some would then argue that Helen's untidiness and distractedness are innate and incurable, especially in view of Helen's own declaration, and considering that neither stick nor carrot appears to induce her to comply with the 'systematic arrangements' of Lowood. The inefficacy of Miss Temple's approach to Helen need not, in other words, subtract from the value of her pedagogy in general. However, Helen's situation should not be indicative of any incurable fault on her part either. Her seeming inability to focus in class, even those conducted by Miss Temple, and Helen's confessed preference for reading when she should be learning her lessons (*JE* 67) can in fact be suggestive of a flaw in the education provided by Lowood Institution. It can suggest that the content and format of Lowood's lessons are not sufficiently stimulating. As we shall see in the segment addressing conversation (1.3), there are some educational methods that *can* secure Helen's focus, and 'draw out' her capabilities. Miss Temple's inability to retain Helen's presence by way of the default Lowood lesson format need not diminish the novel's otherwise ardent critique of public shaming and corporal punishment.

Jane Eyre can, in summation, be seen to attack the practice of corporal punishment and public shaming in that they hurt the innocent, engender rage instead of respect and are harmful, not conducive to the improvement of children. Some might argue, however, that this stance on public shaming, at least, is not present in all of Brontë's works. In both *The Professor*, the first novel she wrote, and *Villette*, the last to be published during her lifetime, public shaming is in fact deemed necessary by the novels' protagonists for securing the attention and respect of their pupils. While Brontë may well have written a 'blazing indictment' of the regime at Cowan Bridge in her depiction of Lowood School, a predilection for public shaming can also be said to reverberate through, and indeed frame, her authorship.

The protagonist of *The Professor*, William Crimsworth, begins his employment in Brussels tutoring boys. In his first lesson with his class, he makes each of them read aloud a paragraph in English without correcting them. At the end of the reading, he merely surveys them all 'with a steady and somewhat stern gaze' and declares their pronunciation to be

affreux, meaning awful (TP 48). In his first lesson as head of a class of female pupils, he commends the dictée of one of the girls, but tears another's into four pieces before the whole class, pronouncing it to be *honteux* or shameful (TP 66). At another point, he manages to 'quell' a 'swinish tumult' instigated by a girl named Juanna Trista by making her and her 'accomplices' stand on their chairs for five minutes before turning them from the room, locking Juanna in a cabinet (TP 78). Crimsworth considers this course of action as 'judgement' (TP 78). He is also satisfied with his conduct in relation to the inmates at the boys' seminary in his first ever lesson as he had 'encountered them on the right footing at the very beginning' and so made sure 'they never attempted mutiny' thereafter (TP 50).

Strikingly similar scenes occur in *Villette*, which is also set in Continental Europe. Brontë was prevented and in turn dissuaded from publishing *The Professor* during her lifetime, and so made use of a lot of its material in *Villette* (Nicholls quoted in TP Preface viii), which explains the many similarities. Yet, the fact that Brontë chose to retain William Crimsworth's means of creating order and feature it in *Villette* suggests that this motif was of particular interest and importance to her. In the first lesson Lucy Snowe conducts, she, like Crimsworth, is seen to create order by tearing in two the dictée of Blanche, the 'eldest, tallest, handsomest, and most vicious' girl in the class, 'in face of the whole school' (V 71). She subsequently locks Dolores, the only girl not silenced by this act, in a closet (cf. V 72). Through these actions, Lucy is able to make 'the remainder of the lesson [pass] in order and industry' and earns the respect of the superintendent of the *pensionnat*, Madame Beck (V 72). Lucy justifies the imprisonment of one of her pupils with the fact that 'it proved popular' amongst her other pupils, on account of Dolores being 'the sort of character at once dreaded and hated by all her associates', and because of her 'dark, mutinous, sinister eye' (V 72). Lucy, like Crimsworth, regards her own treatment of Dolores as an 'act of summary justice', and her behaviour toward Blanche as necessary: it was 'All [she] could do' under the circumstances (V 72).

These conceptions of public shaming are scarcely compatible with that of *Jane Eyre*. *The Professor* and *Villette* present shaming as constructive and indeed necessary for creating order and earning the respect of one's pupils and superiors. One could, on the other hand, argue that Brontë condones harsher means of securing the attention and respect of Continental European pupils namely because they are *not English*, and that the education presented in her Continental European novels are exceptions and not in line with what she envisions and otherwise presents as educational ideals. In *Villette*, Lucy remarks that her first lesson was especially memorable because 'it opened up to [her] ... all the undercurrent of life

and character'; then first did she 'begin rightly to see the difference that lies between the novelist's and poet's 'jeune fille,' and the said 'jeune fille' as she really is' (V 70). Up until that moment, she has been sceptical of the superintendent Madame Beck's rule by espionage, and the fact that she keeps her girls 'in distrustful restraint' and 'in blind ignorance' of the 'surveillance that [in reality leave] them no moment and no corner for retirement' (V 65). Lucy appears to hum a different tune when Madame Beck explains that 'relaxation, however guarded', on the part of a tutor, would be 'misunderstood and fatally presumed upon' by 'continental children' (V 65). If a teacher does not constrain her pupils, it will have ruinous consequences (V 65), according to Madame. And she reminds Lucy that the inmates at the *pensionnat* 'always throw over timid teachers' (V 70). Before long, Lucy comes to see that 'the continental 'female' is quite a different being to the insular 'female' of the same age and class' (V 70). The 'continental female' does not, in other words, appear narrow-minded to Lucy, but calculating. She is therefore in need of a display of force.

Although the view of public shaming as constructive cannot be said to echo in *Jane Eyre*, the propensity to categorize the 'continental female' as the Other *is* present therein. Even the benignant Jane Eyre—who believes that 'the germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, [and] kind feeling, are as likely to exist in [the] hearts [of coarsely-clad peasants] as in those of the best-born' (JE 413)—displays a capacity for projecting negative signifiers onto the unknown Continental Europeans as a means of defending the stigmatized among her own kind. When Jane is to take her post at Morton School, teaching farmers' daughters, she tries to rid herself of prejudice towards the rural population. After her time in charge of the school, however, Jane concludes that 'the British peasantry are the best taught, best mannered, most self-respecting of any in Europe' (JE 449). She considers them the very antithesis of the 'paysannes' and 'Bäuerinnen' of Continental Europe, the best of whom she conceives as 'ignorant, coarse, and besotted, compared with my Morton girls' (JE 449).

Marianne Thormählen has regarded this segment as extradiegetic commentary on, and evidently Charlotte Brontë's own reaction to, the suggestion to implement a national scheme of mandatory primary education in 1846, similar to the one already in place in many Continental European countries (cf. 11). It can also be highly indicative of Charlotte Brontë's own anglocentrism, however, or indeed of racist sentiments towards all that is foreign. The prevalence of racism and patriotism in Brontë is a well-covered subject in the world of literary criticism (Spivak; Mitchie; Williams). Indeed, Continental European children are presented, in *Jane Eyre* as well as *The Professor* and *Villette*, as a species completely

different from English children. They are ‘ignorant, coarse, and besotted’ by nature, and in effect appear to be in *need* of harsher modes of discipline.

Alternatively, *Villette*’s and *The Professors*’ diametrically different stances in relation to public shaming compared to that of *Jane Eyre*, can be understood from a cultural relativist perspective. The Belgian and Labassecourien cultures are different from English culture, and their educational system different from the English standard. Different rules and norms apply within the two spheres. If William and Lucy are to teach at a Belgian or Labassecourien institution, they have to comply with the social practices pertaining to its society, and the normative framework of the institution in question. It is not for them to superimpose their ideology on children of another culture. One could argue that Lucy does not so much conceive Continental European children as innately mutinous as she is made to see that they are socialized into being restrained or naturalizing restraint. If she is to avoid being ‘throw[n] over’ by ‘continental children’ in class, therefore, and retain her position as tutor at the *pensionnat*, Lucy has to restrain her pupils when she sees fit. Despite the fact that she appears to relish in her treatment of Dolores and Blanche, she admits to putting on an act in front of her students, pretending to be more enraged than she actually is, which suggests that it is not her natural disposition in relation to children – even ‘continental children’ (cf. *V* 65). Yet, an assumed austerity is, according to Lucy, necessary under the circumstances (*V* 72).

Many scholars have written on the centrality of acting and theatricality in Brontë (cf. Jackson; Litvak). John Kucich, for example, has noted that while Brontë’s works usually express a contempt for female duplicity and ‘the coquette’, her ‘pieties’ do not apply to performativeness: ‘Jane Eyre’s eventual proposal to Rochester’, he argues, ‘expressed in an ironic, tongue-in-cheek manner, is also a flirtatious performance, especially in its coy, calculated insinuations about her relationship with St. John—insinuations that parallel Rochester’s earlier insinuations about Blanche’ (Kucich 45). Accordingly, Lucy Snowe’s austere treatment of her Continental European pupils can be seen to derive from her discovery that ‘a very rare flash of raillery [appears to do] good’ (*V* 74). Her habit of ‘storm[ing] down’ one of the inmates of Rue Fossette, Ginevra Fanshawe, is also conducted ‘[h]alf in earnest, half in seeming’, but for the purpose of disciplining her (*V* 300). Most notable, however, is the fact that the teacher’s *estrade* appears as a sort of stage in *Villette*, on which Lucy turns into or acts the part a Continental European teacher: Joseph Litvak contends that while ‘the most sustained example of [the] theatricalization of power is the episode of the school in chapter 14’, ‘the fête’, ‘the most recurrent [one is] the tendency of the narrative to frame the teacher’s *estrade* as a stage’ (Litvak 84). When Lucy finds herself

in a new situation, she grants that her circumstances are changed and that ‘the *scene* is new’, and she understands that she must adapt in order to survive and in due course ‘gain good’ (cf. *V* 39, italics mine). At Madame’s *pensionnat*, the scene is also new, and as such, Lucy must act according to its rules and play the role of teacher in order to ‘gain good’. She can, in other words, be seen to resort to harsher means of discipline to act the part of a Continental European teacher. That is not to say that she would employ the same mode of teaching on English soil, or that Lucy’s or Crimsworth’s initial means of securing order in class are indicative of any preference on Brontë’s part for corporal punishment or shaming.

Even though the protagonists in *Villette* and *The Professor* appear proponents of public shaming, the novel *Shirley* can be seen to satirize those who value austerity in a teacher. Hortense Moore, who tutors one of the protagonists, Caroline Helstone, makes a point out of never commending her pupil, ‘[h]owever faultless [her] tasks are achieved’ (79). It is a maxim with Hortense that ‘praise is inconsistent with a teacher’s dignity’ and that ‘blame, in more or less unqualified measure, is indispensable to it’ (*S* 79). As we know, many—educators and parents alike—believed in the efficacy of the rod in Brontë’s day and for many years to come. Yet, the narration of *Shirley* is constructed in such a way as to undermine any potentially honourable motive on Hortense’s part for her austere treatment of her pupil. The reader’s first encounter with Hortense yields the information that her reason for taking Caroline on is that the office of tutor would give herself a sense of importance (cf. *S* 77). Her reason for never commending Caroline is that it would harm Hortense’s dignity as a teacher and be below her. It is not that ‘blame’ is fruitful for Caroline’s education and cultivation. Hortense’s credibility as a teacher is clearly undermined by the fact that she is said to not so much believe in the efficacy of an austere comportment or the importance of appealing to Caroline’s sense of shame, but that she in fact values the concept of blaming one’s pupil as a means of asserting oneself as a teacher: ‘blame, in more or less unqualified measure, is indispensable to ... *a teacher’s dignity*’ (*S* 79, italics mine). It should be noted, however, that this quotation is not a direct citation of Hortense’s, but the musings of the narrator. While Hortense may not in reality value ‘blame’ per se, the narrator’s formulation hints at the fact that Hortense may prefer being guarded in relation to Caroline in that the latter appears to be more knowledgeable than her tutor. Hortense might, in other words, deal with this fact by blaming rather than commending.

Hortense’s methods are not the only ones cast in doubt by the narration. Even though Madame Beck approves of Lucy’s act of locking Dolores in a closet, William Crimsworth’s superior is not as happy with his identical conduct: although Crimsworth eventually manages

to reassure Mademoiselle Reuter, showing her that his methods create order, Mademoiselle is said to initially have looked ‘much aghast at beholding so decided a proceeding’ (*TP* 78). One might argue, however, that her astonishment need not be indicative of an overall narrative discontent with his methods. *The Professor* was admittedly meant as a dispassionate and realistic portrayal of a man’s ascent of ‘the Hill of Difficulty’ by the ‘sweat of his own brow’ (Preface to *TP* vi). Yet, considering the fact that the narrator of *The Professor* is William Crimsworth himself, Mademoiselle Reuter’s reaction all the same serves as an outside perspective, challenging the assumed righteousness of Crimsworth’s actions. The fact that Lucy’s course of action during her first lesson gains the approbation of Madame Beck is, moreover, not necessarily in Lucy’s favour, or that of the method she employs. While deeming Madame ‘very capable’ and comprising ‘the duties of a first minister and a superintendent of police’, Lucy also states that Madame’s rule by espionage is ‘not the best way to make [her pupils] grow up honest and modest women’ (*V* 65). She does not endorse Madame’s methods, in other words, even though she comes to emulate them to some extent herself. At first glance, Madame Beck’s institution admittedly appears to Lucy ‘the thriving outside of a large and flourishing educational establishment’, where its students are ‘never oppressed’. Lucy is of the opinion that ‘many an austere English schoolmistress’ would in fact ‘do vastly well to imitate’ its educational approach (*V* 66). She soon realizes, however, that despite Madame’s supposed ‘easy, liberal, salutary, and rational’ approach to her students, the inmates of the *pensionnat* are in fact ‘under a surveillance that [leave] them no moment and no corner for retirement’ (*V* 65).

By choosing to take Madame at her word and restraining her pupils in spite of her many reasons for doing the opposite, Lucy is at a rudimentary level rationalizing violent behaviour. She regards her treatment of Dolores and Blanche as right and ‘[a]ll [she can] do’, and anchors her conviction in the fact that the ‘continental female’ is of a different species than the British female, and that ‘continental children’ have been interpellated into a repressive ideology. In doing so, Lucy is dehumanizing her pupils. William Crimsworth in fact likens his Belgian students to dogs (*TP* 48) and ‘desperate swine’ (*TP* 50), thereby seemingly warranting his austerity towards them. Brontë presents dehumanization, as well as theatricality, as the contingents of teaching at a Continental European institution or for resorting to public shaming in the classroom – which does not present public shaming in a positive light. However, Lucy’s adoption of the *pensionnat*’s methods need not be an indicator of Brontë’s own ambivalent relationship to public shaming. Even though Elizabeth Gaskell remarked that Lucy Snowe was no less than ‘the truest picture we possess of the real

Charlotte Brontë' (*The Life* 479), Brontë's supposed fictional double is by no means presented as an ideal person or tutor. Many have in fact commented on not only Lucy's unreliability as a narrator in that she in retrospect withholds information from the reader while claiming to convey the true account of her life; she can in fact be construed as an *antihero* in that she appears, as Joseph Boone notes, 'so determined to remain behind the scenes that she nearly succeeds in erasing herself from the plot of which she is the central subject' (37).

When writing *Villette*, Charlotte Brontë 'never meant to appoint [Lucy's] lines in pleasant places' (cf. CB to GS Nov 3 1853; Gaskell 479). A clear opposite of Jane Austen's Emma Woodhouse, whom Austen expected no one to like *but* herself (Austen-Leigh 117), Brontë was 'not leniently disposed' towards Lucy Snowe 'from the [very] beginning' (CB quoted in Gaskell 479). Many have argued that Lucy is represented in such a way as to make the reader constantly evaluate her decisions and statements (cf. Martin), and that not just her character is to be doubted: the novel itself only masquerades as a realistic fictional autobiography. According to Boone, '[t]he text's elliptical movement, gap-filled trajectory, indefinite beginnings and inconclusive endings, dreamlike sequences, disorienting spatial and temporal schemes' serve to create a 'radically decentered' narrative, lacking 'a stable or coherent identity' (37). In light of this, Lucy's character and stance in relation to education should not be relied upon too heavily. While this thesis does not agree with Boone's contention to the point that Lucy's character and opinions should be discredited, the erratic narrative structure in addition to Lucy's contradictory statements—her pledged allegiance to the 'Titaness amongst deities' and life's ambition to 'penetrate to the real truth' (*V* 435), yet lack of openness with the reader—suggest that the reader should take her observations, as Martin suggests, with a pinch of salt. As such, the representation of public shaming in *Villette* should not diminish *Jane Eyre*'s clear condemnation of that practice in addition to that of corporal punishment.

It should also be noted that neither Crimsworth nor Lucy is given time to prepare for their first lessons, but is thrust into it. The succumbence of both to the impulse to, as in *The Professor*, 'quell' a 'swinish tumult' (78), or, in *Villette*, to 'get command over this wild herd' (71), through a physical display of force is rather an act of desperation than one of premeditation. If they had been allowed time to prepare, they might have been able to achieve 'order and industry' by way of less severe means. However, especially Crimsworth's steadfast belief in the righteousness of his own severity towards some of his students suggests otherwise. His treatment of Juanna Trista, for example, occurs after he has been teaching at

the boys' seminary for some time and in effect become 'at ease with [his] pupils' (TP 50). He moreover justifies his behaviour in relation to Juanna with the fact that she treats those who do her a good turn with 'malevolence and ingratitude'. She is moreover said to eventually join her father 'in the – Isles, exulting in the thought that she should there have slaves, whom, as she said, she could kick and strike at will' (TP 50-1). There is evidence to suggest that Charlotte Brontë harboured xenophobic, even racist, feelings in that she has many of her protagonists describe Continental Europeans in generalizing and often derogatory terms. In spite of this, only a few of her Belgian or Labassecourien characters are treated strictly by English tutors. In comparison, the austerity of Crimsworth's manner towards his male pupils amounts to calling their pronunciation atrocious in plenum before showing them how to read an excerpt from *The Vicar of Wakefield* correctly. He does not single them out and shame them individually in front everybody, nor is he physical with them. It would seem, then, that Juanna of *The Professor* and Dolores of *Villette* are in need of stricter discipline personally. One could then argue that while especially *Jane Eyre* condemns the practices of corporal punishment and public shaming, *Villette* and *The Professor* suggest that there are some extreme cases that require a firmer response.

1.2 Rote Learning and the Imperfect Nature of Man

Although *Jane Eyre*'s depiction of the fictional Lowood Institution is regarded by many as a denunciation of the regime of Cowan Bridge, critics have guarded themselves against pegging Charlotte Brontë as opposed to the primary mode of teaching employed at Lowood, namely rote learning. Rote learning was the prevailing educational paradigm during Charlotte Brontë's lifetime. It consists in assigning pupils chunks of information, which they are to memorize and repeat. The method is also referred to as 'mechanical learning' (*OED*) in that it does not require any understanding of or reflection on the given material, either on the part of the instructor or the pupil. The latter is solely evaluated on his or her ability to recite the material correctly.

Critics have anchored their belief in Charlotte Brontë's neutrality in regard to, or indeed acceptance of, rote learning in the fact that neither she nor any of her sisters are 'on record as rebels [against] rote-learning', and the fact that neither child nor adult Jane Eyre articulates her disapproval of that mode of instruction (cf. Thormählen 190, 191). In spite of this, there are many elements in Brontë, *Jane Eyre* in particular, in apparent disfavour of rote learning. On Jane's first day as an active participant at Lowood, for example, she admits to being overwhelmed by the lesson format: 'being little accustomed to learning by heart, the

lessons appeared to me both long and difficult', she relates; 'the frequent change from task to task, too, bewildered me' (*JE* 63). Apparent in this statement is, firstly, a discontent with rote learning. The fact that her lessons feature frequent changes of topics furthermore suggests that the contents of these lessons are superficial at best. A central and oft-discussed flaw in nineteenth-century female education, especially in the eyes of opponents of rote learning, was that women were made to learn and recite material they did not comprehend. An article in *Fraser's Magazine* declared that women learn nothing thoroughly: 'in their education the *reason of things* is altogether left out' and 'their understandings are left to slumber' (*An Inquiry* 707, italics in original). Maria Edgeworth, a leading figure in the anti-rote learning stance, argued that women's retentive faculties were overloaded, while their inventive and reasoning faculties were rendered absolutely passive (444-445). You could not take for granted, either, that the teachers understood the content of their own lessons sufficiently. They themselves were in all likelihood taught by rote and moreover not required, as previously mentioned, to understand the material they imparted. Their sole responsibility was to read sentences aloud, or delegate this task, and make sure that the lines were recited back to them correctly. In effect, women's education was in many ways redundant. Yet, while personages such as the author of *The Saturday Review's* 'Queen Bees or Working Bees?' would argue that the reason why governesses were ill-paid was that the 'wares they [sold were] worthless', and that female education at the time was 'very bad', neither he nor his publication stipulated that women should be allowed to enrol at universities and thus improve the quality of these "wares" (575).

The adult narrator of *Jane Eyre* apologizes to the reader for her 'narrow catalogue of accomplishments', being as she is only qualified at teaching 'a good English education, together with French, Drawing, and Music' (*JE* 103). Yet, she admittedly relates that at the time in which the novel is set, such an education was considered 'tolerably comprehensive' (*JE* 103). Nevertheless, when Rochester hears her play, his verdict is that she does 'play a *little*'—'perhaps rather better than some, but not well' (*JE* 146). Even though her drawing abilities are admired by many throughout the novel, and Rochester concedes that Jane's creations are 'peculiar ... for a schoolgirl', and that she has managed to secure therein 'the shadow of [her] thought', she does not, in his view at least, possess 'enough of the artist's skill and science to give it full being' (*JE* 148). One should of course consider the fact that Jane is only eighteen years old at this point and has not had the fortune of receiving a proper drawing education. Before the mid-nineteenth century, this luxury was reserved for upper-class women fortunate enough to have been born into an artistic family (Peterson & Wilson

1976). Yet, Jane echoes Rochester by stating that she has not, in her own opinion, been able to do her artistic vision justice: ‘I was tormented by the contrast between my idea and my handiwork’ (*JE* 148). While Jane appears to have original ideas, and possess a rare talent, there is still a discrepancy between her visions and her execution. This fact need not diminish her artistic abilities, however, but merely point to a flaw in the education provided at Lowood—as well as women’s education in nineteenth-century England in general. Despite having eventually risen to the top of her class at Lowood, stayed on as a teacher for two years and easily obtained a position as a governess at Thornfield, her education may not be as comprehensive as her curriculum vitae suggests—to which Jane too admits.

The fact that young Jane is overwhelmed by rote learning and the rapid oscillation between subjects on her first day is not surprising, however. One can, of course, argue that Jane’s initial reaction to the lesson format at Lowood is not necessarily an expression of disapproval with the mode of teaching, or representative of Jane’s overall feelings towards Lowood, but rather indicative of her unfamiliarity with formal education. Jane is after all bewildered at the lesson format on her first day, and we know that she in time grows accustomed to learning by rote and comes to excel at her subjects:

I toiled hard, and my success was proportionate to my efforts; **my memory**, not naturally tenacious, **improved with practice**; **exercise sharpened my wits**; in a few weeks I was promoted to a higher class; in less than two months I was allowed to commence French and drawing.
(*JE* 88, bold mine)

Nevertheless, when looking back at her first quarter at Lowood School, the adult narrator reveals that it ‘seemed an age, and not the golden age either; it comprised an irksome struggle with difficulties in habituating myself to new rules and *unwonted tasks*. The fear of failure in these points harassed me worse than the physical hardships of my lot, though these were no trifles (*JE* 71, bold mine). Her statement that exercising her retentive capacities ‘sharpened [her] wits’ can arguably vouch for the value of the institution’s heavy emphasis on repetition-based lessons. The fact that she also describes her lessons as ‘irksome struggle[s] with ... unwonted’ or unusual tasks is, on the other hand, indicative of Jane’s displeasure with rote learning. The notion that she moreover feels ‘harassed’ by ‘the fear of failure’ at the tasks she is assigned also presents rote learning in a more severe light. In rote-based lessons, a student fails if she recites her lines incorrectly. In Brontë’s time, she would in this case have to learn additional material by heart or be made to wear ‘the dunce’s cap’ (Barker 136). We see similar punishments in *Jane Eyre*, especially in the case of Helen Burns, who on one

occasion is made to wear ‘a piece of pasteboard’ with the word ‘Slattern’ written on it (*JE* 87); on another, she is made to wear ‘the untidy badge’ (*JE* 80). These sanctions are after all the result of Helen’s inability to keep her things in order and not for failing to recite her lines properly. Yet, they hint at how the administration reacts to their pupils’ failure to live up to the required standard, to comply with the ‘unwonted tasks’ as much as the rules.

Indeed, in another instance, Helen is ‘condemned to a dinner of bread and water’ for having ‘blotted an exercise in copying it out’ (*JE* 80). At this, the narrator proclaims, ‘Such is the imperfect nature of man! Such spots are there on the disc of the clearest planet; and the eyes like Miss Scatterd’s can only see those minute defects, and are blind to the full brightness of the orb’ (*JE* 80). Immanent in this statement is the message that human beings are imperfect, that *Miss Scatterd’s* imperfect nature prevents her from seeing Helen’s values, and that the act of occasionally blotting a page is human and therefore not worth punishing—at least, not to the extent that it is by Miss Scatterd. Alternatively, the first sentence—‘Such is the imperfect nature of man!’—can be regarded as laden with sarcasm. Here, the narrator can appear to satirize or ridicule a person’s need to maximize defects that in reality are insignificant, rightly suggesting that there are far worse faults than the blotting of a page. Whether ironic or exasperated, however, the message of the excerpt remains the same: by only having eyes for man’s ‘minute defects’, one is prevented from seeing the full picture, not only a person’s advantages, but their entirety – ‘the full brightness of [the] orb’.

In this instance, it is hard to imagine how an author who writes on the pointlessness of nitpicking could ever be construed of being in favour of rote learning. It seems absurd that the statement above, the disapproval of letting a person’s minute defects overshadow their other qualities—indeed, of viewing these as representative of a person’s capabilities and overall competence—can be interpreted as anything other than opposed to rote learning. When learning by rote, all you are solely judged upon is your ability to repeat a poem or a so-called fact word by word, not your stance in relation to that fact, or even understanding of its content. Yet your ability to recite the given material correctly allegedly determines your intelligence. How can, in other words, support for this notion be compatible with Jane’s declaration above?

Some have argued that the reason why Charlotte Brontë was not outspoken in the rote learning debate, was that the method did have its advantages (cf. Thormählen 190). In Brontë’s day, many did consider a retentive memory essential onto itself, for example, and one’s retentive capacities as indicative of one’s overall intellect (Edgeworth 217). Those

opposed to this view, however, would argue that stored but undigested knowledge is no knowledge at all, and therefore not an indicator of any great intellect (Edgeworth). Yet, while Maria Edgeworth did not see the point in making eight-year-olds learn more allegorically advanced poetry by heart (410, 477-8), she was not opposed to committing verses to memory as such – she merely considered a prerequisite for memorizing poetry be that the person undertaking the process understand its content. ‘The business of a poet is [after all] to *please the imagination*, and to *move the passions*’ (Edgeworth 477-8, italics in original). Similar opinions are expressed in Brontë. There are many occurrences in *Shirley*, for example, of characters taking great pleasure in committing verses to memory. Louis Moore, of a slow yet retentive memory (*S* 496), professes to ‘acquire both knowledge and liking’ from learning poetry by heart: he proclaims that ‘the acquisition grows into my brain, and the sentiment into my breast’ (*S* 496). Yet, he juxtaposes this action with ‘the rapid springing produce which, having no root in itself, flourishes verdurous enough for a time, but too soon falls withered away’ (*S* 496). In order to be truly imprinted on the mind, in other words, poetry has to be understood fully: the acquisition moreover has to ‘grow into’ the brain as well as the heart for the process to be of value. This view appears in clear opposition to what in reality constituted the majority of rote learning: it contests ‘the rapid springing produce’, which has ‘no root in itself, and values committing poetry to mind and heart.

Yet, rote learning could be conceived as beneficial to language studies. The fierce critic of rote learning, Mary Atkinson Maurice (1797-1858), for instance, admittedly condemned the ‘Q and A’ books that formed the basis for this ‘miserable system’, such as Richmal Mangnall’s *Questions* (1798), and ‘Mrs. Ward’s’ *Child’s Guide to Knowledge* (1825). Maurice was adamant that they could ‘not be too strongly protested against’: according to her, ‘they seem[ed] to have been invented for the very purpose of preventing sound instruction’ (87). On the other hand, she also considered rote learning ‘a valuable help in education ... to a certain extent’ in that nothing could supply its place in the study of language (87). Despite Jane Eyre’s arguable educational deficiencies, in view of her self-proclaimed ‘narrow catalogue of accomplishments’ and her supposed unrefined potential for playing the piano and even drawing, she does possess an aptitude for languages. During the parts of her life depicted in *Jane Eyre*, the protagonist learns French, German and Hindustani. On the note of her French capabilities, she is said to speak the language as well as Mr. Rochester (cf. *JE* 120), who is a well-travelled man. Jane has only known Gateshead and Lowood and never seen a city (cf. *JE* 129).

Jane partly credits her command of the French language to her tutor at Lowood, Madame Pierrot.

Fortunately I had had the advantage of being taught French by a French lady; and as I had always made a point of conversing with Madame Pierrot as often as I could, and had, besides, during the last seven years, learnt a portion of French by heart daily – applying myself to take pains with my accent, and imitating as closely as possible the pronunciation of my teacher – I had acquired a certain degree of readiness and correctness in the language (*JE* 120)

Charlotte Brontë can, through her representation of Jane's language studies at Lowood, be seen to second Maurice's view of rote learning as conducive to language acquisition. One could, of course, argue that Jane's own interest in languages, and, in all likelihood, ear for languages are the main reasons for her competency in not only English and French, but later also German and Hindustani. Although her actual command of the latter two languages is not vouched for by any native speaker, Jane does learn both a bit of German and Hindustani during the course of a year, and attains a good enough grasp of the latter to be qualified to travel as a missionary to India. Rote learning need not, in other words, be the sole driving force for her linguistic development. However, as the established way of learning and teaching languages during the nineteenth century was rote learning, one could assume that St John Rivers employs the method in his Hindustani lessons with Jane. And, from the excerpt above, we can gather that rote learning has been highly beneficial to Jane's language education. She learns a portion of French by heart daily, in the process taking particular pains with her accent, imitating her teacher's accent and pronunciation as closely as possible, as a result acquiring a certain degree of fluency in the French language.

However, Jane also sets much store by having a French tutor. There is evidence to suggest that such circumstances were uncommon at charitable, predominantly rote based institutions. From an administrative point of view, rote learning was a lucrative choice. Great sums of money could be saved in relying solely on the method (Thormählen 190-191). By only teaching by rote, there was no need for a large number of classrooms, books or tutors – or competent tutors, for that matter. One teacher could, firstly, hear the repetitions of several pupils simultaneously, thus minimizing costs. As the teachers were not required to convey the import of the lines they read, or even understand their content, less qualified and less expensive people could be employed. Yet, this practice not only, by all accounts, diminished the value of the education provided at these institutions, but could often result in employing people unsuitable for the care of children altogether. If these were the circumstances, you would therefore, as Jane relates, be 'fortunate' if you had a tutor who was actually in

command of his or her subject, and especially if he or she were a native speaker of the language they were teaching. If one had a language teacher who taught in her mother tongue, or possessed a borderline mother tongue comprehension of a language, that would be rewarding in itself. That teacher would have the correct pronunciation, be able to correct those who did not, and both use and impart the right phrases, idioms and collocations.

Shirley Keeldar of *Shirley* is also aided by having a tutor who has French as his mother tongue. Recalling their lessons, Louis Moore, her former tutor, reminds Shirley of a moment when she ‘gave [him] the treat of hearing [his] native tongue spoken without accent by an English girl’ (S 495). When Shirley again meets Louis Moore, however, the French language ‘has become stranger to her tongue’: ‘it falter[s] and ‘flow[s] unevenly’, and is ‘broken by Anglicanized tones’ (S 487). After Louis has obliged Shirley in reading a paragraph aloud, however, Shirley catches his accent ‘in three minutes’ (S 487). The rapidity with which she reclaims her perfect pronunciation should of course be credited to her ear for language, and actual command of the language; she might have lost her previous fluency with mere lack of practice. Her competence need not, in other words, be attributed to Louis’ skills as a teacher. Yet, the extent of his familiarity with the language can all the same be seen to guide her back to her former degree of accomplishment, as it will no doubt have contributed to her borderline native grasp of the French language in the past.

When Jane recounts the reasons for her proficiency in French, rote learning is moreover not the only means by which she attained it. She also relates that, ‘I always made a point of *conversing* with Madame with Madame Pierrot as often as I could’ (JE 120, italics mine). Jane, in other words, made an extra effort and took charge of her own language education. It was also first and foremost through conversations that she was able to gain fluency, or ‘readiness’, in her speech.

1.3 Conversation: The Dialogic Format of Instruction

Especially in the late eighteenth century, conversation—the exchange of thoughts and words—takes on a greater cultural significance. Recent eighteenth and nineteenth century studies have focused on the cultural politics of conversation, arguing that domestic-based culture and home-based rituals, such as tea-drinking or dinner parties and later also book clubs and coffee houses, functioned as platforms for not only the ‘cultivation of genteel society’, but also for free converse (Gleadle 61, 62). While it could also be part of the ‘social sphere’, the domestic sphere was not ‘officially public’ (Klein 112), and could as such function as a safe haven for female expression.

Yet, conversations were also vital to the education and cultivation of children. In her chapter on the ‘familiar conversation’ as a pedagogical tool (2015), Michèle Cohen argues that too little attention has been given the importance of conversation in the intellectual training and development of children during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (447). Conversation was especially from the late eighteenth century onwards considered ‘the currency of civil society’ (Gleadle 62) and a reflection of a person’s cultural capital. The ability to converse well on a wide range of subjects, on everything from politics, religion, and philosophy to natural history, chemistry, botany, and household economy, would secure the regard of one’s acquaintances (Gleadle 64; Cohen 448). A person’s competence as a conversationalist was also evaluated on the basis of his or her ‘ease and elegance of address’ (*The Polite Lady* 152; Cohen 450), and ability to pay attention to others, retaining the essence of what they said (Cohen 451). Conversations taking place within the ‘social sphere’ could then be exhibitions of vast stores of knowledge, and oratory skills, as well as displays of politeness and sociability. Allowing one’s children to stay and listen to the conversations taking place within one’s social circle could therefore prove instructive as well as entertaining (Cohen 448). As Hester Chapone remarks in her essay ‘On Conversation’ (1775), the hours spent in society ‘may be made, not only the most agreeable, but perhaps the most useful of any’: ‘even amongst those of moderate understanding and knowledge’, Chapone maintains, ‘it seems almost impossible that an evening should pass in mutual endeavours to entertain each other, without something being struck out that would in some degree enlighten and improve the mind (13). Conversations could, in other words, prove educational not only for those listening, but the parties engaged in the discussion. In the spirit of Bakhtin’s ‘dialogic’, a conversation could be seen as a cumulative process, party B building on the conceptualizations of party A, both interrupting (albeit politely) the reflections of the other, or adding new impulses to each other’s views on a given subject.

Conversations were also integral to home-based education in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. Many households valued conversations, between parent and child, or governess and child, as supplementary to formal lessons (Amies 87; Cohen 456, 458). It was appreciated by many as a valuable and initially informal means of training a child’s mind to reason (Cohen 447). As Marion Amies envisages in her article on ‘Amusing and instructive conversations’ (1985), the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mother would during an afternoon walk, for example, guide her children’s attention to natural phenomena, to ‘fossilized shells buried in a lime deposit high on a hillside, to the delicate mechanism of a butterfly’s wing’ (87). Most importantly, however, she would also encourage ‘their questions

as to ‘how’ and ‘why’, teach[ing] them to observe, to test their observations and to reach their own conclusions to the queries they had raised’ (Amies 87).

Conversation as a formal mode of instruction experienced a surge of popularity between the end of the eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries (Cohen 456). The concept of a dialogic format of instruction is admittedly the oldest form of education, derivative of the Socratic method, or ‘maieneutics’ (midwifery). The classical Greek philosopher Socrates considered the work of an educator very much the same as that of a midwife in that the educator merely assisted in ‘drawing out’ the wisdom latent in a person’s soul (cf. *Thaetetus* 150-151 BC). The educator, like the midwife, does not perform the act herself, in other words, but guides her charge through the process, subsequently determining ‘whether the offspring is healthy or not’ (Nola & Irzik 107). Through the dialogic format of instruction, the educator accordingly attempts to ‘draw out’ a pupil’s stored information through questions, interruptions and problematizations. The most crucial element in the dialogic format, however, is that the educator enables her pupils to be actively involved: she not only trains children to think rationally and critically, which many of Brontë’s contemporaries deemed the object of education (cf. Maria E. Budden 1826), but *allowed* them that right as well. To ensure that one’s pupils are actively involved, they, in other words, have to be allowed to ask as well as answer questions, agree as well as disagree, to interrupt, and change the subject (Cohen 449).

The resurgence of the Socratic method in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries was partly due to the publication of books or periodicals attempting to recreate and transcribe familiar conversation, such as Antoine Pluche’s *Spectacle de la Nature* (1732-1751). Pluche’s series was translated into English as soon as in 1733 (Amies 87), and authors such as Ann Murray, Jane Marcet, and ‘Mrs Markham’ (Elizabeth Penrose) published books in ‘familiar conversation’ in the early to mid-nineteenth century⁵. In publications such as these, there were two or several characters engaged in conversation. Instead of having one character be the ‘all-knowing adult teacher’, and the other the ‘ignorant child-learner’ (Cohen 452), however, publications such as Marcet’s *Conversations of Chemistry* (1817) include instances where pupils challenge or indeed disprove ‘Mrs B’s’ argument. The child characters are moreover presented as active learners, not passive ‘receptacles to be filled with knowledge’ (Cohen 453): they interrupt Mrs B or each other, and often digress from the main

⁵ Anne Murray’s *Mentoria, Or the Young Ladies’ Instructor: In Familiar Conversation* (1835), Jane Marcet’s *Conversations on Chemistry* (1817), and Mrs Markham’s *A History of France* (1828).

vein of the conversation. As such, the dialogic format differed from the ‘Q and A’ books (which arguably attempted to replace the ‘informal and digressive’ nature of the familiar format with ‘a serious pursuit’ of knowledge [Robertson 11]) in that they did not present a standard set of questions and answers which children were to consume and regurgitate uncritically; their goal was rather to stimulate children’s inventive and reasoning faculties, and were based on the principle that ‘the best aim of education is to teach children to think for themselves’ (Budden quoted in Cohen 449), not merely that a retentive memory is essential onto itself.

Authors’ reasons for employing the dialogic format in their books was that familiar conversation enabled them, in the spirit of Locke, to ‘lure the mind into knowledge’ (Ann Murray xi), and create works that stimulated their readers intellectually as well as amusing them. Pricilla Wakefield, for example, chose the dialogic format to ensure that her instructive lessons ‘be read from choice rather from compulsion, and be *sought* by ... young readers, as an entertainment’, ‘not shunned as a mere dry perceptive lesson’ (quoted in Cohen 454-5, italics mine). Both Murray and Wakefield echo Locke through their expressed hesitance at *imposing* education on children and through their wish to and belief in making learning fun: Locke himself argues that a child’s mind will take aversion to learning if it is ‘made a burthen to them, or impos’d on them as a task’ (73.38). The ‘greatest instrument to turn [children] by’ is, in Locke’s view, appealing to their rationality (73.38), and adapting the lessons to ‘their natures and aptitudes’ (Locke 66.29).

In Brontë, the dialogic format is in many ways represented as the ideal mode of instilling knowledge in a child’s mind, and awakening their thirst for knowledge, perhaps occasionally *supplemented* by rote learning. Charlotte Brontë’s own education appears to have benefitted from a domestic format, stimulated by the library at Haworth parsonage (supplying her with ample literary references, which would come to enrich her novels), as well as by conversing with her siblings. During Charlotte Brontë’s childhood, women were denied a classical education and thereby severed from a close acquaintance with Latin, Greek and Ancient history, and the writings of the ancient world (Barker 171). Brontë’s remarkable familiarity with Latin and ancient works was then most likely the result of lessons with her father, a Cambridge alumnus, or from second-hand lessons with her brother Branwell, who would have received Latin lessons from his father before starting his own classical education (Barker 170-171). The Brontë colloquies, especially that between Charlotte, Ann, and Emily, were vital to their education, and would later be of great importance to the formation of all of

their literary creations. In her essay on ‘The Education of Charlotte Brontë: A Pedagogical Case Study’ (2001), Sue Lonoff emphasizes the importance of these colloquies:

what we now term “collaborative learning” was just as important to Charlotte’s development, at least until her mid-twenties ... As they pored over sources, exchanged ideas, and transmuted the results into fictions of their own, the children taught and learned from each other (459)

After her siblings passed away in quick succession, Charlotte Brontë related to her editor, George Smith, that ‘I can hardly tell you how much I hunger to have an opinion besides my own, and how I have desponded and almost despaired because there was no one to whom to read a line – or of whom to ask council’ (*Selected Letters* 207).

As we have seen in the section addressing rote learning, Jane Eyre relates that she greatly benefitted from conversing with her former French tutor, Madame Pierrot. By way of conversation, Jane was able to put the material she committed to memory, such as French tenses and words, into practice and into context. Even though the narration of *Jane Eyre* can be seen to favour rote learning as *part* of language education in that Jane benefits from committing French phrases and glossary to memory, it is the *application* of this stored information in meaningful conversation that appears to be most beneficial. Jane’s learning experience can moreover be seen to improve through the informality of these conversations. Jane otherwise suffers from the constant fear of failure and reproof (cf. *JE* 71), but her conversations with Madame Pierrot serve to strengthen her command of the French language. We can imagine that these sessions are moreover devoid of or less tinted by the tension which otherwise seems to riddle the lessons at Lowood. The dialogic format of instruction, in other words, creates a safe learning environment, which strengthens Jane’s education.

Helen Burns also appears to benefit from the dialogic format more than she does from rote learning. During her lessons at Lowood, which are primarily rote based, she often struggles to keep her mind from ‘rov[ing] away’. She is admittedly able to retain focus, and ‘the substance of the whole lesson’ when the matter at hand is of interest to her, as seen in her history lesson with Miss Scatcherd on the reign of Charles I (cf. *JE* 64). Here, Helen is one of the few who are able to answer correctly. More often than not, however, Helen ‘los[es] the very sound of [Miss Scatcherd’s] voice’ in class, and ‘fall[s] into a sort of dream’ when she should be listening to her (*JE* 67). Helen’s mental excursions to Northumberland during her classes evoke Charlotte Brontë’s own escapes into alternate realities. Brontë would often,

during her time at Roe Head, fantasize about the fictional world of Angria⁶ as a means of breaking away from her mundane existence and duties as a teacher (Tressler 4): ‘a voice of wild and wailing music’ would fill her mind, and she would distinctly see ‘the Duke of Zamorna ... sitting in the schoolroom at Roe Head’ (CB quoted in Tressler 4). In instances such as these, Brontë ‘was quite gone’, and ‘utterly forgot where [she] was and all the gloom and cheerlessness of [her] situation’ (CB quoted in Tressler 4). In Brontë’s case, the reveries are indicative of her own dissatisfaction with her situation at Roe Head, her neglect of her art, as well as the unstimulating and uninspiring nature of her duties at that institution. Helen’s constant daydreaming during class can accordingly be symptomatic of the ‘cheerlessness’ of *her* learning situation.

When one juxtaposes Helen’s accounts of her lessons and Jane’s depiction of Helen’s conversation with Miss Temple, the disparity between the effects of the two educational practices becomes evident. When Helen and Jane pass an evening in Miss Temple’s company, Jane is taken aback by the conversation taking place between the two others and at the simultaneous transformation in Helen’s features:

[H]er powers ... awoke, kindled: first, they glowed in the bright tint of her cheek, which till this hour I had seen but pale and bloodless; then they shone in the liquid lustre of her eyes, which had suddenly acquired a beauty more singular than that of Miss Temple’s – a beauty neither of fine colour nor long eyelash, nor pencilled brow, but of meaning, of movement, of radiance. Then her soul sat on her lips, and language flowed, from which source I cannot tell ... Such was the characteristic of Helen’s discourse on that, to me, memorable evening; her spirit seemed hastening to live within a very brief span as much as many live during a protracted existence.
(*JE* 86-87)

Conversation appears to be able to captivate Helen and ‘draw out’ her abilities in such a way as rote learning cannot. Thomas Shore, a country clergyman and educator, whose thoughts on education have been immortalized in the diary of his daughter, Margaret Emily Shore, refuted the popular conception that poor children naturally had ‘more vacancy and stupidity of mind than those of the higher ranks’ (Shore 40): Shore, of a Socratic persuasion, contended that their possible vacancy of mind arose from their not having been ‘drawn out by questions’, and ‘taught to apply what they know’ (Shore 40). Helen’s absentmindedness can accordingly stem from not being ‘drawn out’ by Lowood’s educational methods. While struggling to keep her mind from wandering in class, Helen appears revived by her conversations with Miss

⁶ A universe of her brother, Branwell, and her own devising, the tales of which are considered part of the Brontë Juvenilia, and the realm to which the Duke of Zamorna pertains.

Temple. Her reveries during formal lessons, however, prevent her from benefitting from these lessons and may well give the lecturer the impression that she is morally weak or intellectually deficient (Tressler 3). Helen often ends up at the bottom of her class as well as punished in effect of her trances (*JE* 64). Jane's account of Helen's memorable conversation with Miss Temple, however, is a testament to her actual intellectual vigour:

‘They conversed of things I had never heard of; of nations and times past; of countries far away: of secrets of nature discovered or guessed at: they spoke of books: how many had they read! What stores of knowledge they possessed! Then they seemed so familiar with French names and French authors: but my amazement reached its climax when Miss Temple asked Helen if she sometimes snatched a moment to recall the Latin her father had taught her, and taking a book from the shelf, bade her read and construe a page of Virgil; and Helen obeyed, my organ of Veneration expanding at every sounding line’ (*JE* viii, 87)

Just as the rote based lessons do not appear sufficiently intellectually stimulating for Helen, conversations can be seen as an effective way of not only securing the focus and interest of one's pupil, through the novel's depiction of Helen's learning experience; the dialogic mode of instruction is also represented as ideal for drawing out and discovering the information and abilities latent in the mind, in accordance with Socratic philosophy. It should be noted that while the act of inspiring the awe of a girl at the beginning of her educational career, which Jane is at that point, should not be that difficult, the ability of reading and interpreting French and Latin was quite uncommon for a girl in her teens during Brontë's lifetime (Barker 148).

Although perhaps most prominent in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, this concept that conversations can reveal a pupil's existing talents is also present in *Shirley*. Caroline Helstone is self-conscious regarding her own accomplishments, or rather lack thereof, being of the opinion that ‘her attainments are fewer than possessed by girls of her age and station’ (*S* 77). Her tutor, Hortense, takes Caroline ‘precisely at her own estimate, as an irregularly taught, even ignorant girl’ (*S* 77). When she finds that Caroline makes unexpected ‘rapid and eager progress’, however, Hortense does not credit this development to any application on the part of her scholar; nor does she view her rapid progress as indicative of any competence which Hortense herself might have overlooked in her haste to assess Caroline. Hortense merely sees that she was ‘unskilled in routine’ and fine sewing, and deems her ignorant; the narrator of *Shirley* in fact professes that this ‘idea [is] not logical’ despite the fact that ‘Hortense had perfect faith in it’ (*S* 77). Through her conversations with Caroline, Hortense finds that her pupil has ‘knowledge of her own – desultory but varied’ – even ‘on subjects whereof she [herself knows] little’ (*S* 77). By way of conversations, Caroline is able to

express the information already stored in her mind and reveal the fact that she is knowledgeable and in fact far exceeds her tutor in some areas. The problem in this instance, however, is that Hortense does not recognize these abilities, but rather credits the ‘treasures’ Caroline ‘gleans’ (S 77) in conversation as testament to her own proficiency as her tutor – taking credit for the knowledge Caroline displays on matters she has not taught her and that she herself does not possess.

1.4 The Essay: Assessment and Empowerment

We have seen that people’s failure to see others and their abilities clearly is a central theme in Charlotte Brontë’s novels. Her fiction often features characters with small frames, plain features, but with rich inner lives and vibrant minds. The ability to underestimate and prejudice against others is particularly present in Brontë’s educational scenes. We have seen that Miss Scatcherd’s emphasis on neatness prevents her from seeing Helen Burns’ true worth, or ‘the full brightness of [her] orb’ (cf. *JE* 80). Perhaps due to being intellectually inferior to her pupil and self-conscious on this point, or from a fault in her own much-revered ‘method’, Hortense is unable to see Caroline’s competence and give her credit for it. While we have explored the dialogic format of instruction’s potential for revealing a person’s hidden or unforeseen talents and attained knowledge, Brontë also presents another way of doing so: essay writing.

In all of Charlotte Brontë’s novels but one, essay-writing, or the *devoir*, comes across as an important means by which a teacher can come to see his or her pupil’s potential clearly: *Shirley*’s Louis Moore, *Villette*’s Paul Emanuel, and *The Professor*’s William Crimsworth all have their pupils display their knowledge attainment and creative capacity by writing essays. They are all subsequently made aware of the rare talent of one pupil in particular: the essays of Louis’ former pupil, Shirley Keeldar, have made such a mark upon his mind and heart that he can recite them many years later. The quality and originality of Lucy Snowe’s work prompt M. Paul to show her *devoirs* to colleagues at the men’s college. He has Messieurs Bossie and Rochemorte assess her so as to convince them that the essays are of her and not his doing. And in Frances Henri, Crimsworth discovers an exceptional power of vision and gift for narration, as well as a good grasp of history.

The positive force the essay features in Brontë has already been remarked upon: Juliet Barker, for instance, has deemed the essay ‘the midwife of love’ in *The Professor*, *Shirley* and *Villette* in that it in each case enables the hero to recognize ‘the intellectual powers and emotional depth hidden beneath the otherwise unexceptional exterior of an apparently

conventional young woman' (492). The essay indeed comes across as a romantic catalyst in *Shirley* in particular: Louis' ability to commit Shirley's *devoirs* to memory is testament to his own deep emotional connection to her words. For when he learns something by heart, 'the acquisition grows into [his] brain, and the sentiment into [his] breast' (S 496). Yet, Barker primarily views Brontë's employment of the essay as a means by which Brontë herself could remember and communicate with her own former tutor and assumed unrequited love, Constantin Héger (cf. 491-492). This section will nevertheless not look at how Brontë presents the essay as a 'midwife of love' in her fiction, but instead discuss how she represents essay-writing as a significant assessment tool for the tutor—giving him or her insight into pupils' abilities, and the best way to reshape their education—as well as a source of empowerment and agency for the pupil.

While not a mode of instruction per se, Brontë firstly presents the essay as an essential tool for monitoring pupils' capacities and for using the outcome of that assessment as basis for shaping and improving their education. While present in all of her novels except *Jane Eyre*, *The Professor* is perhaps most explicit as to the first notion, its narrator clearly stating that the essay can be an efficient way of confirming pupils' knowledge attainment. William Crimsworth clearly states his intent when assigning Frances the task of writing an essay:

'Now,' thought I, 'I shall see a glimpse of what she really is; I shall get an idea of the nature and extent of her powers; not that she can be expected to express herself well in a foreign tongue, but still, if she has any mind, here will be a reflection of it.' (TP 103)

He, in other words, regards the essay as a means of reflecting pupils' capabilities. As a result of the assignment and the proficiencies and deficiencies it brings to light, Crimsworth is also able to determine how best to shape the continued education of the pupil in question.

There were errors of orthography, there were foreign idioms, there were some faults of construction, there were verbs irregular transformed into verbs regular, it was mostly made up, as the above example shews [sic], of short and somewhat rude sentences, and the style stood in great need of polish and sustained dignity; yet such as it was, I had hitherto seen nothing like it in the course of my professional experience. (TP 105)

Frances' essay not only reflects and informs her tutor of her capacity for originality and creativity, which is like nothing he has seen so far during the course of his career. It also provides him with a basis for shaping Frances' continued education, in other words, in that it

alerts Crimsworth to the fact that Miss Henri is in need of instruction on the subjects of English grammar and orthography and guidance on how to structure her compositions.

Brontë also presents the essay as a means by which the pupil can take charge of her own education and derive a sense of empowerment. In the case of Lucy Snowe, essay-writing enables her to gain insight into subjects hitherto unfamiliar to her. She relates that, ‘When M. Paul dictated the trait on which the essay was to turn, I heard it for the first time; it was a matter new to me, and I had no material for its treatment’ (*V* 375). Yet, Lucy deals with her deficiencies by getting books and ‘read[ing] up the facts’, before ‘laboriously construct[ing] a skeleton out of the dry bones of the real, ... cloth[ing] them, and [trying] to breathe [life] into them’ (*V* 375). The task M. Paul assigns his class, firstly, prompts Lucy to explore and master new territories, making her stray beyond her comfort zone. Lucy concedes that she finds the process of amassing and arranging facts challenging and nerve-wracking: ‘With me it was a difficult and anxious time till my facts were found, selected, and properly pointed; nor could I rest from research and effort till I was satisfied of correct anatomy’ (*V* 375). She struggles with the fact that, ‘the knowledge was not there in my head, ready and mellow’ (*V* 375-376), and that ‘whatever I want, I must go out and gather fresh’ (*V* 376). Yet, she relates that she ‘had pleasure’ in making the facts she compiled her own (*V* 375).

She appears unable to see the extent of her own talent, deeming her *devoirs* the work of the ‘crude hand of a novice’ (*V* 375), and the professors who come to verify her authorship ‘Incapables!’ for not seeing this. However, Messieurs Bossiee and Rochemorte themselves believe Lucy’s essays to be ‘the work of a ripe scholar’ (*V* 376). Whereas Lucy’s own appraisal of her work may seem testament to either false modesty or severe self-deprecation, the effort she puts into giving her compositions ‘great anatomy’, her delight in breathing life into ‘dry bones of the real’, and her determined execution of Messieurs’ examination are by contrast indicative of confidence and faith in her own abilities. When M. Paul on a previous occasion insinuates that she has deceived him by appearing *faible*, or incompetent, Lucy concedes to the reader that she ‘*had* feigned a false capacity’ (*V* 330, italics mine). When writing the essay the examiners assign her on the subject of Human Justice, Lucy moreover quickly ‘[falls] to work’, ‘‘Human Justice’ rush[ing] before [her] in a novel guise’ (*V* 376).

The source of her inspiration is the revelation that Messieurs Boissee and Rochemorte are the very men who ‘chased her breathless over a whole quarter of the town’ on the night of her arrival in Villette. Her ensuing essay is her reprisal of the self-declared ‘Pious mentors’ and ‘Pure guides of youth’ standing before her and an outlet for her frustration at the injustice of them being able to hold their post and ‘enjoy [their] present credit’: she consequently

envisions 'Human Justice' as a pipe-smoking, 'red, random beldame' who lets beggars' starving go unnoticed.

She had a warm seat of her own by the fire, she had her own solace in a short black pipe, and a bottle of Mrs Sweeny's soothing syrup; she smoked and she sipped and she enjoyed her paradise, and whenever a cry of the suffering souls about her pierced her ears too keenly – my jolly dame seized the poker or the hearth-brush: if the offender was ... strong, lively, and violent, she only menaced, then plunged her hand in her deep pouch, and flung a liberal shower of sugar-plums (*V* 377)

In summation, Brontë presents the essay as not only the means by which a teacher can assess pupils and gain insight into how best to shape one's lessons; she also presents it as an effective tool for getting one's pupils to explore foreign territories and immerse themselves in material, and as a means of female expression and agency in an otherwise male-dominated, repressive world.

1.5 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, Brontë represents conversation, or the dialogic format of instruction, and essay-writing as the ideal modes of instruction. The essay comes across both as a means of empowerment on part of the pupil and as a tool for assessing pupils, their current level of competence, and how to shape their education in future. While the narrative of *Jane Eyre* presents rote learning as valuable to a certain extent, in that Jane Eyre's language education greatly benefits from committing French phrases and glossary to memory, it also stresses the importance of *applying* one's stored knowledge through conversation. While Louis Moore of *Shirley* professes his love for committing poetry to mind as well as heart, he suggests that this procedure be undertaken with some consideration, promoting active understanding and the processing of content. He also suggests that a piece of text has to be of emotional or sentimental significance to the person committing it to memory for the process to be complete and permanent as well as of value. This notion resounds in Helen's experience of rote learning and in the fact that she is able to retain focus and the essence of the whole lesson when the topic at hand is of actual interest to her.

As such, Brontë can be seen to argue that education has to be made engaging and available to the learner. One of the ways in which a teacher can achieve this object is by way of conversation. Brontë represents the dialogic format of instruction as conducive in that it not only provides a safe learning environment, but both ensures and requires active participation. In Brontë, the essay, too, demands critical awareness on the part of the pupil. It

nourishes their analytical faculty, compelling the learner to take charge of her own education. It is also a means of exploring and gaining a proficiency in new fields and delving deeply into subjects. As such, it can be a means of self-realization and self-assertion. In envisaging the essay as a reflection of pupils' competence as well as the areas that are in need of further instruction and polish, Brontë represents the essay as an important way by which the teacher can gain insight into the needs of her pupils and shape lessons on the basis of this knowledge. In the dialogic format of instruction and in essay writing, all parties are, in other words, actively involved in shaping the trajectory to learning. As we shall see in the next chapter, the engendering of agency in one's pupils, and a hands-on approach on the part of the administration is vital to the running of a school and for the creation of a flourishing establishment.

2 The Ideal School

Charlotte Brontë's works not only present the ideal pedagogical tools for inspiring and instilling new knowledge in pupils; they also create an outline of the ideal school. In accordance with the trend amongst nineteenth-century fictions on education, *The Professor*, *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* can all be said to trace a movement from ineffectual or oppressive school practices to ideal school spaces. The protagonist in each novel starts off as a student or teacher at a suboptimal educational establishment, before eventually establishing or being in charge of a school of his or her own.

In Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1850), the idealized school of Dr Strong is described as 'excellent' and founded on 'a sound system', and 'as different from Mr Creakle's as good is from evil' (225). While *The Professor*, *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* trace a corrective movement, they only—like *David Copperfield*—supply a vague sketch of how the educational programmes of her reformed schools differ from those they replace. In *The Professor*'s description of the school later founded by the protagonist and his wife, for example, the emphasis is first and foremost on the freedom and agency afforded Frances in running her own establishment. The novel also conveys the fact that Frances treats her pupils equally, and describes the degree to which her pupils respect her (cf. *TP* 199-200). In *Jane Eyre*, the description of Morton girls' school merely tells us that Jane is teaching farmer's daughters how to 'read, write, and sew', as well as 'the elements of grammar, geography, history, and the finer kinds of needlework' to the more advanced (cf. *JE* 422), and that she considers it her duty to develop their 'germs of ... excellence, refinement, intelligence, [and] kind feeling' of her pupils (cf. *JE* 413). Jane does not go into detail as to how her own programme will differ from that of Lowood. The *Jane Eyre* of the 2006 BBC adaptation is adamant that Morton school shall pose a clear contrast to Lowood, clearly stating the terms of her employment before accepting the post at Morton, demanding that there will be 'no beatings, and enough food for dinner' (episode four). The *Jane Eyre* of the novel, however, is not as specific or openly anti-Lowood in the Morton section.

Despite Jane's avoidance of mentioning Lowood in her outline of Morton, her account of her time at her alma mater is ripe with critique. In spite of his vagueness in relation to the organization of his own establishment, the narrator of *The Professor* expresses his disapproval of the low standard at Madam Reuter's and Monsieur Pelet's establishments

throughout the novel. He also voices his frustration at how Roman Catholicism can prevent pupils from realizing their full intellectual potential. While Charlotte Brontë's novels can be said to form corrective trajectories, it is in her descriptions of the narrators' *encounters* with the less-than-ideal school spaces that Brontë evaluates and comments on their educational programmes, making suggestions as to how they may be improved.

The first part of this chapter (2.1) will address the concrete measures Brontë's works suggest an educational administration should take to ensure the physical and mental welfare of the pupils in its care. This section will also show the ways in which *Jane Eyre* in particular demonstrates the ramifications of a system that does not make proper facilitations for pupils' well-being, and how *Villette* illustrates the dangers of an overindulgent regime. The second part of this chapter (2.2-2.4) will focus on the ideal educational programme. I will demonstrate that Charlotte Brontë's works, with special emphasis on *Jane Eyre*, illustrate the downsides of overemphasizing one subject, and how *Villette* in particular underlines the importance of cultivating one's students, and promoting self-culture. I will also examine the ways in which reading comes across as an educational and reformatory force in all of Charlotte Brontë's works.

2.1 Arrangements for the Well-Being of One's Scholars

While all of Charlotte Brontë's novels engage with the topic of education, *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* are most explicit as to what concrete measures a boarding school administration has to take for its boarders to thrive. In each novel's description of its respective educational establishment, *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* promote making the fulfilment of one's charges' physiological needs the administration's first priority. While *Villette* goes on to stress the importance of self-culture, and an administration's duty to couple generosity with moral guidance, as we shall see in more detail in section 2.3, its protagonist starts off by underlining the importance of making sufficient provisions for the physical and mental welfare of one's pupils.

Lucy Snowe at first conceives Madame Beck's *Pensionnat des Demoiselles* in Labassecour as a 'flourishing educational establishment' and 'a complete and most charming contrast to many English institutions of the same kind' (V 66). Lucy anchors her claim in the fact that the *pensionnat* appears characterized by a 'liberty of amusement' (V 65): its inhabitants are 'healthy, lively' and 'well-dressed' (V 66), there are ample 'provisions for exercise' in Rue Fossette, Madame 'allow[s] plenty of time for sleeping, dressing, washing, [and] eating', and the food provided at the institution is both 'abundant and good' (V 65). As

a result, ‘neither pale nor puny faces [are] anywhere to be seen in the Rue Fossette’ (*V* 65). Lucy therefore concludes that ‘Nothing could be better than all [of Madame’s] arrangements for the physical well-being of her scholars’ (*V* 65). She believes that ‘many an austere English schoolmistress would do vastly well to imitate’ Madame’s facilitation of her charges’ physical prosperity (*V* 65).

In *Jane Eyre*’s depiction of Lowood Institution, Brontë demonstrates the negative ramifications of an administration’s failure to take care of its students and prioritize their physical and mental welfare. Here, pupils are subjected to ‘[s]emi-starvation’ and poor insulation and clothing in the name of economy and the administration’s endeavour to render them ‘hardy, patient, [and] self-denying’ (*JE* 75). All of these factors predispose the children of Lowood to receiving the infection that in due course pervades the school, and ‘transform[s] the seminary into a hospital’ (*JE* 91). Furthermore, Lowood’s meal plan in all likelihood stunts its students’ growth by not accommodating ‘the keen appetites of growing children’. The cook and housekeeper issues portions Jane deems ‘scarcely sufficient to keep alive a delicate invalid’ (*JE* 71). Brontë also describes Lowood’s rule by semi-starvation as ‘false economy’ (cf. *JE* 145) and represents it as a source of discord amongst the inmates, eliciting immoral behaviour and resulting ‘in an abuse which presse[s particularly hard] on the younger pupils’ (*JE* 71). The ‘deficiency of nourishment’ and ‘exigency of hunger’ reduces ‘the famished great girls ... [to] coax or menace the little ones out of their portions’ (*JE* 71). After the return journey from church on Sundays, the smallest students are furthermore denied the heat of a blazing fire, each hearth being immediately surrounded by the largest girls, ‘the younger children crouched in groups, wrapping their starved arms in their pinafores’ (*JE* 72). Brontë does not paint the older girls at Lowood as innately immoral, but traces their menacing behaviour back to the ironically *uncharitable* way in which Lowood is organized: the ‘famished great girls’ are, in other words, rendered desperate for hunger, and in their desperation, commit immoral acts.

While Lowood considers exercise important, allotting one hour each day to activities in the open air (*JE* 71), the administration does not provide its students with adequate footwear or gloves. As a result, snow gets into the girls’ shoes on their way to church, their feet and ungloved hands become ‘numbed and covered with chilblains’ and often inflamed (*JE* 71). Yet, the narrator remembers with fondness the play hour in the evenings, and the quarter in between breakfast and the resumption of lessons, ‘during which the schoolroom was in a glorious tumult’ (*JE* 55). As a child, Jane valued these instances in that one ‘seemed to be permitted to talk loud and more freely ... for that space of time’ (*JE* 55). She thought the

play hour ‘the pleasantest fraction of the day at Lowood’ in that ‘the long restraint of the day was slackened’ during this interval, and ‘the schoolroom felt warmer than in the morning – its fires being allowed to burn a little more brightly’ (*JE* 65). Most important and most rewarding, however, was the ‘licensed uproar’ these occasions granted, ‘the confusion of many voices [giving] one a welcome sense of liberty’ (*JE* 65).

Any school administration should, in other words, prioritize making sure that pupils are adequately fed, rested, clothed or supplied with sufficient materials and tools with which to make their clothing—which Jane confirms is not the case at Lowood, Brocklehurst equipping them with ‘bad needles and thread ... for economy’s sake ... with which [they can] hardly sew’ (*JE* 145). Another measure Brontë outlines as crucial to thriving educational establishment is making sure that pupils are not without their share of amusement and sense of liberty. As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis (1.1), Lowood does in time come to be ‘a truly useful and noble institution’ (*JE* 100) in the eyes of the narrator. Its eventual worth is attributed to the fact that Brocklehurst’s role is curtailed, and a committee is appointed to aid him, comprising ‘gentlemen of rather more enlarged and sympathizing minds’ (*JE* 99) than Brocklehurst, who know how to ‘combine reason with strictness, comfort with economy,’ and ‘compassion with uprightness’ (*JE* 100).

Another arrangement Brontë represents as crucial for pupils’ well-being is a balanced work load and acceptable working hours. Lucy’s initial praise of Madame Beck’s arrangements for the welfare of her students also includes the fact that no mind within the walls of her establishment appears to be overtasked. The inmates of Rue Fossette are ‘gaining knowledge ... without painful exertion or useless waste of spirits’, and their lessons are ‘well distributed’ (*V* 65). These factors not only appear in Madame Beck’s favour, but are also one of the primary reasons for Lucy’s conviction that Rue Fossette constitutes a ‘charming contrast to many English institutions of the same kind’ (*V* 66). Its schedule alone renders it the antithesis of most early-nineteenth-century schools in England, which, as Jane Eyre conveys, features ‘frequent change from task to task’ (*JE* 71), each school day lasting from dawn until nine in the evening⁷. After her investigation into the living conditions at early-nineteenth-century charity schools in Yorkshire, England, Juliet Barker can confirm that Jane Eyre’s account of the schedule at Lowood Institution is realistic (143). Her discoveries suggest that the conditions *Jane Eyre* conveys in fact are more favourable in comparison with those of many real life contemporary schools of the same description. Woodhouse Grove in

⁷ On the night Helen dies, Miss Miller is said to call the pupils to go to bed at nine o’clock (cf. *JE* 95).

West Yorkshire, for example, had a far stricter regime under John Fennel's⁸ (1762-1841) headmastership than that depicted in *Jane Eyre*:

the boys rose at six, had a public prayer meeting from six-thirty to seven, then spent an hour in school at reading and exercises. This was followed by a family prayer and breakfast, after which lessons began at nine and continued till twelve, or half past if music lessons were on the child's syllabus. An hour was then given to dinner and exercise, followed from lessons from one-thirty to four-thirty. The next hour and a half was spent in preaching and reading, followed by two hours, from six till eight, of public prayer, ending in supper and a family prayer before bed.
(Barker 144)

Regardless of Lowood's arguable leniency in comparison to authentic English early-nineteenth-century boarding schools, its schedule can still be regarded as extreme. The activities which comprise it, for one, often tire its youngest students to the point of collapse, as we shall see in more detail in the section addressing religious education (2.2).

Lucy's statement in preference of well-distributed lessons and an educational programme 'without *painful* exertion or *useless waste* of spirits' (italics mine) resonates with the contentions of John Locke and the stance of the proponents of the dialogic format of instruction, as well as the rote learning opposition: it too suggests that it would be counter-productive to *impose* education on children. Locke, for example, argues that if 'the things [children] are to learn' are made 'a burthen to them, or imposed on them ... the mind takes an aversion' to study (73.38). It would appear that the long days and rapid oscillation between subjects seen at Lowood *do*, in comparison with the *pensionnat's* programme, uselessly waste the spirits of its pupils. Jane can be seen as driven on in part by the fear of failure that permeates her time at Lowood. She advances before long to the senior class despite her school's oppressive atmosphere. However, she also concedes that the 'fear of failure' of adapting and living up to Lowood's austere regimen 'harrassed [her] worse than the physical hardships of [her] lot, though these were no trifles' (*JE* 71).

Yet, through Lucy's depiction of Rue Fossette's educational programme, Brontë also points to the drawbacks of an excessively *liberal* approach to one's students: while Madame Beck's pupils are never ostensibly oppressed, they are 'not, perhaps, making very rapid progress in anything' (*V* 66). While *Jane Eyre's* depiction of Lowood's regime can argue for the importance of adapting education to the needs and interests of each pupil (cf. chapter one of this thesis), both *Villette* and *The Professor* appear critical of the concept of lowering the

⁸ Who, coincidentally, was Charlotte Brontë's great-uncle, married to her maternal great-aunt, Jane Branwell (*Letters* I: note 4, p. 105).

bar of learning too far. William Crimsworth expresses himself with some derision at the fact that he must ‘smooth ... the path of learning ... to the utmost’ for his pupils at the institutions of Madame Reuter and Monsieur Pelet. For his Continental European students to be able to keep track in class, Crimsworth must allegedly ‘remove every pebble from the track’, and lead the pupil ‘quietly along the prepared road’, bringing the lessons down to ‘the *lowest* level of [his] *dullest* pupil’s capacity’ (*TP* 51, italics mine). Crimsworth’s disdain echoes that expressed by Charlotte Brontë herself in regard to her pupils at Roe Head School. In her writings from her residency at Roe Head, Brontë pours out her frustration at the ‘idleness ... & most asinine stupidity’ of the ‘fatheaded oafs’ in her care (*RHJ* quoted in Barker 295). This frustration had in all likelihood more to do with Brontë at this point being far from Haworth, having to settle for a career as a teacher. While Brontë’s correspondence expresses her own respect for the teaching profession, it also clearly suggests that her own literary aspirations prevented her from truly immersing herself in her pedagogical duties (cf. *Letters* II 226 in particular).

While also acknowledging their ‘singularly stubborn nature’ (*TP* 50), Crimsworth deems his arrangements necessary mostly on account of the intellectual faculties of ‘the youth of Brabant’ being ‘generally weak’ (*TP* 50). Lucy Snowe, however, favours the former explanation and suggests that the administration in fact enables the children’s stubbornness. In scrutinizing the programme at Rue Fossette more fully, Lucy finds that the Labassecouriennes ‘would not, bear ... [s]evere and continuous mental application’, rejecting any ‘heavy demand on the[ir] memory, ... reason, [or] attention ... point-blank’ (*V* 74). The primary reason for this behaviour is not merely an arguable innate stubbornness, but the fact that Madame’s pupils can get away with it. Madame Beck’s priority as the director of Rue Fossette is appeasing her students and their parents. If these parties are not content with the performance of a certain teacher, Madame does not have any qualms about hastily replacing that person (cf. *V* 70). In light of this, Lucy concludes that a teacher ‘who understood her business would take [a rejected task] back at once, without hesitation, contest, or expostulation’ and in fact ‘proceed with even exaggerated care to smoothe [sic] every difficulty, [and] reduce it to the level of [her students’] understandings’ (*V* 74). Hence, if a teacher is to get any work done and retain her position at Madame’s establishment, she has to ‘humour’ her students and bear their insolence ‘very patiently’ (*V* 74). While Lucy regards the ‘very rare flash of raillery’ as necessary for keeping them in check, she also observes that Labassecouriennes would ‘riot [at] three additional lines to a lesson’ (*V* 74). Although Brontë’s depiction of Rue Fossette’s programme makes it clear that nothing can be done to

increase the intensity of its lessons, her authorship – in fact *Villette* itself – seems to argue that a balance should ideally be struck between an oppressive regime and one overly indulgent and devoid of any intellectual challenges if one’s pupils are to benefit from their education – even if such a balance cannot be effected on Continental European soil, from *Villette*’s and *The Professor*’s depiction of Belgian and Labassecourien educational establishments.

2.2 Religious Education: ‘Re-Enacting the Part of Eutycus’

On the topic of education, Charlotte Brontë’s authorship is perhaps mostly associated with anti-Romanism⁹. Yet, her literature also expresses scepticism towards religious education based on Anglican principles. Charlotte Brontë was an Evangelical Christian and the daughter of a perpetual curate, Reverend Patrick Brontë. She eventually married a curate by the name of Arthur Nicholls. Charlotte Brontë and her sisters were moreover in charge of the Sunday school at Haworth, which abutted the parsonage in which they lived. This section does not contend that Brontë was opposed to religious education in its entirety, but, firstly, that she objected to what she considered false Christian practices. I will examine this concept in this section—most notably in relation to Mr Brocklehurst’s take on the Evangelical faith—as well as in that on Roman Catholicism (2.3). Secondly, I will argue that Brontë opposed the disproportionate emphasis charitable schools in particular seemed to place on religious education in their programme, even when its tuition was anchored in her preferred branch of Christendom: Evangelical Protestantism. To demonstrate these views, I will be looking at *Jane Eyre*’s description of Lowood’s religious education and the way in which Brontë describes the pupils’ and staff’s reactions to its proportions and contents.

Before the Education Act of 1870, which made elementary education mandatory on a national basis in Britain (Gargano 22), one of the principal providers of education for the lower classes was ‘The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales’, an Anglican initiative founded in 1699 (Thormählen 12; parliament.uk). One could, of course, learn ‘the three R’s’ (reading, writing and arithmetic) at Sunday school or ‘dame schools’, the latter being run by

⁹ Early criticism of *Villette*, epitomized by Harriet Martineau’s review (2 Feb 1853) in *The Examiner* and that of Anne Mozley (April 1853) in the *Christian Remembrancer*, rebuked the novel for its ‘passionate hate of Romanism’ and narrow-eyed representation of said branch of Christendom. While later criticism has focused on its open and accepting nature, Rosemary Clark-Beattie argues that *Villette* in fact reflects and is an expression of the anti-Catholic sentiments that existed in Britain in Brontë’s day (1986).

old ladies or retired soldiers (parliament.uk). The aim of such schools was to engender enough literacy in working-class children to enable Bible reading and character training through religion. A formal education, however, could only be obtained at an affordable price at ‘charity schools’, such as the fictional Lowood, the real life Woodhouse Grove, or the Clergy Daughters’ School at Cowan Bridge, the latter of which Charlotte Brontë and her sisters but one attended. Most of these institutions were Christian endeavours of or else in close affiliation with the Church of England. As a result, charity schools often placed special emphasis on Bible studies – to the extent that it often served to prevent both the intellectual and moral improvement of its students. Richard Johnson’s study of early-to-mid-nineteenth-century boarding schools (1970) suggests that the function of such schools was to replace the deficient family in the development of morals and discipline of children (Davin 90). Claudia Nelson (2008) regards this mission to be founded on middle- and upper-class discrimination against families of the lower classes. Her chapter on childhood and adolescence in *Victorian Literature and Culture* contends that numerous nineteenth-century commentators ‘painted family life among the lower working classes as damaged and damaging, dominated not by loving domesticity but by brutishness or ignorance’ (71). Nelson relates that most Victorians distinguished between children of the ‘undeserving poor’, such as criminals and drunkards, and those of respectably employed, ‘deserving poor’. Nevertheless, ‘we may nonetheless discern in the push for compulsory schooling a desire to colonize or convert even the latter group’ (73), she argues. Educators increasingly felt the necessity of ‘step[ing] in to care for the “children of the state”’ (Nelson 71). Christian educational establishments considered religious education the best course of action. Quite possibly as a result, a former peer of Brontë’s has remarked that, despite being ‘a firm advocate for making religion the groundwork of all education’, she considered ‘the hours devoted to sermons, lectures [and] scripture lessons’ at Lowood’s assumed original ‘so unreasonably long’ that she felt they were ‘calculated to hinder’ and ‘not promote the salvation of immortal souls’ (quoted in Barker 143, underscore in original). This notion is indeed seconded in *Jane Eyre*’s depiction of Lowood Institution’s educational programme.

The narrator’s description of the average school week at Lowood clearly shows that the institution places a considerable emphasis on Bible studies, which is admittedly not surprising as the institution’s patron, Mr Brocklehurst, is a clergyman. Yet, the extent of Lowood’s stress on Bible studies is somewhat extreme. In spite of this, Juliet Barker insists that Brontë’s representation of Lowood’s emphasis is not exaggerated, but indeed in accordance with the norm at early-nineteenth-century Christian charity schools (143). The

average day at Lowood commences with prayers, the day's collect (the reading of various texts of Scripture), and 'a protracted reading of chapters from the Bible' (*JE* 54). Before the students are allowed to breakfast, however, a 'long grace' is said (*JE* 54, italics mine). On Sundays, the inmates of Lowood attend both the morning and afternoon services at Brocklebridge Church, where Mr Brocklehurst officiates. Sunday evenings are also devoted to Bible studies. Following their return from church, the pupils at Lowood spend their Sunday evenings 'repeating, by heart, the Church Catechism, and the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of St Matthew; and in listening to a long sermon, read by Miss Miller, whose irrepressible yawns arrested her weariness' (*JE* 72). During this interval, the youngest girls usually 'fall down', 'overpowered with sleep', and have to be pulled back up, 'half dead' (*JE* 72). The so-called remedy is then to 'thrust them forward into the centre of the schoolroom and oblige them to stand there till the sermon [is] finished' (*JE* 73). If this tactic fails, they will then have to be 'propped by with the monitors' high stools' (*JE* 73).

In this section, Brontë is able to perfectly accentuate the foolishness and superfluity of Lowood's stress, and by extension that of English Christian boarding schools, on religious education. She manages this, firstly, by way of an excessive use of adjectives. Each instance of graces, readings or sermons is described as either 'protracted' or 'long'. She highlights the duration of these activities further by relating that by the end of the morning session, for example, 'day had fully dawned' (*JE* 54). By consistently emphasizing the duration of each religious item on the agenda rather than their content, Brontë also makes it clear that the pupils of Lowood are not benefiting either intellectually or morally from their religious education. The description of the youngest pupils' collapses as 're-enactments of the part of Eutycus' is, however, Brontë's most efficient tool in establishing the unstimulating nature of Lowood's religious programme and its nimety. In doing so, Brontë is drawing a parallel between the latter and the story of St Paul's young pupil, Eutycus. Eutycus is said to fall 'into a deep sleep' during one of Paul's long sermons, seemingly dead until his tutor revives him. In Brontë's day, this anecdote was popularly used to illustrate the tedium of church attendance and the uninspiring nature of sermons. Jonathan Swift, most notably, used the tale of Eutycus during a sermon of his own to 'disturb some part in [the] audience of half an hour's sleep, for the convenience and exercise whereof this place, at this season of the day, is very much celebrated' ('On Sleeping in Church' 1776 119). Brontë also constructs her narrative so that one of the underteachers, Miss Miller, is unable to stifle her yawns while reading the 'long [evening] sermon' out loud (*JE* 72). By doing so, she indicates that the staff too views the religious lesson content as unstimulating and its proportions as somewhat

unnecessary. By alluding to the tale of Eutycus, Brontë is also able to comment on Lowood's rough and in many respects un-Christian regime. In accordance with the Biblical tale, Brontë has the young pupils be 'taken up half dead' after their collapse (cf. Acts 20). She then deviates from it, however, by writing that they are not revived by bread and conversation, as Eutycus is, but by being 'thrust forward' and made to stand for the remainder of the reading, or be 'propped up with the Monitor's high stools'.

Not only does the religious education offered at Lowood appear to be un conducive to the moral and intellectual improvement of its pupils from Brontë's description. It appears, in some of its guises, to be detrimental to the learning environment and the welfare of the children attending Lowood. We have already seen that Brocklehurst's resolve to secure his pupils' 'spiritual edification' by starving them, or, as he puts it, 'by encouraging them to evince fortitude under ... temporary privation' (*JE* 75; cf. 2.2), in fact causes them to steal from one another. When Jane communicates her views on Mr. Brocklehurst to Rochester, she moreover relates that Lowood's patron not only 'bored [them] with long lectures once a week'; he also made them 'afraid to go to bed' with his 'evening readings from books of his own inditing [sic], about sudden deaths and judgements' (*JE* 145). Jane is given one of these pamphlets by Brocklehurst on their first encounter, the 'Child's Guide', which 'an account of the awfully sudden death of Martha G—' (cf. *JE*). Such publications were not uncommon during the early nineteenth century. Indeed, Reverend Carus Wilson (1791-1859), the patron of Cowan Bridge and assumed original of Brocklehurst, edited a series of edificatory Evangelical magazines, which almost fetishize dying children.

The notion that religious education does little for the moral education of students also resounds in *Villette*. The evening study session (*étude du soir*) at Rue Fossette is a prime example of the hindrance religious education—especially that of a Roman Catholic variety—is presented to pose in the way of a person's moral improvement. The *étude du soir* usually consists of a *lecture pieuse*, a reading of the legends of the catholic saints. Lucy Snowe usually excuses herself from these sessions not only because she conceives the legends unfolded during the readings as 'wholesome mortification[s] of the Intellect', 'useful humiliation[s] of the Reason', and 'no more than monkish extravagances, over which one laugh[s] inwardly' (*V* 106). She feels Prudence to in fact recommend 'a swift clearance of [her] person from the place' when the book of tales is brought out (*V* 106). Consequently, on occasions when she has sat through the reading, her ears have 'burned on each side of [her] head as [she has] listened ... to tales of moral martyrdom inflicted by Rome; [and] the dread boasts of confessors, who had wickedly abused their office, trampling ... high-born ladies ...

to deep degradation, ... [and] making the countesses and princesses the most tormented slaves under the sun' (V 106). She appears to first and foremost object to the content of the *lecture* in that the tales read aloud are 'nightmares of oppression, privation and agony' (V 106), a conception that echoes her overall view of Roman Catholicism as highly oppressive, 'rear[ing] the minds of its members] in slavery' (V 116). However, Lucy's description of the evening reading also suggests that it serves to render its listeners everything but pious and solely devoted to God, despite being referred to as *la lecture pieuse* (the 'pious reading'). Lucy, for one, appears to be shocked to the point of sexual arousal at the legends of the Catholic saints:

'I sat out this 'lecture pieuse' for some nights as well as I could, and as quietly too; only once breaking off the points of my scissors by involuntarily sticking them somewhat deep in the worm-eaten board of the table before me. But, at last, it made me so burning hot, and my temples and my heart and my wrist throbbed so fast, and my sleep afterwards was so broken with excitement that I could sit no longer.'
(V 106)

The way in which she describes the tales of the saints, especially the fact that they seem to boast of 'trampling high-born ladies to deep degradation', is almost pornographic. The excitement engendered in Lucy at hearing tales of oppression can certainly reflect the predilection for being controlled and enjoyment in power struggles that can be seen to permeate Brontë (cf. Kucich; Kvistad). The fact that Lucy feels Prudence to recommend 'a swift clearance of [her] person' (V 106) when the *lecture pieuse* begins, as well as her passionate depiction of the sensations prompted within her by the reading, suggest that she in fact derives erotic pleasure from tales of oppression. Alternatively, her excitement and restlessness can also be expressive of a profound indignation; Lucy can appear to be deeply provoked at what passes for education. Regardless of the precise nature of her reaction to the legends of the saints, however, Lucy concludes that the tales are hardly conducive to the moral education of young women.

The fact that *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* appear critical of educational establishments where religion 'permeate[s] every arrangement' (V 116) does not mean that Charlotte Brontë was personally in favour of an educational programme devoid of religious education. Nevertheless, her works do present the absurdity of certain religious traditions and practices, and of a disproportionate emphasis on religious education—to the extent that they seem to toy with the idea of secular education. However, this notion is not compatible with one significant element in *Jane Eyre*: the narrator's praise of the British peasantry in chapter thirty-four. Here, Jane declares that 'the British peasantry are the best taught, best mannered,

most self-respecting of any in Europe: since those days [at Morton School] I have seen paysannes and Bäuerinnen,' she proclaims. And 'the best of them seemed to me ignorant, coarse, and besotted, compared [to] my Morton girls' (*JE* 449). The British rural population is, in other words, morally superior by far in comparison to that of Continental European countries such as France and Germany. Some have noted that Jane's speech appears somewhat out of place, disrupting the flow of the narrative and seemingly irrelevant to the plot (cf. Thormählen 2008). The resolute tone in which Jane states that the disparity between the British and Continental European rural population 'after all' is a verifiable fact (cf. *JE* 449) is moreover conspicuous—especially considering the time Jane's declaration was written.

In the early-to-mid nineteenth century, the idea of a national and secular scheme of primary education, a system already in place in several Continental European countries, was steadily gaining approval in England. This scheme did not at this point pass, however, partly on account of division on the subject of religious education. The primary source of dispute was whether it should be organized by the Church of England or the Dissenter body (Thormählen 12). In 1846, the current Vicar of Leeds, Walter Farquhar Hook, suggested that the instruction conducted by schoolteachers be secular, while the Anglican clergymen and Dissenter ministers could supply religious education to their respective flocks (cf. *The Means of Rendering More Efficient the Education of the People*). This proposal was supported by Brontë's acquaintance and much-revered educationalist, Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth (Adamson 140), and by her father, Reverend Patrick Brontë (Thormählen 13). Yet, Jane Eyre's speech regarding the inherent superiority of the English peasantry suggests that her creator was of a different opinion.

Marianne Thormählen has noted that Jane's rhetoric in her eulogy of the British peasantry evokes that of a *Leeds Mercury* article (25 July 1846) critical of Hook's scheme (15). Disputes between the Church of England and the Dissenter body were not the only reasons for the delay in educational reform: some were opposed to the concept of implementing a Continental European system, affronted at the supposition that the French in particular were better at educating their poor. Thormählen argues that this stance is immanent in Jane's declaration of British superiority, which suggests that the rural population of Britain, in Brontë's opinion, were faring well if not better as they were, under *pastoral* care (12). As Thormählen too has noted, the placement and overall construction of Jane's statement, as well as the year in which it was written, is such as to indicate that the matter at hand was of particular importance to Brontë herself, and that she in this instance in fact uses

her protagonist to voice her own opinions – or, as Thormählen remarks, ‘[i]t is hard to believe that Charlotte made her heroine-narrator articulate a stance on the most pressing social question of the day which she did not share’ (15).

Villette can, like the economist (and brother of Kay-Shuttleworth) Joseph Kay (1821-1878), be seen to applaud Continental European educational establishments on their emphasis on providing their students with plenty of ‘food for the body’. Yet, the novel also contests their ability to supply ‘intelligence for the soul’ (cf. *The Social Condition and Education of the People in England and Europe*; Colby 1967/1968, 181). Lucy Snowe observes that although never seemingly oppressed, the inmates at Rue Fossette are ‘not, perhaps, making very rapid progress in anything’ (V 66). As Robert A. Colby remarks in his chapter on *Villette* in *Fiction with a Purpose* (1967), ‘we also have Ginevra Fanshawe’s testimony’ as to the inadequacy of Continental European education: ‘Oh, the number of foreign schools I have been at in my life! And yet I am quite an ignoramus’ (Colby 181; V 47). In summation, Brontë’s works appear critical of educational programmes relying too heavily on religious education, especially of what she deemed the wrong branch of Christendom. In spite of this, however, she did not endorse the secularization of education. Her works can, therefore, be said to argue that the ideal educational programme should effect a *balance* between all its subjects.

2.3 Roman Catholicism and Cultivation

Later Brontë studies have problematized *Villette*’s assumed fervent anti-Catholic dogmatism, some suggesting that the novel by contrast ‘ultimately advocates an open and accepting stance towards religious difference’ (Clarke 969). This notion is admittedly reflected in the fact that Charlotte Brontë appears to envision the union between Protestant Lucy and Roman Catholic Monsieur Paul as a possibility and indeed a fulfilment of the narrative. In spite of the novel’s in many ways reconciliatory conclusion, however, *Villette* is riddled with anti-Catholic sentiments. Lucy’s objection to the *lecture pieuse* and the conceptions she expresses in her rant against it can be read as part of a larger criticism on Brontë’s part of Roman Catholicism. It can be seen as an articulation of the view that that particular branch of Christendom encourages the disclamation of any responsibility for one’s own cultivation, and that an educational establishment founded on Roman Catholic principles as such would not be likely to improve its inmates either morally and socially, or intellectually.

The concept of *cultivation* is first and foremost horticultural or agricultural, derivative of the Latin *cultivat* or *cultivare*, and refers to ‘[s]enses relating to growing crops or raising

other living things' (*OED*). In the mid-eighteenth century, however, *cultivation* also came to be understood as 'the action of refining or improving [the mind through] education or training' (*OED*), with the object of rendering a person *cultured* or *refined*. Similarly, the concept *self-cultivation* or *self-culture* refers to 'one's own efforts [to cultivate] ... one's mind, faculties, manners etc.' (*OED*). A person's cultivation can entail his or her *intellectual improvement*, the acquisition of knowledge, as well as one's *cultural, moral* and *social development*. The latter categories encompass a person's virtue and command of societal norms and skill in socializing with one's fellow men and women. The English *cultivation* can, in other words, be understood as the French term *éducation*. As Sue Lonoff explains in her 'Case Study' on Charlotte Brontë's education (2001), there are two words for 'education' in French: *éducation* and *formation* (458). Whereas *formation* refers to intellectual development in a more limited sense, mostly in terms of career development or vocational training, *éducation* may refer to formal schooling, but more precisely comprise other kinds of development, such as a person's emotional, moral, and social education (cf. 'Case Study' 458).

The "self-improvement ethos" was a strong force in nineteenth-century England. The period saw the emergence of 'Mental Improvement Societies' as well as a multitude of literary works aimed at making youth practice and see the necessity of self-culture (Thormählen 3-4). Although they were published in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, works of this description that were popular during the nineteenth century were Isaac Watts' treatise *The Improvement of the Mind* (1741) and Hester Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1773). Watts in particular viewed cultivation as a moral imperative, declaring that it was the 'necessary Duty and the Interest of every Person living to *improve his Understanding, to inform his Judgment, to treasure up useful Knowledge, and to acquire the Skill of good Reasoning*' (3, italics in original). For, by 'acting without Thought or Reason, we dishonour the *God* that made us reasonable Creatures, we often become injurious to our *Neighbours, Kindred or Friends*, and we bring Sin and Misery upon ourselves' (Watts 3, italics in original). The Brontës are known to have owned a copy of Watts' treatise, Anne having been awarded with it and 'Miss Wooler's kind love' for good conduct at Roe Head School (*Letters* I 158). Regardless of Charlotte Brontë's view of Watts' work, however, cultivation and the self-improvement ethos can be said to reverberate through her works. One of Lucy Snowe's primary objections to the Rue Fossette regime is that it does not encourage self-culture.

Lucy expresses her astonishment at its confessional tradition at an early point in her account of life at Madame's *pensionnat*. She relates that the line 'J'ai menti plusieurs fois'—'I have lied many times'—'formed an item of every girl's and woman's monthly confession: the priest heard unshocked, and absolved unreluctant' (*V* 73). Immoral behaviour, such as lying, appears socially acceptable in the culture of Labassecour in that one can easily be absolved by merely confessing to a priest on a regular basis. Any change in one's behaviour, however, the attempt to refrain from committing sins in future, does not appear to be in focus within the Labassecourian culture. Confessions are, as Lucy's account suggests, most often met with indifference rather than reprimands or moral guidance, which can be regarded very much the same as acceptance or enabling: if the concession of a sin is not met with a response deeming it an actual act of misconduct, the confessor is not likely to improve his or her ways. The act of confession can thereby be regarded as redundant, not reformatory. In effect, the Roman Catholic tradition of confession cannot be regarded as conducive to its members' cultivation. From Lucy's depiction of life at Rue Fossette, social acceptance of immoral behaviour appears to permeate the religious education provided at the school in general: the tales read aloud during the *lecture pieuse*, for example, seem to condone and even encourage immoral behaviour, 'boast[ing]', as they are said to do, 'of confessors, who had wickedly abused their office' (*V* 106).

Brontë's foremost grievance with Roman Catholicism and an educational institution based on its principles is the disclamation of responsibility engendered by that particular form of Christendom in relation to one's own cultivation and that of one's charges. Lucy addresses the dangers of leaving one's own moral and spiritual state entirely in the hands of the church, and not actively taking charge of their maintenance and continual development oneself. By not practising self-culture, one is in danger of becoming 'ignorant, unthinking, [and] unquestioning' (*V* 116) and drifting in the wrong direction. Lucy remarks that the devil encourages the same disclamation of responsibility and physical overindulgence with which she associates the Catholic Church:

'Eat, drink, and live!' [the Church] says. 'Look after your bodies; leave your souls to me. I hold their cure – guide their course: I guarantee their final fate.' Lucifer just offers the same terms. 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of it; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine!'" (*V* 116)

If a director or a teacher allows and indeed encourages pupils to distance themselves from their own cultivation, and refrains from taking an active part in their moral and intellectual

guidance herself, that teacher is inadvertently leading them down the wrong path, and neglecting what Lucy conceives to be her duties.

Some have argued that Charlotte Brontë in fact distanced herself from Lucy's anti-Catholic sentiments, anchoring their belief in the fact that Brontë felt accusations of *Villette's* 'passionate hatred of Romanism' (cf. Harriet Martineau in Allott 174) to be unjust and incorrect (*Letters* III 105). In Brontë's defence, the author has her heroine concede that a Roman Catholic has made her reassess her former views on Roman Catholicism: 'I thought Romanism wrong, a great mixed image of gold and clay; but it seemed to me that *this* Romanist [Paul Emanuel] held the purer elements of his creed with an innocency of heart which God must love' (*V* 392). As Robert A. Colby has pointed out, Brontë wrote these words at a time when prominent religious journals were calling out for novels that could assimilate religion 'as a principle of conduct, a moving force influencing external circumstance, not as a theological system or a didactic code' (*Prospective Review*; Colby 1967/1968, 187). Through Lucy's acceptance of Monsieur Paul's faith, Brontë can indeed be seen to heed the call of the *Prospective Review*, rendering at least certain practices of Roman Catholicism more relatable and less threatening for English Protestants.

However, Brontë also applauded George Henry Lewes on his and Thornton Leigh Hunt's periodical's, *The Leader's*, latest address of the current religious condition of Britain (*Letters* II 516). During the two weeks before Brontë wrote to congratulate Lewes, *The Leader* had published two articles (9 and 16 November 1850) in response to the growing public fear of Catholic conversion and the Lord Chancellor of England's declaration that the Papal Bull had officially placed Protestant England under the Roman Catholic Hierarchy (*Leader* II 803), an act known as the 'Papal Aggression'. *The Leader* firstly debunked the Lord Chancellor's claim as 'claptrap' in that the Pope did not have the right or authority to merely place 'Protestant England under a Roman Catholic Hierarchy' as, 'until [Protestants] return into the fold[,] he has no connection with them', and Protestant England does not and need not 'acknowledg[e] his supreme jurisdiction' (*Leader* II 803). The gist of both columns is that while they recognize Catholics' right to their own faith and convictions (cf. *Leader* II 803)—the 'master-principle of Protestantism' after all being 'the liberty of private judgement' (*Leader* I 780)—they deem Catholic dogmas in diametrical opposition to Free Thought (cf. *Leader* I 780). In *The Leader's* incessant 'combat for *absolute* freedom of opinion', it finds itself 'opposed to all that is vital in the organization of Rome' (*Leader* II 802). *Villette* can, on the one hand, be regarded as a dialectical exploration of Christendom and seen to engage with the religious discourse of Brontë's day, as Lisa Wang has suggested

(342). In accordance with this idea, the novel addresses both sides of the spectrum, the views of the ardent Protestant Lucy Snowe *and* her would-be Catholic convert, Monsieur Paul. However, Brontë's articulated support of *The Leader's* stance suggests that she, like Lucy, views Roman Catholicism as essentially intellectually limiting and oppressive. In a section eventually omitted from the Rylands MS edition of Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), its author remarked that she believed Brontë's 'strong feelings against the Roman Catholic religion' to, in part, arise from 'the fact that she was aware of her own susceptibility to some of the influences employed by its professors, but did not consider that they were such as ought to prevail against the exercise of free will and reason as the highest points that can concern a human being' (Easson 282).

The view of Roman Catholic doctrines as oppressive and the notion that they can prevent a child from realizing her intellectual potential, are also present and perhaps more directly addressed in *The Professor*. Mademoiselle Henri, Crimsworth's half-English, Protestant wife-to-be, is not the only promising pupil in his class. In his first lesson at Mademoiselle Reuter's boarding school, he recognizes a girl named Sylvie as 'the most attentive in the room'. When he first starts tutoring girls, Sylvie's achievements are the only ones with which he is content (cf. *TP* 66). She appears the antithesis of most of her peers in that she is 'gentle in manners, intelligent in mind' and 'even sincere, as far as her religion would permit her' (*TP* 79). Yet, her religious convictions appear to form a barrier between her and her tutor, preventing Crimsworth from drawing her out and challenging her intellectually. He observes that, 'destined as she [is] for the cloister, her whole soul [seems] warped to a conventual bias' (*TP* 79). Having 'prepared herself for her future course of life', she appears to have 'giv[en] up her independence of thought and action', placing it 'into the hands of some despotic confessor' (*TP* 79). Crimsworth notices that, while bright and diligent, Sylvie 'permit[s] herself no original opinion' and seems 'guided by another ... in everything' (*TP* 79).

With a pale, passive, automaton air, she went about all day long doing what she was bid – never what she liked, or what, from innate conviction, she thought it right to do. The poor little *religieuse* had been early taught to make the dictates of her own reason and conscience quite subordinate to the will of her spiritual director. She was the model pupil in Mdlle. Reuter's establishment – pale, blighted image, where life lingered feebly, but whence the soul had been conjured by Romish wizard-craft.
(*TP* 79)

Here, the Catholic faith, or at least the spiritual authorities in Brussels (in which the novel is set) come across as highly oppressive. The Catholic Church appears to force a set of principles on its members, but does not seek to cultivate a critical awareness within them. Such was the popular conception of Roman Catholicism in mid-nineteenth-century Protestant England.

From Crimsworth's description, Sylvie's spiritual advisors appear to not only prevent her from thinking freely; they also seem to stifle her *joie-de-vivre*. In light of Crimsworth's account, Sylvie's existence can be compared to that of a zombie, or a victim of *obeah*. *Obeah* or *obia* can be described (albeit from a Eurocentric perspective) as 'sorcery, witchcraft, or folk medicine as practised in the English-speaking areas of the Caribbean' (*OED*). In the Western world, *obeah* is highly associated with zombification. One of the many interpretations of zombification, which differs from the prevalent Western conception, but can be seen as applicable to Sylvie's situation, is zombification as 'the magical process by which the sorcerer seizes the victim's *ti bon ange*—the component of the soul where personality, character, and volition reside—leaving behind an empty vessel subject to the commands of the bokor', the *obeah* priest (Paravisini-Gebert 38).

Admittedly, Brontë does not use the words *obeah* or *zombification* either in *The Professor* or in any of her other works. In light of this, there is little to suggest that these concepts were known to her. However, the European gothic tradition had especially since the late eighteenth century looked to its colonies for new horrors to employ (Munroe 110). According to April Munroe, 'Victorian readers of *Jane Eyre* would have instantly recognized Brontë's characterization of the Creole madwoman, Bertha, a subtext of a cultural hybridity and racial indeterminacy consonant with Gothic representation of monstrosity' (110). The fact that *Jane Eyre*, written only briefly after *The Professor*, features the Creole Bertha Mason from the West Indies, confirms that that particular area was of interest to Brontë. It moreover suggests that it may also have been so when she wrote *The Professor*. Her familiarity and fascination with the West Indies would furthermore suggest that its cultural practices were known to her. Although she uses the word *witchcraft* rather than *obeah* or *zombification* in her description of the Roman Catholic priests' influence on Sylvie, her rhetoric is otherwise highly reminiscent of zombification and the practice of soul-sucking: Crimsworth describes Sylvie as characterized by an 'automaton air' and 'a corpse-like lack of animation', 'all day long doing what she was bid' (*TP* 94). He views her as a 'pale, blighted image, where life lingered feebly, but whence the soul had been conjured' (*TP* 94). *Villette* admittedly paints a far more favourable image of the Roman Catholic priest in the character

Père Silas. In doing so, Brontë in fact diverges from the popular Victorian depiction of Catholic priests as vampires or villains (Clark-Beattie 821; Wolffe). William Crimsworth, however, appears to encourage the “voodoo” comparison through his description of the influence of Roman Catholic priests as ‘Roman wizard-craft’. By describing Roman Catholicism in terms evocative of occult practices in the West Indian colonies in the latter novel, Brontë is tying these cultures together, thus reinforcing the prevalent conception amongst mid-nineteenth-century English Protestants of Roman Catholicism as something foreign, detrimental and ominous.

Sylvie’s intellectual growth and any friendship between her and her tutor also appear to be hindered by her spiritual advisors. When Crimsworth tries to encourage and commend Sylvie, she shrinks away from him (*TP* 95). The fact that he is a man, as well as ‘a heretic’ by being a Protestant, serves to ‘[divide] her mind from [his]’, as though by ‘a fourfold wall of separation’ (*TP* 95). As a result, he keeps Sylvie at arm’s-length for knowing that ‘every friendly word, every kindly action, would be reported by her to her confessor, and by him misinterpreted and poisoned’ (*TP* 94). Lucy of *Villette* is equally stifled in her attempt to guide her pupils morally. When she in ‘an unguarded moment, chance[s] to say that, of the two errors, [she] considere[s] falsehood worse than an occasional lapse in church-attendance’, it is as if ‘an unseen, an indefinite, a nameless something – [steals] between’ Lucy and her students (*V* 75). While bouquets continue to be offered Lucy, conversation with pupils in between lessons ‘henceforth be[comes] impracticable’ (*V* 75). As her ‘poor pupils are tutored to report in Catholic ears whatever the Protestant teacher [has said]’, especially if she challenges the doctrines and established truths of their church, Lucy suggests that the change in her pupils’ conduct is a direct consequence of an administrative warning (*V* 75).

While *Villette* in many ways can be seen to depart from popular portrayals of Roman Catholicism and its priests during her lifetime, it is not entirely devoid of anti-Romanism. *The Professor* can be seen to vilify Catholic spiritual leaders. In spite of this, the Continental European novels’ arguable criticism of the Roman Catholic faith is essentially a critique of an educational establishment forcing a set of principles upon its pupils and not making any room for critical thinking. Despite the fact that Madame Beck’s establishment appears characterized by ‘a liberty of amusement’, it appears in dire need of liberty of thought. Brontë’s depiction of educational establishments based on Roman Catholic principles, therefore, underlines the importance of a school encouraging critical awareness, and originality of thought.

2.4 Reading for Its Own Sake

A measure Brontë presents as vital to children's cultivation, as well as for ensuring their continued education, is reading. As reading can be regarded as a valuable means of attaining new knowledge, its positive and educational force in Brontë could have been discussed in the chapter on ideal modes of instruction. However, by presenting literature as something more than a pastime activity, and in fact as something reformatory and an integral part of a person's education, Brontë is going against the established view in her day of literature's place in education: she is arguing that educational programmes should actively include reading. As such, an exploration of Brontë's representation of reading also ties together the exploration of how her novels comment on how the ideal school should be organized and how the administration should shape its educational programme.

The potential reasons for British boarding schools throughout the nineteenth century's failure or unwillingness to feature reading in the classroom were manifold. Money could be saved in prioritizing 'Q and A' or rote learning books: one or two copies would be enough to educate an entire school. There also existed a worry that the increase of literacy amongst the British populace, especially amongst 'the lower orders', would produce a 'restless and fevering temper' amongst them and in turn engender social upheaval (cf. 'The Fall' 65). Elizabeth Sandford advocated *active* study and the act of 'furnish[ing] the mind with matter to reflect on', and 'habituat[ing] it to think' (*Female Improvement* 183). Yet, she also believed the extension of literacy to have contributed to the socio-political unrest of the early nineteenth century, eliciting mutinous behaviour reminiscent of 'the feverish desire for change which sprung up with the French Revolution', such as the Chartist and Luddite movements ('The Fall' 65). By this logic, charitable institutions should not be too eager to promote reading in that it could engender critical thinking and by extension challenge the status quo.

Perhaps more applicable to female education, however, was the fact that many English nineteenth-century commentators expressed their worry that so-called '*fictitious stories*' would 'inflame the passions of youth' and 'corrupt' the young reader by giving her the 'expectation of extraordinary adventures ... and the admiration of extravagant passions and absurd conduct' ('On Politeness' 115). Considering the fact that many viewed the 'chief purpose of education' to be to 'moderate and restrain' the passions of youth (cf. 'On Politeness' 115), literature should have no place in women's education. Or, as John Ruskin so famously declares, a woman's 'range of literature' should only be such as is 'calculated to add the qualities of patience and seriousness to her natural poignancy of thought and

quickness of wit; and also to keep her in a lofty and pure element of thought' (100-101). The nineteenth century as a whole experienced widespread literary censorship (cf. 'Reading Practices'). While Charlotte Brontë and her siblings appeared exempt from such restrictions at home, her father still declared the 'sensual novel' to be degenerating in its effect in that it imparted the 'art of self-tormenting' (*The Cottage in the Wood* 2). The 'sensual novelist and his admirer' in his opinion made 'the real world, [with] which they must ... necessarily [be] ... conversant, gloomy and insupportable'. This was the product of immersing oneself in 'an imaginary world, which [one] can never inhabit', in the reverend's view (*The Cottage in the Wood* 2). According to the established psychological paradigm of the early to mid-nineteenth century, extensive fiction reading was moreover inextricably linked with states of 'imaginative withdrawal', such as daydreaming or trances. Reading was thought indicative of moral weakness in that 'states of imaginative withdrawal' interfered with or even prevented proper conduct (Tressler 3). In light of this, the promotion of reading would not be compatible with a school whose aim it was, as in the case of Lowood, to tend to 'the spiritual edification of [its] pupils' (*JE* 75)—or, as for Cowan Bridge, whose 'great Object in view will be [the pupil's] intellectual and religious Improvement; and to give that plain and useful Education, which may best fit them to return with Respectability and Advantage to their own Homes' (Barker 137).

The view that literature can impassion the minds of youth, is somewhat present in Brontë. As discussed in section 2.3, *Villette* can be seen to explore the sexual dimension of being read to. Lucy's chief objection to the legends of the catholic saints, however, and the main reason for the shock and agitation they evoke, is that they are 'nightmares of oppression, privation and agony' (*V* 106). The *lecture pieuse* scene is, in other words, first and foremost a part of the novel's critique of Roman Catholicism and the fact that its literature seems to preach oppression and boast of figures who 'wickedly [abuse] their office' (cf. *V* 106). Brontë's depiction of the evening readings is not necessarily a display of the harmfully impassioning effect of literature itself.

Yet, the view that extensive reading can result in abstractedness, can admittedly be said to resound in the account of Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre*. Helen is seen to read copiously, allegedly prioritizing novels over schoolwork. She is moreover prone to 'fall into a sort of dream' during lessons (*JE* 67). It would not be preposterous, therefore, to suggest that there might be a sense of causality between reading and reverie in her case. It would, however, be somewhat farfetched to suggest that Brontë's account of Helen is meant to second the views of the psychological establishment. Brontë was herself an avid reader and indulged in

daydreams. She is not on record as a believer in the degenerating effect of either. Nevertheless, her father did express his worry that reading of sensational novels could result in self-tormenting and disconnectedness with the world. In line with this view, Charlotte Brontë's journal entries during her time at Roe Head School do convey the fact that she occasionally experienced her reveries as somewhat oppressive. On one occasion, she writes that she has 'had enough of morbidly vivid realizations', conceding that 'every advantage has its disadvantage' (11 Aug-14 Oct 1836; Barker 297). However, this account is one mere drop in a sea of homage to daydreaming: in the entry entitled 'My compliments to the weather', for example, she declares that,

How few would believe that from sources purely imaginary [sic] such happiness could be derived – Pen cannot pourtray [sic] the deep Interest of the scenes, of the continued trains of events, I have witnessed in that little room with the low narrow bed & bare [white-washed] walls ... What a treasure is thought! What a privilege is reverie – I am thankful that I have the power of solacing myself with the dream of creations whose reality I shall never behold – May I never lose that power[,] may I never feel it growing weaker – If I should[,] how little pleasure will life afford me – its lapses of shade are so wide [and] so gloomy[.] Its gleams of sunshine so limited & dim (March 1837; Barker 275).

Almost in retort to her father's words of caution in relation to immersing oneself in 'an imaginary world, which [one] can never inhabit' (cf. *The Cottage in the Wood* 2), Charlotte Brontë's journal entries express her own thankfulness for having 'the power of solacing myself with the dream of creations whose reality I shall never behold' (*RHJ* March 1837; Barker 275).

Admittedly, the Roe Head Journal should first and foremost be considered a dramatized representation rather than an accurate account of Charlotte Brontë's time at Roe Head School. As Juliet Barker stresses in a note to *The Brontës*, the term 'journal' is misleading, firstly, in that it implies a consistent set of dates: many of Brontë's entries, however, appear to have been updated and written subsequent to the events unfolded (note 100 to ch. 9, 1041). The entry entitled 'All this day I have been in a dream' was in fact written over the span of two months, between 11 August and 14 October 1836. It would also be misleading to regard the Roe Head Journal as a journal in that it, like much of her *Juvenilia*, intertwines autobiographical passages and real life events with writings about her Anglian universe (Barker 1041). In 'We wove a web in childhood' (19 December 1835), Brontë effects a seamless transition between 'distinctly [seeing] The Duke of Zamorna ... sitting at the schoolroom at Roe Head' and the relation of him 'leaning against that obelisk

with the mute marble Victory above him, the fern waving at his feet[,] his black horse turned loose[,] grazing among the heather[,] the moonlight so mild & so exquisitely tranquil sleeping upon that vast & vacant road & the African sky quivering & shaking with stars expanded above all' (quoted in Barker 276-277). The entry here cited oscillates between descriptions of Roe Head, Africa, and quite possibly Haworth, Yorkshire, from the mention of heather. While Brontë's journal should not necessarily be regarded as a window into her consciousness, it does supply us with a focus or a point of departure. The journal suggests that reveries were a great consolation to her during her time at Roe Head. In short, there is a correlation between fictional worlds and reveries in Brontë's mind, but neither is presented as unequivocally detrimental.

It should moreover be noted that the content of Helen Burns' daydreams suggests that her distractedness not only arises from a discontent with her present situation; they also appear the result of being away from home. Helen is often seen reading, but her thoughts often wander to her childhood home: 'Sometimes I think I am in Northumberland, and that the noises I hear round me are the bubbling of a little brook which runs through Deepden, near our house' (*JE* 67-68). Her immersion in books is not the only thing that triggers her trances. Yet, the two activities can be regarded as linked here too. Both her novel reading and reveries can be regarded as means by which one can create a sense of domesticity in an otherwise bleak and strictly institutional setting. Her daydreams transport her to her family home, and her reading can equally be seen as an escapism and a means of recreating memories from home. Just as Helen appears to turn her sight inwards and 'into her heart' during her trances, seemingly 'looking at what she can remember' (cf. *JE* 62), reading by and kneeling before 'the dim glare of the embers' (*JE* 66) can be regarded as a means of 'transform[ing] the schoolroom's marginal spaces into [places] of domestic comfort', as Elizabeth Gargano formulates it (71). Helen's reveries are not the *result* of extensive reading, but rather, alike her reading, an expression of home-sickness and a means of re-creating a sense of home within her otherwise oppressive and un-homely environs.

Just as her reading cannot be regarded as morally degenerating, Helen's absent-mindedness is not presented as symptomatic of any moral irregularity or want on her part. Despite her own claim to deserve Miss Scatcherd's reprimands, Helen cannot be defined as morally deficient. She does admittedly not change her ways despite the staff's many attempts at improving her, but continues to forget rules and be unable to keep her things in order (*JE* 67). In spite of this, Helen can be seen as an embodiment of the teachings of the New Testament. She bears her punishments patiently and forgives her tormenter, encouraging Jane

not to foster malignity but return good for evil (*JE* 66). The book Jane first encounters Helen reading, Samuel Johnson's *The History of Rasselas Prince of Abbyssinia* (1759), is moreover a didactic fable on the theme of vanity, which concludes that 'Human life is every where a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed' (31). These words are in fact reminiscent of Helen's own words of wisdom to Jane when the former has finished *Rasselas*, that she believes it to be one's 'duty to bear ... what it is your fate to be required to bear' (*JE* 66). Life is in other words a struggle for everyone alike, and 'it is weak and silly' to refuse to accept one's lot in life (cf. *JE* 66). *Rasselas'* message and Helen's apparent emulation of its content, suggest that the books she reads are not sources of immorality, but rather of information and reformation.

Yet, at the time in which *Jane Eyre* was written, silent reading was uncommon (Thormählen 148). Lessons would occasionally feature readings, yet these sessions would be conducted aloud and in plenum. Outside of lessons, reading was foremost considered a social activity (Thormählen 148; Cohen 451). While the practice of silently perusing a book was becoming ever-increasingly socially accepted during the early nineteenth century (*Woman Reader* 100-102), it was not as socially acceptable to actively seek the company of a book over human companionship when the latter could be obtained. Priscilla Wakefield, for example, considered books 'the best substitutes for the charms of society: they amuse the imagination, and enrich the mind with knowledge, when company cannot be collected' (120). The act of retiring into quiet reading in the presence of others, however, could in fact not only be construed as anti-social. It could be taken as a complete rejection of the society in which one currently resided, and as such regarded as improper behaviour. It is therefore highly controversial that Helen is quietly immersed in *Rasselas* and in fact asks for Jane to postpone their conversation until the former has read through the final pages of the novel in question (cf. *JE* 66).

Yet, it is not presented as such. Helen's silent absorption in *Rasselas* is admittedly presented as unusual. Her behaviour during the play hour clearly sets her apart from the rest of Lowood's inmates, who are presently engaged in 'licensed uproar', '[j]umping over forms, and creeping under tables' (*JE* 65). Jane is moreover 'glad' when Helen is finished reading in that the former can then 'perhaps get her to talk' (*JE* 66). Nevertheless, the fact that Helen is often 'absorbed, silent, abstracted from all round her by the companionship of a book' (*JE* 66) gives her a serious air and the appearance of being devoted to study even though novel reading is, if anything, a pastime activity at Lowood—and considering the fact that Helen's present reading is a *neglect* of study (cf. *JE* 67). Yet, adult Jane puts Helen's choice of books,

of a 'serious [and] substantial' variety, in clear opposition to her own former 'frivolous and childish' preferences (*JE* 59). Helen's ability to read and construe pages from Virgil and the fact that she has read a wide range of books, even some in French, give the reader the impression that Helen is not only vastly intelligent and well-read, but uncommonly so for her age and gender. The fact that Helen is 'bent over [a] book, on the perusal of which she seem[s] intent' the first time Jane sees her, is furthermore what draws Jane to Helen. It impresses and emboldens Jane to speak to her. She 'hardly know[s] where [she finds] the hardihood ... to open a conversation with a stranger' as the step is 'contrary to [her] nature and habits'. Yet, as Jane 'too, like[s] reading', Helen's current occupation touches 'a chord of sympathy' in Jane (*JE* 59). While Helen's behaviour may appear anti-social, therefore, shutting the rest of Lowood out during her reading sessions, her clearly expressed fondness for books lays the foundation for new friendships and stimulating conversations. Reading, while separate from formal study, is also presented as beneficial to a child's moral and intellectual development.

Similarly, *Shirley* also advocates the reformatory powers of literature. Despite her many failings as a pedagogue, Hortense Moore encourages her pupil to read in that she considers it a useful 'practice in pronunciation' (*S* 67). One could, of course, argue that Hortense's opinions on education and reading should not be construed as in any way reflective of those of Charlotte Brontë herself: Hortense is presented in an unflattering way throughout the novel, her 'method' constantly mocked and her intellect depicted as inferior to her pupil's. It is not likely, therefore, that Brontë shared Hortense's views on education. Yet, William Crimsworth of *The Professor* uses reading in the first class he conducts in Brussels, his pupils reading a chapter from *The Vicar of Wakefield* as a means of displaying their grasp of the English language (cf. *TP* 48). The man who gives him his post, Monsieur Pelet, also voices his belief in the value of reading, declaring it to be one of 'the easiest forms of communicating instruction in a foreign language' (*TP* 63). Hortense's brother, Louis, who is presented in a more favourable light than his sister, employs some of the same methods in his programme. In a re-enactment of their former lessons, Louis asks Shirley Keeldar to read a passage in French to demonstrate her present command of the language. Whereas Hortense is said to pride herself on 'entertaining a decided preference for *dry* studies', and assigning her pupil 'interminable' grammar exercises, which are 'by no means a source of particular pleasure to Caroline' (*S* 77), Louis' lesson does not have any such narrative commentary. Not only does the narrator refrain from undermining and satirizing his mode of instruction, the narrator does not comment on his lesson content at all. One could, of course, argue that the

reason for the lack of narrative annotations in the section addressing Louis' past tutelage of Shirley is that the present focus is not on the value of the education he provides, or his worth as an educator. It is rather on the past and present dynamic and power relation between former pupil and master. Nevertheless, the absence of any articulated narrative evaluation of Louis' pedagogical abilities is worth noting. It is both in his favour and that of the methods he employs—such as the choice to assign his pupil books to read for her improvement, especially as regards her pronunciation. It is also worth noting that while the fact that the narrator constantly derides Hortense's person and methods, her belief in the educational value of reading is not questioned.

Perhaps the most noteworthy representation of the educational value of literature within this novel, however, is the scene unfurled in the chapter entitled 'Coriolanus' (ch. 6). Here, Caroline Helstone entreats her cousin Robert to read from Shakespeare's tragedy of the same name. The object of this exercise is, according to Caroline, for Robert to 'take some of [Shakespeare's] soul into his', and to 'give [him] new sensations'. She wishes him to 'feel [his] life strongly, not only [his] virtues, but [his] vicious, perverse points' as well (S 90). Caroline's desire for Robert to take Shakespeare's soul into himself evokes the concept of emulation. Under the care of Constantin Héger, Brontë was herself taught to emulate the works of great poets and authors, taking care to study their form and drawing on what was good about them ('Belgian Essays' 393). In this instance, Caroline's reason for getting Robert to read *Coriolanus* does not seem to be to study its form for the sake of improving his own creative skills. Yet, Brontë's arguable reference to emulation studies is still a point of interest: it can be read as a tribute to the education she received at the hands of Héger, the only true literature master she ever had (cf. *Letters* I 368).

Nevertheless, the purpose of the reading scene above appears to be of a moral nature. Caroline's speech suggests that she sees and appreciates the instructive and reformatory potential of literature. She appears to recognize its didactic power and its ability to 'waken [a person's] nature' (S 90) and make a person 'discover by the feelings the reading [gives] you ... how [morally] low and high you are' (S 90). Through Caroline, Charlotte Brontë echoes the view of eighteenth-century scientist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (albeit phrasing it somewhat more eloquently) that, 'A book is a mirror: if an ape looks into it, an apostle is unlikely to look out' (69). Yet, Brontë appears to go beyond Lichtenberg by suggesting that reading experiences can open you up to others as well. Similarly, Caroline's suspicions are confirmed during the reading as she observes that Robert appears to sympathize with the 'proud patrician' Coriolanus, who, like Robert himself, 'does not sympathize with his

famished fellow-men, [but] insults them' (S 91-92). Robert can furthermore be seen to attain some wisdom from the passages he reads. After the reading, Robert can be seen to—if only temporarily—question his own resolutions in relation to his former employees and to Caroline. When he returns from walking her home, Robert is 'grave, almost morose', and stands 'musing in the watering moonlight all alone, the hushed, dark mill before him', before exclaiming 'This won't do! There's weakness—there's downright ruin in all this' (S 97). This exclamation can, on the one hand, refer to his resolve never to marry solely for love, and to hold Caroline at arm's length. On the other, it can refer to his treatment of the men he has laid off, and who resent him for depriving them of their livelihood. His evening with Caroline can, in other words, be seen to inspire Robert to stray from his plans to modernize the mill and to reassess his fierce approach to 'the mob'. According to Linda Hunt, the moon is a symbol of 'the feminine principle' as determined by Greek mythology and throughout *Shirley* (58)¹⁰. In light of this, Robert's standing 'in the watering moonlight' during his musings can be seen to reflect the fact that Caroline's influence has challenged his views and actions and shed a new light on them.

Indeed, Marianne Thormählen has pointed out that that particular evening, despite failing to deter Robert instantly from what he later calls his 'poor ambition' and 'sordid schemes' (S 649), all the same 'marks a station in Robert Gerard Moore's *éducation sentimentale*' and brings him one step closer to his final acceptance of and succumbence to his feelings for Caroline (Thormählen 142). After Robert's reading of *Coriolanus*, Caroline aids him with the 'comical' parts of the play before indulging him in reciting one of her new favourites, André-Marie Chénier's poem 'Ode la Jeune Captive'. Robert does appear very much in the process of falling in love with her during her performance, noticing that:

Her cheek had a colour, her eyes a light, her countenance an expression this evening which would have made even plain features striking; but there was not the grievous defect of plainness to pardon in her case. The sunshine was not shed on rough barrenness; it fell on soft bloom. Each lineament was turned with grace; the whole aspect was pleasing. At the present moment—animated, interested, touched—she might be called beautiful. Such a face was calculated to awaken not only the calm sentiment of esteem, the distant one of

¹⁰ Her essay on 'Female Friendship in *Shirley* and *Villette*' notes that 'When Shirley angrily denounces Robert for coming between Caroline and herself, she describes that intrusion as "a perpetually recurring eclipse of our friendship. Again and again he crosses and obscures the disk I was always to see clear' (58). And 'Again, in the scene where Mrs. Pryor tells Caroline she is the mother who have her up as a baby (a reunion which puts Caroline on the road to recovery from her decline), there are numerous references to the moon "lately risen" and "shining clear."' (58-59).

admiration, but some feeling more tender, genial, intimate—friendship, perhaps, affection, interest. (S 95)

He appears to notice her for what seems to be the first time, taking in not only her ‘grace’, ‘soft bloom’ and ‘pleasing aspect’; the animation she exhibits during her reading of the comical parts of *Coriolanus* and her favourite poem is most importantly such as to stir ‘more tender and intimate’ feelings in Robert. Just as some of his less amiable aspects are made apparent to Caroline during his reading, her reading can be said to open her true nature up to Robert. His decision later that evening not to be tempted by and give in to ‘ruin[ous] ... weakness’ can accordingly refer to his present resolution not to marry for love alone.

The double reading can also be said to form a post in his moral education, more precisely his journey towards treating his fellow men and women with due respect, even those who are below him in social standing. He does consider his moment of potential doubt (for he does not articulate the content of his meditation, only his final resolve to turn from weakness) one of ‘frenzy’ and ‘quite temporary’, one that ‘will be gone tomorrow’. In spite of this, Robert eventually bows to Caroline’s wisdom. In the *Coriolanus* chapter, Caroline urges Robert ‘not [to] be proud to[wards his] workpeople’: ‘you must not neglect chances of soothing them; and you must not be of an inflexible nature, uttering a request as austere as if it were a command’, she advises him (S 93). She is ‘sure that kindness is more likely to win their regard than pride’, and that ‘treat[ing] them haughtily’ and ‘includ[ing] them under the general and insulting name of ‘the mob’’ will only incur their wrath, and may well result in his downfall (S 94). These observations are revealed to be accurate, and Robert’s failure or refusal to heed her warning is indicative of his own lack of self-knowledge and his inability to understand and sympathize with others. In *Shirley*’s final chapter, however, Robert declares that he ‘*shall do good*’ with the money he earns - that Caroline ‘shall tell [him] how’ (S 651, italics in original). He claims to have ‘seen the necessity of doing good’ and ‘learned the downright folly of being selfish’ (S 651).

It should not be denied that Shirley Keeldar’s refusal of Robert is of some import to his eventual change of heart. When he proposes marriage, Shirley accuses him of speaking ‘like a brigand who demand[s her] purse, rather than a lover who ask[s] for [her] heart’ (S 539). The blow her rejection and manner of rejecting him deals to his pride is of importance to Robert’s sentimental and moral education. Her words can be seen to make him reconsider and recoil from his former pragmatic approach to marriage, thus bringing him one step closer to Caroline. They also cause him to go on a brief sabbatical, seeing up close the suffering of

others. As a result, he re-evaluates his contempt for ‘the mob’ and acknowledges the idiocy of not being able to see the individual. However, Shirley’s positive influence on Robert should diminish the value and importance of Caroline’s advice to him: Caroline’s decision to introduce Robert to Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, in addition to their ensuing conversation, can be regarded as a vital factor for Robert’s eventual reformation.

Charlotte Brontë’s novels can be seen to present the educational value of literature. However, despite the fact that literary works are used as means of improving pupils’ pronunciation in foreign languages, study and reading are otherwise presented as separate in her works. Although intended by Caroline as instructive, the reading of *Coriolanus* is strictly speaking that evening’s preferred choice of entertainment (cf. S 89-90). While Helen’s reading of *Rasselas* too can be seen as educational, it is not a part of the formal lessons at Lowood. Such was, as we have seen, the educational state in England in Charlotte Brontë’s day: reading, apart from the chanting of ‘Q and A’ books or listening to Bible readings, was not a normal feature in lessons offered by English, early-nineteenth-century boarding schools.

There are numerous accounts of the contents of the Brontë parsonage library, of Charlotte’s ability to recite and discuss poetry at an early age (cf. Mary Taylor quoted in *The Life* 89), as well as the many literary allusions that pervade not only the Brontë children’s later works and correspondence, but their Juvenilia as well. From this we may draw the conclusion that the Brontës were in many ways exempt from the literary censorship that affected so many during the nineteenth century (cf. ‘Reading Practices’). However, Brontë’s letters suggest that while deeming novel reading an important character-improving activity, she and her family did not regard it as ‘study’ per se. For example, in a letter to William Smith Williams (Jan 1849) following the death of Emily Brontë, Charlotte mentions that her remaining sister ‘Anne cannot study now[;] she can scarcely read’ (*Letters* II 167). This passage, as Marianne Thormählen too remarks, suggests that Charlotte Brontë regarded ‘study’ as separate from ‘reading’, and that she distinguished between reading for intellectual attainment and reading for pleasure.

According to Thormählen, as children of the clergy, the Brontës were required to improve their minds by constant independent study (24). Yet, for reading to be considered ‘study’ and be of educational value, it had to entail a ‘cerebral effort’ (Thormählen 138). Similarly, formal study at Lowood, at Rue Fossette, as well as Charlotte Brontë’s alma maters, comprised the subjects of geography, history, English, French, arithmetic and music. However, Brontë herself is known to have devoted her breaks at Roe Head to additional study, which consisted of attempting to attain ‘every scrap of information [possible]

concerning painting, sculpture, poetry, music, etc., as if it were gold' (Mary Taylor quoted in Barker 204). Charlotte Brontë in other words considered activities popularly construed as solely recreational, as valuable to her education. Right enough, Mary Taylor recounts that Brontë 'always said there was enough of hard practicality and *useful* knowledge forced upon [them] by necessity, and that the thing most needed was to soften and refine [their] minds' (quoted in Barker 204, italics in original). In summary, accounts of Charlotte Brontë's life and her works present the reading of novels or poetry as intellectually stimulating or refining. As such, Brontë appears to argue that literature constitutes an integral part of a person's education and cultivation, and that it should be included and even promoted in any educational programme that seeks to cultivate and improve its pupils.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

The representation of the ideal school in Charlotte Brontë's novels is very much concerned with fighting privation and oppression, as well as with promoting self-culture. An educational establishment should, in Brontë's view, be a place of learning as well as one of safety, comfort and personal freedom. Her works, *Villette* in particular, also illustrate the importance of coupling generosity and provisions for plenty of sleep, enjoyment, and plenitude of food, with moral guidance. The staff have to assume active roles in the cultivation of pupils for the latter to benefit from their education, improving intellectually *and* becoming 'honest and modest' (cf. *V* 65). As underlined by Jane Eyre in relation to post-reform Lowood, a school administration should ideally 'combine reason with strictness, comfort with economy,' and 'compassion with uprightness' (*JE* 100).

An integral part of an academic education is moreover the engendering and promotion of critical thinking. Brontë's authorship argues that literature is an effective source of enlightenment, both as regards a person's intellectual improvement *and* their attainment of self-knowledge. As articulated by Caroline Helstone, a good novel can both give 'you new sensations' and bring you face to face with 'your virtues, [as well as] your vicious, perverse points' (*S* 90). Such an encounter will hopefully change your ways for the better. As seen in Robert Moore's case, however, you might need the addition of a tutor, someone to guide you in the right direction. The next and final chapter will explore what constitutes the ideal tutor in Charlotte Brontë's works.

3 The Ideal Pedagogue

So far, this thesis has presented how Charlotte Brontë's works sketch the ideal educational modes of instruction and illustrate how to structure an educational establishment. This, the third and final chapter, will explore what she envisages and represents as the ideal pedagogue in her novels. This topic is perhaps that most covered by Brontë studies out of those explored in this thesis. Writers on education in Brontë, such as Marianne Thormählen, Elizabeth Gargano, and Sue Lonoff, have addressed and evaluated the ideal of *Jane Eyre*'s Miss Temple. There is also general consensus among critics that Brontë's Continental European novels are, at least in part, literary endeavours to eternalize her former professor and 'only master', Constantin Héger, and the influence he had on her writing and conceptions of romance and sexuality (cf. *Letters* I 368; Barker ch. 15; 'Case Study'; Colby 1967/1968).

In light of the abundance of studies into Brontë's engagement with the concept of the ideal tutor, this topic could have been addressed in the first chapter, the thesis working its way towards less familiar turf. Instead of structuring my thesis in this manner, however, I thought it best to begin with laying the groundwork, establishing the educators' structural settings and pedagogical framework before addressing Brontë's representation of the ideal tutor. For while her representations of the ideal method and the ideal structure are quite clear-cut, her portrayal of the ideal tutor is more complex and multifaceted. The first two chapters of this thesis have explored Brontë's literary engagement with domestic and strictly institutional approaches to education, where the former materializes as constructive yet sadly underrepresented within her fictional academic worlds, and the latter comes across as a detrimental and ominous trend that should be curtailed. One might, therefore, draw the conclusion that Miss Temple and a domestic approach to education represent the ideals to which every educator, in Brontë's view, should strive, while her Continental European model represents something less ideal. I wish, however, to complicate this notion in the ensuing chapter. It is my contention that Brontë's works in fact present *three* ideals of teaching: an affectionate, maternal mode (3.1), a challenging mode (3.2), and one based on friendship (3.3).

3.1 The Mother: Love and Domesticity

The concept of being unloved and uncared for, alone in a bleak world, and the absent parent are recurring elements in Brontë. Charlotte Brontë consistently centres her novels on young, motherless, often orphaned, characters. The namesake of Brontë's debut novel, *Jane Eyre*, is left to the care of her 'hard-hearted' Aunt Reed (*JE* 44) after the death of both her parents and her benevolent uncle. While Shirley Keeldar of *Shirley* has the uncommon and good fortune of being the heiress to a large inheritance and extensive property, she too is an orphan and has been brought up by her uncle, Mr. Sympson. Caroline Helstone, *Shirley*'s other protagonist, was left by her mother when an infant. After her father's passing, she was left to the guardianship of her uncle, Reverend Helstone. While vague about her origins, Lucy Snowe of *Villette* is alone in this world but for her godmother, Mrs. Bretton. And with both parents dead and being unable to rely on the goodwill of his eldest brother, *The Professor*'s William Crimsworth similarly has to make his own way in the world.

Charlotte Brontë most often fills the void created by the absent parent by introducing surrogates. While *The Professor* was intended as a story of the self-made man (cf. preface to *TP* vi), Crimsworth receives both invaluable help and support from Mr Hunsden. The loss of Shirley's parents appears eased by her governess, Mrs Pryor, in that Shirley's orphanhood hardly forms a subject in her story. Caroline regains an internal balance and sense of self by reconnecting with the same Mrs Pryor, who reveals herself to be Caroline's long-lost mother. Jane Eyre's time at Lowood is considerably improved and a sense of home temporarily established by her acquaintance with its superintendent, Miss Temple. It is the positive educational value of this latter quasi-maternal relation that will be the focal point of this section.

Miss Temple is widely recognized among Brontëans as an ideal pedagogue. Elizabeth Gargano, author of *Reading Victorian Schoolrooms* (2008), considers Miss Temple at the heart of *Jane Eyre*'s corrective itinerary, the novel 'chart[ing] a path from Lowood under Brocklehurst's cruel reign to its more benign management by Miss Temple after Brocklehurst's role has been curtailed' (47-48). Gargano argues that it is through the novel's 'juxtaposition and implicit comparisons' between the two regimes that *Jane Eyre*, in accordance with numerous mid-nineteenth-century novels, 'both critique and "correct" current educational abuses' (Gargano 48). And while ultimately disagreeing with her ideal, Marianne Thormählen nevertheless recognizes Miss Temple as Brontë's *attempt* at articulating what she envisioned as the ideal teacher (194).

There is indeed a remarkable correspondence between Miss Temple's character and the opinions Brontë expressed on the requirements for people entering the teaching

profession. In a letter (3 July 1849) to her friend and editor William Smith Williams on the topic of whether his daughter would be fit for the teaching profession, Brontë notes that:

Of pleasing exterior (that is always an advantage—children like it), good sense, obliging disposition, cheerful, healthy, possessing a good average capacity, but no prominent master talent to make her miserable, by its craving for exercise, by its mutiny under restraint—Louisa thus endowed will find the post of governess comparatively easy ... and if, consequently, she is fond of children, and possesses tact for managing them, [and] their care is her natural vocation—she ought to be a governess’
(*Letters* II 226)

Miss Temple can be seen as an embodiment of this list of requirements. Her looks and comportment are in part what appeals to her pupils and secures their attention. Lowood’s superintendent is said to possess ‘something of serenity in her air, [and] state in her mien’, qualities which serve to ‘[chasten] the pleasure of those who [look] on her, and [listen] to her, by a controlling sense of awe’ (*JE* 86). One of the factors that raise her above the rest of Lowood’s staff is nevertheless the fact that she appears to surpass Brontë’s criterion of a ‘good average capacity’. The content of her lessons is sufficiently intellectually stimulating even for Helen Burns, who often struggles to retain focus in class. Helen states that Miss Temple generally has ‘something to say which is newer than my own reflections’ and ‘the information she communicates is often just what I wished to gain’ (*JE* 68). Miss Temple’s prime virtue, however, and what makes her the epitome of Brontë’s list of criteria, is the maternal role she plays. At the heart of Brontë’s list is the emphasis on the importance of considering the care of children one’s ‘natural vocation’. Miss Temple likewise displays a general concern and fondness for the care of her pupils and is devoted to their education and welfare.

Brontë establishes Miss Temple’s maternal character throughout the Lowood section of *Jane Eyre*. The superintendent addresses her pupils as ‘my children’ and draws them ‘to her heart’ (cf. *JE* 87). She also provides for her pupils: when the small morning portion of porridge is burnt and rendered inedible, Miss Temple issues a lunch of bread and cheese in its stead (cf. *JE* 57). When Helen and Jane pass an evening in her company, she moreover shares her evening repast with them and treats them to her secret stash of seed-cake (cf. *JE* 85-86). Brontë furthermore depicts Miss Temple as a carer, having her carefully monitor her pupils’ health. On that same evening in her parlour, for example, Miss Temple, aware of Helen’s gradually deteriorating state, checks her pulse and asks about her cough, and chest-pains (cf. *JE* 85). During Helen’s last days in this life, Miss Temple moreover sacrifices her own

comfort to secure that of Helen by allowing her to rest in the superintendent's own bed (cf. *JE* 95).

Brontë reinforces Miss Temple's maternal traits by tying her to domestic signifiers. In the parlour sequence, which contains the most in-depth descriptions of Miss Temple out of the Lowood section, the superintendent places Helen and Jane on each side of herself, conversing with them before a blazing fire. In this setting, the hearth is perhaps the most obvious domestic symbol, representative of the comforts of home life. As we have seen in section 1.3 of the first chapter, conversation was moreover central to and highly associated with the domestic sphere—in particular a mother's education and upbringing of her children. By establishing a connection between Miss Temple, the hearth, and conversation, Brontë is strengthening her character's already marked maternal traits. The positive contrast Miss Temple's parlour poses to the rest of Lowood Institution furthermore reflects the Victorian conception of the home, or the domestic sphere, as a safe haven against the hostile reality outside of the home, namely the public sphere. In his chapter on 'Victorian Sexualities' (1999), James Adams states that the home was not only regarded as 'a haven from the cutthroat world of Victorian economic struggle', but also from male sexual aggression (129). Some claimed that 'the unworldliness of woman's love ... made it important that she be insulated from the coarsening influences of public life' (Adams 129). Yet, Victorian studies, such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), and the nineteenth-century transmutation of male character from encompassing 'social graces and sexual prowess' into comprising 'inward fortitude, self-regulation, and a sense of duty', are deeply expressive of an emerging unease with male sexuality (Adams 129)¹¹. The hostility of Lowood outside of the parlour admittedly has more to do with physical privations and a loveless existence than unease with male sexual aggression. Yet, Miss Temple's parlour all the same complies with the Victorian notion of the domestic sphere as a sanctuary, thus underpinning the maternal nature of its inhabitant.

Despite her many other qualifications, Miss Temple's maternity and tenderness are not only at the heart of her character, but the true sources of her strength as a teacher in general and ability to influence Jane in particular. Jane confesses that she greatly benefits from Miss Temple's 'friendship and society' and that the superintendent has 'stood me in the

¹¹ Krafft-Ebing states that the maintenance of the angel as the female ideal, and female antisensualism by extension, was crucial to preventing civilized society from falling into ruin, arguing in the ninth edition that, 'Were it not so, the whole world be a bordello, and marriage and the family unthinkable' (quoted in Adams: 129).

stead of mother, governess, and latterly, companion' (*JE* 100). Jane attributes 'the best part of my acquirements' to Miss Temple's instruction (*JE* 100) and by extension her mild and affectionate mode of teaching. Although somewhat vague as to the nature of these "acquirements", we shall see in more detail in 3.3 that Miss Temple's guidance induces Jane to 'be most moderate' in retelling the story of her aunt's past ill-treatment of her (cf. *JE* 84). Jane also notes that Miss Temple instruction has rendered her 'disciplined and subdued', engendered within her an 'allegiance to duty and order' and that she in turn has 'imbibed ... something of [Miss Temple's] nature', namely 'more harmonious thoughts' and 'better regulated feelings' (*JE* 100). And as touched upon in previous chapters, Brontë's contemporary deemed the primary function of boarding schools to be to inculcate a sense of morality in children (cf. Davin 90), and the aim of female education in particular to be to 'moderate and restrain' their passions (cf. 'On Politeness' 115). In view of Jane's declaration, Miss Temple can be seen to have succeeded in educating Jane, not only stimulating her intellectual faculties, but with regard to discipline and moral management.

One could conversely argue that Miss Temple essentially fails as a teacher in that her positive effect, on the latter head at least, is short-lived. In the course of the very first afternoon following Miss Temple's departure from Lowood, Jane 'undergo[es] a transforming process': it is as if her motive for tranquillity has left her (*JE* 101), and Lowood is once more reduced to 'routine' and 'not enough' for Jane (*JE* 102). While Miss Temple might have succeeded in teaching Jane the value of 'moderating' her speech in certain settings, therefore, she does not succeed in curbing Jane's passionate ways. Jane might, of course, be said to emulate Miss Temple to a certain extent, eventually changing her attitude to Aunt Reed. Yet, Jane does not fully embrace the superintendent's stoicism. Miss Temple, on her part, chooses and is in fact able to remain cool in the face of injustice, her face 'assuming ... the coldness and fixity' of marble while Mr. Brocklehurst lectures her on the dangers of mollifying her pupils' hunger. By contrast, Jane later speaks out at Rochester's efforts to make her jealous and reacts by claiming her equality to him, her employer and eventual husband. And when her cousin St John fails to take no for an answer when proposing loveless marriage, Jane again speaks out, stating the 'violent' and 'unfeminine' words: 'If I were to marry you, it would kill me. You are killing me now' (*JE* 475). While calm and subdued on the surface in the presence of Miss Temple and considering the fact that Jane is eventually able to forgive her aunt her trespasses, Jane does not, in other words, stray too far from the passionate nature of her childhood.

Yet, one could also argue that the fact that Jane eventually rejects or disagrees with Miss Temple's stoic approach should not be read as symptomatic of Miss Temple's ultimate lack of influence, but rather of Jane's preference of another course of action: speaking out instead of remaining fixed yet silent in the face of injustice. Indeed, Jane's *bildung*, or journey towards maturation and independence, may in part, as Karen Chase suggests, be regarded as a '*bildung* by negative example' or process of elimination, Jane learning 'how not to be' during the course of the novel (cf. 78). As much as Jane respects her superintendent, it would be contrary to her own nature to *truly* emulate her example. Instead, she can be said to find a middle ground between Miss Temple's coolness and her own childhood outbursts. Even though Miss Temple is said to 'have taken with her the serene atmosphere [Jane] had been breathing in her vicinity' when departing (*JE* 101), she can also be said to have permanently influenced Jane's temperament for the better. It should be noted that even though Jane begins to 'feel the stirring of old emotions' at Miss Temple's removal, she is keen to emphasize the fact that, 'It did not seem as though a prop were withdrawn', and 'it [was] not the power to be tranquil that had failed me'. Rather, 'the reason for tranquillity was no more' (*JE* 101).

In addition, the notion that Jane's newfound sense of stability evaporates at Miss Temple's departure can in fact also be construed as testament to the solace engendered at her hands and her mode of instruction. Miss Temple and her affectionate approach to her pupils enable Jane to weather the many privations of Lowood. Not long after her enrolment, Jane states that she 'would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations for Gateshead and its daily luxuries' (*JE* 89). This declaration can be regarded as proof of the fact that Miss Temple indeed alleviates the suffering Lowood otherwise subjects Jane and her peers to. Some have attributed the quote above and Jane's sudden acceptance of Lowood to the fact that she has finally grown accustomed to its numerous rules and demanding lesson format, no longer tormented by a fear of failure. Marianne Thormählen in fact regards Jane's preference of Lowood over Gateshead as evidence of the school's value even before its reform (cf. Thormählen 175). However, the evening spent in Miss Temple's company and Jane's newly formed acquaintance with her and Helen appear to have more to do with Jane's changed outlook. The fact that Miss Temple, on that particular occasion, has allowed Jane the opportunity to clear her name of the taint momentarily inflicted upon it by Aunt Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst, might certainly have contributed to Jane's present sense of elation. Yet, Jane's distress after being publicly shamed by Brocklehurst primarily arises from the fear that no one will care for her thereafter and that the clean slate she hoped Lowood would offer her

has been tainted. The words preceding Jane's stated preference for Lowood at the end of Chapter 8 (a sentence apparently overlooked by Thormählen) suggests that there is another source of her newfound ease: her statement that 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith' (*JE* 89) suggests that Miss Temple's loving treatment of her on the evening in question and affectionate approach in general has brightened Jane's existence, and shifted her focus away from, or perhaps even diminished, the privations of Lowood.

In short, Miss Temple's presence and approach are vital to making her pupils feel at ease and securing their attention. It is particularly important in that it seems to avert their focus away from their inadequate living conditions—to their lessons. As we have seen in chapter one of this thesis, Miss Temple supplied her formal lessons with informal yet highly educational conversations, playing on the strengths and interests of her pupils. However, the following section will argue that Brontë's Continental European novels in fact suggest that Miss Temple's method falls short in the education of young adults. It will contend that these novels offer an alternative and more constructive—if slightly more demanding—way of motivating one's pupils and helping them realize their innate potential.

3.2 The Master: Tough Love and Education as Combat

When discussing Brontë's master-pupil relations, critics often explore what these relations divulge regarding Brontë's own view of love and sexuality (cf. Chase; Kucich). This angle is easily justifiable in consideration to Brontë's own expressed resolve to write novels in homage of 'the only master I have ever had' (*Letters I* 368), her former professor and quite possibly also unrequited love, Constantin Héger¹². The basis for executing a romantic or erotic reading is further strengthened by the way in which her fictional professors' characteristics often align with Brontë's letters' descriptions of Héger (cf. *Letters I* 284), as well as independent records of him (cf. Harper; 'Case Study'). In a letter to Ellen Nussey (May 1842), Brontë describes Héger as,

a little black, ugly being with a face that varies in expression, sometimes he borrows the lineaments of an insane Tom-cat – sometimes those of a delirious Hyena – occasionally – but very seldom he discards these perilous attractions and assumes an air not above a hundred degrees removed from what you

¹² In a letter to Héger (24 July 1844), Charlotte Brontë writes that it is her intention to 'write a book, and ... dedicate it to my literature master – to the only master I have ever had – to you Monsieur' (*Letters I*: 358).

would call mild & gentleman-like.
(*Letters* I 284).

This portrait quite conspicuously evokes the *fictional* ‘little man of unreasonable moods’, who is ‘apt to flash anger and discomfort around him’, but who is also seen to exude forbearance and tenderness to which ‘no words can do justice’ (*V* 326, 329): Monsieur Paul Emanuel of *Villette*. This same character is also said to render tragedies ‘grand by grand reading, [and] ardent by fiery action’ and make the piece he reads aloud ‘a vessel for an outpouring, [filling] it with his native verve and passion like a cup with a vital brewage’ (*V* 307). Janet Harper, a former pupil of Héger, has noted that M. Paul’s assumed original similarly possessed a rare talent for reading aloud and for rendering ‘a simple fable by La Fontaine’ into ‘veritable drama’:

[Héger] was a magnificent reader—you saw, you felt, you laughed, you cried, you grew hot, you grew cold, you joyed, you mourned, you went through a riot of emotion, exactly in proportion as he wished.
(462)

Like Héger, Brontë’s Continental professors also devote great efforts to cultivating the rare literary talent of their (albeit to varying degree) English, Protestant pupil. There are, in other words, many likenesses between Brontë’s fictional Continental educators—M. Paul in particular—and real life Professor Héger. These remarkable similarities may be regarded as sufficient basis for exploring what Brontë envisioned as ideal romantic and sexual relations in her portrayal of her master. The fact that *Villette* as well as *The Professor* and *Shirley* all feature a romantic union between tutor and pupil, whereas Brontë’s potential love for Héger remained unrealized, recommends these novels as attempts on the author’s part to live out her romantic aspirations, as many have suggested (cf. Barker 602-603; Harman 18; Lewis 1969/2013: 289; Quarm).

There is, however, a tendency within Brontë studies to analyze her master-pupil relations solely along a romantic or sexual axis and to disregard their educational aspect entirely. Explorations of her novels as wish-fulfilment have indeed helped to flesh out Charlotte Brontë biographies. Sex-radical readings of her works (cf. Kvistad; Kucich) have also contributed greatly to complicating and challenging the given conceptions of the power relations in Brontë, and to underlining the subversive quality of her authorship. Yet, by disregarding the strictly educational dimension of the master-pupil dynamic, critics reduce the relation between master and pupil to only a romantic or erotic attachment, condensing its

complexity and leaving out a vital aspect of this relation. While Monsieur Héger may very well have been the great love of Charlotte Brontë's life, she also declared him to be the only true literature master she ever had, to whose advice and goodness she was greatly indebted (cf. *Letters* I 368). Deviating from popular readings of Constantin Héger's mentorship of Charlotte Brontë, Sue Lonoff has made a point of exploring it in a strictly pedagogical sense, treating their attachment first and foremost as a 'writer's connection' ('Belgian Essays' 391): 'Whatever the force of her emotions, Brontë sought approval as a thinker and an author', and 'wanted [Héger] to acknowledge her ability and foster it by working closely with her' (391). Just as the master-pupil relation may divulge Brontë's repressed conceptions of love and sexuality, they may likewise express her views on education. Like Lonoff's study, this section, while still acknowledging the incentives passion and the desire to conquer pose in this equation, will mostly explore Brontë's master-pupil relation along the educational axis. It will look at how Brontë's portrait of her master-tutor cultivates and realizes the potential of his pupil.

The educational scenes in *Jane Eyre* and Brontë's sketch of Miss Temple in particular promote love as the most influential and reformatory force, and a tutor's appeal to that emotion as imperative. Brontë's Continental European novels, on the other hand, advocate the value of a harsher approach. Even when thoroughly impressed with their pupils' work, *The Professor's* William Crimsworth and *Villette's* M. Paul occasionally make a point of not commending their pupils, underplaying their own enthusiasm – even choosing to treat pupils with scorn. Nevertheless, the Continental European novels' marked difference from *Jane Eyre* should not subtract from the value or competence of Brontë's Continental European educators. The brutality employed by educators at Continental European establishments may admittedly be read as an expression of Brontë's own xenophobia and racism: in *Villette*, the author does represent brute force and ridicule as contingents for taming 'continental children'. The same novel has Lucy, the English tutor-heroine, derive great pleasure from constraining her foreign pupils, quickly internalizing Madame Beck's view that 'ruinous consequences would ensue if any other method were tried' (cf. *V* 65). Yet, Lucy, who is not of Continental European origin, also comes to see the value of M. Paul's severity as a much-needed spur in her own education, which would suggest that Brontë herself saw the value of a sterner pedagogy – not merely in relation to the tutelage of Continental Europeans. As Lonoff points out in her study of Brontë's Belgian essays, Héger's mentorship—and by extension, his pedagogy—was of great importance to Brontë's maturation as a writer. The

devoirs Héger assigned her, in Lonoff's opinion, constitute 'a missing link between the juvenilia and her adult novels' (387). There is admittedly nothing in M. Paul's demeanour or looks, for example, to suggest that he complies with Brontë's sketch to Williams of the ideal tutor: while M. Paul, like Miss Temple, is not in possession of a 'master talent to make [him] miserable'—for while he is a brilliant reader of great works of literature, he is said to lack the ability to write them—he is by no means described as a man of 'pleasing exterior', or an 'obliging' or 'cheerful' disposition, which Brontë's sketch states as criteria for someone undertaking the education of children (cf. *Letters II* 226). In spite of this, Brontë can, in her Continental novels, all the same be seen to advocate the worth of a severe and unrelenting pedagogy in the tuition of young adults.

John Kucich's influential analysis of Brontë's depiction of repression in *Repression in Victorian Fiction* (1987) is perhaps best known for its contention (drawing on Auerbach and Foucault) that Brontë regarded and represented repression as a means of heightening sexual and romantic pleasure, and in fact of *asserting* one's power and sexuality (cf. Auerbach 7; Foucault 122). Another central and revolutionizing point he evokes, however, is the fact that Brontë appears to envisage love, and romantic and sexual union as 'mutual conquest' rather than a 'harmonious merging' (Kucich 47). Instead of being a means to an end and a necessary trial of fire her heroines must endure in order to obtain a resting point, 'the protracted, combative courtship of M. Paul and Lucy', for example, can be seen 'as a vivid picture of the unresolved battleground Brontë required of sexual passion' (Kucich 58, italics mine). All of Brontë's protagonists share 'a solitary, indiscriminating pleasure in combat', in Kucich's view (58-59). While this is primarily in reference to the erotic dimensions of Brontë's master-pupil relations, the concepts of combat and the battleground can also be used to describe the educational aspect of these relations, especially that depicted in *Villette* between M. Paul and Lucy Snowe. Whereas Kucich argues that *Villette* in particular represents love as a battle, Brontë can also be said to represent education as combat and mutual conquest in her Continental European setting. Lucy cannot only be said to find love 'in the tension of continual sparring' with M. Paul, as Kucich suggests (cf. 57), but also self-realization and intellectual growth.

Initially, however, the domestic approach comes across as the only mode by which Lucy can be taught. At the beginning of her lessons with M. Paul, Lucy appears to set great store by his affectionate way of teaching her: 'words can hardly do justice to his tenderness and helpfulness' (*V* 329), she relates, and '[h]is affection had been very sweet and dear—a

pleasure new and incomparable' to her (*V* 330). When his attitude towards her suddenly changes, however, and his affection seems withdrawn, she declares: 'I cared not for his lessons' (*V* 330). At first, an affectionate mode of teaching such as that of Miss Temple in *Jane Eyre*, in other words, appears a requisite for Lucy to take any pleasure in her education. Lucy's appreciation of M. Paul's tender treatment of her can, of course, be explained by the fact that she has been starved for affection for a long time. Lucy is orphaned, and her first employer, Miss Marchmont, for whom she comes to care before long, dies not long into Lucy's service. Lucy is also for a long time estranged from her godmother, Mrs. Bretton, and later learns not to depend too much upon her affection and attention as that their lives are too different¹³. Loss and loneliness are central themes in *Villette*, as well as in Brontë's authorship at large, and M. Paul's warmth—'a pleasure new and incomparable' to Lucy—appears to fill the void within her and satiate her emotional starvation.

In this instance, Lucy's relation to M. Paul is comparable to that between Jane and Miss Temple, the pupil in both instances being largely motivated by the affection she receives from the person who can be construed as her surrogate. At one point, Lucy in fact echoes Jane Eyre's motives for learning: whereas Jane is urged on by 'a great delight in pleasing my teachers, especially such as I loved' (*JE* 100), Lucy declares that she is not driven on by 'the godlike thirst for discovery', but '[w]hat I loved, it joyed me by any effort to content' (*V* 329). Yet, in Lucy's case, the relation between tutor and pupil is not that between parent and child, but sexually charged: her fondness for his tender approach can also be explained by her ever-increasing sexual and emotional attraction to him, which in time will blossom into a more profound relationship. Regardless of the true nature of Lucy's feelings for M. Paul, however, his affectionate method can be seen to fix her attention in class and inspire her to work hard. However, he is still not able to realize her full potential by way of this method.

In spite of occasional gleams of kindness, Lucy conceives M. Paul as a 'pitiless censor' (*V* 131): he exhibits 'a love of power' and 'an eager grasp of supremacy', giving him 'points of resemblance to Napoleon Bonaparte' (*V* 327; 326). He can, of course, be 'kind [and] forbearing' in the face of incompetence (cf. *V* 329), adopt a softened tone in his address

¹³ Lucy sees her godmother as a 'stately ship, cruising safe on smooth seas', a clear contrast to herself, the 'solitary lifeboat' put out to sea 'when the billows run high in rough weather' (*V*: 168). As such, Lucy does not wish to confide her depression to Mrs Bretton, as 'the details of what I had undergone belonged to a portion of my existence in which I never expected my godmother to take a share. Into what a new region would such a confidence have led that hale, serene nature!' (*V*: 167).

of pupils who consider themselves ‘ignoramus[es]’ (*V* 332). At a point when he is not aware of the extent of Lucy’s talent, she is moved by the fact that he seems to feel ‘the weighty humiliation imposed by [her] own sense of incapacity’ (*V* 329). However, M. Paul has a very different approach to ‘dawnings ... of a peculiar talent appearing within his range’ (*V* 328). In such instances, his method is one of tough love, M. Paul choosing to cultivate his pupils’ potential through ceaseless tasks and challenges and an air of discontent, even disdain.

‘Prove yourself true ere I cherish you,’ was his ordinance; and how difficult he made that proof! What thorns and briars, what flints he strewed in the path of feet not inured to rough travel! He watched tearlessly—ordeals that he exacted should be passed through—fearlessly. He followed footprints that, as they approached the bourne, were sometimes marked in blood—followed them grimly, holding the austerest police-watch over the pain-pressed pilgrim ... and it was only when every severest test had been applied and endured, ... that he admitted it genuine and, still in clouded silence, stamped it with his deep brand of approval (*V* 328)

While his method may appear severe and often be perceived as such by his pupils, it yields results. Although Lucy initially finds M. Paul’s sudden change from ‘kindness [to] sternness’ puzzling and even harassing (cf. *V* 329), compelling her ‘to feel very profoundly that learning is not happiness’ (*V* 330), she later concedes that his approach serves as a powerful prod and source of invaluable motivation:

...when M. Paul sneered at me, I wanted to possess ... a contraband appetite for unfeminine knowledge [even] more fully; his injustice stirred in me ambitious wishes—it imparted a strong stimulus—it gave me wings to aspiration (*V* 329)

Lucy attributes her initial distress at M. Paul’s changed behaviour towards her to not knowing his motives. These soon become clear to her, however: in the beginning, ‘that uncomprehended sneer of his made my heart ache, but by and by it only warmed the blood in my veins, and sent added action to my pulses’ (*V* 329). She comes to see that his mission is to provoke her into ‘proving herself’ (cf. *V* 328) or proving him wrong. On one occasion, M. Paul ridicules the concept of the ‘Woman of Intellect’, stating that she is ‘a sort of ‘*lusus naturae*,’ a luckless accident, a thing for which there [is] neither place nor use in creation’, and that ‘as to work, the male mind alone [can] work to any good practical result—hein?’ (*V* 332). And in this ‘hein’, Lucy detects ‘a note of interrogation intended to draw from me contradiction or objection’ (*V* 332). M. Paul’s approach, albeit severe and occasionally frustrating, is therefore a way of ‘drawing out’ or rather coaxing out abilities. In light of this, his method is more similar to the Socratic mode that one would initially assume. While not

predominantly posing questions as in the traditional manner, he nevertheless attempts to lure forward a response and generate conversation or debate.

The educational relation between M. Paul and Lucy can be construed as highly combative. Lucy's reason for doing more than is required of her, 'voluntarily doubl[ing], trebl[ing], quadrupl[ing]' the tasks M. Paul sets her, appears to be 'to please him' and secure 'his deep brand of approval' (cf. *V* 328). One could also argue, however, that she expresses a desire to not only mollify her tutor, but to conquer him. Brontë's descriptions of their educational interactions are rife with belligerent imagery. Lucy imagines M. Paul's behaviour to be reminiscent to that of Napoleon Bonaparte (*V* 326). On this note, it is well established that the Brontë siblings, Charlotte in particular, worshiped the first Duke of Wellington, Napoleon's eventual conqueror. At thirteen, Brontë wrote a booklet containing 'Anecdotes of the Duke of Wellington' (1829-1831), and she and her siblings would invent and perform plays about the Iron Duke's triumph over Hannibal, Cæsar or Napoleon (cf. Gaskell 45). The Duke himself, or fictional versions of him, is moreover a recurring figure in her juvenilia. While Brontë's fascination with Wellington makes Napoleon's name and character a natural part of her vocabulary, it can also suggest that Lucy's comparison of M. Paul to Wellington's opponent is everything but coincidental.

Sally Shuttleworth has regarded Brontë's choice to centre two of her novels in Belgium, or Belgium-like countries, as an attempt in part to create an 'alien' atmosphere (1996). Yet, Brontë's choice of setting for her Continental novels can also be seen to emphasize the theme of combat. Waterloo of Belgium was after the location of the British victory over the French, of Wellington's over Napoleon. As Anne Longmuir highlights in her essay, 'Negotiating British Identity in Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor* and *Villette*' (2009), mid-nineteenth-century Britain moreover conceived newly independent Belgium as a place with 'potential for Anglicization' and as such a space within which French and British values could be battled out (167). As Brontë's employment of Belgium or Belgium-inspired locations in her Continental European novels can be regarded as an underscoring of the theme of combat, her comparison of M. Paul to Napoleon may be read as a potential foreshadowing of Lucy, M. Paul's English and Protestant opponent, as his conqueror.

As regards Lucy and M. Paul's educational interactions, the protagonist describes her tutorials with M. Paul themselves as 'combat' (*V* 329). When M. Paul swiftly moves from accusing Lucy of having 'feigned a false capacity' in his first evaluation of her, to claiming that her works are plagiarisms, Brontë has her heroine *turn* upon her professor and *rise* against him (cf. *V* 330). Lucy declares herself to previously have lacked 'a contraband

appetite for unfeminine knowledge' and the desire to 'trespass the limits proper to my sex' (*V* 329). Yet, he later claims that M. Paul's derisive pedagogy – that 'his injustice' – stirs such 'ambitious wishes' in her; she begins to develop a 'noble hunger for science in the abstract' and a 'thirst for discovery' (cf. *V* 329). She can thus be said to acquire a wish to encroach upon M. Paul's territory, the world of academia, and challenge his notions of femininity. In mistaking Lucy's work for that of M. Paul (cf. *V* 376), Messieurs Bossiec and Rochemorte of Athénée college can be seen to attest to the fact that Lucy before long reaches M. Paul's level of academic competence.

Yet, in spite of the belligerent nature of M. Paul and Lucy's relation and his naturally volatile temper, his conduct is not without motive. We know that M. Paul's treatment of Lucy changes and only assumes a severe character when he senses 'dawnings ... of a peculiar talent' within her. We also know that Lucy comes to recognize his provocation of her as an attempt to spur her into action or prompt a response. The previous chapters have touched upon the centrality of theatricality in *Villette*, especially in the classroom (cf. 1.1). Crimsworth of *The Professor* divulges that he values 'seeming imperiousness' as a way of drawing out Frances Henri's capacities:

Constancy of attention, a kindness as mute as watchful, always standing by her, cloaked in the *rough garb of austerity*, and making its *real* nature known only by a rare glance of interest or a cordial or gentle word; real respect *masked with seeming imperiousness*, directing, urging her actions, yet helping her too, and that with devoted care – these were the means I used, for these means best suited Frances' feelings (*TP* 117, italics mine)

Whereas Crimsworth appears to adopt a generally strict disposition in relation to his pupils, publically shaming poor results, M. Paul only appears to be severe to those he believes able to stomach it. M. Paul initially takes Lucy at her word, supposing her to be *faible*, or incompetent. In this instance, he is 'very kind, very good, [and] very forbearing' towards her. When he realizes that she misled him at first, – which she confirms to the reader to be true (cf. *V* 330) – his kindness ceases. Yet, when Lucy on one occasion grows disheartened at his severity and, as a result, begs that he cease their arrangement, M. Paul politely returns her books, looking 'kind and good, and [holds] out his hand with amity' (*V* 330). This sudden transition may be seen as a confirmation of the fact that he uses severity and the appearance of contempt as means of motivating pupils. It clearly suggests that he believes in its efficacy, but only employs this method as far as the nature of the pupil in question will allow. As Lucy's resignation is a reaction to M. Paul's derision at the concept of 'Woman of Intellect', this instance may also be seen as an (albeit unsuccessful) attempt on the tutor's part at

drawing Lucy out and sizing her up. Believing her to be excessively proud and easily fired up by sexist comments, M. Paul can be seen to misread his pupil. Regardless of whether he is unsuccessful or not, however, this instance shows us that M. Paul uses sternness as a pedagogical tool, taking pains to evaluate the character and needs of his pupils.

M. Paul can, as such, be seen to customize his education to the individual pupil, both in terms of workload and mode of teaching. Lucy's learning trajectory and the way in which M. Paul adapts his approach to her progression, suggest that Brontë envisions education as split into several stages, each of which in fact requires a different approach. While Lucy admits to having downplayed her capacities when she first came to know M. Paul, there is also evidence in her speech during the early stages of their acquaintance indicative of a deep-rooted sense of inadequacy or timidity: while not reflective of her actual competence, Lucy states that she has felt herself 'marked by a preternatural imbecility' and that she cannot boast to be of 'average quickness' in social settings (*V* 329). And at a point when Lucy, very much like Jane during her first quarter at Lowood, is starved for affection and everything but self-assertive, M. Paul can be seen to decide to meet her with a tender (yet arguably condescending) approach. As their lessons progress, however, he understands that she will be best motivated by a mode of severity. While Jane Eyre can be seen to thrive at the hand of an affectionate educational approach, the many parallels between her attitudes towards education and those of Lucy suggest that Jane might have ascended beyond what she herself deems a 'tolerably comprehensive' yet 'narrow catalogue of accomplishments' with the assistance of a tutor in M. Paul's mould. While Miss Temple's pedagogy appears integral to the early stages of Jane's education, M. Paul's ever-challenging mode might, in other words, have suited her continued education and spurred her on to new, formerly unimagined heights. Previous chapters have already suggested that Helen's distractedness might have arisen from the generally unstimulating nature of Lowood's educational programme. The same institution is after all also reduced to mere 'routine' and 'not enough' for Jane after Miss Temple's departure. The quest for love and companionship—the need to fill the void Miss Temple leaves behind—might be the primary incentive for Jane's own eventual departure from Lowood. One might also argue, however, that the desire for new challenges poses an equally important role in her decision to seek 'a new servitude' (cf. *JE* 102). Higher education and a tutor in M. Paul's cast might have offered Jane the 'change' and 'stimulus' she comes to crave after Miss Temple's removal, before settling for what appears most realizable: a new place of employment.

One could argue that Brontë's ideals are somewhat conventional in that they reflect conventional gender roles: the affectionate and mild pedagogue is a woman, whereas the brusque and unrelenting mentor is a man. Gender can as such be seen to inform the mode of instruction or range of possibilities of Brontë's ideals. On the other hand, it is fairly well established that Brontë wrote a lot from personal experience. Despite the fact that there are many common denominators between Miss Temple's character and the ideal qualities outlined in one of the parsonage books, George Wright's *Thoughts in Younger Life*¹⁴, there is also evidence to suggest that Brontë's maternal pedagogue is largely based upon one of the few positive aspects of life at Cowan Bridge, whom biographers suspect to have been its superintendent, Miss Ann Evans (later Mrs. Connor)¹⁵. M. Paul has, as we have seen, many striking points of semblance to Brontë's own master-tutor, Héger. With their assumed originals in mind, one could argue that the sexes of Brontë's ideals are first and foremost a result of the sexes of the people they were based upon. Their sexes can, conversely, also be seen as defined by the settings in which she places them: in Brontë's time, male educators were in all likelihood scarce at British, all-girl charity schools as they would be more expensive to employ. As such, it would be more in tune with reality to have the superintendent of her fictional charity school be a woman. As for Rue Fossette of *Villette*, M. Paul might work as literature professor at the *pensionnat de demoiselles* quite possibly as a favour to his cousin, the superintendent of that establishment. The fact that Madame Beck is reported to have employed men in the past¹⁶ suggests that they also have the financial capacity to do so. It would, therefore, be more natural to feature a male professor at Rue Fossette than at Lowood School.

The existence of Miss Scatcherd, who strikes particularly hard down upon those who do not comply with her required standard, is moreover proof of Brontë's acknowledgement

¹⁴ In her book on education in Brontë, Marianne Thormählen contends that Miss Temple corresponds with Wright's model in that she 'tak[es] care to make learning a pleasure and not a mere task, she has a thorough acquaintance with the human mind, an extensive general knowledge, [and] a commitment to encouraging early wisdom in her pupils and a tender and humane temper, neither too gentle nor too severe' (2007: 194)

¹⁵ A few months after *Jane Eyre*'s publication, Brontë wrote to Williams that, 'I saw an elderly clergyman reading it the other day, and had the satisfaction of hearing him exclaim 'Why – they have got – School, and Mr – here, I declare! and Miss – (naming the originals of Lowood, Mr. Brocklehurst and Miss Temple) He had known them all: I wondered whether he would recognize the portraits, and was gratified that he did' (Barker: 645). Author of the newly published *Charlotte Brontë: A Life* (2015), Claire Harman, quite matter-of-factly mentions Ann Evans as 'the kind teacher upon whom Miss Temple is based' (55).

¹⁶ At the end of chapter 8, Lucy relates that Madame 'got thrice the work out of me she had extracted from Mr Wilson, at half the expense' (*V*: 72).

of the fact that women may choose other (albeit inferior) means of educating and engaging with pupils. Yet, she also makes it clear that Scatcherd's severe pedagogy is, in contrast to that of M. Paul, detrimental, and not to be preferred over that of Miss Temple in the tuition of children. Miss Scatcherd is first and foremost judged on the brutality of her method, not the fact that she as a woman employs them. Yet, as a tutor, Lucy Snowe also adopts a harsh approach. Although she does not strike children, she is seen to tear substandard *dictées* demonstratively in two and shove mutineers in the closet. While her pupils come to care for her before long, which instantly sets her apart from Miss Scatcherd, *Villette's* accounts of Lucy's lessons only relay the ways in which she creates order in class. She is represented as a disciplinarian rather than a pedagogue. While her choice to keep her class in check by way of the occasional 'flash of raillery' (*V* 74) also serves to underline that Brontë does not envision a mode of severity as solely restricted to men, she cannot be regarded as one of Brontë's pedagogues. Lucy resembles M. Paul by choosing to feign austerity, but deviates from his method by feigning austerity solely for the sake of creating order and gaining her pupils' attention, and not as a means motivating or spurring her pupils into action. In summary: while one could argue that the sexes of Charlotte Brontë's ideals can be seen to inform the way in which Miss Temple and M. Paul engage with pupils, this factor need not be thought of much consequence. One could conversely argue that the reason why Brontë's formal pedagogues employ different modes of instruction is not gender-based; it may rather boil down to the fact that the ages and the needs of their school's residents are different from one another.

3.3 The Informal Tutor: Friendship

Charlotte Brontë devotes a great deal of space in her novels to evaluating and commenting on the behaviour of formal pedagogues and disciplinarians, and her sketches of various educational settings can be regarded as corrective schemes, as this thesis indeed contends. However, she also dedicates a considerable part of her authorship to arguing for the educational value of friendship and for the importance of the informal tutor. As previously touched upon, Brontë started her academic career at home, engaged in what we now term 'collaborative learning' ('Case Study' 459). She and her siblings worked together on literary projects, constructing the fictional world of Glasstown. They read together, exchanged ideas, taught and learned from each other. The colloquy between Charlotte, Anne and Emily would prove important throughout their lives, not only providing them with a good foundation before commencing their formal education, but ensuring their continued education and self-

culture as individuals and authors. Perhaps as a result of her own learning experiences, Charlotte Brontë's novels contain several instances of reformatory conversations between tutor and pupil outside of formal lessons, and between peers or friends. We have already explored the positive force conversation constitutes in Brontë's novels (cf. 1.3), with special emphasis on that between Miss Temple and Helen in the parlour. This section will, however, explore the ways in which Brontë represents friendship or conversations between friends as equally beneficial to a person's education as the guidance of formal tutors, if not more so.

Throughout Brontë's authorship, friendship constitutes a positive force in life, a source of motivation and distraction, something that shifts the focus away from and lessens one's sufferings. The monotony of Caroline Helstone's life is temporarily broken at the appearance of the novel's title character, Shirley. A bond of friendship and womanhood quickly forms between them. While calling for bettered and more varied circumstances for unmarried women as regards work and education, it would seem that Brontë's *Shirley* also explores the possibility of whether a profound attachment between two women might in fact be the solution to the problem of how to survive emotionally as a single woman in Victorian society. It can even be said to argue for female companionship as a preferable alternative to heterosexual relationships¹⁷. Caroline declares to her friend,

‘Love hurts us so, Shirley: it is so tormenting, so racking, and it burns our strength with its flame’, whereas ‘In affection there is no pain and no fire—only sustenance and balm. I am supported and soothed when you—that is, *you only*—are near, Shirley’ (*S* 266, italics in original).

Some have also suggested that Bertha Mason's madness may in fact have been the result of, or else made worse by her imprisonment and isolation from sympathetic female companionship. While Grace Poole attends her, she can only offer a ‘few words’ and a ‘hard, plain face’ (*JE* 127; Fisk 225). She moreover has a tendency to lull into an alcoholic stupor in Bertha's presence (cf. *JE* 492). In ‘Decoding Narratives of Female Desire’ (2008), Nicole Fisk treats *Jane Eyre* and Eliza Fenwick's *Secresy* (1795) as complementary texts. Comparing Bertha's situation to that of Sibella Valmont, both of whom are captives, Fisk argues that ‘without the friendship of Caroline Ashburn [in *Secresy*], Sibella would have appeared in the image of ‘Bertha Mason’, fifty years before Charlotte Brontë published her most famous novel’ (219): ‘Sibella's correspondence [with Caroline] is not only therapeutic,

¹⁷ cf. Linda Hunt's ‘Sustenance and Balm: The Question of Female Friendship in *Shirley* and *Villette*’ (1982) for an in-depth exploration of Brontë's engagement with female friendship and the bond of womanhood in these novels.

but also liberating', Fisk argues; 'she finds her own voice, finds an ally in Caroline, and is able to experience a world beyond Valmont castle via her friend's descriptions' (225). As a result of this exchange, Sibella's 'mental faculties seem to strengthen' (Fisk 225). Similarly, while the presence of Miss Temple is a source of solace for Jane Eyre at Lowood, an institution not without its similarities to prisons, the friendship she establishes with one of her peers is not only a contributing factor to her sudden acceptance of her own dreary living situation, but of great importance to her emotional stability and self-culture.

When Jane Eyre is to defend herself against the accusation of falsehood, Miss Temple's advice is admittedly of great help to her. The superintendent stresses the importance of Jane not overembellishing her tale of Gateshead and Aunt Reed: 'defend yourself as well as you can. Say whatever your memory suggests as true; but add nothing and exaggerate nothing', is her directive (*JE* 84). Miss Temple's words, while perhaps also aided by Jane's current state of fatigue, induce Jane to 'be most moderate' in her narrative, and render her tale 'restrained and simplified' (*JE* 84). As a result, her tale sounds 'more credible' in her own ears, and Jane is able to convince Miss Temple of the veracity of her account (*JE* 84). She thus learns to create a rational defence for herself, beforehand 'reflect[ing] a few moments in order to arrange coherently what [she has] to say' (*JE* 84). However, Miss Temple's words are not the only ones that make an impression upon Jane in this instance. Before proffering her version of events, Jane also takes Helen's advice into consideration: Jane relates that, 'mindful of Helen's warnings against the indulgence of resentment, I infused into the narrative far less of gall and wormwood than ordinary' (*JE* 84). By heeding Helen's advice, Jane is, in other words, able to comply with Miss Temple's request and not exaggerate any part of her tale. Here we, in other words, see the informal teacher as an invaluable supplement to a child's formal education and the guidance they receive from adult pedagogues.

Elizabeth Gargano has termed Helen as 'Jane's domestic child-mentor' (71). The conversations taking place between Helen and Jane are indeed educational and constitute a large part of the Lowood narrative. The content of these conversations may be regarded as something Charlotte Brontë deemed important. Helen and Jane's conversations are almost of a Socratic nature, as we shall see in the coming paragraphs. They can admittedly be seen to deviate from Socratic dialogue in that Jane is the one posing the questions, and Helen is in many ways presented as the person in possession of the answers, first and foremost 'the sage on the stage' rather than 'the guide on the side', to borrow terms from the School of Education (cf. King 1993). The term 'sage of the stage' is used to describe the role of the

teacher in the traditional (and in many ways outdated) lecture format or ‘transmittal model’. Here, the professor ‘is the one who *has* the knowledge, and transmits that knowledge to the students, who simply memorize the information, and later reproduce it at an exam—often without even thinking about it’ (King 30, italics in original). In later years, the transmittal model has largely been replaced by the ‘constructivist model’, which is highly reminiscent of the Socratic mode of instruction, the professor or tutor becoming the ‘guide on the side’. In contrast to the mode of transmission, the constructivist model ‘places the student at the center [sic] of the process—actively participating in thinking and discussing ideas while making meaning for themselves’, while the tutor ‘facilitates learning in a less direct way’, helping the pupil to construct meaning out of new information and rearrange existing knowledge (King 30). While Helen is presented as more mature and wiser than Jane, she comes across as a guide on the side in that she facilitates learning in a more subtle way. In line with constructivism, she ‘present[s] the material in ways that make the students do something with the information—interact with it—manipulate the ideas and relate them to what they already know’ (King 30). What is more, Jane is not a mute participant merely regurgitating Helen’s words of wisdom, but is actively involved in the conversation, challenging Helen’s views. When Helen advocates the importance of not ‘nurturing animosity’ (*JE* 69) but forgiving those that have wronged you, Jane retorts with her belief that one should not succumb to or accept injustice, but fight it: ‘when we are struck at without reason,’ she retorts, ‘we should strike back ... so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again’ (*JE* 68).

Another likeness between the Socratic mode and Jane’s and Helen’s sessions, is the notion that their conversations feature moral education and explore the larger questions. Jane and Helen are indeed discussing the correct mode of conduct, and pondering weighty issues such as whether it is right and indeed possible to ‘love thine enemy’ (cf. *JE* 66-70). In this instance, the narration appears to emphasize Helen’s doctrine as the truest principle: Jane’s arguments are in part undermined by her own rhetoric, as well as by the narration. As regards the first point, Brontë describes Jane’s tale as one of ‘resentment’, ‘[b]itter and truculent’, the young heroine speaking ‘without reserve or softening’ (*JE* 69). As regards the other, her speech is overly aggressive in that she advises Helen to ‘get [Miss Scatcherd’s rod] from her hand, [and] break it under her nose’ (*JE* 66). Brontë also stresses Jane’s current naïve and petty tendencies by making her young heroine state the fact that there is ‘[a] great deal [of merit]’ in only being ‘good to those who are good to you. It is all I ever desire to be’ (*JE* 68). Helen, on the other hand, comes across as the voice of reason, alerting Jane to the fact that the brief act of breaking the rod would ensure her immediate expulsion, thereby hurting and

disappointing her benefactors and ruining perhaps her only chance at obtaining an education. Helen furthermore highlights the fact that there is always an explanation for people's behaviour.

However, Charlotte Brontë can be seen to present Helen's 'doctrine of endurance' and self-abnegation as ultimately detrimental in that it arguably culminates in her premature death. The act of giving one's life to the mission—the ultimate act of self-abnegation in *Jane Eyre*—is moreover equated with imprisonment and death. The latter scenario would, for Jane, require stepping into a loveless marriage with St John, 'at his side always, and always restrained, and always checked – forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry, though the imprisoned flame consumed vital after vital – *this* would be unendurable' (*JE* 470). *Jane Eyre* forms a clear contrast to Scott's *Marmion* (1808), which St John gives Jane as a gift, and which tells the tale of a nun condemned to being enclosed 'Alive, within the tomb' (xxv, 69) as a result of breaking her vow for love. To accept St John's offer would allegedly kill Jane (cf. *JE* 475). In St John's case, the death he experiences as a result of his missionary work in India is more than metaphorical: *Jane Eyre* closes with the announcement of his approaching death and the fact that he 'has hitherto sufficed to the toil, and the toil draws near its close: his glorious sun hastens to its setting' (cf. 521).

In Helen's case, it is quite clear that her premature death is largely brought on by Lowood's poor living conditions and the fact that her determination to stay alive is considerably reduced by her longing to return to her 'last home' (cf. *JE* 96) as well as by the unappealing nature of the life available to her. Caroline Helstone's observations regarding the spinster Miss Ainley can easily apply to Helen as well: Caroline never finds Miss Ainley 'oppressed with despondency, or lost in grief'. Yet, she remembers her to have 'allowed there was, and ever had been, little enjoyment in this world for her' and that 'she had tutored her thoughts to tend upwards to Heaven' (*S* 396). And so, Caroline entertains the idea that, 'poor Miss Ainley would cling closer to life if life had more charms for her', musing that, 'God surely did not create us and cause us to live with the sole end of wishing always to die' (*S* 396). Like Miss Ainley, Helen's piety and wish to focus on the 'invisible world and a kingdom of spirits' (*JE* 83) rather than her present circumstances, in part stems from the dreariness of the latter. One could argue that Helen might likewise have clung to life if it had more charms for her.

However, self-abnegation can itself be regarded as denial or negation of the self, and thereby a decay of the individual. The fact that Helen, who practices a doctrine of endurance and self-sacrifice, dies at an early age from tuberculosis, is quite symbolic. Brontë can, in a way, be seen to equate a life spent in denying oneself and making allowances for others' offences, with physical deterioration, presenting it as harmful. This is a fairly radical move. The concept of writing about the death of a child who is too good for this world is admittedly a staple of religious texts during the nineteenth century in particular, as well as in popular fiction during this period, such as Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1841), which features the death of Little Nell, to the great despair of the Victorian reading population. However, Brontë's choice to consistently "kill off", as it were, those characters who preach and live according to a doctrine of self-abnegation, and present this life choice as a contributing factor to their premature death, is less conventional. Helen Burns' name is indicative of an inward fire, yet she is presented as ever composed: even while Miss Scatcherd beats her, 'not a feature of her pensive face alter[s] its ordinary expression'. This is in clear contrast to Jane, whose fingers 'quivered at this spectacle with a sentiment of unavailing and impotent anger' (*JE* 65). It would seem, to use Jane's words, that by keeping the fire of *her* nature continually low, compelling it to burn inwardly and never uttering a cry, Helen might cause the imprisoned flame within herself to *consume vital after vital*. Her creed might in other words be a contributing factor to her early death by consumption (cf. *JE* 470). From a story-line perspective, Jane, who chooses to assert herself and her worth and reject the life of a missionary's wife, is rewarded with being reunited with the man she loves (albeit living in a secluded cottage in the woods, separated from civilization). Helen, the self-denier, on the other hand, dies at the age of fourteen. St. John, similarly, who suppresses his love for Rosamond Oliver and gives his life to the mission, passes away at a fairly young age. While Helen's principles are represented as superior to those of Jane during their conversation, the plot can at large be seen to favour Jane's actions and outlook on life, thus seemingly diminishing Helen's influence and the value of her teachings.

Yet, whereas Jane's relation to Miss Temple, and that of Lucy to Paul Emanuel, are hierarchical, the relation between pupil and informal tutor has a flat structure, which can make it more conducive to the cultivation of a person's critical awareness. Admittedly, some might contest or question the actual hierarchical nature of the relation between Miss Temple and her pupils, and even that between M. Paul and Lucy. Despite the latter's appearance of being more oppressive and overtly hierarchical than the other relations mentioned, the dynamic between M. Paul and Lucy can also be seen to break with conventional power

relations and be characterized by informality: while M. Paul can, in general, be seen to attempt to frighten his pupils into submission and action, his mode of instruction as regards Lucy largely entails provoking her into retorting and challenging his views, thereby encouraging her to speak out of turn and be informal. As regards Miss Temple: in conversation with Helen, superintendent and pupil appear to speak on equal terms and to almost possess the same level of competence¹⁸. Yet, despite the fact that Miss Temple's employment of a maternal approach in part entails distancing herself from conventional roles and power relations, her approach does not undermine her authority over her pupils or diminish the level of respect her pupils have for her. Through Jane's eyes, Miss Temple can rather be seen to exert benevolence from above. While mild and tender towards Jane, Miss Temple's goodness appears hinged upon the fact that she, unlike her peers, *condescends* to Jane's level, and that she, despite her position of authority, appears to treat Jane like an equal in conversation. As a result, Miss Temple creates a safe and constructive learning environment. However, the relation between Jane and her informal tutor, Helen, appears to create an even safer and even more constructive learning environment. Its flat structure and truly informal nature affords both parties the opportunity to speak on actually equal terms and the freedom to challenge one another without having to pay heed to standing, and without fear of potentially speaking out of turn. Brontë can, accordingly, be seen to present the informal tutor as even more conducive to the cultivation of Jane's critical awareness and ability to argue her case.

In conversation with Helen, Jane is comfortable enough and indeed able to speak 'without reserve or softening'. She is allowed the freedom to voice her opinions, but these are also put into perspective by Helen during these exchanges, and Jane is offered another point of view. Jane's refusal of St John's proposal and her choice to speak unreservedly and assert her equality to her master-turned-husband, Mr. Rochester, may be seen as confirmation of the fact that Jane's infantile views will come to reflect those she holds later in life. Yet, her eventual forgiveness of her aunt can be seen as testament to Helen's influence. Similar to her choice to moderate her speech when recounting her aunt's treatment of her to Miss Temple, Jane's eventual absolution of her aunt can be traced back to her conversations with Helen. While the adult Jane attributes the greater part of her accomplishments to the guidance of

¹⁸ While Miss Temple assigns Helen tasks, Jane is astonished at the number of books they have read, and marvels at 'the stores of knowledge *they* possess', *both* seemingly 'familiar with French names and French authors' and conversing 'of nations and times past; of countries far away; [and] of secrets of nature discovered or guessed at' (*JE* 87).

Miss Temple, her formal tutor, (and that this influence has not only been enabled by the superintendent's maternal air, but also her display of friendship and companionship), Helen's advice and outlook on life are sources of reformation for Jane, and her guidance an invaluable supplement to Jane's formal moral education.

3.4 Concluding Remarks

Charlotte Brontë can, in summation, be seen to present three positive pedagogical guises through her depiction of scenes of both formal and informal education. Through her portrayals of the relations between Miss Temple and Jane Eyre, between Paul Emanuel and Lucy Snowe, and between Jane and Helen Burns, Brontë can be seen to envision education as dynamic and divided into stages, each of which requires a different response: Miss Temple represents the character and mode of instruction most conducive for the education of children, based on love and tenderness, whereas M. Paul's person and derisive and challenging pedagogy are presented as ideal for educating young adults. Brontë can also be said to present education as never-ending through her emphasis on conversations between friends and the educational value of such verbal interaction. Her authorship at large represents friendship as a source of reformation throughout life and a valuable if not crucial supplement to formal education.

While the view of education as progressive might not appear revolutionary, Charlotte Brontë's novels were written at a time when popular opinion dictated that middle-class women's formal education ought to comprise the accumulation of accomplishments such as skills in drawing and dancing or acquiring sufficient general knowledge so as not to humiliate one's prospective husband in company¹⁹. If a woman were to receive vocational training, equipping her for a life as a governess, for example, this education would only comprise a few years and be at an elementary level. The concept of going to grammar school before attending university, however, and an education consisting of elementary *and* higher

¹⁹ According to Sue Lonoff, accomplishments 'outranked intellectual achievements in the view of most parents and headmistresses' ('Belgian Essays' 461). Irish social activist and reformer, Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904), who studied at what was known as the best English ladies' school in the mid-thirties, related that '[e]verything was taught us in the inverse ration of its true importance. At the bottom of the scale were Morals and Religion, and at the top were Music and Dancing' (64). Victorian art critic, John Ruskin, so famously contended that while 'a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly, ... a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as it may enable her to sympathize in her husband's pleasure, and in those of his best friends' (100).

education, was to be reserved for men until the end of the 1800s, almost half a century after Brontë's death. Brontë's ideals can also be regarded as controversial in that she not just advocated for further education for women at a time when female education was not a priority, but in that she comes across as an ardent supporter of domestic education at a time when education was gradually being institutionalized. At a time when 'familiar conversation' was replaced with 'Q and A' books, and its 'informal and digressive' format increasingly critiqued for 'sowing the seeds of idleness' and *inhibiting* 'serious study' (Robertson 11), Charlotte Brontë's novels feature inspirational pedagogues, formal and informal, who 'guide on the side' and influence their pupils by *breaking* with or modifying conventional power dynamics. Brontë can thus be deemed controversial for not only reverting back to the Socratic mode of instruction, but by mirroring late twentieth/early twenty-first century education.

While M. Paul may seem to represent institutionalized education, his method has two essential traits in common with that of Miss Temple and Helen Burns: the influence of all of Brontë's pedagogical ideals are contingent upon the establishment of an emotional bond between tutor and pupil, and their engagement with their pupil is largely based on conversation. Whether this emotional bond is based on passion and the need to challenge and conquer, or on love or friendship and equality, and regardless of their varying hierarchical nature, Brontë's educational scenes all the same argue that the foundation of an emotional connection is necessary for the tutor to be able to reach his or her pupils and give them the proper motivation to take charge of their own education.

4 Conclusion

My introduction touched upon the fact that while the social content of the works of some nineteenth-century women authors—such as Harriet Beecher-Stowe and Elizabeth Gaskell—has been recognized by contemporary and later criticism, that of many others has been overlooked. It also suggested that this tendency might have been caused by the predominant association of women authors with the personal and confessional (cf. Byron 79). The past decades have seen the historical recovery of many Victorian female authors, and the recognition of hitherto unnoticed female social commentary in popular fiction. Charlotte Brontë has been considered a proto-feminist writer, and her engagement with the Woman Question and the stigmatization of governesses been acknowledged by critics during her lifetime and since then. By some standards, Brontë's commitment to 'the personal and romantic' admittedly prevents her from being considered a social novelist (cf. Kucich 39; Lane 204; Lewes 165). Her works were moreover first included in modern feminist literary studies in the 1980s. Yet, the feminist dimension of Charlotte Brontë's works has not, in other words, gone entirely unnoticed.

However, on the topic of Brontë's engagement with education, critics often interpret her employment of educational settings along a romantic or sexual axis, or view it as a strand of the autobiographical. It is interpreted as a testament to the fact that Brontë based her novels on personal experiences, or used as support for the claim that she used her works as means of acting out her sexual and romantic fantasies (cf. Barker 602-603; Harman 18; Lewis 289). It is also perceived as a romantic catalyst by being the place and circumstances that unite Lucy and M. Paul in *Villette*, Frances and Crimsworth in *The Professor*, Shirley and Louis in *Shirley*, and in a sense also Caroline and Robert in the same novel²⁰ (cf. Barker). This thesis has sought to demonstrate that the educational setting in Charlotte Brontë's novels is more than a backdrop, or a facilitator for romance. My aim has been to show that her

²⁰ Cf. the chapter entitled 'Coriolanus' in particular, where Caroline in many ways conducts a seminar on literature and ethics. Caroline moreover seeks Robert's guidance during her lessons with Hortense. According to the narrator of *Shirley*, 'Mr Moore possesses a clear, tranquil brain of his own; almost as soon as he looked at Caroline's little difficulties they seemed to dissolve beneath his eye: in two minutes he would explain all; in two words give the key to the puzzle' (77). Caroline appears to value his approach, thinking that 'if Hortense could only teach like him, how much faster she might learn' (77). Their relationship is therefore not without its pedagogical aspects.

educational scenes present an active social agenda, evaluating the education of her day and presenting an alternative educational paradigm.

This paradigm can both be regarded as reactionary in relation to the time in which her novels were written, and as progressive in that it in many ways mirrors twenty-first-century practices and developments in education. Charlotte Brontë's authorship values the dialogic format of instruction and informal ways of teaching and learning. These approaches were increasingly considered passé in her own day, but form the basis for today's seminar format, for example. In particular, Brontë's novels promote instructive conversations between friends, or what we now term 'collaborative learning'. Her works present novel reading as educational, and solitary reading as a sign of intelligence and commitment to one's own learning, even if a slightly unusual occupation. This was at a time when novel reading was first and foremost considered a social and past-time activity, conducted aloud. Today, novel reading is a central part of basic education. Charlotte Brontë's ideal pedagogues are moreover able to influence her novels' protagonists by way of a more informal approach, in a sense breaking with the conventional educational power relations of her day. Her tutors emphasize active learning, encouraging their pupils to self-study rather than merely transmitting knowledge, which has been a common practice up until the late twentieth century. In line with modern pedagogy, Brontë's pedagogues guide on the side and place the pupil at the centre. In light of this, Charlotte Brontë's representation of both formal and informal education is not only forward-looking and controversial considering the time at which they were conceived; her novels can be said to expound a theory.

The frustration that inspired and germinated into my current thesis was in part one with the idea of the social novel. Author of the influential *The Social Novel in England 1830-1850* (1973)²¹, Louis Cazamian (1877-1965), explains that 'by social novel we mean 'novel with a social thesis'' (7). The social novel is, in other words, a novel with a social agenda and one that seeks to unfold a theory. Keeping in mind that Brontë devoted much of her authorship to writing about education or the absence of it, why can she not be deemed a social novelist? In my research on Brontë criticism, I found that even though her novels have been recognized by many as dealing with societal issues, critics have all the same been wary of pronouncing her works as social novels per se. In his elaboration of Brontë's quite controversial representation of sexuality and repression, John Kucich is all the same keen to stress the fact that he considers Brontë's vision 'the least explicitly "social"' of the three

²¹ The original version, *Le Roman Social en Angleterre*, was published in 1903.

included in his study, namely Brontë, Charles Dickens and George Eliot (39): ‘Though she did aspire to address “the warped system of things”, he argues, Charlotte Brontë’s ‘angle of vision always returns to the narrow sphere of the personal and romantic’ (39).

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* defines the social novel as a ‘work of fiction in which a prevailing social problem, such as gender, race, or class prejudice, is dramatized through its effect on the characters of a novel’. However, especially in a nineteenth-century context, the English social novel is often used interchangeably with the condition-of-England novel, or the industrial novel. Cazamian united ‘social novel’ to unite these three subgenres, and Michael Wheeler deems the condition-of-England novel a precursor to the social novels of Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli and Elizabeth Gaskell (19). According to Louis James, the social novel ‘grew out of a profound realignment of public consciousness, brought about by the urban and industrial changes at the beginning of the nineteenth century’ (544). Novels pertaining to the social novel genre are said to share an engagement with the social consequences of industrialism for working class families, and the poor (Colby 1995, 18). Yet, is education not a social matter? The subject permeates Charlotte Brontë’s authorship, as this thesis has sought to demonstrate. Charles Dickens’ critique of the educational system—especially in *Hard Times* (1854) and *David Copperfield* (1850)—is often evoked as an example of the socially charged nature of his works (cf. Orwell 4; Niyogi 49, 52). Yet, Brontë’s consistent address of education is predominantly read in autobiographical or sexual and romantic terms.

One could of course argue that gender might be a contributing factor in the viewing of Dickens as social and political and Brontë as personal and confessional. However, it is even more probable that Brontë’s engagement with school structures, even that in *Jane Eyre*, is not regarded as socially or politically charged due to her address of the education of the *middle* class. Social novels are, as we have seen, expected to deal with the societal problems of the working class and the poor. Yet, do not the middle class experience societal problems? The concept of writing about the social consequences of industrialism is apparently quite broad: a novel addressing the social consequences of industrialism can be one that deals with day-to-day factory life, child labour or urbanization, but also a novel that addresses the many Reform Acts enacted during the mid-nineteenth century (cf. Colby 1995). An area that experienced great change during this period was the educational system. The National Education act of 1833 not only aimed at ‘promot[ing] the religious and moral education of the labouring classes’, but also entailed the government giving financial assistance to schools in general (parliament.uk). The education acts were to benefit (if only marginally) and make

education more accessible to children of all socioeconomic statuses. Writing about the meagre conditions at a Yorkshire boarding school, as Brontë does in *Jane Eyre*, would then surely be a social action?

While defining Charlotte Brontë as a social novelist is not a goal in itself, I have found that the social novel conventions are often used to argue against Brontë's social or political dimension. The fact that Brontë did not write archetypal social novels is often used to prove that Brontë did not write on societal matters at all. This notion is particularly present in *Shirley* criticism. Victorian critic George Henry Lewes appeared to view this particular novel as both a failed romance and a failed social novel in that *Shirley* does not narrow its scope to one particular subject, but encompasses several: 'the authoress never seem distinctly to have made up her mind what she was to do; whether to describe the habits and manners of Yorkshire with its social aspects in the days of King Lud or to paint character or to tell a love story' (165). While acknowledging *Shirley* as an exploration of the Woman Question, Juliet Barker argues that Brontë's choice not to elaborate on the sufferings of the former mill workers is a testament to the fact that the author did not write on 'matters of public interest' (cf. 712). My introduction to this thesis touched upon the fact that Brontë's interest in character psychology might have distracted readers from her novels' engagement with their social backdrop. Yet, many also regard the complexity of Brontë's novels, and the fact that they touch on several themes instead of one, as something that hinders these works from being perceived as social commentary. Many appear to view the fact that *Shirley* in particular unites seemingly unconnected topics such as the riots of dispossessed workers and women's plea for an occupation and a social function unconnected with marriage, as evidence of Charlotte Brontë's lack of political consciousness.

Instead of exploring Charlotte Brontë's scenes of education as evidence of her tendency to base her writing on her own life experiences, or as a sexual or romantic catalyst, I have sought to examine various aspects of the pedagogy they promote. My aim has been to demonstrate that despite its subtlety, an active social agenda all the same emerges from Brontë's pages. I have wished to make my contribution to the ever-growing study on social and political dimensions in Victorian women's authorships.

5 Works Cited

Primary Sources

- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Reprint. London: Penguin Books, 2006.
- . *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 1829-1847*, vol. I. Ed. Margaret Smith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Google Books.
- . *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 1848-1951*, vol. II. Ed. Margaret Smith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. Google Books.
- . *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë 1852-1855*, vol. III. Ed. Margaret Smith. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004. Google Books.
- . *Shirley*. 1849. Reprint. London: Penguin Books, 2012. Print.
- . 'Preface'. In *The Professor*. Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1857. vi-viii. Google Books.
- . 'Preface'. In *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Reprint, ed. Margaret Smith. London: Oxford UP, 1973.
- . *The Professor*. 1857. Reprint. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1994.
- . *Villette*. 1853. Reprint. London, Penguin Books, 1993.

Secondary Sources

- Adams, James Eli. 'Victorian Sexualities'. In *Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. Herbert Tucker. Malden, MA: Blackwell publishing, 1999. 125-137.
- Adamson, John William. *English Education: 1798-1902*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1964. Google Books.
- Allott, Miriam. 'Introduction'. In *Jane Eyre and Villette: A Selection of Critical Essays*, ed. Miriam Allott. London: Macmillan Press, 1973.
- Amies, Marion. 'Amusing and Instructive Conversations: The Literary Genre and Its Relevance to Home Education'. 1985. *History of Education* 14, No. 2 (23 May 2006): 87-99. Taylor and Francis Online.
- Auerbach, Nina. *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Austen-Leigh, James Edward. *A Memoir of Jane Austen*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2007.
- Barker, Juliet. *The Brontës*. 1994. Rev. ed., London: Abacus, 2010.
- Bergman, Carolyn Vellenga. *Creole Crossings: Domestic Fiction and the Reform of Colonial Slavery*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2006. Google Books.

- Boone, Joseph Allen. 'Policing and Depolicing the Theory of the Novel: Repression, Transgression, and the Erotics of "Heretic Narrative" in "Victorian" Fiction: Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*'. In *Libidinal Undercurrents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. 32-61.
- Brontë, Patrick. *The Cottage in the Wood; Or the Art of Becoming Rich & Happy*. 1818. Second ed. Bradford: Abraham Holroyd; Michael Nelson, 1860. Google Books.
- Brown, Susan. 'Economical Representations: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Jenny" and Augusta Webster's "A Castaway", and the Campaign Against the Contagious Diseases Acts'. *Victorian Review* 17, No. 1 (Summer 1991): 78-95. John Hopkins UP. Project Muse.
- Budden, Maria E.. *Thoughts on Domestic Education*. 1826. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, Google Books.
- Byron, Glennis. 'Rethinking the Dramatic Monologue: Victorian Women Poets and Social Critique'. *Essays and Studies* 56 (2003): 78-98. Gale Gengage Literature Resource Center.
- Chapone, Hester. 'On Politeness and Accomplishments'. *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. 1773. Edinburgh: Fairbairn & Anderson, 1821. 98-115. Google Books.
- . 'Essay II: On Conversation'. *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse: Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*. 1775. Reprint. London: J. Mawman et al, 1810. 13-28. Google Books.
- Chase, Karen. *Eros and Psyche: The Representation of Personality in Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens and George Eliot*. 1984. Reprint. London: Routledge, 2014. Google Books.
- Clark-Beattie, Rosemary. 'Fables of Rebellion: Anti-Catholicism and the Structure of *Villette*'. In *EHL* 53, No. 4 (Winter, 1986): 821-847. John Hopkins UP. Jstor.
- Clarke, Michael M. 'Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, Mid-Victorian Anti-Catholicism, and the Turn to Secularism'. *EHL* 78, No. 4 (2011): 967-989. John Hopkins UP.
- Cobbe, Frances Power. *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe as Told by Herself*, vol. 1. London: Bentley, 1894.
- Cohen, Michèle. 'The Pedagogy of Conversation in the Home: 'Familiar Conversation' as a Pedagogical Tool in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century England'. In *Oxford Review of Education* 41, No. 4 (25 Jun 2015): 447-463. Taylor & Francis Online.
- Colby, Robert Alan. 'Villette: Lucy Snowe and the Good Governess'. *Literature with a Purpose: Major and Minor Nineteenth-Century Novels*. 1967. Reprint. Bloomington and London: Indiana UP, 1968. 178-211.

- Davies, Stevie. 'Introduction'. In *Jane Eyre*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. xi-xxxiv.
- Davin, Anna. "'Mind that you do as you are told": Reading Books for Board School Girls 1870-1902'. *Feminist Review* 3 (1 Jan 1979): 89-98. Jstor.
- 'Death of Currer Bell'. *Daily Alta California* 6, No. 136 (30 May 1855): 1. California Digital Newspaper Collection. cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=DAC18550530.2.4. Accessed 8 Sep. 2016.
- Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*. 1847-1851. Reprint, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1992.
- Easson, Angus. 'Two Suppressed Opinions in Mrs Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë"'. 1974. *Bronte Society Transaction* 16, No 4 (1974): 281-283. Taylor Francis Online.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*. 1975. Anniversary ed.. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Google Books.
- Edgeworth, Maria. *Essays on Practical Education*, volume 1. 1798. Reprint. London: R. Hunter et al, 1815. Google Books.
- Eliot, Simon. 'Reading by Artificial Light in the Victorian Age'. In *Reading and the Victorians*, eds. Dr Matthew Bradley, and Dr Juliet John. Surrey: Ashgate, 2015.
- Fisk, Nicole Plyler. "'I Heard Her Murmurs': Decoding Narratives of Female Desire in *Jane Eyre* and *Secresy*'. *Brontë Studies* 33 (Nov 2008): 218-231.
- Flint, Kate. 'Reading Practices'. In *The Book History Reader*, eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. 316-323. Google Books.
- . *The Woman Reader: 1837-1914*. 1993. Second ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. 1976. Reprint. New York, Vintage Books, 1990. Google Books.
- Gargano, Elizabeth. *Reading Victorian Schoolrooms: Childhood and Education in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. 1857. Reprint. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2008.
- 'George Eliot's Moral Anatomy'. *The Spectator* 5 Oct 1872: 6-16. *The Spectator Archive*. <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/page/5th-october-1872/>. Accessed 11 Oct 2016.
- Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. 1979. Second ed.. New Haven: Yale Nota Bene Press, 2000.

- Gleadle, Kathryn. ‘“Opinions deliver’d in conversation’: Conversation, Politics, and Gender in the Late Eighteenth Century’. In *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, and Institutions*. Ed. J. Harris. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. 61-78. Google Books.
- Harman, Claire. *Charlotte Brontë: A Life*. London: Penguin Books, 2015. Google Books.
- Harper, Janet. ‘Charlotte Brontë's Heger Family and Their School’. *Blackwood's Magazine*, no. 191 (April 1912): 461-69. The Internet Archive.
- Hook, Walter Farquar. *The Means of Rendering More Efficient the Education of the People*, sixth ed. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1846.
- ‘An Inquiry into the State of Girls’ Fashionable Schools’. *Frazer’s Magazine* vol. 31 (June 1845): 703-712. Google Books.
- Ipfling, Heintz-Jürgen and J. J. Chambliss. ‘Education: England’. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. <https://global.britannica.com/topic/education/National-education-under-enlightened-rulers>. Last updated 4 June 2015. Accessed 1 Feb 2016.
- Jackson, Anne W.. ‘It “Might Gift Me with a World of Delight”: Charlotte Brontë and the Pleasures of Acting’. In *The Brontës in the World of the Arts*, eds. Sandra Hagan and Juliette Wells. Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008. 125-148.
- James, Louis. ‘The Nineteenth-Century Social Novel in England’. *Encyclopedia of Literature and Criticism*, ed. by Martin Coyle et al. 1990. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003. 544-553. Google Books.
- Jan, K. M.. ‘The Drug of Dreams’: Charlotte Behind *Jane Eyre*. *Studies in Women Writers in English, vol. 4*. Eds. Mohit Kumar Ray and Rama Kundu. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2005. Google Books.
- Jane Eyre*. Dir. Susanna White. By Charlotte Brontë and Sandy Welch. BBC, 2006. Mini-Series.
- Johnson, Dr. Samuel. *The History of Rasselas Prince of Abbyssinia*. 1759. Reprint, ed. John P. Hardy. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968.
- ‘Justice for Catholics’. *The Leader* 34 (16 Nov. 1850): 802-803. *Nineteenth Century Collections Online*. <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/39THU0>
- Kaufman, Will. *Civil War in American Culture*. Edinburgh UP, 2006.
- King, Alison. ‘From the Sage of the Stage to the Guide on the Side’. *College Teaching* 41, No. 1 (Winter 1993): 30-35. Jstor.
- Klein, Lawrence E.. ‘Gender, Conversation and the Public Sphere in Early Eighteenth Century England’. *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices*. Edited by Judith Still and Michael Worton. Manchester UP, 1993. 100-115.

- Kucich, John. *Repression in Victorian Fiction*. California: California UP, 1987.
- . 'Passionate Reserve and Reserved Passion in the Works of Charlotte Brontë'. *EHL* 52, No 4. (Winter, 1985): 913-937. John Hopkins UP. Jstor.
- Lewes, George Henry. 'The Pope, or Free Thought?'. *The Leader* 33 (9 Nov. 1850): 780. *Nineteenth Century Collections Online*. <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/39Dfy5>
- . Review of *Shirley*. 1850. *Edinburgh Review* 91: 153-73. In *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage*. Reprint, ed. Miriam Allott. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2001. 160-170. Google Books.
- Lewis, C. S. *Selected Literary Essays*. 1969. Reprint, ed. Walter Hooper. Cambridge UP, 2013. Google Books.
- Lichtenberg, Georg Cristoph. *Georg Christoph Lichtenburg: Philosophical Writings*. Albany: Suny Press, 2012. Google Books.
- Litvak, Joseph. *Caught in the Act: Theatricality in the Nineteenth-Century English Novel*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Livingstone, Judith Hochstein. *The Impact of Africa Upon Major British Literary Figures, 1787-1902*. Doctoral dissertation. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977. Google Books.
- Locke, John. *Thoughts Concerning Education*. 1693. The Federalist Papers Project.
- Lonoff, Sue. 'Charlotte Brontë's Belgian Essays: The Discourse of Empowerment'. *Victorian Studies* 32, No. 3 (Spring 1989): 387-409. Indiana UP. Jstor.
- . 'The Education of Charlotte Brontë: A Pedagogical Case Study'. *Pedagogy* 1, No. 3 (Fall, 2001): 457-477. Project Muse.
- Macaulay, Catherine. *Letters on Education*. 1790. Reprint. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014.
- Martineau, Harriet. *Daily News* 3 Feb 1853. *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage*. 1974. Reprint, ed. Professor Miriam Allott. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2001. 171-174. Google Books.
- Maurice, Mary Atkinson. *Governess Life: Its Trials, Duties, and Encouragements*. London: John W. Parker, West Strand, 1849. Google Books.
- Melnyk, Julie. 'Introduction'. In *Women's Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Transfiguring the Faith of Their Fathers*. New York: Garland, 1998.
- Michie, Elsie. 'From Simianized Irish to Oriental Despots: Heathcliff, Rochester and Racial Difference.'" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 25, No. 2 (Winter 1992): 125-140. Duke UP. Jstor.

- Miller, Thomas P.. 'The Expansion of the Reading Public, The Standardization of Educated Taste and Usage, and The Essay as Blurred Genre'. In *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in British Cultural Provinces*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1997. 32-61. Google Books.
- Moglen, Helene. 'Shirley: Feminism and Power'. In *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conveived* 1976. Reprinted in *Shirley* by Charlotte Brontë, ed. Jessica Cox. London: Penguin Books, 2012. 661-702.
- Mozley, Anne. *Christian Remembrancer* April 1853. Reprinted in *Brontës: The Critical Heritage*. 1974. Reprint, ed. Professor Miriam Allott. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2001, pp. 202-208. Google Books.
- Munroe, April. "'Haunted and Obeah": Gothic Spaces and Monstrous Landscapes in Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*'. *Studied in the Humanities* 42 (Dec. 2015): 108. Gale Literature Resource Center.
- Nelson, Claudia. 'Growing Up: Childhood'. *Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. Herbert E. Tucker. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1999. 69-81.
- Niyogi, Ralla Guha. 'Text, Reader and Metaphor: Exploring Links between 'Disparate Domains' in Some Novels of Charles Dickens'. *Special Issue on the Bicentennial of His Birth (1812-2012), Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* iv, no. 1 (2012): 46-57. Google Books.
- Nola, Robert and Gürol Irzik. *Philosophy, Science, Education and Culture*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2005.
- Orwell, George. 'Charles Dickens'. In *All Art is Propaganda: Critical Essays*. Jan 1941. Reprint. Orlando FL: Harcourt, 2008. 1-62. Google Books.
- Peterson, Karen and J. J. Wilson. *Women Artists: Recognition and Reappraisal*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- Paravisini-Gerbert, Lizabeth. 'Women Possessed: Eroticism and Exoticism in the Representation of Woman as Zombie'. In *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santeria, Obeah, and the Caribbean*. Eds. Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Pravisini-Gerbert. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Reuters UP, 2000. 37-58. Google Books.
- The Polite Lady; or a Course of Female Education*. Philadelphia: Printed for Mathew Carey, 1798. Google Books.
- Quarm, Joan. 'Pink Silk and Purple Gray: Charlotte Brontë's Wish-Fulfillment in *Villette*'. *The Journal of the Brontë Society* 31, issue 1 (2006):1-6. *Taylor & Francis Online*.

- ‘Queen Bees or Working Bees?’ 12 Nov 1859. *The Saturday Review: Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, vol viii. London: The Office, 1859. Google Books.
- Robertson, Joseph. *An Essay on the Education of Young Ladies*. London: T. Cadell, 1798.
- Ruskin, John. *Sesames and Lilies*. Rev. and enlarged ed. London: Smith, Elder and co., 1871. Google Books.
- Sandford, Elizabeth. ‘The Fall of the Constitution’. In *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 32. Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1832. Hathi Trust Digital Library. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000496211>.
- . *Female Improvement*. 1833. Reprinted in London: Longman, Rees et. al., 1836. Google Books.
- ‘Schooling Before the 19th Century’. *parliament.uk*. Accessed 3 Jan 2016. <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/before19thcentury/>
- Scott, Sir Walter. *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field*. 1808. London: William Smith, 113 Fleet Street, 1840. Google Books.
- Shore, Emily. ‘March 26 [1833]’ *Journal of Emily Shore, 1891*. 1891. Reprint. London: Forgotten Books, 2013. 40-1.
- Shuttleworth, Sally. *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*. Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Smith, George. ‘Charlotte Brontë’. *George Smith: a Memoir*. Cambridge UP, 2012. 82-105. Google Books.
- Smith, Margaret. ‘Introduction’. In Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. London: Oxford UP, 1993.
- ‘Social Problem Novel’. *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 1 Nov. 2007. <http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/102495>. Accessed 12 Oct 2016.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. ‘Three Women Texts and a Critique of Imperialism’. *New Literary History* 24, No. 1 (1 Jan 1993): 17-43. Gale Online.
- Sutphin, Christine. ‘Human Tigress, Factious Angels, and Nursery Saints: Augusta Webster’s *A Castaway* and Victorian Discourses on Prostitution and Women’s Sexuality’. *Victorian Poetry* 38, No. 4 (Winter 2000): 511-531. West Virginia UP. Project Muse.
- Swift, Jonathan. ‘On Sleeping in Church’. 1776. *The Works of Rev. Jonathan Swift*, vol. xiv. Ed. Thomas Sheridan. New York: William Durell and Co., 1812. 119-128. Google Books.
- Thormählen, Marianne. *The Brontës and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.

- Tressler, Beth. 'Illegible Minds: Charlotte Brontë's Early Writings and the Psychology of Moral Management in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*'. In *Studies in the Novel* 47, No. 1 (Spring 2015): 1-19. John Hopkins UP. Project Muse.
- Wakefield, Priscilla. *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex; with Suggestions for Its Improvement*. London: J. Johnson, Darton and Harvey, 1798. Google Books.
- Watts, Isaac. *The Improvement of the Mind*. 1741. Second ed. London: J. Brackstone and T. Longman. 1743. Google Books.
- Wheeler, Michael. *English Fiction of the Victorian Period 1830-1890*. New York: Longman, 1994.
- Williams, Derek 'The Dark Continent: Europe's Encroachment Upon English Identity in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*'. MA thesis. Clemson University, 2011.
- Wolffe, John. 'The Jesuit as Villain in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction'. In *The Church and Literature*. Eds. Peter Clarke and Charlotte Methuen. Woodbridge, England: Boydell, 2012. 308-320.