Verbal and visual intertexts: an approach to analyzing and teaching two novels by Charlotte Bronte

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Verbal and visual intertexts: An approach to analyzing and teaching
two novels by Charlotte Brontë

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Literature)
Major Professor: Dr. Brenda O. Daly

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1998
Graduate College
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of
Kristy Marie Hinz
has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

[Signatures]
Committee Member
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For the Major Program
For the Graduate College
For Mom and Dad.

Reader, they are wonderful.
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INTRODUCTION: INTERTEXTUALITY IN BRONTÉ’S NOVELS

It is truly awe-inspiring to realize how much of Charlotte Bronté’s own dreams and life can be found on the pages of her novels. Many elements in Bronté’s life did not occur as she would have wished; for that reason, she lives out many of her fondest dreams through the protagonists of her novels. Bronté’s writing also includes references to other writers, genres, and methods that reflect her preferences and choices in life. All of these elements appear as intertexts; therefore, this study explores what Julia Kristeva defines as intrapsychic or auto(bio)graphic traces in two of Bronté’s novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. Since this is a somewhat specialized definition of intertextuality, I will pause here briefly to provide a fuller definition of the term.

The term “intertextuality” has been found in literary studies ever since it was coined in the 1960’s by Julia Kristeva, and throughout its existence, it has developed several meanings. If one breaks down the word “intertextuality,” it literally means “across texts.” This idea parallels Kristeva’s definition of intertextuality, which is “the result of the intersection of a number of voices of a number of textual interventions, which are combined in a semantic field, but also in the syntactic and phonic fields of the explicit utterance” (Waller 281). These voices can be seen, as Kristeva states, in the “intersection of external plurality at different levels” (Waller 281). In other words, intertextuality is the voice heard in a piece of writing, but this is a multi-vocal voice made up of influences from several internal and external elements that can resound not only in the meaning of the text, but also in the style of the writing.

Since intertextuality can be found in countless literary works, many critics have embraced and developed their own definitions of intertextuality. An
important school of criticism, Post-Structuralism, defines intertextuality as "always in process, continually changing its shape. In this view, a text is a fabric simultaneously being woven and unwoven, made up not of a uniform 'material' but by the traces of other texts" (O'Donnell and Con Davis x). When many people hear the word "intertextuality," they refer to this Post-Structuralist definition of a text consisting of "traces of other texts." This common view of intertextuality is applicable to Brontë's texts. Allan Pasco adds that intertextuality involves "any textual exploitation of another text. It would include satire, parody...reference, allusion, modeling, borrowing, even plagiarism" (5), and he divides the Post-Structuralist view of intertextuality into three categories: allusion, imitation, and opposition.

Pasco's first category, allusion, means "different texts--both the one in hand and those that are external--are integrated metaphorically into something new" (5). In Jane Eyre, the idea of allusion can be illustrated by the paintings Jane shows to Rochester. All of the paintings employ verbal images of sin, temptation, and death found in John Milton's Paradise Lost to foreshadow the sin, temptation, and death that Jane will encounter in her life at Thornfield. A reader of Jane Eyre who familiar with Milton's text will understand the perilousness of Jane's situation more clearly because of prior knowledge of the severity and consequences of these same sins in Milton's work.

One must, however, be aware that not all moments of intertextuality are as explicit as a direct allusion to another text. Intertextuality can also be seen in the various influences on a writer. Pasco would call the relationship between Brontë's work and these influences "imitational," which means "the author fits his [or her] text into a tradition and willingly attempts to use its means--whether styles, forms, lexicon, or devices--and its values to echo previous success" (Pasco 5). An example of a tradition that leads to imitational intertexts in Brontë's work is the
governess novel, specifically Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, which was published in 1740. As Susan Lanser demonstrates, the plot of *Jane Eyre* parallels that of Richardson's novel, which is the story about a pretty servant girl named Pamela who resists the sexual advances of her master, Mr. B. However, by the end of the novel, Mr. B is reformed by Pamela's example of chastity. Like Pamela, Jane Eyre is a servant with feelings for her master, Mr. Rochester, and just as Pamela would have been tarnished by Mr. B if she would not have resisted his advances, Jane Eyre would also have been negatively affected had she married Rochester when he was already wedded to Bertha. Brontë no doubt in part modeled *Jane Eyre* after *Pamela* because of Richardson's success, and she certainly wished the same fate for her novel.

Of course, other writers are not the only influences that can lead to imitational intertextual moments in a novel; genres are also important influences that can be echoed within a novel. An apt illustration of a genre Brontë uses in her writing is fairy tales, which were and continue to be very popular forms of literature. Elements from Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and Bluebeard are evident in many of Brontë's novels. For example, echoes of the story of Little Red Riding Hood are seen in *Jane Eyre*'s experiences at Lowood and in her description of Mr. Brocklehurst: “What a face he had... what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large, prominent teeth!” (*Jane Eyre* 64). By imbedding familiar story lines into her novels, Brontë (according to Pasco's definition) is appealing to readers by using a genre to which her readers can relate. Certainly, influences from one or multiple sources can affect a writer, and these influences lead to imitational intertextual moments within a writer's work.

Pasco's final category, "opposition," can also be found in Brontë's work. "In opposition—whether irony or satire or even negative commentary and
comparison—the signified images resist integration and emphasize disparateness” (Pasco 5). In *Jane Eyre*, St. John, Jane’s long-lost cousin, is very similar to Greatheart, a character in John Bunyan’s novel/morals guidebook, *Pilgrim’s Progress*. St. John is a “pillar of patriarchy” (Gilbert and Gubar 366) who wants Jane to live a life of servitude with him. However, Jane resists St. John, refusing to be subdued by him. Here we see Brontë’s opposition to the teachings in *Pilgrim’s Progress*: she refused to succumb to its prescriptions of how people should live their lives. By modeling St. John after Greatheart and having Jane resist the fate he prescribes for her, Brontë resists and revises Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. She and her protagonists refuse to submit to its teachings on how individuals should live their lives; instead, Brontë and her protagonists live in their own ways and make their own decisions and choices in their lives. Brontë “re­vision[s]” (Rich 166) *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and “creates a new entity greater than any of its [the “old” text] constituent parts” (Pasco 13-14).

All of these approaches to intertextuality are valid, and all have been applied to Brontë’s work. However, there is an additional approach to intertextuality that critics have not yet thoroughly investigated in Brontë’s work: intrapsychic intertextuality. Kristeva explains intrapsychic intertextuality as

the notion that the participation of different texts at different levels reveals a particular mental activity. And analysis should not limit itself simply to identifying texts that participate in the final texts, nor to identifying their sources, but should understand that what is being dealt with is a specific dynamics of the subject of the utterance, who consequently, precisely because of this intertextuality, is not an individual in the etymological sense of the term, not an identity. In other words, the discovery of intertextuality at a formal level leads us to an intrapsychic or psychoanalytic finding, if you will, concerning the status
of the "creator," the one who produces a text by placing himself or herself at the intersection of this plurality of texts on their very different levels. (Waller 281)

"Intrapsychic intertextuality" means that a writer uses his or her own accomplishments, failures, and dreams, as well as written texts, as intertexts with his or her writing. Brontë bases the experiences of her protagonists on her own life, but she allows her protagonists to attain the dreams she is unable to accomplish; these intrapsychic moments are "wish-fulfillments" made by Brontë in regards to her own life. The intrapsychic intertexts in Brontë's novels are symptoms of how Brontë makes situations evolve for her characters in the ways she would have liked them to evolve for herself. In Jane Eyre and Villette, many of Jane's and Lucy's wishes and aspirations parallel Brontë's, except events turn out to benefit them, and they are able to find happiness and satisfaction in their lives. Bronte's life, although she did experience some happiness, was filled with much heartache and sadness because events in her life did not evolve as she wished. A specific example of this is her relationship with Monsieur Heger, the headmaster of the school where she taught in Brussels. Brontë loved him and no doubt wished to be with him; however, he was a married man and her dream was forever unrealized:

It was only too probable that a girl like Charlotte, bred on the most extravagant romantic poetry, should one day come to dedicate her whole heart and imagination to the service of just such an unrequited and unrecognized love... [but] it was not unrecognized by Madame Heger. (Gerin 227)

Brontë was prevented from being with the man she loved; therefore, in Jane Eyre, Brontë arranges events so that Jane is able to spend her life with Rochester, even
though he, like Heger, was a married man.

Another example of Brontë’s wish-fulfillment writing is in *Villette*. Lucy Snowe desires to have her own school, and Brontë organizes occurrences in the novel so that this happens because for Brontë, the dream of having her own school was never fulfilled. She and her two sisters desperately wanted to operate their own school to escape lives as governesses and also avoid moving away from their home in Haworth. Unfortunately, this did not happen for the Brontë sisters, and they had no other choice but to earn their living as governesses. Brontë attains many of her dreams through her novels. Therefore, one could view Brontë’s writing as a type of “therapy” for her because her most intimate dreams and feelings can be seen and are resolved in the pages of her novels. This “therapy” found in Brontë’s writing is on a continuum with opposition on one end and wish fulfillment on the other: through her protagonists, Brontë can effectively resist and re-vision what she cannot control in her own life. As one can see in Brontë’s writing, intrapsychic intertexts, which transform the autobiographical, can be as powerful as other types of intertexts.

The intrapsychic intertexts found in Brontë’s writing have three distinct forms: autobiographical, literary, and visual. Autobiographical intertexts involve elements of a writer’s own life and include wishes, memories (memory texts), lived experiences, and letters. Examples of autobiographical intertexts abound Brontë’s writing. For example, Brontë based *Villette* on her own teaching experiences in Brussels, and when the novel was first published, several of Brontë’s friends and co-workers were able to identify the individuals who served as prototypes for the various characters in the novel. Also, the first section of *Jane Eyre* is based on Brontë’s childhood experiences at Cowan Bridge School. Elements of Brontë’s negative experience at Cowan Bridge and with the Reverend Carus Wilson echo within the descriptions of Lowood School (which Jane attends) and Mr.
Brocklehurst (who is the superintendent of Lowood). When Jane Eyre was published in 1847, there was an uproar about Brontë’s portrayal of Cowan Bridge because several people could discern from details given by Brontë in her novel that she was referring to her former school.

The second type of intrapsychic intertextuality is literary intertexts. These include all the writers and their texts and styles that influenced Brontë’s writing: Lord Byron’s Don Juan, William Wordsworth’s “Lucy Gray,” John Milton’s Paradise Lost, John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, Samuel Richardson’s Pamela, Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, and Thomas Bewick’s A History of British Birds. An example of literary intrapsychic intertexts is seen when Brontë “echoes” Lord Byron and his “Byronic” hero in her writing. In his most well-known novel, Don Juan, Lord Byron presents the Byronic hero as a “brooding and defiant romantic character” (Groliers) who is both darkly evil and thoroughly attractive.

But whatsoe’er he had of love reposed
On that beloved daughter; she had been
The only thing which kept his heart unclosed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and seen,
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean
His feelings from all milk of human kindness,
And turn him like the Cyclops mad with blindness. (120)

While the Byronic hero is aware of sin and evil, he tries to eradicate guilt through acts of personal freedom. Brontë’s Mr. Rochester possesses all of these characteristics, and at the beginning of Jane Eyre, Mr. Rochester is the archetypical Byronic hero—a man with a “past” who is mysterious and wealthy, and much older than the protagonist. All of these traits are found in the heroes of Byron’s works—works that made Byron extremely popular and successful as a writer. Brontë no doubt emulated his work in hope of a similar success. However, it should be noted that Brontë punishes her Byronic hero, for at the end of Jane
Eyre, Rochester is a maimed and despondent man: Brontë presents to readers her "re-vision" of the Byronic hero. Only after Mr. Rochester is truly repentant for his sinful life does Brontë allow him to be with Jane; she allows Rochester and Jane to be together, but on Jane's terms.

A second example of a writer who influenced Brontë is William Wordsworth, particularly his popular "Lucy Gray" poems, as excerpted below:

```
Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
--The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen. (Wordsworth 90)
```

Brontë models many of her characters after the poor and lost Lucy Gray: Jane Eyre becomes a Lucy Gray figure when she is lost on the moors near Whitcross, and Lucy Snowe of Villette is also tragic when she is searching for a place where she can belong. Interwoven in the images of both characters one can see allusions to a little lost Lucy Gray trying to find her way home.

The third type of intrapsychic intertexts is visual intertexts; these can be seen in Brontë's love of the visual arts, her sketches and paintings, the nineteenth-century art she viewed, and the art manuals such as the *Annuals*. Surprising as it may be, Charlotte Brontë had every intention of becoming a *visual* artist, not a *verbal* artist. "Before she [Charlotte] had accepted the prospect of governess, Charlotte was in earnest. Art education [at the various schools Charlotte
attended] was not simply a delightful amusement; she intended to make it a career” (Alexander, “The Earnest Amateur” 41). Although events did not allow Brontë to become a professional visual artist, she embeds countless references to art in her novels and writes in a “painterly way” (Alexander, “Art and Artists” 180). Brontë has an unusual ability to describe scenes in a way that makes it easy for readers to picture what Brontë describes because she includes many vivid descriptions:

I reached the lodge at Gateshead about five o'clock in the afternoon of the first of May: I stepped in there before going up to the hall. It was very clean and neat: the ornamental windows were hung with little white curtains; the floor was spotless; the grate and fire-irons were burnished bright, and the fire burnt clear. (Brontë, Jane Eyre 255)

Brontë notices what some writers may overlook: it takes an artist's skill and eye to address exactly how the fire is burning.

In addition to the picturesque descriptions found in her novels, Brontë makes all of her heroines modest amateur artists. This is another example of a visual intrapsychic intertext: Brontë was a skilled amateur artist even though she was unable to fulfill her dream of becoming a professional artist. She cared deeply about art, therefore her characters do also. It is interesting however, to note that art is the one wish-fulfillment Brontë did not allow to materialize for her protagonists: although often complimented for their skills in art, Brontë's protagonists never become professional artists because Brontë knew that women were hindered by society from doing so. Even so, readers of Brontë see that visual intrapsychic intertexts, along with autobiographical and literary intrapsychic intertexts, play essential roles in Brontë's writing.

Charlotte Brontë used several internal and external elements in her novels,
and these elements form many moments of intertextuality. By studying intrapsychic intertextuality present in her novels, this thesis will illuminate the dreams, feelings, and opinions of one of the world's greatest writers. In Chapters One and Two, the role these intertexts play in Jane Eyre and Villette are examined. Chapter Three addresses the intertexts between Brontë's verbal and visual arts. The final chapter contains a discussion of teaching the novels of Charlotte Brontë at the secondary level and suggests some ideas for implementing intertextuality into the classroom. The bond that unites these three chapters is the focus on intrapsychic or "autographical" intertexts: Brontë used incidents from her own life to write Jane Eyre and Villette, her love of art plays a prodigious role in her writing, and the instructional chapter suggests ways to allow students to partake in writing which allows them to utilize the intertexts present in their own lives.
CHAPTER 1. WISH FULFILLMENT: INTERTEXTS IN JANE EYRE

Unless I have something of my own to say, and a way of my own to say it in, I have no business to publish. Unless I can look beyond the great Masters, and study Nature herself, I have no right to paint. Unless I can have the courage to use language of Truth in preference to the jargon of Conventionality, I ought to be silent.

-Charlotte Brontë, letter to W.S. Williams

Charlotte Brontë certainly does have something of her own to say, and it involves her own life and experiences. Her memoirs are found on the pages of her novel, the semi-autobiographical Jane Eyre. The character Jane Eyre and Brontë experienced a similar sadness, a similar heartache, and a similar triumph. However, there are some situations that they do not share, namely, what Jane inherits at the novel's close: family and wealth. Jane Eyre can be viewed as Brontë's "wish fulfillment" novel because Brontë makes most of Jane's dreams come true, and in this way Brontë is able to live vicariously through her character. Brontë makes her voice and Jane's voice "intersect on the same plane" (Kristeva qtd. in Waller 281). According to Julia Kristeva, the "discovery of intertextuality at a formal level leads to an intrapsychic or psychoanalytic finding concerning the status of the creator" (qtd. in Waller 281). Intertextuality abounds throughout the novel, and one way to examine this is to analyze the intrapsychic or autobiographical moments in Brontë's novel. The ways that Brontë embraces certain plots and narrative traditions in the novel, while simultaneously drawing attention to other traditions by attempting to resist them, reveal autobiographical intertexts with her own life. Both Brontë's life and Jane's life contain economic struggles, family tragedies, and romantic disillusionments. In Jane Eyre, the reader is able to ascertain the intrapsychic intertexts between Brontë's and Jane's lives because a comparison of the "text" of Brontë's life to the text of Jane Eyre reveals the similarities between the lives of Brontë and Jane, yet Jane is
able to attain many of the dreams that Brontë never was able to achieve.

Brontë's early years were austere. Her mother died when she was only five, her father was an impoverished clergyman, and she had little hope for a life of wealth and comfort. A few years after her mother's death, Patrick Brontë, Charlotte's father, decided to send his four daughters to Cowan Bridge, which was a school for orphans and daughters of poor clergymen. After completing the schooling at Cowan Bridge, students would attend another institution to be trained as governesses (Wilks 42). Pursuing an occupation as a governess was the only way, other than marriage, in nineteenth-century England for the poor and genteel woman to become independent (Rich 144). Since Patrick Brontë was afraid that his daughters would be unlikely to find husbands, he felt it essential to prepare them to earn their livings (Gordon 14).

Although Cowan Bridge was supposed to have been a secure and safe place for girls, the conditions at the school were nothing like the conditions with which the Brontë girls were familiar. They were undernourished, overburdened with work, and not given proper medical care.

The school was situated below falls in a picturesque but damp place. Its unhealthiness was compounded by poor sanitation and a meager, sometimes inedible diet, largely composed of dry bread, burnt porridge, and bakes of dingy odds and ends from a dirty kitchen. Hungry as they were, the girls often could not bring themselves to swallow such food, and were soon semi-starved. (Gordon 15)

In *Jane Eyre* Brontë uses Cowan Bridge as the basis for Lowood, the school that Jane is forced to attend. Like the semi-orphaned Brontë, Jane is an orphan with no money and no hopes for the future. Jane's school experiences run along a parallel continuum with Bronte's: the care is poor, the teachers are oftentimes
cruel, and the students are very susceptible to illnesses. Even the school masters of the two institutions are similar. Cowan Bridge’s founder, Reverend Carus Wilson, was a harsh and unyielding man who viewed children as impertinent beings. He had a zealous regard to correct and offset the sinful bias in children’s natures (Wilks 43). These traits are shared by Mr. Brocklehurst, the superintendent of Lowood. In young Jane’s eyes, Mr. Brocklehurst is the epitome of the Big Bad Wolf that Little Red Riding Hood meets in the forest:

In uttering these words, I looked up: he seemed to me a tall gentleman, but then I was very little; his features were large, and they and all the lines of his frame were equally harsh and prim... I stepped across the rug: he placed me square and straight before him. What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large, prominent teeth! (Brontë, Jane Eyre 64)

Mr. Brocklehurst has come to take her to Lowood, and as Gilbert and Gubar say, where else would a beast take a child but into a wood? (“Plain Jane’s Progress” 161). Brontë, no doubt, was intimidated by Wilson, just as Jane is frightened by Brocklehurst. Here is an example of an intrapsychic trace: by making Brocklehurst (and in her mind also Wilson) as a character who is eventually killed by a woodsman, Brontë seems to be attempting to overcome a traumatic childhood memory. By knowing the imminent death of the wolf, Brontë appears to be fulfilling the wishes she harbored as a child.

Miserable as the Brontë sisters were, in contrast to Jane, they at least had each other to turn to for support. Charlotte Brontë especially doted on her eldest sister, Maria, who became a maternal figure to the rest of the Brontë children when their mother died. She was a loving and happy person, and the entire family held her dear. In an autobiographical moment, Brontë portrays many of Maria’s
character traits in Helen Burns, Jane's friend at Lowood. Like Maria, Helen "burns" with emotions of love and spirituality. Helen becomes Jane's sister-like companion—the first true friend young Jane ever has. Helen is a very stoic person; she never complains or seems to dislike anyone, even when she is unjustly accused or ridiculed. Likewise, Maria Brontë never complained of any mistreatment. There are several scenes in Jane Eyre that echo events that occurred in Maria's life. For example, Helen is persecuted by Miss Scatcherd, one of the teachers at Lowood. She is repeatedly chastised and ridiculed for things she has not done. Yet, through all her ordeals, Helen remains submissive. Jane sees this cruel unfairness, and becomes very angry. In one instance, Helen is forced to wear a sign that says "slattern" on it for an entire day:

She wore it till evening, patient, unresentful, regarding it as a deserved punishment. The moment Miss Scatcherd withdrew, after afternoon school, I ran to Helen, tore it off, and thrust it into the fire. The fury of which she was incapable had been burning in my soul all day, and tears, hot and large, had continually been scalding my cheek; for the spectacle of her sad resignation gave me an intolerable pain at the heart. (Brontë, Jane Eyre 105-106)

Here is another example of an intrapsychic moment: Jane's feelings of rage at the detestable treatment of such a loving person are echoed by Charlotte Brontë. Her beloved sister Maria, similar to Helen, was the target of unprecedented attacks by Miss Scatcherd's double, a Miss Andrews, who was one of the teachers at Cowan Bridge. No matter how well Maria excelled at lessons or in duties, Miss Andrews would attack her for any slight infraction. Once Miss Andrews chastised Maria for dirty nails even though frozen water made washing impossible (Gordon 16). Maria's sisters would watch while Maria was forced to gather twigs and receive
several strokes on the neck; all the while, Charlotte would quiver with impotent anger (Gordon 16). However, unlike Jane, Brontë was unable to take action against the cruelty levied against her sister, therefore, she allows Jane to act as she wished she would have. Eventually, Maria died from consumption; and in turn, Helen does also. Throughout their short lives, Maria and Helen preached lessons of endurance and patience. However, both Brontë and Jane resisted these teachings. Against her sister’s unresisting death, Brontë shaped herself as a survivor, and so, too, her survivors in fiction: they refuse to surrender control of their destinies (Gordon 21). The tragic end of her sister’s life was a reversal of the life Brontë desired to live: Brontë loved her sister dearly, but she could never assume her spirit of acquiescence. Like Brontë, Jane refuses to submit to those who mistreat her, and she cannot follow Helen’s model of patience and martyrdom. By resisting the fates of Maria and Helen, Brontë and Jane chose the path of life that they wished to follow, and they would follow this path the rest of their lives.

Eventually, patrons of Lowood become aware of the unsatisfactory care and treatment at the school. An advisory council is established, and Mr. Brocklehurst is forced to answer to it. As a result, the conditions of the school greatly improve. By contrast, since Cowan Bridge’s regime remained unchanged, the surviving Brontë children were removed from the school’s cruel and deadly environment. Certainly, for Cowan Bridge to be forced to alter its practices was a fond wish of Brontë’s, and although she could not make this happen in reality, she fulfills this wish in Jane Eyre.

After her schooling was complete, Charlotte Brontë, like Jane Eyre, became a governess, an occupation she loathed as evidenced by a letter she wrote to her brother Branwell. In the letter, Brontë stated that she was miserable when she thought of spending her life as a governess. Although Brontë claimed she detested teaching, it did serve as a fount of ideas and a stimulus for her writing (Gordon 87),
and many of her experiences as a governess are recorded in Jane Eyre. Brontë and Jane share some of the same opinions about being governesses: Brontë regretted the fact that she must become a social nonentity in other people's drawing rooms (Wilks 86), and Jane feels that she is socially inferior to many of the people with whom she must interact. In another intrapsychic moment in Jane Eyre, Brontë reveals through Jane how she preferred the society of other governesses at events rather than the social elite. Jane prefers not to spend time at social gatherings, although her employer requests her to do so: "I will go, if no better may be; but I don't like it" (Brontë, Jane Eyre 199). Eventually however, both Jane and Brontë are able to overlook the downfalls of being a governess, and they are able to enjoy teaching promising students.

Since Jane Eyre addresses the hardships and trials of governesses, the novel can be viewed as a governess's tale, a popular genre used by women writers of the mid-1800's. According to Susan Lanser, a governess tale consists of two fictions of dependency: the courtship novel and the spiritual autobiography, which are woven into a tale of a dependent woman's progress to spiritual and material happiness (177). Jane Eyre contains both of these elements: although Rochester falls in love with Jane, her spiritual life is apparent in the fact that she does not abandon nor give up her own life for him. She does eventually marry him, but on her terms of independence and mutual respect. Although Jane finds these joys as a governess, Brontë is denied them. Analogous to the way Jane falls in love with Rochester, Brontë fell in love with her employer, Monsieur Constantine Heger. Brontë very much wanted her employer to return the affections she felt for him, but to no avail. His mind, conversation, and consideration for Brontë combined to sweep her off her feet (Wilks 93). She found no greater pleasure than spending time with him.
However, unlike Heger, Jane’s Mr. Rochester returns her feelings of love. He proposes marriage, and they make plans for a happy life together. However, during the wedding ceremony, it comes to light that Rochester is already married to a mentally unbalanced woman, Bertha Mason. Just as Bertha prevents Jane’s happiness with Rochester, Heger’s wife prevented Brontë’s happiness with the man she loved; in time, Heger’s wife sensed the feelings Brontë had for her husband, and she quickly put an end to instances when Brontë could spend time alone with Heger. This, coupled with all of her duties, made Brontë bitterly unhappy (Wilks 93). Soon, her lovesickness combined with homesickness. Brontë was deeply in love with her employer but was completely denied his attention, and she knew that Heger’s wife was the reason why she was separated from the man she truly loved. Of course, one cannot blame Madame Heger for her actions, but Brontë was distraught with misery as a result. Eventually, Brontë came to resent Brussels and returned to Haworth. According to Wilks, this retreat was uncharacteristic of Brontë (94). She returned to Haworth a sad, dejected woman because her life was shattered by her love for her employer. Jane, on the other hand, is successful in her relationship with Rochester. She is forced to leave him for a time, but she is able to return to him and marry him. The outcome of Jane’s life is another example of wish fulfillment on the part of Brontë: she would have done anything to return to Brussels to be with Monsieur Heger, yet she was unable to do so because he was married. As sinister as it may be, this may explain why Brontë eliminated Rochester’s wife. If Madame Heger was nonexistent, Brontë would be free to pursue a relationship with Monsieur Heger. After Brontë left Brussels, she tried to correspond with Heger, but he did not return her letters, and, as Brontë reasoned, his wife most likely also read them. This silent rebuke by Monsieur Heger, although it was extremely devastating to Brontë, served as the impetus to write and provided the plot for her masterpiece,
Jane Eyre

Heger’s shunning of Brontë forced her to make her dreams come true through Jane. However, Brontë makes Jane the one in control, not Rochester. After Jane finds out that Rochester is married, she makes plans to leave Thornfield. However, he implores her to stay with him, even though he is married. Jane is tempted, but she knows she must obey her conscience and leave him. The temptation Jane endures is foreshadowed earlier in the novel by her three watercolors of a shipwreck, a beautiful woman, and a person with a crown of white flame, which she shows to Rochester. In these paintings, there is a clear intertextual relationship to John Milton’s Paradise Lost as the subject matter in Jane’s paintings are very similar to the scenes described in Milton’s novel about life, sin, and death. According to Alan Bacon, the scenes in these paintings foreshadow the future scenes in Jane’s life, and although Jane must endure the temptation of an overpowering love, she resists living a life of sin with Rochester, thus escaping sin and death. Brontë had these same feelings of temptation in regards to her relationship with Monsieur Heger. However, unlike Jane who leaves Rochester, she gave in to these feelings, yet did not become an adulteress. Here is another instance of wish fulfillment or intrapsychic intertextuality: Jane will not give in to the temptation of obeying her feelings for a married man as Brontë did. Jane leaves Thornfield, even though Rochester is desperately in love with her. This is similar to Bronte’s experience of leaving Brussels, but the difference is that Jane leaves because she knows it is the right thing to do, while Brontë left because her love for Heger was unrequited.

When Jane leaves Thornfield, she is reduced to begging for food and even eats the slop intended for swine. This is a tremendous blow to Jane’s ego. Brontë no doubt also felt a blow to her ego when when she was spurned by Heger and left
Brussels. Perhaps she felt she had been reduced to a condition of begging for his affection through her letters, and like Jane, felt as though she were an outcast. Brontë's and Jane's feelings of isolation are analogous to the feelings of the monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, thus creating an imitational intertext between the two novels. The association of Jane with the wretched and unhappy monster produces a symbolic commentary on Jane's feelings of isolation and alienation in a society that has no place for her (Young 327). After retreating to Haworth after her unhappy experience at Brussels and her subsequent shunning by Heger, Brontë no doubt felt reclusive and did not want to deal with society life. Despite the various local activities of the parish, she felt isolated from the world (Wilks 99). These feelings, compounded with her sadness and and feeling of loss resulting from her mother's and sister's early deaths, would enable her to identify with the tragic character in Shelley's novel.

The monster in *Frankenstein* despairs his fate, and similarly, Jane despairs hers. This idea is manifested in the scenes where Jane and the monster peer into the happy comfortable homes of others, and they both desperately wish they could be included in such warmth. According to Young, this is the "ultimate and most striking parallel between the two novels" (332). Jane finally gathers her courage and knocks at the door of the happy home that she sees, but is initially turned away by a servant. However, St. John, a man of the church and the owner of the house, intervenes on her behalf and saves Jane from perishing on the moors. The monster, however, does not have such a fate. When his presence becomes known, the inhabitants of the cottage flee in fright. In regards to her unhappy feelings about Heger, Brontë no doubt wished there was a safe haven for her as there was for Jane. Her feelings lead to another intrapsychic intertext. In order to fulfill her wish, Brontë saves Jane from the fate of loneliness and isolation that she and Frankenstein's monster had to endure. Brontë gives Jane a hope to
cling to, whereas Brontë had no hopes of rescue from the desolate and lonely places in her life after her love is not returned by Heger.

An oppositional intertextual moment of this novel occurs when Jane is rescued by a man who shares many of the same traits with Greatheart, a character in John Bunyan's novel, Pilgrim's Progress. This man is St. John Rivers, and eventually he teaches Jane many of the same Christian ideals found in Pilgrim's Progress: St. John has many parallels with Bunyan's character. According to Sandra Gilbert, his "blatantly patriarchal name" (74) refers to his profession. St. John is very religious, and his heart burns for God only. "But that heart is already laid on a sacred altar: the fire is arranged around it. It will soon be no more than a sacrifice consumed" (Brontë, Jane Eyre 394). St. John Rivers forgoes worldly happiness in hopes he will receive a place in Heaven. He becomes a missionary in India and wants Jane to go with him, proposing marriage to Jane, not for love, but to offer her, as Rich says, what Milton's Eve was offered: "He for God only, she for God in him" (153). St. John tells Jane that this is the only way she will arrive in the "Celestial City." Jane, although indecisive at first, resists him and his proposal. She wants to live in the present and be happy, and for her, this means a life with Rochester, even though he is married to Bertha. Jane's desire to do what she wants to do is an intrapsychic intertext of Brontë's life. Brontë wanted to be with Heger, even though she knew it was immoral because he was a married man. Like Jane, Brontë is resisting Bunyan's lesson in Pilgrim's Progress that declares that an individual should strive to be "perfect" and hold dear values and morals, even if these are in opposition to his or her needs and desires. Brontë and Jane did not share Bunyan's view: Bronte's conscience, like Jane's conscience, disagreed with Bunyan's teaching. Brontë wanted to be with Heger, even though circumstances prevented this from happening. Therefore, she made her wish
come true by enabling Jane to spend her life with Rochester. In the end of the novel, Jane is able to return to Rochester, after Bertha dies a tragic death (which is another wish fulfillment on the part of Brontë).

Although Jane returns and marries Rochester, he is maimed. During the tragic fire that claimed his wife's life, Rochester lost his left hand and his vision. Before Jane returns, he is a sad, dejected, and lonely man at Ferndean. Perhaps this is another moment of intrapsychic intertextuality: Bronte's feelings of love for Heger may have turned to bitterness after he rejected her and she wished that she could punish Heger in some way. Thus, in an intrapsychic intertextual moment, she "wounds" Heger for all the bitterness and sadness she felt about their relationship. However, Jane rescues Rochester from a life of unhappiness, and they are finally married and are happy. "We are precisely suited in character--perfect concord is the result" (Brontë, Jane Eyre 476). Undoubtedly, Brontë wanted her relationship with Heger to turn out as it did for Jane. Perhaps though, this final wish fulfillment of happiness for Rochester and Jane brought Brontë peace.

Similar to the way Bertha is "waving her arms above the battlements, and shouting out till they could hear her a mile off" (Brontë, Jane Eyre 453), Brontë is waving her arms and raising her voice in her novel through intrapsychic intertexts to shout to the world what she wanted in her life. Just as Jane desires the freedom to be herself and not to be altered or suffocated by Rochester, Brontë wished to express herself in her own way in the midst of inexpressible circumstances. Since she could not have what she wanted, she turns her wishes into reality for Jane in the pages of her novel. Although many of Bronte's wishes were unfulfilled, later in her life she was able to find some happiness: she had several novels published and she married the Reverend Arthur Bell Nicholls. Although she had once "loved unloved" (Wilks 136), she found a warm and caring companion in Nicholls. Perhaps he was her Rochester destined to save her from the burning
Thornfield Hall... only this time, instead of making her dreams come true through Jane, Brontë was able to make one of her own wishes come true.
CHAPTER 2. GETTING EVEN: INTERTEXTS IN VILLETTE

*Down the sable flood we glided; I thought of the Styx, and of Charon rowing some solitary soul to the Land of Shades. Amidst the strange scene, with a chilly wind blowing in my face, and midnight-clouds dropping rain above my head... I asked myself if I was wretched or terrified.* -Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (1853)

Oftentimes, intrapsychic intertextuality in Brontë's novels is revealed in dark and sinister moments because death played an ominous and onerous role in Charlotte Brontë's life. For most of her life, she lived in a parsonage "surrounded by gravestones" (Thurman 111). Since Brontë undoubtedly observed several burials and gazed daily upon the cemetery bordering the parsonage where she lived with her family, the deaths of others may have affected her little. However, the deaths of her mother and two older sisters when she was a young girl did greatly affect her. Years after their deaths, Brontë still dwelled on thoughts of them in her writing, as evidenced by intertextual moments inspired by their characteristics. Perhaps the death of Brontë's loved ones and the fact that she beheld countless burials as a child compounded with her unhappy attachment to Monsieur Heger as a young woman led her to dwell on the darker elements of her life; these thoughts then spilled over into her writing as intrapsychic intertexts.

Brontë's writing can be classified as Gothic: since much of her own life was filled with darkness, it is natural that Brontë would be attracted to the "psychic darkness" (Heilman 97) of this the Gothic genre. Lovett and Hughes describe the Gothic as containing "incidents of physical violence and mental anguish [that] are

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1This work differs from works of other authors (such as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar) in that it not only acknowledges that Brontë's characters shared many similarities with her, but also that her characters have common traits with various individuals present in Brontë's life.
assisted by supernatural appearances; and through this melodramatic matter runs the thread of romantic love” (112). This is a prescription that Brontë had read and which she followed in all her novels, but especially in Villette which is “the most heavily saturated with Gothic” (Heilman 105). Hence, it is possible that the combination of Brontë’s own dark life and her fascination with the Gothic explains why the “dark” characters in her novels are just as memorable as her heroines.

For example, Jane Eyre would be left wanting without Edward Fairfax Rochester, Grace Poole, or Bertha Mason Rochester, all of whom are the dark characters of the novel. In much the same way, Villette would be incomplete without the inclusion of Madame Beck, Madame Walravens, and Vashti. Similar to the way Jane Eyre is defined by the “dark” characters in her life, Lucy Snowe (the heroine of Villette) is only fully understood when compared and contrasted to the ominous individuals present in her life. Lucy must fight the negative influences of these controlling and immoral characters to find happiness, just as Jane struggles against the oppressive characters present in Jane Eyre. Helene Moglen describes Madame Beck and Madame Walravens as “malicious villains of a Gothic tale in which she [Lucy] and Paul are cast as the victims” (22), and Lucy herself describes Vashti as a fearful being and as one who possesses “something neither of woman nor of man: in each of her eyes sat a devil” (Brontë, Villette 339). Even though Lucy does not need to resist a man who would lead her to a life of sin or confront a mad woman in an attic, the negative forces with which she must contend are just as powerful as those with which Jane Eyre must do battle.

A surprising revelation is that all of the “dark” characters in Villette “represent aspects of herself [Lucy]” (Gilbert and Gubar, “The Buried Life” 45). Although Lucy is a good and pious person, she has many similarities with Madame Beck, Madame Walravens, and Vashti, and each of them reveals a side of Lucy that she attempts to stifle. In addition, all of these characters share common traits with
Brontë herself or with people in Brontë's life. In many intrapsychic or autobiographical moments throughout the novel, readers are shown the dark side of the writer herself or of those people with whom she had to contend.

A major character in Villette who is very “dark” is Madame Beck, the proprietress of the pensionnat at which Lucy is employed. Kate Millett states that Madame Beck is one of the “most efficient women one can meet anywhere in fiction” (34). Not only does Madame Beck operate her school in a very economical manner, but she also is emotionally efficient:

I say again, madame was a very great and a very capable woman. That school offered for her powers too limited a sphere; she ought to have swayed a nation: she should have been the leader of a turbulent legislative assembly. Nobody could have brow-beaten her, none irritated her nerves, exhausted her patience, or over-reached her astuteness. In her own single person, she could have comprised the duties of a first minister and a superintendent of police. Wise, firm, faithless; secret, crafty, passionless; watchful and inscrutable; acute and insensate—witheal perfectly decorous—what more could be desired? (Brontë, Villette 137)

Madame Beck is an unmovable person: she allows nothing to sway her actions, and she never demonstrates her emotions. Also, she is very practiced in surveillance—she constantly watches others and waits for them to make a mistake. One way in which Madame Beck’s efficiency and super surveillance skills is revealed by her expertise at spying on Lucy and the other teachers at the pensionnat. “As Madame Beck ruled by espionage, she of course had her staff of spies” (Brontë, Villette 136). However, Madame Beck’s “spy ring” is not necessarily out of the ordinary, because according to Sally Shuttleworth, Victorian society’s ordering was “achieved through constant surveillance, or ‘careful
watching” (145). (Shuttleworth also states that asylums patterned themselves after Victorian society: “observation” was a prime treatment for patients.) In much the same way that a doctor of an asylum desires to study and analyze patients, the master observer Madame Beck appears to feel that she should know every minute and intimate detail of her staff members’ lives. Madame Beck is a shadow, and “like a ghost, she walks in the darkness, secretly searching Lucy’s room, encroaching on Lucy’s secret places, and violating her privacy” (Lee 75).

Indeed, Madame Beck reads all of Lucy’s letters, searches her drawers, and even copies the keys to Lucy’s chests:

In my dress was a pocket; she fairly turned it inside out: she counted the money in my purse; she opened a little memorandum book, coolly perused its contents, and took from between the leaves a small plaited lock of Miss Marchmont’s gray hair. To a bunch of three keys, being those of my trunk, desk, and workbox, she accorded special attention... [the keys] were not brought back till they had left on the toilet of the adjoining room the impress of their wards in wax. (Brontë, Villette 131-132)

To add to her efficiency as a “spy,” Madame Beck is a very stealthy and observant investigator: she never leaves traces of her probings. “All being thus done decently and in order, my property was returned to its place, my clothes were carefully refolded” (Brontë, Villette 132). The only reason Lucy is aware of Madame Beck’s nocturnal escapades is that she is usually not asleep when the unsuspecting Madame Beck arrives to undertake her investigations, and surprising as it may seem, Lucy unquestionably accepts Madame Beck’s prying into her private possessions and life. Perhaps the reason why Lucy is complacent about Madame Beck’s searches is that she also considers them necessary in order
for Madame Beck to know what kind of employees she has working at her pensionnat and caring for her own children. Lucy even calls the searches Madame Beck conducts as her “duty.” Although Brontë never specifies exactly what Madame Beck is hoping to find, the “perpetual policewoman” (Millett 35) is a thorough investigator who leaves nothing in Lucy’s possession unsearched—everything from the private letters Dr. John writes to Lucy later in the novel to the violets given to her by M. Paul—are studied by Madame Beck.

Although she never finds anything incriminating in Lucy’s possessions, Madame Beck is able to spy effectively on Lucy because Madame Beck represents a side of Lucy’s character and is “one of the many voices inhabiting and haunting Lucy’s mind” (Gilbert and Gubar, Madwoman in the Attic 408). In fact, Lucy seems to respect and approve of Madame Beck’s investigations, and following Madame Beck’s example, Lucy even does some spying of her own. While Madame Beck spies on Lucy, Lucy is “simultaneously engaged in spying on Madame Beck” (Gilbert and Gubar, Madwoman in the Attic 409). Pretending to be asleep, Lucy observes and forms opinions about Madame Beck while she searches through Lucy’s belongings. Lucy wonders “of what nature were the conclusions deduced from this [Madame Beck’s] scrutiny? Were they favorable or otherwise... Madame’s face of stone... betrayed no response” (Brontë, Villette 132). Lucy wonders what Madame Beck thinks about the results of her probings, but this very statement by Lucy could be reversed. What does Lucy think of Madame Beck and her midnight searches? Are her feelings favorable? The answers to these questions are positive, as evidenced through Lucy’s generally respectful treatment of Madame Beck. Therefore, in the approval of Madame Beck and her investigations, Lucy, in many ways, approves of herself.

Not only do both Madame Beck and Lucy spy on each other, but they also have many other similar characteristics: both are educators, and both are dressed
in “decorous gray” (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic* 409). A more subtle comparison is that both women want what they cannot have—namely Dr. John. “Like Lucy, she [Madame Beck] is attracted to the young Englishman Dr. John; and like Lucy, she is not his choice” (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic* 409). Madame Beck accepts Dr. John’s rejection in a very composed manner: “Real as her own sexuality is, she will gracefully acknowledge his rejection, and serenely carry on the business” (Millett 35). In much the same way, Lucy also accepts her rejection by Dr. John by carefully burying the letters he sent her. “But I was not only going to hide a treasure—I meant also to bury a grief. That grief over which I had lately been weeping, as I wrapped it in its winding-sheet, must be interred” (Brontë, *Villette* 380). In fact, Lucy “applauds the way in which Madame Beck represses her desire for Dr. John... And in doing so, Lucy is applauding her own commitment to self-repression” (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic* 409). Lucy and Madame Beck—the “symbol of repression” (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic* 408)—do share many similar traits, but even so, Madame Beck has much more in common with the woman Brontë modeled her after: Madame Claire Zoé Heger.

Brontë became acquainted with Madame Heger when she was a student and teacher in Brussels at the Hegers’ school. Unfortunately, Brontë also fell in love with Madame Heger’s husband, Monsieur Constantin Georges Romain Heger. After Madame Heger perceived this, she made it nearly impossible for Brontë to be alone with the man she loved, and eventually the broken-hearted Brontë left Brussels. In a letter written to her friend Ellen Nussey, Brontë stated “I shall not forget what the parting with M. Heger cost me; it grieved me so much to grieve him” (Shorter 277). In the ensuing months, Brontë wrote several letters to Monsieur Heger, but he never replied. Brontë felt that Madame Heger was
preventing her husband from answering her letters; thus, she developed a great hatred for Madame Heger, and in an intrapsychic intertextual moment, “Madame Beck” was created in Brontë’s mind. “The idea that an enemy was bent on her destruction... was implanted forever. ‘Madame Beck’ was born in that January of the suffering caused by M. Heger’s silence” (Gerin 277). Bronte’s distorted image of Madame Heger became the basis for the cold-hearted and unmoving character of Madame Beck in Villette.

According to Moglen, Madame Heger’s feelings of jealousy are echoed in Madame Beck’s reaction to Lucy and M. Paul’s relationship: “In Madame Beck’s jealous opposition to their love, we hear the outrage of Madame Heger” (22). Madame Beck tries to come between M. Paul and Lucy, just as Madame Heger came between Brontë and Monsieur Heger. In another letter addressed to her friend Ellen Nussey, Brontë wrote:

You will hardly believe that Madame Heger (good and kind as I have described her) never comes near me on these occasions. I own, I was astonished the first time I was left alone thus; when everybody else was enjoying the pleasures of a fete-day with their friends, and she knew I was quite by myself, and never took the least notice of me... You remember the letter she wrote me when I was in England? How kind and affectionate that was? Is it not odd? I fancy I begin to perceive the reason of this mighty distance and reserve; it sometimes makes me laugh and at other times nearly cry. When I am sure of it I will tell you. (Shorter 274)

Although Brontë never describes Madame Beck as “good and kind,” she does reveal that Madame Beck treats Lucy with “respect improved into distinction” (Villette 274). However, evidence of Madame Beck’s domineering and controlling tactics are seen in her spying on Lucy. In much the same manner, Madame
Heger spied on Brontë during her stay in Brussels: “She [Madame Heger] was obliged therefore to use methods that very likely appeared underhand to Charlotte, in order to isolate Charlotte both from her master and from her fellow teachers. She was prepared to watch over her privacy, and Charlotte did not hesitate to call this spying” (Gerin 233-234). Terry Eagleton describes Madame Beck as Lucy’s “oppressor” (111), and, in turn, Madame Heger was Bronte’s oppressor, since she was the one who cut off all interaction and correspondence between Brontë and Monsieur Heger. Madame Beck also attempts to end all relations between M. Paul and Lucy, but unlike her predecessor, Madame Heger is unsuccessful. Here, as in many intrapsychic moments throughout the novel, Brontë is fulfilling a wish for herself. She undoubtedly wished that Monsieur Heger was free to correspond with her and even to choose to be with her. Just as M. Paul punches Madame Beck when she tries to block his way, Brontë, one could imagine, would have liked to have done the same to Madame Heger when she stood between Brontë and the man she loved.

However, perhaps Brontë grudgingly accepted the fact that Madame Heger had the right to spy on her activities in connection with Monsieur Heger. For although there is not love lost between Lucy and Madame Beck, Lucy does respect her and states at the end of the novel that she “prospered all the days of her life” (Brontë, Villette 596). Although the main reason why Lucy is unable to have a happy ending in her relationship with M. Paul is that Brontë did not have a happy ending to her relationship with Monsieur Heger, perhaps Brontë felt Madame Heger was justified in separating her from Monsieur Heger, because even when M. Paul dies and is never with Lucy again, Lucy does not blame Madame Beck and the others for forcing her betrothed to undertake such a perilous journey. Lucy’s acceptance of M. Paul’s death could be an intrapsychic intertext of
Brontë's own state of mind because although hatred and jealousy influenced Brontë's feelings about Madame Heger for most of her life, perhaps at the end of her career, in her last novel, Brontë finally realized that Madame Heger, no matter how underhanded and cruel her methods seemed to Brontë at the time, was only trying to protect her marriage, her school's reputation, and unintentional as it may have been, Brontë herself.

Despite Brontë's possible change of feelings towards Madame Heger later in her life, hatred and jealousy of the woman who kept her from the man she loved did play oppressive roles in Brontë's life. These feelings are further exemplified in a second "dark" character, Madame Walravens. Madame Walravens, who is perhaps the most oppressive character in Villette, is an embittered old woman who is hateful and haughty:

She might be three feet high, but she had no shape; her skinny hands rested upon each other, and pressed the gold knob of a wand-like ivory staff. Her face was large, set, not upon her shoulders, but before her breast; she seemed to have no neck; I should have said there were a hundred years in her features, and more perhaps in her eyes—her malign, unfriendly eyes, with thick gray brows above, and livid lids all round. How severely they viewed me, with a sort of dull displeasure!

(Brontë, Villette 481)

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar suggest that "Madame Walravens seems to be a black parody of the artist, perhaps of the author herself, because her three-foot height recalls Bronte's own small stature (four feet, nine inches)" (432). Remembering that Brontë nurtured an extreme hatred for Madame Heger, there is an intrapsychic intertext between Madame Walravens and Brontë herself:

A sense of outrage entered now into her feelings; there was anger mixed with the desolation. Though she still might exonerate him [M. Heger]
from the worst cruelties—because she was convinced he was not wholly free to act as he would—she no longer hesitated to point the finger at the enemy working through him. . . and it was plain that she meant Madame Heger. (Gerin 277)

Madame Heger’s action of separating Brontë from M. Heger turned Brontë’s “feelings to poison, and made her suspect intentional malevolence in every incident that ensued” (Gerin 241). In much the same manner, the supercilious Madame Walravens regards every person and act of kindness with suspicion. For example, when Lucy walks a great distance to deliver a basket of fruit to her from Madame Beck, Madame Walravens tells Lucy to return the fruit and that she could care less about Madame Beck’s greeting. Madame Walraven’s rudeness and cruelty to Lucy can be compared to the way Brontë felt when she was being mistreated by Madame Heger. Thus, the hatred and suspicion demonstrated by Madame Walravens is a reflection of Brontë’s overwhelming hatred for Madame Heger. Brontë’s hatred distorted her perception of Madame Heger’s character and forced her to regard Madame Heger as evil. Brontë’s odious image of Madame Heger is personified in an intrapsychic intertext as Madame Walravens.

According to Gilbert and Gubar, Madame Walravens’ name reveals her true identity, for a “raven is a traditional Celtic image of the hag who destroys” (Madwoman in the Attic 431). Madame Walravens successfully destroys M. Paul and Lucy’s relationship, just as Madame Heger successfully destroyed Bronte’s relationship with Monsieur Heger. Madame Walravens sends Paul on a sea voyage to enhance her financial status, and Gilbert and Gubar call this a “typically witchy quest for treasure” (Madwoman in the Attic 431). Similarly, Madame Heger arranged for herself and her husband to go on a sea voyage to Blankenberg.
Had things been otherwise, the Hegers might have considered it their
duty to invite her [Brontë] to join them at the sea. The fact that no such
proposition was or could be made by Madame Heger only added to the
sense of exclusion from all natural pleasures that caused Charlotte's
acutest suffering then. (Gerin 240)

Just as M. Paul dies on the sea, and Lucy never sees him again, Monsieur Heger is
figuratively lost at sea for Brontë. Brontë blames Madame Heger for all her woes
concerning Monsieur Heger and personifies her resentment of her in Madame
Walravens, who, consequently, is ultimately the person whom Lucy could blame
for her loss of M. Paul.

Another aspect of Madame Walravens's and Madame Heger's miens is that
they both attempt to manipulate events and erase history to further their own
agendas. In their dominating fashions, both women attempt to control the lives of
people around them. For example, Madame Walravens attempts to force M. Paul
to abandon his love for Lucy, and Brontë perceives Madame Heger as doing the
same to Monsieur Heger. Madame Heger is Monsieur Heger's second wife, and
Brontë concludes that she is trying to force Monsieur Heger to forget that his first
wife ever existed. According to Gerin, the character of Justine Marie is named
after Monsieur Heger's first wife: “His [first] bride was Marie-Josephine Noyer
(whose memory Brontë evoked as Justine Marie of Villette)” (193-194). Shortly
after Monsieur Heger and Marie-Josephine were married, Marie-Josephine and
their daughter died of cholera. After some time, Monsieur Heger re-married, and
this second wife is the woman who stood in the way of Brontë's happiness. Moglen
states that “One must remember that Heger was also a survivor, who witnessed
the deaths of his first wife and child. By metaphorically developing this aspect of
his experience, Brontë undercuts the importance of his second marriage--and
second family” (30). Brontë obviously resented Madame Heger and was very
willing to allow herself to believe that since she was not his first wife, Madame Heger was not truly the woman Monsieur Heger loved. (Of course, this idea would preclude Brontë from being the the woman Monsieur Heger truly loved, but this thought must not have occurred to Brontë.) Since Brontë felt that Madame Heger was not the “true” wife of Monsieur Heger, she most likely perceived everything that Madame Heger did as trying to overcome her predecessor. Madame Heger’s possible attempts to eradicate her competition is personified by Madame Walravens when she enters the room where Lucy is waiting for her through a picture of her granddaughter, Justine Marie:

By-and-bye the picture seemed to give way: to my bewilderment, it shook, it sunk, it rolled back into nothing; its vanishing left an opening—arched, leading into an arched passage, with a mystic winding stair; both passage and stair were of cold stone, uncarpeted and unpainted. Down this donjon stair descended a tap, tap, like a stick; soon, there fell on the steps a shadow, and last of all, I was aware of a substance. (Brontë, *Villette* 481)

As Madame Walravens walks into the room, her body “looms up as some kind of shapeless malign presence” (Tanner 61) and appears to erase the image of Justine Marie. This act can be compared to Madame Heger’s position as a second wife who most likely tried to erase the memory of her predecessor. Many second wives feel that they are competing with the first wives; therefore, the very fact that Madame Heger took the place of Monsieur Heger’s first wife possibly left her feeling somewhat insecure, or at least it appears that Brontë felt this was the case. Brontë’s act of having Madame Walravens, a “dark” character of her novel eclipse the portrait of Justine Marie brings to mind a comparison of this action to any actions the “dark” Madame Heger would have undertaken in attempt to
eliminate any memories or traces of Marie-Josephine. Madame Walraven's overshadowing of the image of the beautiful and pious Justine Marie clearly shows the contrasts of good and evil to the reader, and it seems that Brontë wished for this contrast to carry over to the possible actions of Madame Heger against Marie-Josephine. It is apparent that Brontë saw Madame Heger and Madame Walravens as unsuccessful in their plights because Marie-Josephine is not forgotten by Monsieur Heger, and similarly Justine Marie is not forgotten by M. Paul.

Along with Madame Beck and Madame Walravens, a third "dark" character present in Villette is Vashti, the French tragedienne whom Lucy saw perform when she accompanied Dr. John to the theatre. When Lucy goes to the theatre, she expects to see a refined actress who moves "in might and grace before this multitude" (Brontë, Villette 339). However, a genteel lady is not whom Lucy beholds: "By-and-by I recognized my mistake... These evil forces bore her through the tragedy... They wrote HELL on her straight, haughty brow. They tuned her voice to the note of torment. They writhed her regal face to a demoniac mask. Hate and Murder and Madness incarnate, she stood" (Brontë, Villette 339). Certainly, Vashti is not the elegant and beautiful actress Lucy expects to see. Instead, she is an overtly passionate actress whose acting seems to be the cause of the fire that evacuates the theatre. Lucy says that Vashti's performance "was a marvellous sight: a mighty revelation. It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral" (Brontë, Villette 339). From Lucy's account of her, it is easy to understand why Vashti can be considered a "dark" character of Villette.

Just as the other "dark" characters have their roots in actual individuals, Vashti too has autobiographical intertexts with Brontë's life. The character of Vashti is modeled after Rachel whom Brontë saw perform twice while she was in London. Gerin states that Rachel awakened "fascination rooted in horror,
incredulity, and wonder" (481) in Brontë, and this fascination is clearly seen in the
detailed description of Vashti in Villette. Bronte’s preoccupation with Vashti is
also evidenced in a letter written by Bronte to Amelia Ringrose: “She [Rachel] and
Thackeray are the two living things that have a spell for me in this great London--
and the one of them is sold to the Great Ladies--and the other--I fear--to
Beelzebub” (Gerin 481). Perhaps the reason why Bronte was so captivated by
Rachel is that Rachel had the freedom to express herself as she pleased, even
though there were societal constraints placed upon Rachel as there were upon
Bronte. Bronte did not or could not express herself even remotely as freely as
Rachel did. This is seen in many situations throughout Bronte’s life: her
relationship with Monsieur Heger, her loathing of being forced to be a governess,
and her feeling that she could not name herself as the author of her novels and
instead used the pseudonym “Currer Bell.”

Perhaps though, Rachel did inspire Bronte to be more expressive of her feelings
because Bronte’s novels are the places where Bronte articulates herself with the
most passion and candor. Since Rachel/Vashti had a great effect on Bronte, a
similar effect is felt by Bronte’s semi-autobiographical character, Lucy. In Lucy’s
description of Vashti, the reader sees one of the few times when Lucy breaks her
bonds of silence and repression and reveals her true feelings.

According to Brenda Silver, Vashti “enacts Lucy’s own rebellion and self-
mastery” (100). The repressed Lucy does not feel at liberty to express her
emotions, and when she sees Vashti do so, it awakens a deep yearning within her:
To her [Vashti], what hurts becomes immediately embodied: she looks
on it as a thing that can be attacked, worried down, torn in shreds.
Scarcely a substance herself, she grapples to conflict with abstractions.
Before calamity she is a tigress; she rends her woes, shivers them in
convulsed abhorrence. Pain, for her, has no result in good; tears water no harvest of wisdom: on sickness, on death itself, she looks with the eye of a rebel. Wicked, perhaps, she is, but also she is strong; and her strength has conquered Beauty, has overcome Grace, and bound both at her side, captives peerlessly fair, and docile as fair. (Brontë, Villette 340)

Throughout her life, Lucy has kept her emotions to herself and has accepted that pain, unhappiness, and grief are to be her lot in life. When speaking metaphorically about her childhood, Lucy says:

I even know there was a storm, and that not of one hour nor one day. For many days and nights neither sun nor stars appeared; we cast with our own hands the tackling out of the ship; a heavy tempest lay on us; all hope that we should be saved was taken away. In fine, the ship was lost, the crew perished. As far as I recollect, I complained to no one about these troubles. (Brontë, Villette 94)

When Lucy sees Vashti openly express her rage, grief, pain, and rebellion, it shocks her because she has only allowed her feelings to be released in a much quieter and less open way than Vashti does. However, it is also apparent that Lucy feels envious of Vashti’s freedom of expression, and this is seen in Lucy’s preoccupation with Vashti. Instead of being hemmed in by societal rules, Lucy must wish that she too could express herself as freely as Vashti.

Although they express themselves very differently, Vashti is “struggling against the fate of the character she plays, much as Lucy struggles against the uncongenial roles she plays” (Gilbert and Gubar, Madwoman in the Attic 423). In her performances, Vashti confronts and resists the forces that oppose her: “Even in the uttermost frenzy of energy is each maenad movement royally, imperially, incedingly upborne... she remembers the heaven where she rebelled” (Brontë,
Villette 340). In much the same principle yet in an entirely different manner, Lucy too struggles against the forces that oppose her and against the constraints society imposes upon her. However, instead of following Vashti's example of wildly lashing out at those who would try to subdue her, Lucy follows a more dignified regime of resistance. Lucy, the former penniless orphan, saves her money in order to direct her own school, and in this way, Lucy is able to oppose those who would keep her in the lowly position of a governess. Thus, Vashti's resistance becomes an "aspect of her [Lucy's] hidden revolt" (Jacobus 125). Vashti's act of resistance is symbolic of Lucy's plight of breaking the bonds society imposed upon governesses, yet Lucy refrains from following the violent actions of the deranged Vashti and pursues her own dignified methods of escaping the constraints and regulations she is expected to heed.

Vashti, as all the "dark" characters in Villette do, plays a very important role in Lucy's development and in her understanding of the world. Likewise, the individuals who were the models for Vashti, Madame Beck, and Madame Walravens played integral intrapsychic roles in Brontë's development as a person and as a writer. If Brontë did not have to confront and overcome these individuals in her life, her strength as a person and as a writer may have been diminished.

Although most readers are happy when Jane marries Mr. Rochester and are sad when Lucy's dreams of marrying M. Paul are unrealized, they know that without the struggles and confrontations that Brontë's heroines (and Brontë herself) endure there would be no superior collection of works by Charlotte Brontë. Brontë's novels are so moving because they are inspirational to readers: Brontë's heroines prove that love does endure, right does succeed over might, and faith and hope are the essence of all things. Therefore, without Brontë's dark characters, there would be no standard of evil to measure goodness against, no oppressive forces for heroines to overcome, and no hope for change to occur.
Brontë's dark characters are an integral part of her novels, and just as Brontë's novels are unforgettable, so are her dark characters.
CHAPTER 3. BRONTË AS UNREALIZED VISUAL ARTIST: ARTISTIC INTERTEXTS IN THE NOVELS

It is not too strong to say that Charlotte Brontë had a fetish for pictures. Just as she “picked up every scrap of information concerning painting, sculpture, poetry music, etc., as if were gold” in order to improve her mind, so, too, she ferreted out pictures that appealed to her in her bid to become an artist... she applied herself to the task of acquiring an artistic training as best she could and with remarkable determination.


Art was constantly on Charlotte Brontë’s mind. Regardless of whether she was painting, drawing, or writing, art occupied an important position in her creative genius. For Brontë, becoming an artist was “the highest of all callings” (Alexander, “Art and Artists” 202). Beginning at a young age, Brontë and her siblings attempted to answer this calling by their first attempts at drawing, which began as sketches in the margins of their father’s books. According to Alexander, drawing “sustained and nurtured the early lives of the Brontës... pictures enabled the four surviving Brontë children, Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne, to visualize other worlds, to escape the sorrow of their mother’s and two older sisters’ deaths, and to combat... [the] boredom of life in an isolated moorland village (“Influence of the Visual Arts” 9). Just as Glass Town (the imaginary world the Brontë children created) was a method of escaping the sadness and isolation of their lives, so too was drawing a “way out.” However, for Charlotte Brontë, drawing and painting were more than this: she intended for them to be her chosen

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1The examination of Charlotte Brontë’s artwork is a recent development in the study of Brontë. Christine Alexander’s work, especially her book The Art of the Brontës, is the primary source available for a detailed probing of Charlotte Brontë’s visual art. Many biographies reproduce a fraction of Brontë’s paintings and drawings but do not undertake a comprehensive study of all her work and its implications. Therefore, Alexander’s work is often referenced in this chapter.
career. Brontë felt that becoming an artist was the one way she could escape what she perceived as the dreadfulness and monotony of being a governess. Therefore, Brontë pursued her art education with great vigor. Even though Brontë never attended a formal art school or studied under a great master, she did teach herself by using the art manuals that were popular in the 1800's. “Learning from a professional painter was undoubtedly the best option, but... a manual illustrated and often written by an artist of standing was an acceptable substitute” (Irwin 151). Thinking it was the way for her to become a professional artist, Brontë copied many of the engravings found in these manuals. However, although Brontë never achieved her dream of becoming a professional artist, her experience with art played an integral and invaluable role in her writing. “For all the Brontës, a knowledge of the visual arts, the habit of reading pictures, and the practice of drawing and painting, were crucial to their development as writers” (Alexander, “Influence of the Visual Arts” 10). Intertextuality plays a powerful role in Brontë’s verbal art and carries over into her visual art. Brontë used many elements of her experience with visual art and created several intrapsychic or autobiographical intertextual moments in her novels Villette and Jane Eyre. Charlotte Brontë’s self-taught art education and artistic and social influences trained her to write in the “painterly way” (Alexander, “Art and Artists” 180) in all of her novels.

**Brontë and the Art Manuals**

In Brontë’s day, art was a popular pastime for members of the higher classes; women especially were encouraged to engage in painting. Hannah More, a writer of manner books in the nineteenth century, says in her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* that “the arts are among the best reformers; and they go on to be improved themselves, and improving those who cultivate them” (85). To be truly “accomplished,” a young lady was expected to add painting and
drawing to her repertoire, and in fact, "a paintbox was a necessary possession for a young Victorian woman" (Alexander, "The Earnest Amateur" 47). Not only was a paintbox useful in signalling a lady's interest in art, it also revealed "one's politeness, taste, and social standing as much as—if not more than—one's proficiency with a particular medium. The desire to paint or draw signalled gentility" (Bermingham 156). Even if a woman was not skilled in painting and drawing, the mere fact that she attempted to be was enough to reveal her social class and lady-like qualities.

Since women were primarily excluded from the academy, some method of educating masses of middle-class women in the realms of art was needed. Therefore, to assist women in their artistic endeavors, art manuals were widely published. These "how-to" guides for painting could be purchased or borrowed in much the same manner library books are borrowed. These manuals were "written by professional artists and teachers to supplement their income" (Alexander, "The Earnest Amateur" 40). The manuals consisted of several engraved plates of various paintings per book, and amateur artists copied these plates. There were primarily two categories of manuals: one type showed the aspiring painter how to paint a picture by breaking it down in stages (similar to modern basic step-by-step drawing books), while the other type of manual contained only finished pictures. Regardless of the method the novice painter employed, the result was a replica of the original plate.

Although many art manuals were published, one of the more popular editions was the Annuals:

The fashionable Annuals were generously illustrated little books designed chiefly for women as Christmas, New Year, or birthday gifts. They were a direct result of the revolution in engraving, which allowed for reasonably priced books with steel engravings to reach a large middle-class market. There were still the expensive, limited editions of
aquatinted books... and at the other end of the market there were still the cheap books, illustrated by woodcuts or wood engravings... But the majority of the books owned by the Brontës, and from which they copied, had steel-engraved plates. (Alexander, “Influence of the Visual Arts” 14-15)

The Annuals played an important part not only in Brontë’s painting, but also in her writing: Alexander claims that various landscape descriptions found in Brontë’s novels contain details of the “picturesque landscape, illustrated so assiduously in the pages of the Annuals” (“Influence of the Visual Arts” 16). In addition to landscapes, titles of paintings such as Reading the Scriptures, Twelve Coloured Views of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and Abbeys in Monmouthshire reveal other subjects found in the Annuals. These images of religious subjects, towns, and landscapes reflect the “manners and morals of the times” (Alexander, “Influence of the Visual Arts” 14). Much of Brontë’s work, both visual and verbal, mirrors the plates that were included in the Annuals.

Since the Annuals were written primarily for a female audience, it is logical that they contained images involving nature because in order for a lady’s accomplishments to be considered “delicate,” the subjects of her work were socially prescribed to be scenes from nature. Thus, the Annuals and other manuals “of instruction on landscape or flower drawing outnumbered works dealing with other areas” (Irwin 150). This social phenomena is reflected in Brontë’s work, for most of her drawings and paintings are flowers or studies from nature (Figure 1).

There were some nature artists who felt that only women could accurately paint nature. G. Brown, author and illustrator of New Treatise on Flower Painting or, Every Lady Her Own Drawing Master, was one of these who believed that only women had the “fine and delicate feeling” (qtd. in Alexander, “The Earnest Amateur” 49) necessary for the art of drawing from nature: in particular flower
Figure 1. “Study of a Heartsease,” “Pink Begonia,” and “Blue Convolvulus.” It is thought that Brontë copied these studies from an engraving. Notice the attention to the veins and blossoms of the flowers. (From The Art of the Brontës)
painting. Brown even wanted to establish a school that taught only flower painting to women. However, despite his high expectations for female artists and flower painting, flower painting never became very popular because it was “coded as ‘feminine’ and categorized as ‘decorative’ or ‘ornamental.’ Because it was intended to serve some modest domestic use it had no public standing... [and] it had no standing as ‘fine art’ (Bermingham 161). Also, the world of art was dominated by men, and the plates that Brontë diligently copied were always created by male artists. However, in spite of these discriminating obstacles, Brontë still intended to become a professional artist.

**Brontë’s Subjects and Mediums**

The paintings and drawings Brontë found in the Annuals and other art manuals fascinated her, and she made a “determined effort to familiarize herself with the visual arts and with the picturesque vocabulary of the day; and she was remarkably successful” (Alexander, “Art and Artists” 201). Brontë spent countless hours thinking about and evaluating art and artists. Mary Taylor, one of Brontë’s closest school friends, records that Brontë seemed to think “our business was and ought to be, to see all the pictures and statues we could” (qtd. in Alexander, “Art and Artists” 178). Art almost seemed to be an obsession for Brontë.

Brontë’s interest in art did not commence only when she went to school. Even at the young age of thirteen, Brontë had an impressive “list of painters whose works I wish to see” (Gaskell 70). This list included Raphael, Guido Reni, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, van Dyck, Rubens, and Correggio (Gaskell 70). Clearly, the ambitious teenager, who had “probably never seen anything worthy the name of a painting in her life” (Gaskell 70) was very knowledgeable in the field of art. Since she was so knowledgeable, Brontë knew what were popular subjects for paintings and drawings: nature studies and landscapes. Thus, these subjects comprise a large part of the art she painted and drew.
The nature studies, landscapes, churchyards, and beautiful women that Brontë painted were for the most part prescribed to her; most of her work is a reflection of what she found in the *Annuals*. Also, the "classical heads, flowers, and landscapes of Charlotte and Anne reflect the art education they received at Roe Head" (Alexander, "Influence of the Visual Arts" 24). Since "sketching in the countryside was a pastime recommended to many young women of the time" (Alexander, "The Earnest Amateur" 41), landscapes especially play an important role in Brontë's art. In fact, this genre was so popular that one manufacturer of paintboxes included a compass in it so the landscape artist could find her way home (Bermingham 156). From the sheer number of landscapes that Brontë painted, one can clearly see that her choice of subjects was influenced by society. However, as seen by the care and beauty of these landscape pictures, it seems that Brontë must have enjoyed landscape painting very much.

The mediums Brontë used for her paintings and drawings were watercolors and pencils. Out of a known 180 paintings and drawings by Brontë, approximately 50 are in watercolor, and 100 are in pencil. Watercolors were "considered an ideal medium for women" (Irwin 151) because their smell was not as strong as oils, they give faster results than the oils, and there was a "wide choice of masters in the medium" (Irwin 151) for the female artist to study. Another important reason why nineteenth-century women were encouraged to use watercolors was because of the portability of them: no easel was required for watercolors because the artist could simply hold the canvas in her lap. This portability came in very useful for the artists when "landscape painting was burgeoning" (Irwin 151). Landscape paintings in watercolors were very popular, and to prove their "fashion sense" to others, women embraced this medium with open arms.

Although Brontë also completed several landscape paintings in watercolors, drawings created with pencils were even more attractive to her. According to Alexander, Brontë had the best success with pencils: "it is certainly the medium
she found easiest to work with and in which she achieved her best results” (“The Earnest Amateur” 44). This success is seen in the two drawings Brontë exhibited at the Leeds Exhibition in 1834, which was the one and only art show for which she ever qualified. These two submissions, Bolton Abbey and Kirkstall Abbey (Figures 2 and 3), are both illustrated in pencil. These two drawings represent the best of Brontë’s abilities as a landscape artist, and it can be seen that the most detailed and realistic of all of Brontë’s work is drawn with pencils. If there was one medium that Brontë “mastered” as an amateur artist, it clearly was pencils.

Revelations and Realizations by Brontë

Even though Brontë received a tantalizing taste of professional success in her art career, she eventually realized that she would never become a professional artist. Although many factors contributed to her unrealized dream, there were three primary reasons: Brontë was a woman, she mainly copied the genius of others, and she had no superior talent to distinguish her work from the work of others.

Brontë worked incessantly to achieve her dream of becoming an artist, but she always fell short of her goal. One of the main reasons why this happened is that she was not male. In Brontë’s time, the world of art was a man’s world: just as writing was a man’s world. “Currer Bell” the writer knew this fact, and this is one reason why Brontë used a pseudonym. However, Charlotte Brontë the artist did not realize that women did not succeed in the world of professional art until she tried to become a professional artist. Men were enrolled in the finest art institutions, were educated under the greatest master artists, and were allowed socially to succeed in art. Women, however, were never afforded these luxuries. The artwork completed by women was considered only as indications of their lady-like qualities, not as evidence of true talent. Even flower painting—an art form coded as feminine—was dominated by males. Brontë’s own father, Patrick Brontë,
Figure 2. Bolton Abbey This drawing is one of two submissions Brontë displayed in the art exhibition in Leeds. It is known that this pencil drawing is a copy of Edward Finden's painting with the same title. (From The Art of the Brontës)
Figure 3. **Kirkstall Abbey** This pencil drawing is the second submission that Brontë exhibited in Leeds. Although it is possible that Brontë herself visited this abbey located in West Yorkshire, Alexander states that this drawing is probably a copy from an engraving. *(From The Art of the Brontës)*
participated in the practice of overlooking the artistic abilities of females. He sent Branwell Brontë, Charlotte’s brother, to art school, and he also hired a respected artist to train Branwell at home. Although Charlotte would undoubtedly have greeted the opportunity to hone her artistic skills under quality instruction with great joy, she realized there was no possibility “that Patrick Brontë could afford to pay for two children to have private art lessons, enter the Academy schools, or be provided with a studio in Bradford” (Alexander, “The Earnest Amateur” 53). Although Charlotte did not openly resent her father’s choice of schooling Branwell in art rather than her, her father’s choice and her passive reaction speak louder than any words ever could. Patrick Brontë most likely chose to educate Branwell in art not because he had talent superior to Charlotte’s, but because he was male. Men became artists, not women. On the day she was born Brontë encountered a hindrance that would be partly to blame for her never achieving her dream to become an artist: she was a female. Thus, Brontë acquiesced to her father’s choice and never voiced her desire that she be the one trained for a professional career in art. The unquestioning deference Brontë displayed was a characteristic exhibited by countless nineteenth-century women, since society demanded that women defer to the “superiority” of men.

Another obstacle Brontë could not overcome on the road to becoming an artist was that she primarily copied the works of others. However, copying is exactly the method society and manuals such as the Annuals instructed her to follow. Even though Brontë was an extremely talented and creative woman (as her novels aptly demonstrate), “a third of Charlotte’s surviving sketches, drawings, and paintings are copies from contemporary engravings, and the earliest written record we have of her drawing is of her as copyist” (Alexander, “The Earnest Amateur” 38). Brontë was clearly a talented artist, but her own genius was stifled by copying the work of others. According to Bermingham, “the processes of tracing and copying efface the amateur’s own ‘style’ through the reproduction of
work already done elsewhere. . . [the amateur’s] work is reduced to being a copy, she herself verges on becoming nothing more than a machine for reproduction” (161). By imitating the works of others, Brontë never fully allowed her own creative genius to blossom in her artwork; therefore her possible success as an artist was never realized.

Eventually, Brontë realized that the system she believed would lead her to success was actually one of the reasons why she would never become an artist. Brontë became aware that rather than teaching herself for an artistic career, she was the victim of social mores . . . only gradually did Charlotte realize that the system of art education she was taught was directed more towards fitting middle-class girls for society and prospective husbands, than towards acquiring the skills necessary for entering a profession in art. (Alexander, “The Earnest Amateur” 49-51).

Brontë was essentially being schooled by a society that intended to keep women in a subordinate position to men—even in the art world where “free” expression rules supreme.

The third reason why Brontë was unable to succeed as an artist is that she unfortunately lacked the abilities that a master artist must possess. Although Brontë irrefutably drew and painted beautifully, her work shows no indications of “superior talent” (Alexander “The Earnest Amateur” 42) to distinguish her work from that of others (Figure 4). As Brontë was so focused on becoming a professional artist, it took years for her to come to terms with this fact. Perhaps if society had instructed her differently, Brontë might have been successful; but as it was, her training never allowed her to develop fully her abilities. In addition, although it is a prerequisite for master artists, women were discouraged by society from “drawing from life” (i.e. the human body). As can be expected, Brontë
Figure 4. Roe Head School was drawn by both Anne and Charlotte Brontë. Both reveal talented workmanship, but there is no superior qualities to differentiate Charlotte's work from Anne's. (From The Art of the Brontës)
Figure 5. "Portrait of a Lady." This drawing is an early drawing painted by Charlotte Brontë. Notice the disproportionate hand in relationship to the rest of the woman's body. (From The Art of the Brontës)
demonstrated little skill in drawing the human body and face (Figure 5). This is further proof that Brontë’s training did not equip her with the skills she needed to become a successful artist. Brontë herself came to know this, and when her publisher, W.S. Williams, asked her to illustrate Jane Eyre, Brontë refused to do so because she did not think she had the talent to do so.

As to your second suggestion, it is, one can see at a glance, a very judicious and happy one; but I cannot adopt it, because I have not the skill you attribute to me. It is not enough to have the artist’s eye, one must also have the artist’s hand to turn the first gift to practical account. I have, in my day, wasted a certain quantity of Bristol board and drawing-paper, crayons and cakes of colour, but when I examine the contents of my portfolio now, it seems as if during the years it has been lying closed some fairy had changed what I once thought to be sterling coin into dry leaves, and I feel much inclined to consign the whole collection of drawings to the fire; I see they have no value. If, then, Jane Eyre is ever to be illustrated, it must be by some other hand than that of its author. (Shorter 402)

Luckily, Brontë did not throw her artwork into the fire, but this letter proves that even Brontë knew her training had not been adequate and her abilities were not superior enough to allow her to become a professional artist.

Artistic Intertexts in Villette and Jane Eyre

Although Brontë never became the master visual artist she wanted to be, she was indubitably a master verbal artist. Brontë’s verbal art is heavily influenced by her knowledge and abilities in the visual arts. When Brontë wrote her novels, she was “seeing as a painter” (Alexander, “Art and Artists” 184), which means Brontë describes scenes as if they were paintings. An example of Brontë’s supreme description skills is seen in Villette when Lucy describes the theatre
scene to the reader:

These [ambassadors] took possession of the crimson benches; the ladies were seated; most of the men remained standing: their sable rank, lining the back ground, looked like a dark foil to the splendor displayed in the front. Nor was this splendor without varying light and shade and gradation: the middle distance was filled with matrons in velvets and satins, in plumes and gems; the benches in the foreground, to the Queen's right hand, seemed devoted exclusively to young girls, the flower--perhaps I should say, the bud--of Villette aristocracy. (291)

The very choice of "art" words Brontë uses reflects her study and interest in art. These intertexts also echo in the verbal illustration of the red-room in Jane Eyre:

A bed supported on massive pillars of mahogany, hung with curtains of deep red damask, stood out like a tabernacle in the centre, the two large windows, with their blinds always drawn down, were half shrouded in festoons and falls of similar drapery... the walls were a soft fawn colour, with a blush of pink in it; the wardrobe, the toilet-table, the chairs, were of darkly-polished old mahogany. (45)

Examples of Brontë's artistic influence on her writing abound throughout all of her novels. She displays unusual talent as a writer to "set the scene" for her readers. Brontë's attention to minute details that many other writers overlook makes the reader able to visualize the scene she describes with ease. Most readers of Brontë have no difficulty in seeing the scenes Brontë so masterfully paints for them with words.

Another method Brontë employs in her writing which reflects her fascination of art is that "all Charlotte's heroines are distinguished by their ability to observe and to 'read' a face, and all are amateur painters" (Alexander, "Influence of the Visual Arts" 28). Brontë agrees with the societal notion that genteel women should be skilled and knowledgeable in art because Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe are
both modest amateur painters. They claim they can paint only "a little," yet the reader is shown how well they really paint by the reactions of other characters to their work. This idea is clearly seen when Bessie inquires about Jane's teaching and accomplishments at Lowood:

"... And can you draw?"

"That is one of my paintings over the chimney-piece." It was a landscape in water colours, of which I had made a present to the superintendent, in acknowledgement of her obliging mediation with the committee on my behalf, and which she had framed and glazed.

"Well, that is beautiful, Miss Jane! It is as fine a picture as any Miss Reed's drawing-master could paint, let alone the young ladies themselves, who could not come near it." (Brontë, Jane Eyre 123)

(It is interesting to note that even the fiercely independent Jane follows society's prescription for women by painting a landscape portrait.) Jane neither brags nor replies to Bessie's praise. In addition to her abilities as an artist, Jane studies new faces just as she studies paintings: "the new face, too, was like a new picture introduced to the gallery of memory" (Brontë, Jane Eyre 147). Jane views life through a veil of the visual arts, as does Brontë. However, instead of using a canvas to paint her true masterpieces, Brontë uses the pages of her novels and fills them with intrapsychic intertexts from her own life.

The style of art Brontë favors is manifested in her novels. Remembering that Brontë was more skilled in painting still-lifes and landscapes than in drawing the human body, one can see her preferences though the eyes of Lucy Snowe. After gazing on the painting of the hefty Cleopatra--"an enormous piece of claptrap" (Villette 276)--Lucy says she "betook myself for refreshment to the contemplation of some exquisite little pictures of still life: wild-flowers, wild-fruit, mossy wood-nests... all hung modestly beneath that coarse and preposterous canvas" (Villette 276). Lucy, like Brontë, prefers the beauty of everyday scenes and
objects rather than flashy and suggestive images of the human body. Perhaps though, this is due to societal influences rather than personal preferences. Women were encouraged to admire and paint nature and landscapes, but they were for the most part to leave the painting of human bodies (especially nudes and semi-nudes) to men.

**Famous Artists and Imitational Intertexts**

Although the *Annuals* were a great influence on Brontë, the single “greatest influence on the subject and style” (Alexander, “Influences of the Visual Arts 17) of Brontë was the engravings illustrating the poetry and life of Lord Byron. These landscapes, figures, and other images were very attractive to Brontë. Just as Brontë’s writing echoes with Byronic qualities, so too do her paintings and drawings (Figure 6). “It is possible to trace, in the early engravings to Byron’s work, the sources of many of Charlotte Brontë’s illustrations, both verbal and pictorial” (Alexander, “Art and Artists” 196). Brontë’s interest in Byron was reinforced by the *Annuals* because there are a plethora of plates illustrated with Byronic “fashionable beauties and sublime landscapes” (Alexander, “Influences of the Visual Arts” 17). It is likely that while Brontë painted her Byronic images, the appearances of Edward Fairfax Rochester and M. Paul became formulated in her mind.

In addition to Byron, a second important influence on Brontë’s art was Thomas Bewick, who eventually became “one of the most admired printmakers and naturalists of his day” (Cummings 144). Brontë found his drawings from nature compelling, and her own drawings of nature resound with his influence. Using Bewick’s *History of British Birds*, Brontë painted copies of his work (Figures 7 and 8). Bewick’s realistic methods of painting seem to allow his subjects to leap from the canvas, and in hopes of attaining the same effect and status as a professional artist, Brontë no doubt studied and copied Bewick’s famous *History of British*
Figure 6. Arthur Adrian Marquis of Douro. This portrait is inspired by Lord Byron and his Byronic hero. Brontë was fascinated by Byron and his works. (From The Art of the Brontës)
Figure 7. The Mountain Sparrow. This drawing by Brontë is a copy from Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds*. Brontë was fascinated by Bewick’s work, as evidenced from her copies of his plates and the first chapter of *Jane Eyre*. (From *The Art of the Brontës*)
Figure 8. The Palm Squirrel. Charlotte Brontë also copied this picture from an engraving by Bewick. (From The Art of the Brontës)
Birds diligently.

Bewick’s close attention to reality and detail caused him to be “admired by the Victorian artists for his methodical care and accuracy, his study of nature to do the craftsmanly work of illustrating, printing, and also for completing the work with a literary description” (Cummings 145). Brontë also admired Bewick greatly, as evidenced from the fact that Bewick’s *History of British Birds* is the book young Jane Eyre takes with her to the window seat at Gateshead:

I returned to my book--Bewick’s *History of British Birds*: the letterpress thereof I cared little for, generally speaking; and yet there were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of “the solitary rocks and promontories” by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindeness, or Naze, to the North Cape. . . . with Bewick on my knee, I was then happy.

(*Jane Eyre* 40-41)

Although Brontë was fascinated by Bewick’s work, she was “often critical of the forced association between text and picture [found in the Annuals], occasioned by the poetry or prose being commissioned to accompany an already completed engraving” (Alexander, “Influence of the Visual Arts” 14). In an intrapsychic intertext, Brontë clearly makes these feelings known through the young Jane about the accompanying poems and prose for each picture. However from *Jane Eyre*, it is very apparent how much Bewick’s work impressed Brontë. She could have chosen countless other books for young Jane to read, yet she selected Bewick’s book. This intrapsychic intertext alone shows the immense respect Brontë had for Bewick’s work and the great influence he had on her work.

Another added attraction of Bewick for Brontë was that although he primarily created wood engravings, he also painted in watercolors. Watercolors were one of Brontë’s preferred mediums, and it must have been highly pleasing to her that an
artist she respected also utilized the same medium. The amateur Brontë, similar to other students of landscape, could "never consult the works of Bewick without improvement" (qtd. in Hardie 148), as Bewick's influential style and subjects reverberate throughout Brontë's visual and verbal art careers.

Besides Byron and Bewick, another highly influential artist who greatly impacted Brontë's work was John Martin. Martin, best known for his stormy paintings of Biblical scenes, "made his name as a painter of a series of highly colored canvasses usually showing melodramatic scenes from the Bible such as Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still, The Fall of Babylon, and Pandemonium" (Stainton 66). The horrific visions Martin depicted "were terrifying and titanic emblems of destruction and doom" (Hardie 46). Martin's "fire and brimstone" imagery surrounded Brontë on a daily basis, for Patrick Brontë had several prints of Martin's work displayed on the walls of the parsonage. According to Allen Staley, "Scenes of Biblical catastrophes were enormously popular in the early nineteenth century. Not only did they provide spectacular extravaganzas... they also embodied one of the most central of romantic themes: the smallness and helplessness of man before the forces of the universe" (233). Surmising from Brontë's surviving paintings and drawings, it seems that she did not copy any of Martin's turbulent Biblical scenes, but she did copy many of his landscape paintings. However, Martin's passionate influence is best seen in Brontë's writing. His style of painting is clearly seen in the description of the pictures that Jane shows to Rochester. Many of these images also allude to John Milton's Paradise Lost, which, incidentally, Martin illustrated in 1827. Book IV of Paradise Lost contains this description of Satan in the Garden of Eden:

One the Tree of Life,
The middle Tree and highest there that grew,
Sat a Cormorant; yet not true Life
Thereby regained, but sat devising Death
To Them who liv’d. (194-198)

According to Bacon, in Jane’s picture the cormorant may also be seen as an image of temptation (64).

One gleam of light lifted into relief a half-submerged mast, on which sat a cormorant, dark and large, with wings flecked with foam; its beak held a gold bracelet, set with gems... Sinking below the bird and mast, a drowned corpse glanced through the green water; a fair arm was the only limb clearly visible, whence the bracelet had been washed or torn.

(Brontë, Jane Eyre 157)

The danger of temptation is clear from the ominous cormorant itself and the bracelet that it has torn from the corpse (Bacon 64). Jane’s painting echoes Martin’s melodramatic style of portraying sin and temptation, and this painting foreshadows the temptation Jane must endure of becoming involved with Rochester. Just as the female corpse in the painting grasps for the gold bracelet, Jane, although unknown to her at the time, attempts to hold onto a relationship with a man who should be wearing a gold ring on his left hand.

The second painting that Jane shares with Rochester is also influenced by Martin. Jane’s painting and Martin’s illustrations of Paradise Lost show depictions of lusty and sinful love. Jane’s painting illustrates a lovely woman who turns out to be Venus, the goddess of love and lust:

Beyond and above spread an expanse of sky, dark-blue as at twilight: rising into the sky was a woman’s shape to the bust, portrayed in tints as dusk and soft as I could combine. The dim forehead was crowned with a star... the hair streamed shadowy, like a beamless cloud torn by storm, or by electric travail. On the neck lay a pale reflection like moonlight; the same faint lustre touched the train of thin clouds from which rose and bowed this vision of the Evening Star. (Jane
Bacon states that in *Paradise Lost* the Evening Star (Venus) introduces a love that is far from being innocent and harmless (65). The warning in this picture is that the passionate love that Rochester feels for Jane is a sinful snare that is difficult for Jane to resist. This is a very powerful passion as shown by the description of Venus (Bacon 65), and this same passion can be seen in Martin’s painting. Like Venus’s portrait, the surface of Rochester’s love seems beautiful, honest, and pure. However, similar to the strife Venus sometimes creates for lovers, Rochester’s love for Jane is tumultuous. Rochester is a married man, and his love, similar to the lusty and sinful love illustrated in Martin’s works, is dishonorable and immoral.

Jane’s third painting also demonstrates intertextuality with *Paradise Lost*. In Book II of *Paradise Lost*, Satan tries to leave Hell and is intercepted by Sin and Death (Bacon 65):

> For each seem’d either; black it stood as Night,
> Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
> And shook a dreadful Dart; what seem’d his head
> The likeness of a Kingly Crown had on. (669-673)

Jane’s painting is an image of death, something Jane feels would come of an adulterous relationship with Rochester:

> The third showed the pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar winter sky. a muster of northern lights reared their dim lances, close serried, along the horizon. Throwing these into the distance, rose, in the foreground, a head—a colossal head. . . Above the temples, amidst wreathed turban folds of black drapery, vague in its character and consistency as cloud, gleamed a ring of white flame, gemmed with sparkles of a more lurid tinge. This pale crescent was the “likeness of a kingly crown.” (Jane Eyre 157)
The “Kingly Crown” is a clear symbol of death in both of these works. Just as sin and death wear a “Kingly Crown” when Satan encounters them, Jane’s painting foreshadows a possible crown of association with sin and death that she will wear if she continues a romantic relationship with Rochester. This description echoes Martin’s “fire and brimstone” religious paintings, which obviously made a deep impression on Brontë. The depth of this impression is revealed in Jane’s paintings.

Clearly, Martin’s terrifying Biblical scenes influenced Brontë’s thoughts and writing. However, there was one side of Martin that Brontë unfortunately did not emulate. According to Hardie, Martin won fame not only as a painter, but also because he “conducted a long campaign for a purer water supply in London [and] for the proper disposal of its sewage” (46). The water supply and sanitary practices in nineteenth-century England were horrendous: images in the streets of Haworth during Brontë’s time were reminiscent of the Black Plague days in Europe. Trash and sewage littered the streets and contaminated the drinking wells. According to a nineteenth-century city inspector, the Haworth Brontë knew had a mortality rate that “equalled that of the worst slums in London” (Wilks 33).

The water supply utilized by the Brontë family was also dangerous because it was contaminated by the churchyard cemetery: “Babbage [an inspector] reported with alarm that the burial ground surrounding the church, and the parsonage, was dangerously over-filled and a constant danger to health” (Wilks 33). The cemetery was not large enough to contain all of the bodies it did, and to add to this, nature’s process of decay and purification was stunted by the customary practice of placing large stone slabs over the graves. Babbage ordered that there were to be no more burials in the church yard, but his orders were not obeyed. According to Wilks, Brontë’s younger siblings all died within twelve years of Babbage’s report (33). Perhaps, if Brontë had followed Martin’s ideas of sanitation at Haworth, the inspector’s warnings would have been heeded, and her siblings would possibly not
have died such early and untimely deaths.

Byron, Bewick, and Martin all influenced Brontë's visual and verbal art. Brontë "showed her early perception [of beauty and truth]. . . by allowing art, particularly the art of the painter, to alter and structure the way she perceived the world, and hereby alter the way her readers saw the world" (Alexander, "Art and Artists" 202). One of the major ways in which Brontë narrates her novels is through art. She paints pictures in the minds of her readers that few writers can equal. In a society that expected her to conform to its prescriptions for womanhood (which meant she could not become a professional visual artist), Brontë eventually discovered a method she could employ to fulfill her wish of becoming a professional artist. . . by becoming an artist of words.
CHAPTER 4. INTERTEXTS AND TEACHING: **JANE EYRE** IN THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

Teaching Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in a secondary setting can be a difficult task for English teachers. The length, dense language, and British-based ideologies of her novels can seem daunting to students. However, perhaps the greatest difficulty an instructor can face when teaching *Jane Eyre* is convincing students that it is a worthwhile and beneficial endeavor that may affect their lives. According to Roseanne Y. DeFabio, the two reasons literature is taught is to provide students with the chance to “experience some of the valued literary texts of our culture... and [to] provide opportunities for them to develop textual skills (151). *Jane Eyre* satisfies both of these requirements. Brontë's work (especially *Jane Eyre*) is well-established in the literary canon, and it certainly provides students with textual practice. (The density of the language and the unfamiliarity of some phrases forces students to read the text closely.) These two facts alone should be more than adequate reasoning to justify the inclusion of *Jane Eyre* in the secondary curriculum.

However, some students (especially males ones) may categorize the novel as “too girlish” or “ mushy”: both are adjectives that turn some readers “off” from the text. Despite these stereotypical descriptors, *Jane Eyre* is suitable for students of both genders to read because it enlarges the students' “frame of reference through encountering experiences that are foreign to them which are not likely to happen in their own lives and, thus, to enrich and complicate their perspective” (Fetterley 149-150). It is highly unlikely that students who read *Jane Eyre* will ever become governesses in Britain, live in a mansion with a secret insane occupant on the third floor, run away from a beloved only to return after discovering unknown family relations and live happily ever after. For these reasons, *Jane Eyre* allows students to “get” into someone else's “skin” and view the world through a different
perspective. An instructor can facilitate this awareness through a variety of activities and assignments—such as the ones included in this chapter—that allow students to consider ideas and experiences other than their own.

Perhaps though, the most important reason to teach Jane Eyre in the secondary classroom is that it exposes male readers to a feminine text instead of forcing female readers to be exposed almost exclusively to masculine texts, which is generally what happens in an educational setting. According to Judith Fetterley, “regardless of how many actual readers may be women, within the academy the presumed reader is male” (150). Most literature is “by and about men” (Fetterley 151), and this fact supports the biased view of women being subordinate to men. A further complication of this gender bias, as Brenda Daly states, is that “girls are almost invisible in the language arts curricula of most middle and secondary schools” (106). Even in an age of gender and cultural awareness, this is true. Most individuals, if asked what they read in their secondary English classes, would name authors such as Hawthorne, Poe, Twain, Shakespeare, Dickens, Wordsworth, Chaucer, etc. Moreover, if asked who the authors of classical literature are, these same names would most likely be reiterated. Teachers who exclude the work of female writers out of a fear that they will not be liked or valued by male students because of their femininity are unwittingly rejecting the value women contribute to the literary world and are also excluding girls from the curriculum. In turn, this rejection of feminine accomplishments can be emulated by students—both male and female.

Therefore, teachers must strive to overcome this rejection of feminine accomplishments because many secondary-age girls are attempting to find their niche in life, and a rejection of female authors could be construed by some female students as a rejection of women in general. In a reply to Daly’s article, Claudia
Mitchell says that there is a "need to put young women in the picture at the very time they are most likely to disappear from view—their own view" (132). By studying (and therefore celebrating) female authors, teachers are sending a message to students that women do have great abilities to contribute to the world. Also, reading female-authored novels gives women the chance to bring their experience into the reading of a novel. Fetterley states that when she taught an all-female authored class to students, the female students shared "the relief they felt at finding within the academy an opportunity of reading something other than texts by and about men" (150-151). If teachers were to include more female authors in the secondary curriculum, this relief would be transformed into a comfortable and recurring emotion felt by female students.

Of course, using a few token female authors is not enough to eliminate the gender discrimination often seen in literature curricula in secondary schools. Regular inclusion of female-authored books is vital to demonstrate their equality with male authored books. For that reason, "separate but equal" classes of women's literature are not adequate. Classes in women's literature can be wonderful learning experiences, but if a secondary school has only one nineteenth-century literature class, it should be divided equally between male and female authors. Otherwise, female authors are viewed by students as secondary and non-standard writers when compared to male authors.

Furthermore, only by learning about each other and "wearing someone else's shoes" can people ever realize what others feel. By including female authored novels, such as Bronte's Jane Eyre, teachers are not only exposing students to wonderful and valuable literature, but they are also demonstrating that women are valuable members of society and have a lot to contribute to it.
Teaching Suggestions

The rest of this chapter is devoted to various teaching ideas for incorporating Jane Eyre and Charlotte Brontë into the secondary classroom. These ideas will help students meet the following objectives:

• Students will use all their language skills--reading, writing, and speaking--by reading the novel, writing essays and other assignments, and delivering a prepared presentation in a speech format to the class.

• Students will be introduced to the concept of intertextuality and will work with its implications in discussions and writing assignments.

• Students will demonstrate imaginative and creative thinking in various writing assignments.

• Students will utilize textual skills of reading, writing, listening, and observing by not only directly reading the novel, but also by reading sections of it aloud, by performing sections of the novel, and by re-creating sections of the novel.

• Students will become aware of the interrelation of the disciplines by several across-the-curriculum activities.

• Students will have an opportunity to read a classical work by a female writer (which is out of the norm in many secondary schools).

• Students will reflect on their cultural and personal values in relation to Jane Eyre.

• Students will practice their cooperation, research, analytical, writing, speaking, and proofreading skills in class presentations and formal and informal writing assignments (including a final essay).

The ideas presented are as yet untested in a classroom setting, but based on the author's previous secondary teaching experience, they should be sound and educational learning tools for students. These teaching ideas are grouped into
three categories: pre-reading activities, intertextual issues, and closure activities.

Pre-Reading Activities

As a “hook” to attain student interest in Jane Eyre, the teacher should set up an activity that makes students want to know more about Jane Eyre. Therefore, the following are suggestions for attaining student interest in the novel:

1. Show a short excerpt (preferably in color) from a scene of a movie version of Jane Eyre. Ideal scenes to show students include Jane’s arrival at Thornfield, her wanderings on the moors near Whitcross, or Bertha’s eerie laughter and pyromaniacal tendencies in Mr. Rochester’s bedroom.

2. Have students write predictions of what they think will happen in the novel.

The teacher should set up a scene similar to the following:

There once was a young orphan girl who grew up to be a teacher for a private family that lived in a large mansion. One day, she discovered a horrible secret in the mansion. In a two-page paper, describe what you think the young teacher discovered and also how she discovered it.

Intertextual Issues

1. Help students get into the “shoes” of another character besides Jane. Instruct students to re-write a scene from Jane Eyre from the viewpoint of another character (Mr. Rochester, Mrs. Fairfax, Adele, Bertha, etc.). When these are complete, have an “author” day for students to read their re-written scenes to the rest of the class.

2. After discussing Jane Eyre as a “wish-fulfillment” novel, have students write their own wish-fulfillment short story. Everything from designer clothes and sports cars to magnificent mansions in Beverly Hills will appear in the stories, but it will help them to see the method Brontë employed when writing Jane Eyre. The material wishes of the students can be compared to Jane’s refusal to accept the jewels and fine clothes Rochester attempted to give her.
What do the differences say about society's influences on individuals and morals in different centuries? Why are these differences present?

3. After the students discover that Rochester is already married, have Jane Eyre outline her dilemma to "Dear Abby." In a "Dear Abby" format, students should reply to Jane giving their advice and suggestions on how she should next proceed. Students are then able to share what they wish would happen in the novel. Share these suggestions with the class.

4. Since Charlotte Brontë and Jane Eyre were artists, the novel presents an opportunity for across-the-curriculum teaching. Work with someone in the art department on a Brontë unit. Perhaps the students could make their own versions of the Annuals as a class project, or they could do their own illustrations of Jane Eyre. If this is not possible, have the students do some research on nineteenth-century British art and artists. Each student should do a different topic and share the information with the class.

5. Team up with an elementary class and have the students become governesses for a day. Each secondary student should work with one or two elementary students and is responsible for instructing them on a subject. (The teachers will want to decide what should be taught—students need to be provided with an outline of goals that the elementary students must meet.) After this is done and the elementary students are no longer present, discuss any difficulties and joys the students had with this activity. Instruct students to report their findings in a paper. (This is another across-the-curriculum moment the teacher could use—work with the science department and have students write their findings in a laboratory write-up style.)

6. Allow students to become "teachers" for a day. Have students research various topics present in Jane Eyre, such as the treatment of women,
governesses, asylums, architecture, orphanages, etc. After their research, students should present their findings to the class, who is then responsible for knowing the information students tell them. (The teacher may wish to have students prepare their research as an informative speech. If so, the author suggests consulting Stephen Lucas's The Art of Public Speaking.)

7. Have students form groups and act out a scene or do a radio script of a scene from Jane Eyre (either referred to by Jane or seen by the reader). Require a script and some rehearsals.

8. Team up with the social studies or history departments and have students investigate how people lived in nineteenth-century England. Instructors will want to be sure to cover the lack of sanitation and life expectancy of the time. Discuss the relation between Charlotte Brontë and where she lived. How did it affect her and her writing?

9. For a college prep class, expose students to various schools of literary criticism. Have students select one and research it thoroughly. After the research is complete, have them write an essay using the method and outside sources.

**Closure Activities**

1. When students have completed the novel, view a movie version of Jane Eyre in class, and also require students to view at least one other version either during free time at home or at school. What is changed? Who is left out of the movie versions? Does this impact the story line? Does it make Jane Eyre better? Worse? Why? If it is appropriate, instruct students to write a short comparison paper that outlines the differences between the movie versions of Jane Eyre.

2. Talk about the fairy tales (include Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and Bluebeard) and the other stories within Jane Eyre with which students
may be familiar (*Frankenstein*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Paradise Lost*). What other novels have students read that have stories imbedded in them? (This would also be a wonderful segue into the next unit if it has intertextual elements in it as *Jane Eyre* does. A good companion novel for *Jane Eyre* is Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which shares an intertextual relationship with *Jane Eyre*.)

These ideas are samples of what can be done in the secondary classroom to facilitate an appreciation for Brontë and *Jane Eyre*. More importantly though, these are methods of celebrating women in literature.
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Verbal and visual intertexts: An approach to analyzing and teaching two novels by Charlotte Brontë

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Intrapsychic intertextuality is found in all of Charlotte Brontë's novels, and these intertexts are autobiographical (found in Brontë's memories, wishes, and letters), literary (Pilgrim's Progress, Paradise Lost, Don Juan, fairy tales, and gothic), or visual (Brontë's own artwork and art of the nineteenth century that she saw). Since Brontë fulfills the unrealized wishes in her life by allowing her protagonists to attain the dreams she is denied, many of the intrapsychic intertexts in Brontë's novels can be classified as "wish-fulfillments." This thesis examines the intrapsychic intertexts present in two of Brontë's novels, Jane Eyre and Villette.

Chapters One and Two of this thesis study the intrapsychic or autobiographical intertextual passages seen specifically in Jane Eyre and Villette. Brontë's own dreams and life are great influences in these novels, as illustrated by the abundant intrapsychic moments found in the texts. Jane Eyre is a semi-autobiographical novel that makes Brontë's own failed dreams into reality for the protagonist, and Villette is a novel based on Brontë's experience in Brussels with characters (including the "dark" characters) modeled after herself and individuals she had met and worked with there.

Chapter Three examines Brontë's own amateur paintings and drawings and explores the social influences present in her art. It then investigates the role Brontë's visual art played in her verbal art. Brontë had every intention of
becoming a professional artist; this did not happen, but her fascination for the visual arts becomes a significant intertext in her novels.

The final chapter argues for teaching Brontë's novels in the secondary classroom, and it also suggests some teaching methods, including intertextuality, for effectively presenting Brontë's *Jane Eyre* to secondary students.