Folklore in the Works of Charlotte Brontë: A New Critical Approach

by

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Abstract

My key objectives are to establish a new contextual framework of folklore in the realist novel so as to widen current Gothic interpretations of Charlotte Brontë's uses of the supernatural across her fiction, to provide evidence of local cultural and Romantic literary sources of folklore in her novels, arguing for their relevant influences on Brontë's narrative and ideological uses, and to connect Brontë's literary allusions to folk belief to her letters. Firstly, I establish Brontë's local folklore milieu as a narrative source in *Shirley* (1849), comparing the material to historical secondary sources. Secondly, I argue for Brontë's early adaptation of the literary antiquarian Walter Scott's narrative and thematic uses of folklore in the Glass Town and Angria Tales. Thirdly, with Scott's Romantic fairy tradition material as a resource, I argue for Brontë's transformative use of the fairy motif in the study of various socio-cultural issues in *Jane Eyre* (1847). Lastly, I examine Brontë's imitation and development of Scott's rhetoric of scepticism in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830) for the study of Enlightenment Rationality and Christian truths, in relation to the ghost motif of *Villette* (1853).

Acknowledgements

In the novel *Jane Eyre*, a kind fairy dropped the idea of Jane advertising as a governess. Similarly, two fairies (Angela and Eileen) suggested I enrol on a WEA course on the study of *Jane Eyre* being held in a local church. When asked about the frequent references to fairies in the novel, the tutor suggested it as an area of enquiry for anyone who had the time and the inclination. This thesis is the result of taking this idea to heart. I wish to acknowledge the initial input of Dr Essaka Joshua, former Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Birmingham, now Teaching Professor of English and Joseph Morahan Director of the College Seminar at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, for supporting the project at MPhil level and encouraging me to expand it further. Once the project progressed to PhD, cultural historian Dr Bob Bushaway supported the cultural historical aspect of the study. Having tragically passed away in February 2013, he was superseded by Dr David Gange, Senior Lecturer in History. Professor Deborah Longworth, Head of Department of English Literature has remained my primary supervisor throughout the remainder of the research and my thanks go to her, especially, for her unwavering belief in this study. I also wish to thank my partner Christopher Boivin for proofreading, relentless patience, love and emotional and financial support over the years. I received the Daphne Carrick Memorial Scholarship in Brontë Studies some years ago for this proposed line of investigation. I hope that the results do justice to the award.

Table of Contents

Introduction: Brontë's Literary Uses of the Supernatural:
Folklore in the Realist Novel as a Narrative Framework 1

Chapter 1: Brontë's Local Sources and *Shirley*.....48

Chapter 2: Brontë's Romantic Sources for Glass Town and Angria:
Walter Scott's Narrative and Thematic Uses of Folklore 79

Chapter 3: *Jane Eyre*'s Fairy Motif: Symbols of Physical Difference,
Sexuality and Aspects of Gender 113

Chapter 4: *Villette*'s Ghost Motif:
Superstition versus Enlightenment Rationality and
Christian Truths 145

Conclusion 177

Bibliography: 183

Introduction

Brontë's Literary Uses of the Supernatural: Folklore in the Realist Novel as a Narrative Framework

> Magic in all its forms appealed to her. The land of elves and fairies was her favourite subject, whereas Branwell rarely mentioned such insubstantial beings.
>
> Christine Alexander[1]

This thesis argues that the role of folklore in Charlotte Brontë's oeuvre is generally overlooked. Overwhelmingly, critics locate supernatural elements across Brontë's fiction within a Gothic tradition, as argued in Robert B. Heilman's 'Charlotte Brontë's "New Gothic"' (1958).[2] Folklore scholar, Jacqueline Simpson, however, persuasively studies the Brontës' use of folk motifs in her article 'The Function of Folklore in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*' (1974),[3] providing a starting point for my project on Brontë's folklore. Although Brontë critics acknowledge her familiarity with folklore, few pay much attention to its narrative and ideological function throughout her fiction. In the Glass Town and Angria Tales, for example, folklore contributes to plot, characterisation, setting and atmosphere. Folklore themes developed in the novels are traceable also to the juvenilia. *The Professor* (1857) contains the fewest references to folklore. In both *Jane Eyre* and in *Shirley* (1849), the fairy departure motif reflects the Victorian engagement with nostalgia, an attitude or

[1] Christine Alexander, *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 69.
[2] Robert B. Heilman, 'Charlotte Brontë's "New Gothic"', in *From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad: Essays Collected in Memory of James T. Hillhouse*, eds. R.C. Rathburn and M. Steinmann (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 118-132.
[3] Jacqueline Simpson, 'The Function of Folklore in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*', *Folklore* 85 (1974), pp. 47-61.

worldview that lamented the past embodied also in the novels of Thomas Hardy. In addition to its narrative value in *Shirley*, folklore also reflects the novel's regional genre and historicity, again, possibly anticipating Hardy's character and environment novels. Although emerging as a narrative in *Shirley*, folklore has a greater ideological role in *Jane Eyre* (1847).[4] Brontë's use of the fairy part of folklore as a form of coding is a conscious attempt to express aspects of culture which are normally difficult to articulate openly. The fairy symbolises cultural or male definitions of Victorian femininity, issues about otherness or difference, female power, spiritual equality and issues about eroticization and sexual taboos. Brontë's use of folklore as a communicative tool to explore the ideology of womanhood and male sexuality possibly resonates with other realist novelists including George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. The trope of the ghost in *Villette* (1853) can be read as a way to examine the tension between superstition and Enlightenment rationality similarly to Charles Dickens' short stories. However, I suggest that Brontë's sceptical Victorian worldview is compatible with her religious piety, a position she might not regard as paradoxical. I situate Brontë's ghost within the Victorian obsession with eschatological issues on death and the afterlife. This thesis aims to direct Brontë's uses of the supernatural towards the realist novel so as to reappraise Gothic led critical perceptions of her novels.

As to Brontë's source material I argue that the presence of region-specific folklore references across *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* suggest her drawing on the Yorkshire rural world or oral tradition that might also be demonstrated, to a degree, across Brontë's letters. Evidence of folklore as a cultural aspect of the local environment may have exacerbated magical thinking (I explain this term later) referenced in her letters. Certainly, magical thinking is a key character trait in her major heroes and heroines, distinguishing them from other fictional

[4] All subsequent references to Charlotte Brontë's novels are to *Jane Eyre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), *Villette* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), *The Professor* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), *Shirley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

characters. Brontë's second major source of folklore, I argue, is drawn from the work of Walter Scott (1771-1832). Richard M. Dorson in *The British Folklorists: A History* (1968) regards Scott as the 'first major figure to cultivate the literary uses of folklore with sympathy and comprehension [...] served well the cause of antiquarian folklore'.[5] While Dorson's work is more historical, Coleman O. Parsons devotes an entire study to the literary role of folklore in Scott's historical romances.[6] Both of these studies, however, situate Scott firmly in a folklore literary tradition. I argue that throughout her tales, Brontë adapted Scott's narrative uses of folklore. She transformed Scott's fairy material for the role of fairies in *Jane Eyre* and adapted Scott's ghost investigations for her theme of Enlightenment rationality in *Villette*.

In sum, Brontë critics do little to advance the relevance of folklore in her fiction. Simpson is invaluable in advancing the topic of folklore studies in her critical analysis of *Jane Eyre*. However, her study overlooks analysis of the role of the fairy motif in gender studies and does not extend to the other novels. Simpson's analysis of *Wuthering Heights*, however, is very useful. It draws attention to Emily's interest in ghosts, an enquiry I develop in my analysis of the role of the ghost motif within the study of eschatology and early psychology in *Villette.* There is, to my knowledge, no other critical study on the role of folklore in Brontë's other works. Brontë critics do not associate Scott, the literary antiquarian, with folklore. However, they do acknowledge the presence of folklore in Brontë's local environment.

To an extent, Jason Marc Harris's recent study of the hitherto critically overlooked relationship of folklore and literature in the Nineteenth-century is a context for my argument.[7] His work is limited to the analysis of folklore in folk legends, fairy tales and ghost stories or the literary fantastic and pays less attention to prose fiction. Yet, it lays a foundation for my

[5] Richard M. Dorson, *The British Folkorists: A History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 107.
[6] Coleman O. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction; with Chapters on the Supernatural in Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964).
[7] Jason Marc Harris, *Folklore and the Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Ashgate: Publishing Company, 2008).

study of the interrelationship between folklore and Brontë's literature. His brief inclusion of Scott's literary uses of folklore in his short stories is relevant to my study. This thesis shifts the focus of Harris' examination of folk narratives to Brontë's realist novels. I argue that 'magical thinking', alluded to in his study, functions as a key character trait in her work. 'Magical thinking' is a term borrowed by Harris for his analysis of superstition in the Victorian literature of fantastic and fantasy texts. Michael Shermer describes magical thinking as our attempt to evolve as 'skilled, pattern-seeking causal-finding creatures [...]. We have magical thinking and superstitions because we need critical thinking and pattern-finding. The two cannot be separated. Magical thinking is a by-product of the evolved mechanism of causal thinking'.[8] Magical thinking is an area of study within the wider context of the psychology of imagination.[9] Harris' goal is to situate the significance of folklore in folk tales and legends or narratives of the literary fantastic. He acknowledges the role of the realist novelists, Dickens, Gaskell, Eliot and Hardy, whom Harris identifies as writers in whose fiction supernatural folklore figures as a significant presence.[10] He omits the Brontës in this list yet casts a glance at the 'fairy-departure motif'[11] in *Shirley* (pointing also to its itemization as motif F388: *Departure of the Fairies* in folklore studies). Carole Silver, in *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (1999) moreover, argues that the subtext behind Mary Garth's retelling of 'Rumpelstiltskin' at Mr Vincy's New Year's Eve celebration in Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-2), suggests that 'fairy lore and fairy faith penetrated even the so-called realist tradition' and even those 'less committed to realism are even more revelatory

[8] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 11. See Michael Shermer, *Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudo-Science, Superstition and Other Confusions of Our Time* (New York: Holt, 2002).
[9] Marjorie Taylor, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[10] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 208.
[11] Ibid., p. 9.

of prevailing cultural beliefs experienced by the Victorians'.[12] To develop my interpretation of the fairy feature in *Jane Eyre*, I take my lead also from Silver's examination of the symbolic role of the elfin world in the works of the Victorian realist novelists and their anthropological role in Romantic poetry, particularly in Scott. Silver more than Harris examines the association between folklore and the novel form, providing a better foundation for my examination of fairy lore in *Jane Eyre*. Still I need to refer as closely to Maureen Duffy, *The Erotic World of Faery* (1972)[13] as her work specifies the relationship between fairies and sexuality. Studies of the supernatural in the works of Dickens (and second sight in Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*) in *The Victorian Supernatural* (2004)[14] reinforce my argument that the ghost trope extends beyond Gothic to Victorian fiction and provides a context for my study of the ghost trope as sceptic discourse in *Villette*. I further my critical reference to Michael Wheeler's *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (1990)[15] for his discussion on contemporary religiosity on the afterlife.

I am careful to advance folklore motifs in Brontë's work from beyond or as well as the Gothic. My reading requires a critical openness to re-position the conventional narrative framework of Gothic currently deployed to examine Brontë's uses of the supernatural and re-frame it as folklore within the realist novel. To recognise the place of folklore and fantasy in Brontë's fiction is to reconsider critical perceptions of her fiction such as Tim Dolin's comment that *Villette* shifts 'between realism, with its overt concern for plausibility and causation, and Gothic romance, with its concern for sensational emotional effects'.[16] In the light of my revision this opposition would no longer apply but would be replaced by

[12] Carole Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 5.
[13] Maureen Duffy, *The Erotic World of Faery* (Cardinal, Sphere Books, 1989).
[14] Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett, Pamela Thurschwell, eds, *The Victorian Supernatural* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[15] Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[16] Brontë, *Villette*, p. xviii.

superstition or magical thinking and rationality, characteristic of folklore in the realist text. My research has identified numerous different folklore types of which some are motifs alluded to across Brontë's fiction, specifically: fairies, ghosts, omens contributing to narrative themes. The allusion to customs, witchcraft, charms, luck, gypsy lore, proverbs, Robin Hood legend, cunning folk, astrology, devil, second sight, wraiths, weather lore, diurnal periods, thresholds and divination operate as narrative strategy (and some are also linked to theme). The types of folklore, alluded to across Brontë's fiction, are itemised in J Simpson and S Roud's *Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore* (2000).

Brontë's fictional characters themselves also have a penchant for folk fiction or folk narratives such as legends, nursery songs, fairy tales and fables (both are types of folk tales), ballads and oral stories. In her fiction, Brontë does not use the term 'folklore' although she was writing *Jane Eyre* about the same time that romance writer and literary antiquarian William John Thoms (1803-1885) first coined the phrase 'Folk-Lore—the Lore of the People'[17] in *The Athenaeum* (22 August 1846). The terms 'superstition' and 'supernatural', however, were in very common usage in Nineteenth-century fiction, and across her fiction, Brontë uses these terms and also others pertaining to folklore types such as sayings and signs for omens (and sayings also for proverbs), anniversaries for customs, and magicians, soothsayers, gypsies, beldame, Mother Bunch and fortune tellers for astrologers or wise men/women or cunning folk. References to fairy, Robin Hood, second sight and ghost, on the other hand, are explicit.

Part of my aim in this thesis is to argue for folklore in the realist text as an alternative narrative framework to the Gothic for thinking about the role of the strange, the otherworldly and the supernatural in Brontë's fiction. One of my objectives is to reposition Brontë's

[17] Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud, eds, *Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 130.

fictional uses of the supernatural world to a folkloric context thus re-identifying generic identities of her supernaturalism as realism as well as Gothic. Subsequently, it provides a forum to widen current critical studies of gender in *Jane Eyre* and develop the study of science and religion in *Villette*. In the following chapters I delineate the presence, sources, narrative and ideological relevance of folklore across the tales and the novels. The overall objectives of this project are to re-contextualise the material as folkloric, to examine the functions of Brontë's literary uses of folklore, to identify Brontë's literary sources, especially Romantic sources and local sources of folklore, with reference to her imaginative experiences, to connect Brontë's personal engagement with folk beliefs with her fictional characters and finally, to intimate Brontë's fiction as reference for folklore studies.

The last decade has seen an immense growth in the academic discipline of folklore studies and I take my lead from this scholarly field of enquiry. The remainder of this introduction sets the scene for my study of folklore in Brontë's fiction and life.

Formation of Folklore Studies

Folklore is a cultural and intellectual field of enquiry into a number of topics including past traditions, performance and beliefs with its inter-disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, cultural and social history, sociology and literary studies. Folklorists study folklore genres such as oral, performance, calendar customs, life-cycle customs, superstitious beliefs and material culture. In nineteenth-century rural England, folk beliefs provided an alternative to mainstream Christianity but rural society was also structured around folk customs officiated by the church. Folklore as an aspect of antiquity became an area of study in popular antiquarianism and later, for Victorian folklorists. Richard M. Dorson provides a definitive chronology of the development of British folklore. The formation of folklore studies in

England began within the field of popular antiquities with William Camden (1551-1623), recognised as the father of folklore studies with his publication, *Britannia* (1586). The concept of antiquities included oral traditions (proverbs and superstitions such as the evil eye) and Camden, in his field work, devoted one section to the 'Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish'.[18] There followed a succession of antiquarians including key figures, the squire, John Aubrey (1626-1697) with his record of supernatural experiences, *Miscellanies* (1696), lexicographer Francis Grose (1731-1791) of *The Provincial Glossary with a Collection of Local Proverbs and Superstitions* (1789), and curates Henry Bourne (1694-1733) and John Brand (1744-1806), the latter adapting Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares* (1725) in *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (1777). Bourne's work advocates Anglican orthodoxy and his comments on omens, highlighted in chapter one, are relevant in the light of Brontë's letters. By 1718, the Society of Antiquaries was established providing a permanent resource for books on British antiquities. Described also by Dorson as a major founder of English Antiquaries, Joseph Strutt's (1749-1802) *Queenhoo Hall* (1808) was published by Scott. Political reformer William Hone (1780-1842) wrote *The Every Day Book* (1830), *The Table Book* (1830) and *Year Book* (1831-2), reference works that Dorson suggests were popular on Victorian shelves and parlour tables. Thomas Crofton Croker (1798-1854) of *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1825) was of particular interest to Scott. Fuelled partly by political nationalism, these Enlightenment antiquarians' contributed to a British cultural heritage. So too, literary antiquarians Scott, James Hogg and Robert Southey (all familiar to Brontë) pioneered a cultural record. It is possible that the works of Grose, Camden, and Hone provided Brontë with source material on folklore from the libraries at the library of the

[18] Richard. M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 3. For further studies of Popular Antiquarianism see Marilyn Butler, 'Antiquarianism (Popular)' in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832,* ed. Iain McCalman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 328-338 (p.328), and Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004).

Heaton family, Ponden Hall, Stanbury, and at the Keighley Mechanics Institute. Certainly, Brontë, interested in vernacular language, frequently alludes to Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1796), another source for folklore, in her early tales. In *The Provincial Glossary* Grose defines much folklore especially on second sight and Hone records poetical adaptations of the Robin Hood legend. Scott, too, interacted closely with the works of these antiquarians, owning many of their texts, as I show in chapter two. The key point is that Scott and Brontë could position themselves as literary engagers of folklore.

By the 1840s, coinciding with Brontë's novel writing years, the field of folklore studies was well established. In *The Athenaeum* (22 August 1846), Thoms, fellow of the Society of Antiquarians in 1838 and secretary of the Camden Society, invited his readers to record 'the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs [...] of olden time [...] what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities or Popular Literature [...] and would be more aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folk-Lore—the Lore of the people'.[19] In the next instalment (29 August 1846), Thoms saw it as imperative to claim a British mythology as the Grimm brothers had done for Germany whilst acknowledging Shakespeare's preservation of the fairy mythology of England. He agreed with fellow antiquary-folklorist Thomas Keightley (1789-1872) of *The Fairy Mythology* (1828) 'that the belief in Fairies is by no means extinct in England' and asked whether any Devonshire correspondent could 'furnish new and untold stories of his native Pixies?' He considered 'Is the Barguest no longer seen in Yorkshire?'[20] Thoms expressed the Arcadian sentiment of Merry England (later alluded to in *Shirley*), hoping to find legends, roundels and fairy songs in areas untouched by industrialisation.

[19] William John Thoms, 'Folklore', *The Athenaeum* (22 August 1846), pp. 862-863.
[20] William John Thoms, 'Folklore', *The Athenaeum* (29 August 1846), p. 886.

Brontë may have consulted some of these works. She read *The Athenaeum* for reviews of her work. Croker and Keightley's work were published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1818-1828) and it is likely that her Irish born father was familiar with Croker's *Fairy Legends*.

In 1878, the Folklore Society formalised the systematic study of folklore, publishing books and a journal. In 1913, Charlotte Sophia Burne (1850-1923) (county collector for Shropshire) was more offensive than Thoms, defining folklore as the 'traditional Beliefs, Customs, Stories, Songs and Sayings current among backward peoples, or retained among the uncultured classes'.[21] Between Thoms and Burne, there emerged the mythological, savage and anthropological folklore theorists, with Max Müller's *Contributions to the Science of Mythology* (1897), Edward Burnet Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871) and Andrew Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (1913). In his epilogue, Dorson laments the decline of the British folklore movement in the early twentieth century yet also celebrates folklore's contribution to intellectual history that commenced with Camden's antiquities.[22]

In the 1900s, the folklore society published a large number of Victorian and contemporary county folklore collections based largely on oral sources. These included Mrs Eliza Gutch's (1840-1931) *County Folklore*: *Examples of Printed Folk-Lore Concerning the North Riding of Yorkshire, York and the Ainsty* (1901) and *County Folklore: Examples of Printed Folk-Lore Concerning the East Riding of Yorkshire* (1912). However, Antiquarian Joseph Horsfall Turner (1845-1915), editor of *Yorkshire Notes and Queries with Yorkshire Folk-lore Journal* (1888) and writer of *Haworth Past and Present* (1879) also amassed a folklore collection for the West Riding. It is possible that his material constitutes a reliable record of that specific area. In 'Our Customary Feasts' (1913) (initially printed in the

[21] Simpson and Roud, p. 130.
[22] Dorson, pp. 440-441.

Brighouse Echo and reprinted in the *Halifax Courier*), Turner proves an authority on West Yorkshire's traditional customary legacy. His material is invaluable to the association I am making between the local world of folklore in *Shirley* and Yorkshire rural cultural life.

Hilda E. Davidson explains that by the 1960s, Alan Dundes had advanced the study of folklore (or folkloristics) from the 'narrowly historical approach and atomistic studies'[23] with its motif-index approach, as an example to interpreting its meanings, patterns and themes. But he approved of Vladimir Propp's structural study of the folk tale in his *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1968). Dundes' analyses were often psychoanalytical and he influenced generations of folklorists. Dundes explains that the *folk* or any group share some traditions which they call their own. Jason M. Harris quotes Jan Harold Brunvand's inclusive definition of folklore as:

> The traditional, unofficial, non-institutional part of culture [...] It encompasses all knowledge, understandings, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples [...] folklore itself is the whole traditional complex of thought, content, and process which ultimately can never be fixed or recorded in its entirety; it lives on in its performance or communication as people interact with one another.[24]

Brunvand states that folklore relates strongly to culture or bodies of knowledge but specifically to informal unofficial knowledge. It is both oral and written, and traditional, and it is passed on generationally. The genres or types of folklore are referred to as folk beliefs, folk narratives, ballads, myths (known as sacred truths), legends and folk art. Its stories or beliefs

[23] Hilda Ellis Davidson, 'Folklore and Literature', *Folklore* 86 (1975), p. 74. See Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1965), Alan Dundes, ed. *International Folkloristics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).
[24] Harris, *Folklore*, p. vii. Jan Harold Brunvand, *The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction* (New York: Norton, 1986), p. 4.

exhibit a dynamic variation generationally and geographically.[25] To the people or community who grow up with folklore, it is often mundane, trivial and familiar but it is also positive providing a sense of place and identity. Lynne S. McNeill states that folklorists question the definition, classification (or genre), source, origin, transmission, variation, structure, function, purpose, meaning and application of folklore.[26] Finally, a current definition of folklore according to Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud is that folklore is the voluntary and informal communication (orally, performed or written) of a group's (of any size, age, or class) cultural traditions, past and present. It is both stable and varied and can adapt to new circumstances. They state that 'the essential criterion is the presence of a group whose joint sense of what is right and appropriate shapes the story, performance, or custom —not the rules and teachings of any official body (state or civic authority)'.[27]

It is partly within this context that I consider the role of folklore in Brontë's fiction. I draw on folklore feminist theory, general studies in folklore and studies in anthropology to examine Brontë's ideological use of fairy material, and studies in religion for the discussion of the ghost motif (outlined in my methodology). There is no reason why Brontë might not read antiquarian material. Crucially, Camden, Grose and Hone are integral to the study of popular antiquities. In her two northern-based novels, *Jane Eyre* but especially *Shirley*, Brontë draws on local folklore for narrative uses and my reading of cultural historicism provides the background for this enquiry. Brontë is in a prime position to absorb local folklore within the rural Yorkshire community and to read both antiquarianism and the creative uptake of

[25] Harris, *Folklore*, p. vii. See also Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1932-7), Stith Thompson and Anti Aarne, *The Types of the Folk Tale: Classification and Bibliography* (1961), Ernest W. Baughman, *Types and Motif-Index of the Folk Tales of England and North America* (1966), Reidar Christiansen, *The Migratory Legends: Proposed List of Types with a systematic catalogue of the Norwegian variants* (1958), Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928), *Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale* (1946), *Theory and History of Folklore* (1984) ed. V Propp; Bengt Holbek, *Interpretations of Fairy Tales: Danish Folklore in a European Perspective* (1987).
[26] Lynne S McNeill, *Folklore Rules: A fun, quick and useful introduction to the field of Academic Folklore Studies* (Utah State University Press, 2013), pp. 1-17.
[27] Simpson and Roud, p. vi.

folklore in the British literary canon. This context is a useful starting point in which to lay a foundation for the re-orientation of Brontë's writing as folkloric.

Studies of Folklore in Nineteenth-Century Literature

Hilda E. Davidson provides an overview on the subject. Oral folklore material and broadside ballads, medieval folk tales and legends helped to shape a British folklore literary tradition. Shakespeare's literary uses of folklore (and other Elizabethan drama) provided material on ghosts, fairies, wise men, legends, omens, devil, witchcraft, and so on, for the Gothic novel, Romantic poetry and prose and the Victorian realist novel. The interaction between folklore and literature developed with critical studies in folklore and English literature (by folklorists) and centred on the meaning of folklore, for example in Beowulf's dragon, the Chaucerian poetic, in Shakespearian comedy and the Hobby Horse in Jacobean drama. In their poetry, the Romantics Scott, Hogg, Southey, Coleridge and Keats reflected the preservation of a British cultural heritage devouring folklore and the fairy tradition. They revived and adapted folk narratives, folk legends, ballads and folk tales to compete with Scandinavian mythology.[28] On the Gothic uptake of folklore, Devendra P. Varma says that Gothic novelists of the mid eighteenth-century, drawn to the wild and extravagance of folklore, rediscovered the 'traditional lore of old heathen Europe, the richness and splendour of its mythology and superstitions, its usages, rites, and songs'.[29] In the case of Gothic horror, the vampires of Eastern European folklore (first recorded in England in William of Newburgh's twelfth century chronicles), were popularised in John William Polidori's *The Vampire* (1816) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818).

[28] Davidson, *Folklore*, pp. 73-5. See also Kenneth Muir, *Folklore and Shakespeare* (London: Folklore Society, 1981).
[29] Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame: being a History of the Gothic Novel in England, its origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration and Residuary Influences* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), pp. 24-5.

Clearly, folklore permeates the literary canon including the Gothic novel. We need to start thinking about the Gothic uptake of folklore similarly to the Victorian novel.

Initially, Katharine M. Briggs (1898-1980) interest lay in the field of the English folklore tradition in early English drama focusing on fairy traits, fairy tradition and folk narratives in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama in *The Anatomy of Puck* (1959), *Pale Hecate's Team* (1962) and *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* (1967). Later, she specialised in the study of folk tales (or fables, fairy tales, novella, nursery tales, supernatural tales and legends) developing important collections in 'The Transmission of Folk-Tales in Britain' *Folklore* 79 (1968) and, particularly, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language* (1970-1). Briggs brought together a compendium on British fairy lore in *A Dictionary of Fairies* (1976), and *The Vanishing People* (1978). Specifically, Briggs talks of Scott drawing from Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), most likely James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1765) and the myths, legends and historical traditions of his native Border country, to become 'the great originator of the Romantic Revival in nineteenth-century English Literature'.[30] Scott's devil folk-themed *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) is founded on the legend of Gilpin Horner, a man believed to resemble the boggart-like hobgoblin of the Borders. In the ballad 'Alice Brand' of *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), Scott shows his familiarity with fairy traditions of Fairyland, shape-shifting, fairy abduction of mortals, the unluckiness of wearing green near fairy territory and rescuing captured mortals by the aid of objects sacred to Christianity (the cross, Bible, bread). Briggs notes Scott's interest in James Hogg, Croker, Robert Chambers, the Grimm brothers and many more and recognises his prestige as contributor to folklore studies. Briggs' precedent for identifying Scott as a literary folklorist furthers my association between him and Brontë.

[30] Katharine M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, and Other Supernatural Creatures* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), p. 349.

Less relevant to my investigation but illustrating the enormity of folklore in literary studies, in the 1980s, Jack Zipes developed studies on the impact of ideology on fairy tale criticism and composition. Topics range from society and moral didacticism, industrialism, the Woman Question, utilitarianism and socialism. His *Why Fairy Tales Stick: Evolution and Relevance of a Genre* (2006) is one of many. Earlier, Zipes also distinguished the *Kunstmärchen* (or literary fairy tale) of the German Romantic tradition from the *Volksmärchen* (folk fairy tale) in *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (1979). Jacqueline Simpson's main contribution was to advance folklore legend (or a short traditional oral or written narrative about a person, place or object, often of a supernatural nature and believed to have existed). Included are Simpson's 'The Legends of Chanctonbury Ring' *Folklore* 80 (1969), 'Beyond Aetiology: Interpreting Local Legends' *Fabula* 24 (1983), and 'The Local Legend: A Product of Popular Culture' *Rural History* 2:1 (1991). So prestigious is Simpson's reputation as a folklore scholar that her article on the Brontës folklore (referred to in the opening section of my introduction) should be valued as a reliable critique.

Folklore as a literary critical area of enquiry was most marked from the 1990s with critics distancing their reappraisal from previous preconceptions of folklore as product based (as data collection and confirmatory evidence). Critics, such as Silver and Harris, focus much on the interaction between folklore and Romantic-era writing. Folklore material often expresses ideas relating to nationalism, national identity and nation building with its distinguishing features of 'cultural practices, stories, traditions, dwellings, songs, music'.[31] In a very recent study, Frank De Caro argues briefly on the interaction between folklore and fiction in his study of folklore's appropriation to other contexts, that we would know far less

[31] Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin, eds, *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 1.

about folklore before the nineteenth-century had folk texts not been succeeded by literary ones. Echoing Brunvand, he says that the success of folklore in literature as an area of enquiry 'in part is a result of folklore's general tendency to be in a dynamic state of flux because of its fluid, unwritten nature, so that adaptation into written forms is a natural step'.[32] Folklore lends itself to Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco's idea of the 'open text', with its potential for 'variant readings and permutations'.[33] Folklorists, de Caro states, study the subject as a process of communication in which meaning is irrevocably grounded in cultural and social contexts. Literary critics have come a long way from perceiving folklore in nineteenth-century literature as simply local colour, anachronism, or affiliation solely with children's fiction. He recognises the significance of folklore's progress in fiction and acknowledges 'folklore's appeal as an aspect of culture suitable for adaptation or ideological borrowing generally'. Moreover, De Caro recognises folklore's use as a symbol of localism for regional writers, as embedding a worldview held by a bygone Other and distinct from other groups, as a theme in literature relating to 'other realities beyond the real', and its resonance for women writers to convey 'semi-secret female messages'.[34] Although De Caro's interest lies in non-literary forms, his summing up of folklore in fiction, encapsulates my analysis of the role of folklore in Brontë's work.

Making headway between Scott and folklore, Carole Silver explains Scott's role as a prime collector and analyst of fairy lore. Moreover, Scott's creative use of fairy lore underpinned a historic interest in cultural anthropology.[35] Silver, Dorson and Parsons state that Scott's poems, ballads, verse romance, historical prose and *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830) bear witness to his interest in fairy traditions and beliefs. They all point to

[32] Frank de Caro, *Folklore Recycled: Old Traditions in New Contexts* (Jackson: University Press of Mississipi, 2013), p. 6.
[33] Ibid., p. 7.
[34] Ibid., p. 8.
[35] Silver, pp. 10-13.

Scott's particular interests in the origin of the fairy superstition, the sources of the elfin peoples, the changeling phenomena and fairy abductions, the link between fairies and witches, and the use of euphemisms as protection against fairy malevolence. Scott was instrumental in exploring the genres of folk tale, local legend and fairy traditions. Folklore, for Scott operated as narrative strategy. Furthermore, Dorson notes how the *Letters* demonstrate Scott's contribution to nineteenth-century literature's rhetoric of scepticism. Dorson is stronger than Parsons and Silver in recognising Scott's folklore as an antidote to rationality. Jason. M. Harris' main focus is to examine the cultural authority of Enlightenment rationality over supernaturalism in the legends of James Hogg. Yet, his reference to Scott's use of second sight in *The Two Drovers* (1827) and *The Highland Widow* (1827)[36] reiterates again Scott's folkloric role in the progression of science. This aspect of Scott's work is influential to Brontë's uses of the supernatural across her fiction.

For studies of folklore in short stories and the novel, *The Victorian Supernatural* (2004) is useful. It includes Eve Lynch's discussion of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novelette 'Ralph the Bailiff' (1861), and ghost stories 'At Crighton Abbey' (1871) and 'The Shadow in the Corner' (1879). They are well equipped, she states, with 'apparitions, mesmerism, fantastical occurrences and inexplicable omens—the stock-in-trade of tales of domestic "possession"'. Although useful, I question her associating folklore solely with domestic staff, who she also describes as devoid of education, property, social standing and economic independence.[37] In Louise Henson's work on Charles Dickens' ghost stories in *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *The Chimes* (1844), she argues that these stories characterise the dichotomy

[36] Harris, *Folklore*, pp. 198-200.
[37] Eve M. Lynch, 'Spectral Politics: the Victorian ghost story and the domestic servant', in Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, pp. 67-85 (p.74).

between sceptic scientist and superstition,[38] thus continuing this literary tradition from Scott. Pamela Thurschwell reads George Eliot's study of second sight in *Daniel Deronda* (1876) in the context of Victorian psychology of selfhood. Thurschwell quotes critic Nicholas Royle on the novel's pervasiveness of 'ghosts and spirits, by forecasting, foresight and 'second sight', by strange intuitions, fantastical coincidences, instances of apparent telepathy, or omniscience'. But she situates Eliot's novel within the Gothic tradition as opposed to folklore in the novel saying that 'Gothic elements also structure the narrative world of Eliot's fictions'.[39] Thurschwell's analysis is relevant. It seems to pinpoint the problematic issue of treating Eliot's novel as Gothic rather than as folklore in Victorian fiction, similarly to Brontë critics on Brontë.

In sum, we can say that the Romantics and Victorians were often obsessed with all things supernatural, otherworldly or folkloric incorporating omens, ghosts, fairies and second sight into their ghost stories, novellas, fairy tales, legends, Gothic and Realist novel. As Bown, Burdett and Thurschwell say in their introduction to *The Victorian Supernatural*:

> The supernatural pervaded literature, art and science – to name only three of the most powerful cultural forces [...] gender relations, the nature of mind [...] the expression of sexual desire [...] were shot through with the language of the supernatural [...] the Victorian supernatural was a complex of images, ideas, beliefs and metaphors that entered into every aspect of life, often in strange and surprising ways.[40]

Once the domain of the Romantics, the Victorian writers proceeded to 'imitate, revise and transform preternatural folkloric material' in folk narratives for authorial and ideological objectives, as Harris argues.[41] Folklore is often central to character subjectivity and is

[38] Louise Henson, 'Investigations and Fictions: Charles Dickens and ghosts', in Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, pp. 44-63.
[39] Pamela Thurschwell, 'George Eliot's prophecies: coercive second sight and everyday thought reading', in Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, pp. 87-105 (p. 91). See Nicholas Royle, *Telepathy and Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 92.
[40] Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, p.2.
[41] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 1.

contemporaneous with authors' worlds. Supernatural folklore, moreover, offers a discourse through which Victorians could express cultural ideas on class, race, religion, gender, sexuality, science, physical or anatomical difference, industrialism and nationalism.[42]

Within this context we can rethink a narrative framework for the study of Brontë's uses of the supernatural.

Brontës and Folklore

Folklore critics and scholars study Brontës' fiction. Katharine M. Briggs noted *Jane Eyre's* ghost in the red room and Rochester's mock gypsy scene and Catherine Earnshaw's ghost of *Wuthering Heights*. Yet, she argued, 'All the atmosphere of folk legend broods over the Brontë books but it is nowhere overtly expressed'.[43] But Briggs identified far more folk material in Elizabeth Gaskell's tales and novels.

Two years later, folklore scholar Jacqueline Simpson found much more to analyse in 'The Role of Folklore in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*', *Folklore* 85 (1974). Simpson asserts that folklore in *Jane Eyre* is 'an essential part of the minds of their heroes and heroines' used at 'climactic moments' and linked to their 'central themes'.[44] The types of and function of folklore are comparable in the two novels, with both writers making full use of fairies, ghosts, witchcraft, omens, wraiths and dreams. But the degree of belief differs. Jane believes in presentiments, sympathies and signs but subordinates them to religious faith. Simpson adds that 'Rochester too says of himself "some superstition I have in my blood, and always had". The maids' influence on Jane's understanding of folklore differ, with Miss

[42] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 34.
[43] Katharine Mary Briggs, 'Folklore in Nineteenth-Century Literature', *Folklore*, 83:3 (1972), pp. 194-209 (p. 202).
[44] Simpson, *The Function of Folklore*, p. 47.

Abbot and Bessie Leaven (drawn from the Brontës maid, Tabitha Aykroyd (1771-1855)) collectively believing in ghosts in the red room and Bessie enchanting Jane with local lore and stories from 'old fairy tales and older ballads'.[45] Whilst the allusion to ghosts, goblins, vampires, dreams and omens add to the atmosphere of horror, fear and foreboding, more significant is Jane's fairy image in the mirror, assuming thematic significance later in the novel. Simpson argues that 'the idea of Jane as a being of the otherworld, particularly as an elf recurs at each stage in their growing love', the fairy motif conveying the theme of love between Jane and Rochester. It symbolises the spiritual affinity between the couple, their difference from other people, and Rochester's amusing perception of Jane's otherness from other women.[46]

Simpson's analysis provides a solid foundation for my study of the fairy element in *Jane Eyre*. Her article remains the only study to date on the topic of Brontë's folklore. I extend Simpson's reading, framing the enquiry within a feminist context and advancing the ideological enquiry that the fairy motif offers a coding discourse to express issues on gender and sexuality.

Simpson's study of folklore in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is more detailed and lengthy. In it she argues that Emily's fullest sympathies are with those characters who believe in the supernatural or whose thoughts focus on folklore. Hareton and Cathy's interaction with fairies symbolizes their happy childhood, whilst Catherine and Heathcliff's wholehearted belief in omens and ghosts reflects their affinity to nature and expresses their fiery souls. Naturally superstitious (like her counterpart, Bessie Leaven), Nelly Dean expresses the most complex attitude. She rationalises so-called psychic experiences but believes in omens. According to

[45] Simpson, *The Function of Folklore*, p. 47.
[46] Ibid., pp. 48-51.

Simpson, Nelly's closing comment, after the death of Heathcliff is the only reference to the 'voice of community':

> The country folk 'would swear on the Bible, that he walks'; Joseph 'has seen two on 'em, looking out of the chamber window', [...] not only the shepherd's boy but the very sheep and lambs will not pass the place where 'there's Heathcliff and a woman yonder, under t'nab'.[47]

Catherine and Heathcliff's superstitious natures are partly motivated by the desire for their version of spirituality. Of the other staff, Zillah is not superstitious and Joseph's beliefs are associated only with Biblical literalism. Despite Lockwood's initial fear of his dream-vision of Catherine's ghost, he returns to the official Church position.

Simpson goes on to identify the sisters' shared knowledge of folk motifs such as devils, witchcraft, wraiths, fairies, omens in the form of mirror reflections and dreams of children, and the use of omens to heighten the atmosphere of doom. In both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, folklore symbolises the shared spiritual affinity between the protagonists and the theme of love. Imagery from folklore symbolises not only Jane's 'difference'[48] from other women but also expresses the 'otherness' or basic strangeness of Heathcliff. Simpson states that Emily makes greater demands on her reader's suspension of disbelief, offering fewer concessions to explanations of elf-bolts, wraiths, pigeon feathers and double-gangers, while Charlotte provides the maid Bessie with folk beliefs that Jane inherits. Simpson concludes that the two writers associate folklore less with the wider rural community but with the 'inner life which sets the heroes and heroines apart from ordinary humanity and binds them irrevocably to one another, whether in life or death'.[49]

Simpson's analysis of Emily's treatment of ghosts further supports the viability of applying a folklore narrative framework for the study of the supernatural. Although she

[47] Simpson, *The Function of Folklore*, p. 60.
[48] Ibid., p. 50.
[49] Ibid,, p. 61.

identifies much shared commonality between the two sisters' use of folklore, there is more to add. Whilst my focus is with Charlotte's novels, I have noted their shared reliance on Scott's fiction: *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), *Rob Roy* (1817), *Count Robert of Paris* (1832) and *The Black Dwarf* (1816).[50] They build on other folk motifs: the negative zone of midnight and white birds and animals presaging disaster. Their knowledge of supernatural beings: fairies, changelings (or un-baptized infants), ghouls, imps, wizards, witches, goblins and vampires is comparable. We can now reframe their characters belief in omens, fairies and ghosts as magical thinking and as the tension between superstition and Enlightenment rationality. Emily's use of ghosts is an area for further study but its presence implies a shared eschatological enquiry. We have to question Nelly's 'Do you believe such people *are* happy in the other world, sir? I'd give a great deal to know?'[51] But, like the finale of Lucy Snowe's intellectual journey, Nelly 'wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth'.[52] Emily's fairy allusions compare with Charlotte's codification of sexism. Emily was just as likely to absorb cultural influences from the local Yorkshire community and from her Celtic inheritance. Emily, more than once, speaks of the 'Fairy Cave under Peniston Crag'[53] and the Gimmerton Band at Christmas. Certainly, in *Shirley*, too, the voice of community is heard loud and clear. In sum, Emily and Charlotte's novels are immersed in traditional culture and both writers deploy this material to narrative and thematic ends.

Although limited to its modification of Victorian swan bride tales, Carole Silver also touches on the role of fairies in *Jane Eyre*. Silver argues that Jane Eyre's 'otherness', sexual

[50] Florence Dry, *The Sources of "Wuthering Heights"* (W. Heffer & sons, 1937), p. 84. Patrick Diskin also associates Emily's novel with the Celtic work of William Carleton in 'Some Sources of *Wuthering Heights*', *Notes and Queries*, 24 (1977), pp. 354-361.
[51] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 146.
[52] Ibid., p. 300.
[53] Ibid., p. 108.

and spiritual passions and 'unChristian' nature is depicted in the language of folklore: fairy, elf, sprite, imp and sylph.[54] Unlike many Victorian fairy bride narratives, Jane is a fairy bride *manqué* but would have earned her title as a fairy bride had she married Rochester before she left him. Silver suggests key sources such as Keightley's *Fairy Mythology* and/or *Arabian Nights* or fairy tales told to her by Aykroyd, echoing Simpson's association between Brontë and her maid. Silver's reading offers another springboard for my further enquiry into ideology and sources of Brontë's folklore. Silver includes other realist novelists such as George Eliot in *Middlemarch* (1872), Thomas Hardy in *Jude the Obscure* (1895) and Edith Wharton in *The Custom of the Country* (1913), all of whom might have adapted these folk tales into their varying studies of gender relations and the institution of marriage. I relate to Silver's study to examine the role of fairies in *Jane Eyre* but develop the idea that Brontë's use of fairy features also as a rhetoric for Victorian novelists' unable to openly express their interests in male and female sexuality, ideas of equality and Victorian sexism.

Silver refers to the changeling motif in *Wuthering Heights* with Lockwood's perception of Catherine Earnshaw's aberrant behaviour and of Heathcliff, that 'imp of Satan'. She refers also to Rochester's response to Jane's apparent change in behaviour on reuniting at Ferndean by addressing her as mocking 'changeling' in *Jane Eyre*. Whilst Silver explores the symbol of changelings as an anxiety of difference I argue that the changeling motif is part and parcel of Rochester's idea of Jane's physical otherness and another example of sexist coding.

In her final chapter, 'Farewell to the Fairies', Silver points to Brontë's allusions to the fairy lament in *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*. With the older generation lamenting the passing of time in *Shirley*, I incorporate Brontë's explicit reference to an Arcadian attitude to the past or

[54] Silver, p. 107. See also Barbara Fass Leavy, *In Search of the Swan Maiden: A Narrative on Folklore and Gender* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1994), pp. 106-107.

theme of nostalgia for a once-pastoral 'Merry England' in my chapter on traditional culture in *Shirley*.

More generally, Simpson and Roud and Iona Opie and Moira Tatem cite the Brontës' fiction as sources for omens with *Jane Eyre's* Gytrash and *Wuthering Heights'* pigeon feathers.[55] On *Shirley*, cultural folklore historian Norman Simms argues that Brontë is familiar with the symbolic role of folk custom in nineteenth-century social protest movements with the Luddite reliance on the communal yell. Brontë also exploits the ritual power of Whitsuntide for the Luddite riot.[56]

Albeit rather brief (excepting Simpson's work), these associations between Brontë and folklore reinforce my central premise that her material can be reframed as folklore in the realist novel. Simpson's article is instrumental in situating the presence of folklore in Brontë's (and Emily) realist novels and identifying their narrative and ideological uses of folklore. Simpson and Silver are crucial for their survey of fairies in *Jane Eyre*. I develop their enquiries, pursue the analysis of ghosts in *Villette* and identify local and literary sources.

<u>Brontë Critical Canon: The Study of Folklore</u>

Brontë critics, scholars and biographers acknowledge allusions to folklore in the work of the Brontës. In *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* (2003) Christine Alexander and Margaret Smith include 'Folklore' in their guide:

> Tabitha Aykroyd remembered when 'fairies frequented the margin' of the Haworth beck. The Brontës learned much folklore from her and from their reading. Charlotte refers playfully to 'fairishes,' elves, brownies, and sprites, but like Branwell, she also knows about the ominous Gytrash or black dog, vampires, deceptive marsh-spirits,

[55] Simpson and Roud, p. 159.; Iona Opie and Moira Tatem, eds, *The Oxford Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 309.
[56] Norman Simms, 'Ned Ludd's Mummers Play', *Folklore* 89:2 (1978), pp. 166-174; See also James A. Hargreaves, 'Methodism and Luddism in Yorkshire 1812-1813' *Northern History* 26 (1990), p. 172.

> and Banshees. *Wuthering Heights* is haunted by the presence of the other world: the unquiet spirits of the dead, Cathy's belief that she is unable to die, Heathcliff's agonized pleas to her to haunt him, and his final 'walking' with her, terrifying the little boy who dares not pass their spirits.[57]

Elsewhere in the *Companion* Alexander and Smith offer a description of the ominous Gytrash and classify it under the heading, 'Natural World'. They point to Branwell's description of the Gytrash in his fragment 'Thurstons of Darkwall Manor' (1837), as a northern dialect term for a spectre, ghost or apparition that manifested in the form of a black dog (described also in *Jane Eyre*). Under the heading 'Fairy Tales' Alexander and Smith write:

> The Brontë children, inspired by the *Arabian Nights*, James Ridley's *Tales of the Genii* and traditional tales like those told by Bessie in *Jane Eyre*, invented their own fairy tales, in which wicked enchantresses, handsome princes, ill-treated virtuous ladies, dwarves and child-eating ogres lived in castles or imprisoning towers.[58]

They add that Brontë alludes to Charles Perrault's 'La Barbe-Bleue' in her three major novels particularly in *Jane Eyre* and incorporates structural elements from the Cinderella Story and possibly from Beauty and the Beast. They also associate the image of Madame Walravens in *Villette* as 'Malevola, the evil fairy' with Perrault's tale. This entry ends with 'see Folklore.' Under the more detailed heading 'Mythology', they say:

> In *Villette* some mythological references are heavy with omens: in chapter 36, 'The Apple of Discord', Lucy solves the deadly 'Sphynx-riddle' of Père Silas's connection with Paul Emmanuel. In *Jane Eyre* the omens are those of folklore, the only mythical reference being Jane's allusion to Rosamond Oliver as a Persian Peri.[59]

Within the context of Brontë's local environment they quote Aykroyd's lament of the loss of the fairies. They describe Pendle Hill, a landmark boundary between Lancashire and Yorkshire as an area famous for its link to the Lancashire witch trials of the Seventeenth-

[57] Christine Alexander and Margaret Smith, eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.198. See also Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Q.D. Leavis (London: Penguin, 1966), p. 484.
[58] Alexander and Smith, p. 185.
[59] Ibid., p. 335.

century (alluded to as Pendleton, Pendle Farm and Pendlebrow in the juvenilia).[60] Smith and Alexander describe Ponden Kirk as a millstone grit landmark at the head of Ponden Clough, on the moors above Stanbury and are represented in *Wuthering Heights* as Penistone Crags. 'There is a tradition that anyone passing through the tunnel in the Kirk (the 'Fairy cave' of the novel) will marry within the year. Hareton Earnshaw shows the younger Catherine Linton 'the mysteries of the Fairy cave, and twenty other queer places.'[61] In their description of Haworth, they refer to the typical 'Whitsuntide'[62] Sunday school feast and procession, recalled in *Shirley* as the only festival celebrated in Haworth, primarily to punctuate sectarian hostility. Lastly, they link Kirklees Priory, the ruins of a Twelfth-century Cistercian priory, in the grounds of Kirklees Hall to *Shirley*. They draw on Gaskell's description of it as 'mouldering stone in the depth of the wood, under which Robin Hood is said to lie.'[63] In *Shirley*, Caroline and Shirley plan to 'penetrate into Nunnwood' where the ruins of a nunnery lie in a deep hollow dell.'

Of the Tales by Branwell Brontë, Biographer Mary Butterfield notes the family's familiarity with local Haworth traditions such as the Horton Gytrash and Heaton family legend of a headless man called Henry Cass or Casson.[64] Similarly Gaskell states Brontë's awareness of the supposed ghost-haunted houses and local legends of Haworth old Hall and Howley Hall, once the property of the Saviles, taken over by Lord Cardigan and not far from Roe Head School, reputed also to be haunted. Gaskell also points to Oakwell Hall (the model

[60] Alexander and Smith, p. 364.
[61] Ibid., p. 393.
[62] Ibid., p. 237.
[63] Ibid., p. 287.
[64] See Mary Butterfield, *Brother in the Shadow: Stories and Sketches by Branwell Brontë* (Bradford Libraries and Information Service, 1988), p. 47. Mary Butterfield cites Croker's *Fairy Legends* as a source for Branwell's fragment.

for Fieldhead in *Shirley*) near Birstall, located near 'Bloody Lane—a walk haunted by the ghost of Captain Batt, the reprobate proprietor of Oakwell Hall.'[65]

Critics focus especially on Brontë's adaptation of myth and fairy tale for plot, imagery and characterisation in *Jane Eyre*. Brontë feminist critics, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar recognise the role of myth and fairy tale for the novel's recurring patterns and images.[66] But, as a bildungsroman and literary realist novel, Molly Clark Hillard argues that there are too many references to fairy tales and legends in *Jane Eyre* to support critics' claims about the predominance of any one single source.[67] The nun-ghost of *Villette* receives attention with Sally Shuttleworth's cultural critical commentary on Brontë's study of Victorian contemporary psychology. She argues that the nun ghost 'functions as a site of crucial interpretative conflict in the text' with Dr John (representing the materialist or scientific view) explaining the apparition as a 'matter of the nerves [...] a case of spectral illusion [...] following on from long-continued mental conflict'.[68] Distancing the ghost from Gothic, Shuttleworth offers a framework for Dr John's diagnosis referring to the contemporary debate on spectral illusion in medical science. She cites John Abercrombie's *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers* (1832) and Robert Macnish's *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1830) (both held at the Keighley Mechanics Institute) and a public lecture 'The Philosophy of Apparitions' presented at the Leeds Philosophical Society in 1850-1.[69]

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[65] Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: The Folio Society, 1975), pp. 107-108. Alexander and Smith, p. 354.
[66] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (Yale University Press, 2000), p. 351.
[67] Molly Clark Hillard, *Spellbound: The Fairy Tale and the Victorians* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2014). See recent studies including Michael M. Clarke, 'Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and the Grimm's *Cinderella'*, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 40:4 (2000), pp. 695-710; Abigail Heineger, 'The Faery and the Beast' *Brontë Studies* 31:1 (2006), pp. 23-29; Jen Cadwallader, 'Formed for labour, not for love: Plain Jane and the limits of female beauty', *Brontë Studies* 34:3 (2009), pp. 234-246; Jessica Campbell, 'Bluebeard and the Beast: The Mysterious Realism of *Jane Eyre*' *Marvels and Tales* 30:2 (2016) pp. 234-250, Heta Pyhönen, *Bluebeard Gothic:Jane Eyre and its Progeny* (University of Toronto Press, 2010).
[68] Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 220, p. 282.
[69] Ibid., p. 226.

As to sources of folklore, Edward Chitham offers much evidence of Brontë's Celtic heritage by tracing Patrick Brontë's (1777-1861) Irish folk roots of Ballynaskeagh. Chitham claims that an 'Irish influence mediated via Patrick Brontë reached the four Brontë children' and their novels, especially Emily's *Wuthering Heights*. His father, Hugh Brunty (1755-1808), a consummate Gaelic story teller or Senachie (or seanchaí) narrated to his children the fairy faith and changeling phenomena and recited folk songs. Brunty lived in an area with a strong heritage of folk legends, ghost stories of headless horsemen, mythology and the Celtic belief in the supernatural race known as Tuath Dé Danann. Of Patrick's poems, the 'Vision of Hell' and 'Kitty's Revenge' contain common elements of folk tradition with the motif of midnight, visions and prophecy tradition in the first, and ghosts in the second. 'The Harper of Erin' from *The Rural Minstrel* (1813) has links to Killarney, the site of a ghost legend and *The Maid of Killarney* (1818) alludes to keening, an Irish custom during the wake. As a child Charlotte was especially keen to learn of Knock Hill and Lough Neagh, the site of a legend.[70]

This evidence is the sum total of the critical appraisal of the role of folklore across Brontë's fiction. It is clear that critics acknowledge the presence of folklore in Brontë's writing and its role as narrative and source in *Jane Eyre* and in *Shirley*. The children were obviously versed in folklore especially as a result of hearing about various fairy tales from their father and the family's maid, Aykroyd. Ghosts contribute to the atmosphere and characterisation in *Wuthering Heights* and are linked to the theme of psychology in *Villette*. Folklore is conceived as a minor aspect of local Yorkshire but one that is primarily unrelated to the Brontës'. Much Brontë criticism is geared to the close inter-relationship between Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and fairy tale sources, many of which contain supernatural beings and supernatural experiences.

[70] Edward Chitham, *The Brontës' Irish Background* (London: Macmillan Press, 1986), pp. 38-112. See also Dáithi Ó hÓgáin, *The Sacred Isle: Belief and Religion in Pre-Christian Ireland* (The Boydell Press: The Collins Press, 1999).

The critical literary review of Brontë's folklore requires extensive revision, elaboration and elucidation. Throughout the critical canon, folklore references are often overlooked or not defined as folklore, and are rarely contextualised within the field of Folklore studies. For example, throughout her analysis of the early Tales, Christine Alexander does not recognise the pervasive presence of folklore in Brontë's early reading of the bible, fairy stories, local legend, *The Arabian Night's Entertainments* (1704), *Tales of the Genii* (1764), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600), *Macbeth* (1606), *The Poems of Ossian* (1759), and the Romantic poetry and prose of Southey and Scott. Alexander and Smith position supernatural beings and phenomena within the context of folklore but there is a notable lack of definition, classification, source, origin and functionality. Simpson's article as examined above is not referenced. The Brontë critical canon's brief explanation of folklore needs much revision. Aykroyd's ubiquitous comment about the demise of the fairies could be better understood with the wider discussion of Merrie England and Romantic counter-enlightenment, the viewpoint expressed inter-generationally in *Shirley*. 'Fairishes' is a localised Yorkshire dialect term for fairies, and 'marsh-spirits' should be explained as the will o'-the-wisp or ignis fatuus or Jack O' Lantern (alluded to in *The Professor* (1857)). From a functionalist perspective, the banshee, elves, sprites, marsh-spirits and brownies are very different types of supernatural beings and fundamentally different from vampires, ghosts and witches. However, they all represent aspects of the otherworld. This material all needs systematization and delineation. The oriental peri was later integrated into English folklore collections such as Keightley's (1789-1872) *Fairy Mythology*, and in her fiction, Brontë's 'peri' operates in the same way as 'undine' and 'sylph' as a language to convey stereotypes of women. Crucially, many of these references are not contextualised as folklore material.

Critics fare better in associating Brontë with the fairy tale genre. Yet, there is no folklore context. Fairy tales, according to Simpson and Roud:

> Is the term used for a group of oral narratives centred on magical tests, quests, and transformations, which are found throughout Europe and in many parts of Asia too. They are defined by their plots, which follow standard basic patterns, and have been classified by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale* (1961) [...] The best collection is Phillip, 1992, with accurate texts and valuable introduction and comments; see also Briggs, 1970-1:A. i and ii, with some texts summarised: Jacobs, 1890/1968, with texts often reworked. All three collections include other genres of folktale besides the fairytales.[71]

They define Myths as stories about divine beings, arranged coherently and treated as true and sacred and endorsed by rulers and priests. If their rule is violated the actors of the story become fairies, human heroes or giants and the story is no longer myth but folktale. If the story is trivial but divine, the narrative becomes a religious legend.[72]

The Gytrash, listed under the heading 'Natural World' would be better placed under 'Supernatural World' or even better still 'Folklore', which are omitted in the *Companion*. The 'gitrash' makes its fictional presence far earlier than Branwell's *Percy* in Charlotte's Glass Town 'Military Conversations' (1829) as a spirit 'in the form of a large hound' and later, as a death omen in 'Liffey Castle' (1830). Brontë writes 'That night in the countryside all the dogs howled as if the Gitrash was abroad, and a sound like a funeral cry was heard at midnight in every house'.[73] Brontë's knowledge of witchcraft extends beyond Lancashire to Yorkshire. As part of literary history, the family would be familiar with Edward Fairfax, poet and translator of Tarquato Tasso's work. But as to local history, she would have known about the same Fairfax from Fewston whose involvement in the major witchcraft trial of 1621 at the York

[71] Simpson and Roud, pp. 117-118.
[72] Simpson and Roud, p. 254.
[73] Christine Alexander , ed., *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, 1, The Glass Town Saga 1826-1832, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 219.

Assize was later recorded by him in his *Daemonologia*.[74] Fairfax may be a model for the superstitious Edward Fairfax Rochester of *Jane Eyre*. The local tradition at Ponden Kirk is better known as a love divination, a major type of folklore. Whitsuntide was, in fact, the most important event of the rural year (as *Shirley* conveys). It is the church festival or Pentecost held on the seventh Sunday after Easter as the commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit and the inspiration of the Apostles. The Brontës not only celebrated Whitsun but also the annual Rush bearing tradition, a custom originally designed to make the church more habitable and popular in northern counties of England.[75] Customs in Brontë's novels (Midsummer Eve, May 1, November 5, Wassail) convey her familiarity with traditional culture. They are simply part of her characters' way of life as an aspect of Victorian rural culture with Brontë adapting them to the literary form as plot device, local colour, setting or symbol of a major theme.

In the notes to *Jane Eyre*, many allusions to folklore customs and beliefs are unexplained such as the potent divinatory date of Midsummer Eve (or St John's Eve, 24 June) and the repeated references to midnight as the lowest point of negativity in the customary cycle of time (signalling danger ahead for Jane). The 'charivari' was a noisy communal event known also as riding the stang in Yorkshire that describes a ritual conducted to express disapproval of community social transgressions. In *Shirley* midnight also functions as the negative time for the Luddite rebellion and the witching hour when fairies might be seen (as Shirley hopes to see). In *Villette* there are no explanations for the Wassail-cup ritual. I suggest Brontë wishes to convey a wistful nostalgia to Merry England as there are also allusions to 'Old Christmas' and 'Old October'. Ginevra Fanshawe's description of Lucy Snowe as Mother Wisdom is possibly linked to the wise woman or cunning folk tradition similarly to

[74] See the account in James Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century Yorkshire: Accusations and Counter-Measures* (University of York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 1992).
[75] Simpson and Roud, p. 303.

Rochester's disguise as 'Mother Bunches', (p. 191) the fortune teller of *Jane Eyre*. Knaresborough-born Mother Shipton (her real name was Ursula Southeil) told prophecies, taught magical recipes and charms and was the subject of seventeenth-century chapbooks including *Mother Bunches Fairy Tales* (1777). In *Wuthering Heights* the musicians were actually defined as the Waits employed by city corporations such as York but abolished by the 1836 Reform Act.[76]

Overwhelmingly, critics overlook the significant presence of folklore across her fiction and its contribution to the narratives and themes in Brontë's fiction. Shuttleworth is helpful in suggesting the link between Victorian psychology and the contemporary debate on spectral illusion theory offering a different context for the novel's nun-ghost. This reading is fundamental to one of my interpretations of the supernatural context of *Villette.* From a folkloric perspective, the nun ghost of *Villette* and fairy feature of *Jane Eyre* offer additional critiques of Brontë's interests and concerns about religion, philosophy and science, and culture, respectively. As I show throughout this thesis, not only the ghost in *Villette* but references to magic and second sight in the Tales, and fairies in *Jane Eyre* altogether represent folklore's opposition to rationality. The study of Brontë's folklore aligns her more closely to Scott not only in terms of his narrative influence on her fiction but also ideologically. Folklore in *Shirley* enhances our understanding of provincial life and its role as a source. Despite the obvious northern identity of *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, advances are slow in situating the local cultural environment as a source of folklore in her fiction. The acknowledgement of Patrick's Celtic folklore milieu does not extend to Maria Branwell

[76] Simpson and Roud, p. 377.

(1783-1821) of Penzance, a county renowned for its folklore heritage.[77] Gaskell highlights Cornish society quoting Dr Davy, a contemporary of the family. He describes the locals as: 'Superstitious, even the belief in witches maintained its ground, and there was an almost unbounded credulity respecting the supernatural and monstrous. There was scarcely a parish in the Mount's Bay that was without a haunted house, or a spot to which some story of supernatural horror was not attached'.[78]

The critical canon has yet to develop a closer association between Brontë and folklore studies.

Brontë and the Gothic Tradition.

Without doubt, and this, is the crux of my premise, allusions or references to the supernatural world, to superstition, to supernatural beings and to supernatural phenomena, are conceived as solely Gothic. Alexander, for example, develops the Gothic legacy in examining the juvenilia.[79] The genre, familiar to and enjoyed by the Brontës from an early age continued its presence in their novels. Alexander and Smith describe Gothic novels as fiction characterised by elements of terror, the ominous, mystery, macabre, the supernatural, set often in the Middle Age and in an oppressive atmosphere of a haunted castle. In their commentary on 'Gothic novels' in the *Companion* they suggest that Brontë was familiar with late Eighteenth-century gothic sources: Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764) (naming and beginning Gothic fiction) and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian; or the Confessional of the Black Penitent* (1797),

[77] See for example, William Bottrell, *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall* (Penzance: The Author, 1870); Robert Hunt, *Popular Romances of the West of England* (London, 1865); Anna Eliza Bray, *A Description of the Part of Devonshire Bordering on the Tamar and the Tavy; its Natural History, Manners, Customs, Superstitions, Scenery, Antiquities, Biography of Eminent Persons, etc in a Series of Letters to Robert Southey Esq* (1836).
[78] Gaskell, pp. 65-66.
[79] Christine Alexander, 'That "Kingdom of Gloom": Charlotte Brontë, the Annuals, and the Gothic', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47:4, (1993), pp. 409-436.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), to name several and Gothic tales and Romantic poetry published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. They argue that Brontë exploited the genre for melodrama, exoticism and violence in the tales and adapted the mode at a deeper more sophisticated level in her novels. Brontë's literary use of the supernatural is Radcliffean.

Although Alexander and Smith argue that *Wuthering Heights* makes more of conjuring ghosts, dreams and hallucinations than *Jane Eyre*, all of the siblings exploit the Gothic lineage, grafting its tropes, motifs, imagery, characterisation, atmosphere and setting onto contemporary realism. Feelings of dread and terror, apparitions, unnatural phenomena and disturbing dream states portray complex character psychologies. Gothic features do not reveal 'paranormal forces so much as they reveal characters' superstitions, transcendental beliefs, desires and subconscious awareness'.[80] Excepting *Shirley*, all of Brontë's novels (and Emily's novel) rely heavily on Gothic.

Scholars strongly associate Brontë with Scott's Gothic. The Brontës' devouring of the Waverley novels and probably the ballads too is reflected in the frequent allusion, reference and direct quotation of Scott across their fiction. Brontë critics argue that 'much of the Brontës penchant for […] Gothic novels […] had been fostered by their addiction to Scott's poetry and novels'.[81] Branwell's Gytrash of 'The Thurstons of Darkwall' (1837) is mined from not only the spectre of Ponden House, near Haworth, but Scott's spirits in his novels and poems.[82] Reference is also to Scott's Scottish border ballads. More, generally, critics of

[80] Alexander and Smith, pp. 222-223.
[81] Ibid., pp. 444-446. See also Florence Swinton Dry, *The Sources of "Jane Eyre"* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & sons, 1940), Florence Swinton Dry, *The Sources of "Wuthering Heights"* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & sons, 1937).
[82] Butterfield, pp. 45-47.

Structuralism, W. A. Craik and E.A. Kneis and the Deconstructionist approach by Carole Bock, credit Scott as an invaluable influence on Brontë's narrative development as a writer.[83]

Robert B. Heilman's influential article, 'Charlotte Brontë's "New Gothic"' (1958) examines Brontë's modification of old Gothic conventions to the arena of psychology. In Angria and on to *The Professor* (1857) Heilman argues, Brontë intensifies the 'emotionalism and psychology' of the 'Gothic novel of sensibility' and asserts a freedom almost obsolete in historical Gothic rarely employed in previous Gothic writers. In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë raises Gothic stock of childhood terror, ghostliness, vampires, dreams, supernatural phenomena, mystery and telepathy to psychological and symbolic heights, achieving greater levels of insight into inner human reality. Brontë continues to eschew Gothic stereotypes of melodrama and sensation in Lucy Snowe's nun-ghost apparitions, the trance-like episode in the park and in her emotional breakdown. Even the social sobering of *Shirley* with its passion and theme of private life is adapted from the Gothic impulse.[84] Delving deeper into the psychoanalytic aspects of her novels, Robert A. Colby, writing a year later, studies Lucy Snowe's unconscious mind and its dynamic of dream-like symbols.[85]

However, more recently, critiques marginalise Gothic's input in Brontë psychology. Christina Crosby's deconstructionist reading of *Villette* centres on Gothic's undermining of Brontë's literary realist goals. Crosby reads the ghost nun of *Villette* as an unwelcome

[83] See W.A Craik, *The Brontë Novels* (London: Methuen, 1969), E.A. Kneis, *The Art of Charlotte Brontë* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1969), Carol Bock, *Charlotte Brontë and the Storyteller's Audience* (Iowa University Press, 1992).

[84] Heilman, pp. 118-132. Interestingly, Brontë is not referred to in several key early twentieth century Gothic criticisms such as Dorothy Scarborough, *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (New York and London: G.P Putnam, 1917), Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: History of the Gothic novel* (London: Fortune Press, 1938) and Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame: being a History of the Gothic Novel in England, its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration and Residuary Influences* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966).

[85] Alexander and Smith, p. 409. See Robert A. Colby, '*Villette* and the Life of the Mind', *PMLA* 75:4 (1960), pp. 410-419. See also Margaret Homans, 'Dreaming of Children: Literalization in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, in *The Female Gothic*, ed. Juliann E. Fleenor (Montreal: Eden 1983), pp. 257-259.

intrusion destabilising realism by its 'incompletely repressed Romanticism'[86] that subverts psychological truths of the unconscious. Similarly, Nathalie Mera Ford agrees that the generic doubling of romance and realism is regarded as a gateway to 'disruptive Romantic conventions of the non-rational mind' and illustrated by states of reverie, dream and trance portrayed in *Shirley* and *Villette* that depict an:

> Unstable if compelling psychic terrain, one that is best for her highly sensitive female protagonists to avoid, despite its enduring allure. In an increasingly rationalistic world, romantic notions of creative subjectivity with transcendent experience were felt to compromise nineteenth-century ideas of excessive introspection'.[87]

Likewise, in her introduction to *Jane Eyre*, Sally Shuttleworth contests Bertha Mason's Gothic intrusion to the realist novel's theme of gender.[88] In her feminist critique, Diane Long Hoeveler, initially, recognises Gothic's two hundred year old tradition and its role in critiquing patriarchy (thus recognising Gothic as in touch with social and cultural realities). But then she bemoans the ghost of Lucy Snowe of *Villette* as the ghost of a defunct and dying literary tradition. The Gothic, she concludes, is a dying discourse system'.[89] However, on the subject of doubling in *Jane Eyre*, Alison Milbank resurrects its Gothic element arguing that the novel is founded on the spectral and then the real. The novel 'evokes a spiritual world through unexplained ghostly visions and sounds, yet finally provides a natural origin for all the effects'.[90] The Gothic horror of Bertha Mason, operating as a doppelganger, proves invaluable, according to Nicole A. Diederich. Its psychological awakening enables Brontë to

[86] Christina Crosby, 'Charlotte Brontë's Haunted Text', *Studies in English Literature* 24 (1984), pp. 701-715 (p. 673).
[87] Nathalie Mera Ford, '"The Track of Reverie": Vision and Pathology in *Shirley* and *Villette*', *Brontë Studies* 36:2 (2011), pp. 141-151 (p. 150).
[88] Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. xvii.
[89] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: the professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p.222
[90] Alison Milbank, 'Gothic Femininities', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, ed. Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 155-163 (p. 157).

subvert the conventional rhetoric on marriage with a 'discourse of remarriage that exposes the often powerless subjectivity of both the first and the second "angel in the house"'.[91]

In terms of genre, structure, narrative and theme, Brontë's Gothic is seen to either add or subtract to her novels. In terms of material, critics are unanimous that allusions to vampire, ghosts, wraiths, macabre dreams, witchcraft, apparitions, Gytrash and any other supernatural phenomena, are contextualised as Gothic (with some of these references overlapping also with folklore). Brontë's Radcliffean Gothic is positioned in opposition to realism according to structural, psychoanalytic and feminist critics. Critics examine this tension across her novels without challenging these generic assumptions. Regarded positively or negatively, Gothic romance characterises Brontë's fiction. It is seen to function along with myth and fairy tale as exemplified in Gilbert and Gubar's monumental work on rebellious feminism and the progress to self hood in *Jane Eyre*. As a liability or of literary value, Gothic is central to Brontë scholarship.

Several points need to be made. Firstly, prior to Heilman's essay on Brontë's Gothic, the Victorian periodical press rarely, if almost never, applied the term to her fiction. The Victorians placed far greater value on the Realist tradition and truth to life than Gothic romance. Of *Jane Eyre*, G. H. Lewes says in an unsigned review in *Fraser's Magazine* (December 1847) that: 'Reality, deep significant reality—is the great characteristic of the book'.[92] Reviewers' comments on the novel's defects, targeted at elements of improbability, melodrama, the supernatural and superstitions, mystery and the unnatural, might have in mind Brontë's novel as typifying Victorian realist texts as well as or excluding the Gothic novel. Contemporary reactions to Gothic features in *Villette* are few. The one exception is an

[91] Nicole A. Diederich, 'Gothic Doppelgangers and Discourse: Examining the Doubling Practice of (Re) Marriage in *Jane Eyre*', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* 6:3 (2010), pp. 1-27 (p. 27).
[92] Miriam Allot, *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 84.

unsigned review in the *Literary Gazette* (5 February 1853) that refers again to the intrusion of reality with the novel's phantom nun. Are these comments targeting Brontë's Gothic or the Realist novel? Across her fiction there is no direct quote, allusion or reference to Walpole, Lewis or Shelley. Did Brontë actually read these works? There are no explicit indications of her reading this material. The only specific reference is to Radcliffe's *The Italian* in *Shirley* (referring to Rose Yorke's worldly desire to travel) and Brontë's reference in a letter to William Godwin's (1756-1836) *Caleb Williams.*[93] There is little analysis between *Villette* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. However, had Brontë read Radcliffe's novel she may have imitated her ideas about Enlightenment rationality. Radcliffe's question 'whether the spirit, after it has quitted the body, is ever permitted to revisit the earth; and if it is, whether it was possible for spirits to become visible to the sense',[94] might resonate with Lucy's eschatological investigation in *Villette*. According to Terry Castle in the introduction to *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe's intention is to awaken in her readers, 'a sense of the numinous—of invisible forces at work in the world'[95] and that her interest in divine mysteries is seen also, to promote the values of Enlightenment rationality whilst also upholding orthodox Christian values. Castle's comments resonate with my reading of *Villette*.

Secondly, Jane Eyre associates her ghost beliefs not with Gothic but with the oral folk narratives of Bessie's nursery tales and ballads and Jane's enquiry of a Thornfield ghost is rooted in local legend and not Gothic sources. The nun-ghost of *Villette* originates as a 'ghost story' or 'vague tale' or 'legend' rather than to Gothic. Thirdly, the identity of Scott as antiquarian needs development as well as his influence as a Gothic writer. Nowhere is Scott recognised as a writer of folklore yet I would argue that folklore permeates all of his poetry

[93] Margaret Smith, ed., *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë with a Selection of Letters by Family and Friends*, 2: 1848-1851 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 202.
[94] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 549.
[95] Radcliffe, p. xxi.

and prose. His *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830) is conceived of more dismissively as occult material rather than a major resource of psychology, early science and a fundamental folklore resource. Fourthly, although my reading of gender coheres, to a large degree with Gilbert and Gubar's study of female power in *Jane Eyre*, they do not recognise folklore features. The idea of the romance/realism opposition in Brontë's novels (as Tim Dolin and others suggest) might be re-read as psychological reality or magical thinking and Enlightenment rationality as an aspect of the realist novel. This tension is played out in characters' desire for rational explanations of their irrational fears, superstitious beliefs or magical thinking, religious beliefs in the divine, dreams of omens and their instinctive presentiments. Critics do not seem to acknowledge Brontë's adaptation of folklore from Celtic fiction, Romantic-era poetry and prose or earlier material such as Shakespearean drama and possibly Gothic novels. Most middle class homes would contain standard works of the bible, classical mythology, Chaucer, *The Thousand and One Nights* (1704), Pope, Milton, Swift and Johnson, all of which contain folklore material. Moreover, the Brontës also owned James Macpherson's *Ossian* (1759), Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (1817), and Scott's work. Across her writing, Brontë also alludes to the evil fairy of Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) and the witch or sorceress of Wilhelm Meinhold's *Sidonie von Bork, die Klosterhexe* (1847) (and also of *The Amber Witch* (1844) which Brontë requested from Smith Elder and Co). It does seem that the Gothic novel is but one source of many for which she could exploit various features of folklore.

In all, folklore receives little attention compared with the role of Gothic, fairy tale and myth in Brontë critical studies.

Folklore in Gothic.

In addressing assumptions between 'Folklore and the Gothic',[96] Harris makes some headway. He pinpoints the question: How do supernatural folk beliefs and folk narratives function in nineteenth-century literary representations of fantasy, and the fantastic, many of which are not Gothic?[97] Harris points to Gothic's antecedents of myth, fairy tale, folk ballad revival, legends, medieval romance and Celtic lore.[98] In noting commonality, Gothic atmosphere, folklore and the fantastic in nineteenth-century fiction often rely on stock motifs of ghosts, demons, corpses and vampires, and vocabulary: supernatural, haunting, terror, horror, marvellous and monstrous. Castles and manors juxtapose wild settings in Gothic reminiscent of folk legends (and, often fairy tales).[99] They embody the aesthetic and emotional atmosphere of 'the fantastic- even though the moment of hesitation may prove to be but uncanny according to Todorovian terms'.[100] Ideological similarities include psychological states underpinning cultural repression,[101] Nationalism and ideas of borders, Imperialism,[102] Transcendentalism and crucially, Enlightenment rationality and science.[103]

[96] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 19.
[97] Ibid., p. 20.
[98] Ibid., p. 20. See also Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), Margaret Carter, *Spectre or Delusion: The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction* (London: UMI Research Press, 1987), G. Malcolm Laws Jr., *A Literary History of the Popular Ballad* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968), David Punter, *The Literature of Terror* (London: Longman, 1980), Marina Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[99] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 19. See Lucy Armitt, 'Gothic Fairy Tale' in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature* ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts (New York: New York University Press, 1998).
[100] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 20. See Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* Trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).
[101] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 3. See William Patrick Day, *In the Circles of Fear and Desire*: *A Study of Gothic Fantasy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985).
[102] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 150. See Patrick Bratlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 227.
[103] Harris, *Folklore*, pp. 5-6. See Marshall Brown, 'Philosophy and the Gothic Novel' in *Approaches to Teaching Gothic Fiction: The British and American Traditions,* ed. Diane Long Hoeveler and Tamar Heller (New York: MLA, 2003), p. 47.

Although Harris notes a literary time difference between them, he seems to overlook the fundamental difference. Folklore is rooted in an oral tradition characterising cultural history that predates the Enlightenment whereas Gothic is a post-Enlightenment literary construct, mode or genre. One is grounded in history and oral tradition but adapted to the literary form, and the other is a literary form. Gothic is but one literary genre or mode to adapt folklore from its cultural/historic context. Gothic exploits the ghost in particular but also werewolves, devils, magicians, witches, vampires, wraiths (or doppelgangers) (and more briefly to fairies and omens) for its supernatural atmosphere, plot and theme. Ghosts in English folklore were rooted in communal tradition and to a degree, were endorsed in Scriptural texts. By the late eighteenth-century, Gothic writers had seized on the ghost material to inject mystery and the macabre, the uncanny, and symbolism of being haunted. The Gothic and folklore evade comparison because folklore is not in itself a literary genre, and conversely Gothic is not an oral history. Gothic is not folk literature. It is feasible, however, to compare folklore in folk narratives and Gothic. Harris's main aim is to examine how nineteenth-century writers revise, imitate and transform folklore material into their narratives. Situating Gothic is useful if only to provide examples of an earlier literary tradition's interaction with folklore.[104] It is better to approach the subject as 'folklore in Gothic' rather than Harris 'folklore and Gothic'. The role of folklore in Gothic fiction is beyond the scope of this project. Suffice to say, the distinction is clear.

The picture is complicated because folklore permeates much of Gothic and realist fiction. But there are also distinctions. Fairies are a major feature in folk literature and Victorian Realist novels. My introduction, thus far, cannot stress more the significance of fairies in the Realist novel. The fairy motif occupies a central place in folklore literary studies

[104] Stacey McDowell, 'Folklore' in *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic*, ed. William Hughes, David Punter and Andrew Smith (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 252-254 (p. 253).

especially in discussions on Victorian fairy tales, folk tales and Victorian realist novels. Fairies feature far less in Gothic supernaturalism. As Maureen Duffy says in her chapter 'Gothick Horror', fairies, as part of the setting in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* are quickly rationalised away.[105] But, significantly, as Silver demonstrates, the Victorian realist novel is a genre in which the fairy occupies a central place. Moreover, ghosts, vampire, customs, second sight, love divinations and charms as well as fairies, feature widely in the Victorian novel. The ghost, however, remains the stock-in-trade of Gothic romance.

On Scott, David Morse engages with the role of ghosts in *Kenilworth*, *The Pirate*, *Quentin Durward*, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, *The Talisman* and *The Heart of Midlothian* not only thematically, to explore cultural history, but structurally too. He writes:

> There is scarcely a single novel that does not make some use of superstition and magical practices [...] Superstition is seen by Scott as a cultural and not an individual phenomenon [...] superstition and the irrational [...] break down assumptions about continuity and orderliness and become symptomatic of an instability in the world and in men's conceptions of it [...] Superstition can be seen as a method of 'reading' history.[106]

So too, Dorson, Parsons, Silver and Harris also examine Scott's deployment of his ghosts from a folklore perspective.[107] Ghosts are pervasive not only in Gothic romance but also in Scott's historical romances, Dickens' and Gaskell's Victorian short stories, Hogg's folk legends and the realist novels of Brontë, Eliot and Hardy, characterising the rhetoric of scepticism. The Gothic tradition, then, does not have the monopoly on the ghost trope. Ghosts are part of a much wider context that includes fairies, omens, customs, and so on. Yet, as I show in Brontë, the realist novel ventures on to explore the thematic potential of fairies. This is the area of folklore study. We must extend our reading of the ghost trope to not only Gothic but also to folklore in the realist novel.

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[105] Duffy, p. 230.
[106] David Morse, *Romanticism: A Structural Analysis* (The Macmillan Press, 1982), pp. 163-181.
[107] See Dorson, pp.113-115; Parsons, *Witchcraft*, pp. 5-15, pp. 105-122; Harris, *Folklore*, p. 199, Silver, pp.10-13.

Lastly, folklore critics interact with folk literary forms that comprise of shorter prose or folk tales or folk narratives such as fairy tales, fables, nursery tales, supernatural stories, novellas, legends, broadsides, chapbooks, riddles, folk songs, ballads (a subdivision of folk song) and drama. However, folklore material, as I reiterate, is not the sole domain of folk fiction but also Gothic romance, Ghost and Horror stories and, significantly, literary realism.

The main focus of my study is geared to addressing the sources and ideological uses of folklore. The entire study of Brontë's folklore, to date, has remained the domain of folklore critics. The role and function of folklore in Brontë's fiction is crying out for a broader scholarly literary field of enquiry. However, its requirement of cross-disciplinary interactions with folklore studies, cultural anthropology, cultural history, psychology, and literary studies and folklore, is also necessary. Throughout this study, I re-examine Brontë's narrative uses of the supernatural as folklore examining direct quotations, allusions, references and motifs across her fiction that indicate her assuredness of folklore traditions and beliefs, and her awareness of literary fairies (and witches), Romantic theories on fairy origins, contemporary debates on spectral illusion theory and differing theories on beliefs in ghosts. This thesis re-sets the context of Brontë's uses of the supernatural in the folklore of the realist novel rather than Gothic, focusing in particular on the functionality of the fairy motif in *Jane Eyre* and ghosts in *Villette*. Although Brontë treats other types of folklore for narrative purposes only, their allusion only serves to reinforce this new narrative framework. This project, then, furthers the study of folklore in Brontë Victorian novels. I therefore address the following three research questions: Who, what and where are Brontë's major sources of folklore drawn? What and where are folklore references in Brontë's fiction? What are the ideological functions of folklore in Brontë's fiction?

To that end, I engage with several theoretical models. Despite Bob Bushaway's deviation from more revisionist cultural historical analyses of nineteenth-century rural culture his work best represents my study of folklore in *Shirley* and Brontë's locale.[108] For the section on Brontë's letters I draw on *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Imagination* (2013)[109] a useful resource to understand the prevalence of magical or imagined thinking as one aspect of the theory of imagination applying it to both Brontë fiction and her letters. My main interest in the study of imagination is Karl S. Rosengren and Jason A. French definition of magical thinking as the search for causality, the tendency to essentialize and the desire for knowledge.[110] For the study of the fairy motif in *Jane Eyre* I advance the ideas of feminist folklore theorist Joan Newlon Radnor in *Feminist Messages*: *Coding in Women's Folk Culture* (1993). Radnor studies folklore's coding, encryption or secret knowledge as a tool to explore cultural issues on gender power, resistance and status reversal. These covert expressions of subversion, Radnor argues, are common in women subjected to men's domination, silence and marginalization.[111] The term, 'symbolic inversion' broadly defines an act of expressive behaviour which 'inverts, contradicts, abrogates or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic, literary […]'.[112] However, there are limitations to Radnor's work as it extends only to the ballad form, legends, oral stories and Irish women's lament poetry (and women's diaries). Yet, the idea of interpreting coding as a form of strategic communication in women's folklore is relevant to

[108] Bob Bushaway, *By Rite: Custom, Ceremony and Community in England 1700-1880* (London: Junction Books, 1982), Bob Bushaway, 'Tacit, Unsuspected, but still Implicit Faith': Alternative Belief in Nineteenth-Century Rural England' in *Popular Culture in England 1500-1850,* ed. Tim Harris (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), pp. 189-215, Bob Bushaway, 'Things said or sung a thousand times': customary society and oral culture in rural England, 1700-1900' in *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain 1500-1850* ed. Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 256-273.
[109] Marjorie Taylor, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[110] Ibid., pp. 49-50.
[111] Joan Newlon Radner, ed., *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), p. 3.
[112] Ibid., p. 25.

my work on *Jane Eyre*. Other studies of symbolic representations of fairies in Carole Silver's *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness* (1999) and Maureen Duffy's *The Erotic World of Faery* (1972) are invaluable. Cultural anthropological studies in Rites of Passage provide another resource for the theme of power and sexuality in *Jane Eyre*. In *The Ritual Process*: *Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969),[113] Victor Turner adapts his studies on status inversion and symbolic inversion from Arnold van Gennep's definitions of rites of passage in *Les Rites de Passage* (1908). I apply Turner's concepts to suggest that the fairy motif occupies a zone of power that elevates Jane's social position and relegates Rochester's. Similarly, folklore studies on the symbolism of boundaries[114] adapt van Gennep's model, useful also for my interpretation of the site of the stile as a border, symbolic of Jane's transition from girl to woman, as the Other or different, her sense of not belonging, and to exploit her fairy image (as a site for supernatural beings).

For the study of the ghost motif in *Villette*, I draw on general revisionist studies on Victorian religion in Frank Turner's *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (1993) and Richard Noakes in *The Victorian Supernatural* (2004) which discusses spiritualism and science.[115] More crucially, I fit the ghost theme within the very specific framework of eschatology and the more specific analysis by Michael Wheeler on Christian doctrine on the four last things: death, judgement, heaven and hell.[116] In addition, I draw on other Christian and ecclesiastical-led historical studies on doctrines of the afterlife,

[113] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).
[114] Hilda Ellis Davidson, ed., *Boundaries and Thresholds: Papers from a Colloquium of the Katharine Briggs Club* (Gloucestershire: Thimble Press, 1993), pp. 7-13, Barbara C. Spooner, 'The Haunted Stile' *Folklore* 79 (1968), pp. 135-139.
[115] Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Richard Noakes, 'Spiritualism, science and the supernatural in mid-Victorian Britain' in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett and Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 23-39 (pp. 23-27).
[116] Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

works that document the extent to which ghosts still commanded critical attention in post-Reformation spirituality.[117]

The main body of the thesis is divided into two chapters that identify local and literary sources and two subsequent chapters that examine themes. Chapter One situates Brontë's novel *Shirley* within her local cultural environment. Folklore serves the narrative features of this regional novel and supports my claim that *Shirley* offers a record of traditional culture. I draw on primary and secondary sources of Yorkshire folklore and compare the material in Brontë letters, drawing comparisons of this trait in her fictional characterisation.

Chapter Two explores the influence of Walter Scott on Brontë's writing and in particular the similarities between Scott and Brontë's creative treatment of folklore. Situating Scott firmly in a folklore literary tradition, I advance the idea that Brontë and Scott shared similar literary and antiquarian sources of folklore and demonstrate Brontë's adaptation of Scott's narrative and ideological uses of folklore in his Waverley romances in her juvenilia. Scott's creative uses of supernatural beings such as dwarfs and supernatural phenomena associated with astrology and magic, second sight and ghosts, are significant influences on Brontë's Glass Town and Angria. I also discuss Scott's interest in Scottish literary folk tradition, and examine how Brontë's absorption of her local cultural environment resonates also with Scott's cultural milieu operating as oral folk sources.

In Chapter Three I turn to Brontë's ideological uses of folklore and the fairy motif in *Jane Eyre*. I draw on Scott's fairy lore material, discussing how Brontë transforms it to depict the 'otherness' of Jane and how her appearance constructs a new kind of heroine that challenges the idealisation of Victorian femininity. The fairy conveys Rochester's sense of Jane's power as another indicator of her difference. It is also a commentary on gender power

[117] Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon, eds., *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul* (Ecclesiastical History Society: Boydell and Brewer, 2009).

relations. With Maureen Duffy's resource I argue that Rochester's encoding of Jane as fairy not only communicates male attitudes towards women but conveys a language for him to express his sexual desire of Jane.

Lastly, in Chapter Four, I suggest that Brontë imitates and adapts aspects of Scott's *Letter One* and *Letter Ten* of *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830) to examine the tension between folk superstition and Enlightenment rationality in *Villette*'s nun-ghost plot/motif. I argue that Brontë's debate is less science versus faith but more internal to the complexities of religious truths. Coleman O. Parsons is useful not only for the treatment of ghosts across Scott's work but the evolution of sceptic thinking in the nineteenth-century and the counter-argument of belief in the supernatural. I refer to Frank Turner's examination of religion and Richard Noakes discussion on the supernatural, and several studies of the afterlife in ecclesiastical history. Referring to Michael Wheeler's study of eschatology, I show that Brontë's concerns about the afterlife were a matter of doctrine within the Christian faith and not a venture into spiritualist thinking.

Chapter One

Brontë's Local Sources and *Shirley*

> The misfortunes she mentioned were not always to her-self. She thought such sensitiveness to omens was like the cholera, present to susceptible people—some feeling more, some less.
>
> Elizabeth Gaskell, *Life of Charlotte Brontë*[1]

In this chapter, I aim to deepen the association between Brontë's northern novels, especially *Shirley*, their allusion to folklore and the local cultural environment of Yorkshire. It warrants a reading of *Shirley* from the perspective of its cultural historical framework. The Yorkshire locale, I argue, provides a source of folklore for her creative writing. References to local folklore in *Jane Eyre* are also present. But, given that *Shirley* is a condition- of- Yorkshire novel we might conceive of it as a more reliable folklore source. However, the Gytrash of *Jane Eyre* is a local folkloric belief as examined in the introduction. *Shirley* seems to mirror the local people's interaction with the cultural framework of the beliefs, customs and proverbs of rural county life in the early nineteenth century. *Shirley* is not simply a condition-of-England novel but a condition-of-Yorkshire novel. Its historicity is in part indebted to the folkloric framework. Not only does Brontë reconstruct the economic and political structure of Yorkshire in 1811-2 (and national events of 1848) but also, to an extent, the cultural structure. Despite the lack of folklore as ideological tool in *Shirley*, it adds to the narrative and helps to shape its generic regional definition. This is a novel moreover, that intimates local traditional culture as a key resource for Brontë's knowledge of folklore. Notwithstanding the pitfalls of treating her northern novels as factual rather than literary constructs, it is possible to study

[1] Gaskell, p. 127.

them from the perspective of cultural change in rural Yorkshire. *Shirley* characterises this aspect of nineteenth-century social change and to a degree, this novel is alert to cultural as well as social history. I also identify the use of local folklore references to support the rural narrative setting, the Luddite plot and Whitsun as key dramatic incidents. Folklore is an aspect of magical thinking in characterisation and the notion of characters' sense of place and rootedness. Above all, the presence of folklore in *Shirley* offers a commentary on Brontë's awareness of cultural transformation in its sentiment of nostalgia. I examine the local cultural backdrop of Yorkshire to argue its potential as a major source for *Shirley.* Finally, comparing allusions to folklore in Brontë's letters with her novels, furthers the idea of the local cultural environment as a major inspiration for her. Her letters indicate not only her use of folklore as a descriptive tool to convey emotion but provide evidence of her own magical thinking.

Critics and biographers situate this novel in the historic-regional setting of Yorkshire landscape, people, or dialect and industrial Luddite theme and recognise *Shirley* within the regional genre.[2] Despite earlier acknowledgement of the regional specificity of *Shirley* and critical praise for Brontë's working class sympathies,[3] Terry Eagleton's study of the novel's politics sets the tone for critical evaluations of the Luddite theme.[4] Yet, still, critical consensus is to the novel's reconstruction of a specific event in Yorkshire's history with an acceptance that Brontë drew on reliable sources of back copies of the *Leeds Mercury* and first-hand accounts of the Luddite period from her father who was curate at Hartshead Church during the protest movement of 1811-12. However, I am particularly interested in Janet Cezari's resurrection of accusations of the novel's lack of unity stating that one of its ruling

[2] See for example Phyllis Bentley, *English Regional Novel* (Norwood Editions, 1941), Arthur Pollard, *The Landscape of the Brontës* (Exeter: Webb and Bower, 1988), Herbert E. Wroot, *The Persons and Places of the Brontë Novels* (New York, 1906).
[3] Asa Briggs, 'Private and Social Themes in *Shirley*', *Brontë Society Transactions* 13:3, 1958, pp. 203-219. See also comments in the 'Introduction' to Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* ed. Judith and Andrew Hook (London: Penguin Edition, 1974).
[4] Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*, 2nd edn. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 45-60.

ideas is its 'defence against time. It expresses a deep longing for an earlier state of things'.[5] Cezari argues that the novel 'subverts the faith in progress that shaped the world of Victorian England'. She recognises in *Shirley* in part the desire not for 'progress, and not even transcendence, but a reversal of the course of its own narrative'[6] referring to the novel's closing comment on the loss of the fairies.

Notwithstanding the omission of folklore in critical studies of *Shirley*, I take my lead from various analyses in order to further reinforce the argument that Brontë drew on her immediate locale to source folklore material. The study of the regional novel might be better placed by Keith Snell's studies. Acknowledging that the regional novel mixes the real with the imaginary, the known with the unknown, he defines it as one that contains local dialect, landscape, setting, history and customs. Snell states that any regional writer might supplement other descriptions as a 'way of imagining, realising or knowing life, character and social relations, with unique imaginative and evocative potential'.[7] This genre, he adds, on occasion, incorporates 'novels dependent upon regional folklore'. Of particular note is Snell's noting of Scott's historical settings incorporating vernacular surroundings 'imbued with local narratives and folkloric traditions'. He cites other examples including the provincial novels of Hardy's *Return of the Native* (1878) and Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), of which folklore is present.

In Carole Silver's final chapter 'Farewell to the Fairies' she points out the lament to the fairies in *Shirley* and *Jane Eyre*.[8] Indeed, the fairy lament is embedded in both novels with Jane Eyre vocalising her sadness on two occasions, once as a child and once as an adult. In the former, Jane opts to read *Gulliver's Travels* instead of fairy tales, having finally accepted that having searched 'among foxglove leaves and bells and under mushrooms' the fairies had

[5] Brontë, *Shirley*, p. xviii.
[6] Ibid, p. xxii.
[7] Keith D. M. Snell, *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 4.
[8] Silver, p. 194.

'all gone out of England to some savage country, where the woods were wilder and thicker, and the population more scant' (p. 21). This passage also relates to the characteristic theme, superstition and rationality prevalent across her fiction. Later, in the novel Jane repeats the sentiment to Rochester saying:

> The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago [...] and not even in Hay Lane or the fields about it could you find a trace of them. I don't think either summer or harvest, or winter moon will ever shine on their revels more. (p. 122)

I provide a context for Cezari's comments, developing the idea of Merrie England in *Shirley*, a novel more fitting to this world viewpoint given its theme of industrial change. These studies support my argument and also go some way to my shifting Brontë's novels in the general direction of reframing Brontë's novels as folklore in the realist novel.

Cultural Historical Analyses

The context of cultural history offers a useful framework to situate my reading of Yorkshire folklore as a major source for Brontë. Although in passing, Jason Marc Harris refers to the interdisciplinary nature of folklore, literature and cultural history, citing studies of customs and beliefs by key historians Bob Bushaway (but also Patrick Joyce and John Rule) to highlight their insistence of the persistence of folklore in the nineteenth century.[9] These studies support my claim that Brontë was in a position to develop her knowledge of local folklore in the early to mid Nineteenth-century. Harris quotes an Anglican clergyman's experience as late as 1826 of a 'world of comprehensive vision' as opposed to a community polarised by true faith and indolent superstition. Looking back the clergyman remembered conjuring parsons and cunning clerks (or wise men), blacksmiths as doctors, and old maids perceived as witches, saying 'in short all nature seemed to be united—its wells, its plants, its

[9] Harris, *Folklore* pp. 6-17.

beasts, its reptiles and even inanimate things in sympathising with human credulity; in predicting or in averting, in relieving or in aggravating misfortune'.[10]

Tim Harris includes Bushaway's historical study of alternate beliefs within Harris' wider and revisionist discussion on popular culture. He too recognises the value of Bushaway's examination of the structure and system of belief in nineteenth-century rural England. Bushaway's work does offer a basis from which to establish the cultural context of rural folklore. His studies all emphasise a consistent pattern of continuity yet change of alternative belief and calendar customs and of a picture, nuanced and ambiguous, characterising nineteenth-century rural England. His studies demonstrate the interrelationship between cultural history and folklore studies. Bushaway also quotes from a local clergyman, adapting the title of his essay, 'Tacit, Unsuspected, but still implicit faith': Alternative Belief in Nineteenth-Century Rural England' (1995) from some of the words of Reverend J.C. Atkinson, a clergyman who walked the length and breadth of the Yorkshire dales to visit his parishioners and described the beliefs as 'a living faith'.[11] Bushaway describes superstitions such as divination, fairies, omens and prophecy as 'alternative belief'. For many people, they were integrated into the structure of rural life of the individual alongside place and landscape, the natural world, seasons, weather and time, domestic life and work. Belief in omens did not abate in the presence of the Church. They were integrated into life crises and celebration, knowledge and wisdom. As a system, omens provided a universal set of principles for controlling uncertainty, chance and minimising disaster. They provided a coping mechanism, a living framework, a value system, a perception of reality and of existence. Beliefs were based on phenomenology, observation and experience. Magic conveyed a symbolic universe

[10] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 15.
[11] Bushaway, *Alternative Belief,* p. 189. See Rev J.C. Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish: Reminiscences and Researches in Danby in Cleveland* (London: Macmillan Press, 1891), p. 63.

(as did orthodox knowledge) from which people gained understanding of social reality. People lived in close proximity with nature and believed in an '*anima mundi.*' For some, the sun, moon, planets, fire and water were allotted religious and cultural status. Superstitions explained local and universal situations. They provided a knowable mechanism to deal with uncontrollable situations and events, a form of wisdom communicated by identifiable individuals such as wise men and women who could be consulted for remedies, solutions, access to futurity and information. Omens were attached to rituals of birth, courtship, marriage and death; all aspects of domestic life. Omens concerning death were the most common. The behaviour of not only animals, birds (both often white) and insects, but also church bells, night noises and deaths of others was also under scrutiny. Weather lore was observed for clues to the future. On the term 'Modern Superstition', Thomas de Quincy notes that 'birds are even more familiarly associated with such ominous warnings [...] ornithomancy grew into an elaborate science [...] magpies are still of awful authority in village life, according to their number'.[12]

In his earlier, *By Rite*: *Custom, Ceremony and Community in England* 1700-1880 (1982), Bushaway examines the fundamental role of customs in the social and economic life of rural England. His chapters cover the context of custom in relation to the community and its calendars, the church and manor regarding legitimacy and, protest and crime. Although focused on the South of England, Bushaway refers to the ubiquity and often similarity of customs in the North with Lifting customs post Easter in Lancashire, the squirrel hunt and rights of gathering wood in Derbyshire, Mummer's plays, Doleing days or 'Going a Thomasin' in Cheshire, the Rochdale Rush bearing, the Didsbury Wakes and northern

[12] Bushaway, *Alternative Belief,* pp. 189-215. See also Simpson and Roud, pp. 266-267.

Whitsun.[13] Bushaway discusses the ritual of Rough Music or Charivari,[14] the ritual alluded to also in *Jane Eyre*. In a more recent study on customary society and oral culture in rural England, Bushaway stresses that the oral culture did not preclude the print culture of chapbooks, broadside ballads and almanacs.[15] In addition to Bushaway's history of custom and belief, other studies are helpful on the persistence of the wise men and women tradition (otherwise known as astrologers, cunning folk and fortune tellers) who practised their trade from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century.[16]

These cultural historical studies compare favourably with the cultural context of Brontë's *Shirley*. Moreover, they concur with Brontë's realistic portrayal of regional folklore in *Shirley*.

Yorkshire Folklore Source Material

In this section, I argue that Brontë could have mined much of the folklore in *Shirley* from one aspect of her local world. This county collection provides evidence of the local context for Brontë's possible fictional allusion to the local beliefs of ghosts, witches, fairies and omens, felt by Caroline and Robert. This includes Caroline's proverb and Joe Scott's allusion to boggarts. Brontë might easily reconstruct the Whit parade as it was an annual local custom. Lastly, Caroline, Shirley and Louis Moore's references to Robin Hood are reminders of

[13] Bushaway, *By Rite*, pp. 167-202. See also Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550-1750* (London: Longman, 1998) - Chapter five covers the festive structure in Middleton. See also Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun*: *A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Although confined to Oxfordshire, see also Alun Howkins, 'The Taming of Whitsun: the Changing Face of a Nineteenth-Century Rural Holiday' in *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914* ed. Eileen and Stephen Yeo (Harvester Press, 1981), pp. 189-206.

[14] Bushaway, *By Rite*, p. 15, p. 167, p. 201. See also E.P. Thompson, 'Rough Music': Le Charivari Anglais, *Annales* 1972: 2, pp. 285-312, E.P Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (London: Merlin Press, 1991), Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1991), James Obelkavitch, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp.260-281.

[15] Bushaway, *Things Said*, p. 258.

[16] See also Owen Davis, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History* (London: Hambeldon and London, 2002), Ronald Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Yorkshire legend. Folklore references in her literature concur with evidence from West Yorkshire and Haworth local historical documentation. In addition, the character name of Fairfax, the ominous Gytrash and Jane's ominous dreams of children in *Jane Eyre* are probably drawn from the local folklore of Yorkshire. There are county folklore collections, histories, reminiscences, broadsides and chapbooks, autobiography and diaries, confirming the persistence of folklore throughout the nineteenth century including Yorkshire. Secondary historical sources also confirm the prevalence of folklore in northern rural communities and other English counties. Brontë was most likely to draw on some of the folk tradition of northern beliefs and customs from oral tradition for the folklore of *Shirley*. Antiquarian Joseph Horsfall Turner's (1845-1915) *Yorkshire Notes and Queries with Yorkshire Folk-lore Journal* (1888) (later, the *Yorkshire Folk-Lore Journal*) provides an excellent record of the oral tradition of West Yorkshire. His collection is similar to Mrs Eliza Gutch's (1840-1931) more well-known *County Folklore: Examples of printed folklore concerning the North Riding of Yorkshire, York and the Ainsty* (1901) and *County Folklore: Examples of printed folklore concerning the East Riding of Yorkshire* (1912). His journal covers the range of northern folk culture similarly to *Shirley* with references to popular beliefs such as boggards, fairies, ghosts and death omens, Robin Hood place names and gravestones, local customs, proverbs, ballads, folk tales, legends and songs. Turner describes 'Boggard', as a 'ghost, common to Northern languages saying: 'One scarcely dare still out on dark nights before gas lights were common for fear of boggards'.[17] Turner records many omens in his *Journal*. They follow patterns of avoidance: avoiding going out on Fridays, sleeping on pigeon feathered pillows (alluded to in *Wuthering Heights*), seeing a cinder in the grate with a hollow side, a leafy smut shaking on the fire grate, a broken looking glass, bearing a child with a blue vein on its nose, spilling salt,

[17] Joseph Horsfall Turner, *Yorkshire Folklore Journal* (Bingley: T Harrison, 1888), p. 15.

turning back on a journey, a ticking spider, a corpse with a soft fleshy feeling, a howling dog at night, corn shooting and bad weather and accepting a light at Christmas.

In Turner's 'Our Customary Feasts' (1913), he describes Whitsuntide as a Quarter Day, 'a great day for baptisms in the early Christian church to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost. The candidates were clothed in white.' Turner explains how the modern Whitsuntide (1800) was vastly reformed from the older form. He remembers the event as a boy in 1852, the poorest child dressed in new clothes, presided over by the Sunday school unions, inter-denominational, a procession led by superintendents and teachers, singing hymns and the afternoon tea party at the chapel for coffee and currant cake.[18] As to St Mark's Day, Turner describes Boggard Neet (April 24th, the night preceding St Mark's Day) as a night in the calendar to be feared.[19]

Yorkshire born local historian, Jessica Lofthouse provides a lengthy account of boggards. Describing them as creatures from the otherworld she finds reference to them from Clitheroe to the Yorkshire Pennines. Lofthouse describes other terms such as gabriel hound or hatchet or gabbleratches, lile hob, dobbie, trash, skriker, gytrash, hedlow kow, bloody tongues, grey cat, jack in irons, and lob lubberfiend.[20] The bogle or boggle was also associated with the dead. The barguest was another spirit or animal that changed shape, in the folklore of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and was sighted at stiles, dark lanes and churchyards. Often regarded as ominous they shrieked and howled. It could be a goblin, headless man, cat, rabbit or more often a black dog. In 1844, place names in and around Haworth and Keighley included Boggart field, Boggart Wood, Boggart Stones, Higher Boggart Stones, Boggart

[18]Joseph Horsfall Turner, 'Our Customary Feasts', *Halifax Courier* (1913), pp. 13-14.
[19] Ibid.,, p. 14.
[20] Jessica Lofthouse, *North-Country Folklore: In Lancashire, Cumbria and the Pennine Dales* (London: Robert Hale, 1976), pp. 24-43.

House. Localised ghosts and legends[21] were linked to Ponden Hall and the Cunliffe family at Wycoller with their variations of Gytrash, Padfoot and Headless horseman.

It is uncertain whether Brontë read folk tales but she may have heard of them. In 'The Rescusitated Ancient' Branwell refers to 'yaw will'nt as mich as club for an odd glass for an owd creature 'ats been shipwrecked wi' Boggards in yawr service'.[22] She may have read the folk tale, 'The Boggart' in Keightley's *Fairy Mythology* if it was published in *Blackwood's.* She was just as likely to have read Scott's 'The Buttery Spirit' in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* or heard of his 'The Farmer and the Boggart' or the Cornish tale, 'The White Bucca and the Black'. But raised in Haworth, there is no doubt that Brontë was familiar with the boggart, alluding to it in her tales (as I demonstrate in the following chapter) as well as *Shirley*. Certain Yorkshire folk legends including 'The Barguest of the Troller's Gill', 'The Barguest near Grassington', 'The Bosky Dike Barguest' and 'The Appearance of Barguest, a presage of Death' were not published until 1888,[23] well after Brontë's death. But they might have been narrated orally within the local community during her lifetime.

Brontë need not only draw on the oral tradition. Brontë might have also looked at antiquarian sources kept at Ponden House in Stanbury and Keighley Mechanics Institute in Keighley. She and her family borrowed books from these libraries. In the *Provincial Glossary* (1787) (listed at Ponden House library), antiquarian Francis Grose includes the widespread belief in 'Omens portending Death' such as a screeching owl flapping its wings against the windows of a sick person's chamber as in *Wuthering Heights,* three loud knocks at the bed of a sick person, a drop of blood from the nose foretelling death and the howling of dogs, similarly to the Gytrash. Similarly to *Wuthering Heights,* Grose includes the ominous belief

[21] Lofthouse, pp. 88-120.
[22] Butterfield, p. 76.
[23] S.O. Addy, 'Four Yorkshire Folk Tales', *Folklore*, 8:4 (1897), Thomas Parkinson, *Yorkshire Legends and Traditions* (London, 1888).

that it is 'impossible for a person to die while resting on a pillow stuffed with the feathers of a dove [...] the pillows of dying persons are therefore frequently taken away [...] lest they may have pigeons feathers in them'.[24]

The mythology of Robin Hood is associated with a number of Yorkshire sites such as Robin Hood bed, stone, quoilt, mill, grave, well (near to Ponden Kirk, Stanbury) and pub. His grave site is located in Kirklees Park, the setting for *Shirley's* Nunnwood forest. As well as hearing about Robin Hood, Brontë may have read an early folk ballad, 'Le Morte De Robin Hode' recorded in William Hone's antiquarian *The Year Book* (1832):

> To Kerklees stately priorie
> Came an old time-worn man
> And for food and shelter prayed he,
> Ye chief of a noble clan [...]
>
> On ye self-same night ye murdress died,
> But she rotted not alone,
> For they laid her carcase side by side
> With Robin of Huntingdon
> And they placed a fayre stone on ye mossy bed.[25]

The Robin Hood legend is part localised in Yorkshire and has been popularised in the ballad tradition since the fourteenth-century. He is mythologized at Kirklees Priory reputed to be buried in close proximity to Brontë's Roe Head School which she attended in 1831. Brontë biographers suggest that the Brontë family was familiar with the legend.[26] Given that Brontë investigated Luddism she would probably be aware of Robin Hood as another mythical figure typifying banditry such as Jack Straw, Captain Swing and Ned Ludd. Robin Hood was part of the folkloric cultural legacy of Yorkshire. Kirklees Priory is situated in the ruins of a twelfth

[24] Francis Grose, *A Provincial Glossary* (Scholar Press, 1968), p. 47, p. 69.
[25] William Hone, *The Year Book* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1832), p. 403.
[26] See Gaskell, pp. 106-107, Alexander and Smith, pp. 286-287.

century Cistercian priory in the grounds of Kirklees Hall to the west of Hartshead and was home to Sir George Armitage, a key figure in the suppression of Luddism.

As well as the term 'fairish', there is the northern dialect term, 'feerorin', associated also with topographical sites such as caves, wells, bridges, steps, burial mounds and holes.[27] There are no specific fairy place names mentioned in *Shirley* but there are about five references to the fairy cave under Penistone Crag (the cave is Ponden Kirk, at the head of Ponden Clough, on the moors above Stanbury) in *Wuthering Heights*. It is the site also for a local love divination and a place where Charlotte Brontë and Gaskell walked.

Lastly, dedicating a chapter to the folklore of Haworth in 'The Wise Man and the Horse Doctor', Steven Wood, local Haworth historian, confirms the presence of the cunning man tradition with local wise man, Jack Kay (1766-1847) who resided close to the Haworth parsonage and was buried by Patrick Brontë. He covers allusion to Kay in local broadside ballads, the use of folk medicine and evidence of material charms (as archival evidence of the past history of folklore at the Cliffe Castle museum).[28] Brontë alludes to magicians in the early tales, and Mother Bunches of *Jane Eyre* is a likely figure of the cunning woman tradition, of which there were several in Yorkshire throughout the nineteenth-century.

Both the critical and local historiography provides a picture of the oral and written culture of the folklore of Yorkshire (and folklore in more widespread use) as a plausible source for Brontë's *Shirley*. Apart from dialect differences and some variation in region specific lore, Northern folklore oral tradition in the nineteenth-century was no different to any other English county. Notwithstanding the role of historical imagination, Brontë is seen to allude to the West Riding of Yorkshire's cultural framework, recognising it as a crucial

[27] Lofthouse, p. 15. See also Richard Blakeborough, *Wit, Character, Folklore and Customs of the North Riding of Yorkshire* (Saltburn-by-the-sea, 2nd ed, 1911), William Henderson, *Notes on the Folk Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Border* (London: Longmans Green, 1866: reprint, Wakefield: EP, 1973: 2nd ed., London: Folklore Society, 1879).
[28] Steven Wood, *Haworth* (Tempus Publishing, 2005), pp. 78-84.

source of folklore. In addition, Brontë could also engage in antiquarian material available to her within the local community.

Narrative Features in *Shirley*

Brontë incorporates folklore as a narrative strategy. Yet, as plot device, its presence also signifies a society in transformation. The novel's tension between tradition and science seems to anticipate some of the novels of Hardy. Folklore in *Shirley* is interspersed sporadically throughout the novel. It hardly constitutes the motif value of fairies and ghosts inherent in the other novels. It is easy for it to go unnoticed. However, we do need to interpret the material as part and parcel of the local rural culture of the novel. It might offer a mirror to Yorkshire in flux as much as to Brontë's reconstruction of Luddism of 1811-12. Its fictional presence suggests Brontë drawing on the oral folk tradition to enhance historical authenticity. Folklore marks the local colour of the novel, typifying manners of speech with Caroline warning Robert not to overstep his power over the weavers and framers with the proverb 'It is a boast of some of them that they can keep a stone in their pocket seven years, turn it at the end of that time, keep it seven years longer, and hurl it, and hit their mark at last' (p. 105). Caroline's local folk proverb is a warning similar to Mike Hartley's anticipation of impending doom in his vision of fairies 'or moving objects, red like poppies, or white' (p. 15). Clearly, Mike's omen acts as a foreshadowing technique. In a show of class solidarity and local patriotism, Joe Scott, overseer to Robert Moore, pours scorn over Southerners, saying 'cause it's sport to us to watch 'em turn up the whites o' their een, and spreed out their bits o' hands, like as they're flayed wi' bogards' (p. 50). As I show later in the chapter, these folklore items resonate with folklore county collections of West Yorkshire with Brontë referring personally to the proverb to Gaskell.

Folklore features, briefly, as characterisation. It explains characters' fears, optimism and over-active imagination or magical thinking. Robert Moore recoils from 'Miss Mann's goblin-grimness'. It went further though than merely disliking her. On one occasion he 'had been fixed with Miss Mann's eye. Robert Moore had undergone it once, and had never forgotten the circumstance' (p.153) and had scarpered forthwith. To Caroline, Moore's magical thinking about witches 'was all a figment of fancy, a matter of surface'. Moore also suggests his belief in good omens such as 'those birds whose appearance is to the sailor the harbinger of good luck' (p. 216). At nine o'clock on the night of the Luddite raid, Shirley Keeldar informs Caroline that 'I would walk from Fieldhead to the church any fine midsummer night, three hours later than this, for the mere pleasure of seeing the stars and the chance of meeting a fairy' (p. 279) to which Caroline replies 'But just wait till the crowd is cleared away'. In addition, folklore personifies Caroline's fading youth and innocence with the narrator saying, 'Elf-land lies behind us, the shores of Reality rise in front' (p. 83). It explains Caroline's insecurities in the following conversation with Mrs Pryor. She describes her increasing dislike of the rectory and its proximity to the out-kitchens near to the graveyard:

> 'My dear! You surely are not superstitious?'
> 'No, Mrs Pryor; but I think I grow what is called nervous. I see things under a darker aspect than I used to do. I have fears I never used to have—not of ghosts, but of omens and disastrous events; and I have an inexpressible weight on my mind which I give the world to shake off, and I cannot do it' (p. 202).

Reference to the Haworth churchyard in the notes to *Shirley* localises the novel to Brontë's home in which the parsonage stood in front of the graveyard.

Whilst folklore hardly advances characterisation, it does, however, point to an interesting aspect of the central characters, Shirley and Caroline. Folklore expresses their awareness of the changing times. Both they and the elder generation vocalise this viewpoint.

The idea that Yorkshire cultural identity is inextricably linked to people's sense of the past or to a pre-lapsed golden age resonates with the sentiment felt in *Shirley*. Symbolically, folklore is an appeal to the past. The sense of nostalgia is realised in *Shirley* with Shirley and Caroline, gazing down on Nunnwood forest. Shirley asks:

> 'Was it not one of Robin Hood's haunts?'
> 'Yes, and there are mementos of him still existing. To penetrate into Nunnwood, Miss Keeldar, is to go far back into the dim days of old. Can you see a break in the forest, about the centre?' (p. 178).

More explicit is Shirley's:

> 'When I was a very little girl, Mr Moore, my nurse used to tell me tales of fairies being seen in that Hollow. That was before my father built the mill, when it was a perfectly solitary ravine. You will be falling under enchantment' (p. 199).

Shirley's nurse is surely echoing Tabitha Aykroyd's recollection of Haworth's pre-mechanisation, saying:

> What is more, she had known the 'bottom' or valley, in those primitive days when the fairies frequented the margin of the 'beck' on moonlight nights, and had known folk who had seen them. But that was when there were no mills in the valleys; and when all the wool-spinning was done by hand in the farm-houses round. 'It wur the factories as had driven 'em away'.[29]

It is unclear as to whether Gaskell heard this comment directly from Aykroyd, another employee at the parsonage, second hand from Brontë or another member of the family. But it resonates in *Shirley*.

The novel's ending is dedicated to the past rather than to the present with Shirley asking her housekeeper to describe pre-industrial Yorkshire. She is the link to historic continuity. Brontë gives the final word to the older generation, to Shirley's housekeeper in the epilogue:

> 'What was the Hollow like then, Martha?'

[29] Gaskell, p. 94.

> ‘Different to what it is now; but I can tell of it clean different again, when there was neither mill, nor cot, nor hall, except Fieldhead, within two miles of it. I can tell, one summer evening, fifty years syne, my mother coming running in just at the edge of dark, almost fleyed out of her wits, saying she had seen a fairish [fairy] in Fieldhead Hollow; and that was the last fairish that ever was seen on this countryside (though they’ve been heard within these forty years). A lonesome spot it was—and a bonnie spot—full of oak trees and nut trees. It is altered now’ (p.542).

This sense of regret for the passing of time might echo the voice of community. *Shirley* is a commentary on history and the fairies symbolize the past. There is a shared sense of inter-generational consciousness of the passing of time and the loss of something be it nature, cottage industry, community, imagination or romance. However, the appropriation of the English past does not detract from the novel’s sense of a radical detachment and discontinuity with what has gone on before. According to Simpson and Roud, the lament for a vanishing past was described as ‘Merrie England’. This Arcadian attitude to the past was popularised by Walter Scott in his ballad *Marmion* (1808):

> England was merry England, when
> Old Christmas brought his sports again.[30]

They describe this sentiment not as an unscientific concept but as an historic attitude that constituted a Victorian world-view, and had a profound impact on traditional festivals and customs. They state that Merrie Englandism was essentially nostalgic with the sense of loss felt mostly in terms of community. Countless novelists adhered to the Merrie England school of thought in an attempt to recreate the golden age. The past of May Day and Christmas was extolled. In *Villette* the wassail-cup ritual epitomises this sentiment with the Home and De Basompierre families paying homage to ‘the mask of Old Christmas’ (p. 279) and ‘Old October’ (p. 281), mentioned three times, with Graham Bretton saying ‘let us have a Christmas wassail-cup, and toast Old England here, on the hearth’ (p. 280).

[30] Simpson and Roud, p. 235.

Perhaps the densest reference to folklore lies in the treatment of Whitsuntide. The event marks the customary aspect of the novel's local colour. The chapter title 'Whitsuntide' supports the novel's main dramatic incident, action and plot of Luddism. It takes up three chapters and Brontë does not spare on description of this inter-parish communal event. It offers the reader more insight into Caroline's introverted nature and it forms the backdrop to the novel's central drama. Whitsun is perhaps the most energised of all the novel's scenes (apart from the rebellion). It describes the social stratification of rural life and conveys a sense of community parish rural life. Brontë includes all of the key features of this calendar custom:

> Whit-Tuesday was the great day, in preparation for which the two large schoolrooms of Briarfield, built by the present Rector, chiefly at his own expense, were cleaned out, whitewashed, repainted, and decorated with flowers and evergreens [...] The children's feast was to be spread in the open air. At one o'clock the troops were to come in; at two they were to be marshalled; till four they were to parade the parish; then came the feast, and afterwards the meeting, with music and speechifying in the church. [...] This notable anniversary had always hitherto been a trying day to Caroline Helstone, because it dragged her perforce into public, compelling her to face all that was wealthy, respectable, influential in the neighbourhood; [...] In the parson's croft, behind the Rectory, are the musicians of the three parish bands, with their instruments. Fanny and Eliza, in the smartest of caps and gowns, and the whitest of aprons, move amongst them, serving out quarts of ale. (pp. 246-7, p. 250).

This includes the wearing of white new clothes, the procession with brass band and banners and ale. On the role of custom and social cohesion, Whitsun, Bushaway states was one of the key customs for the maintenance of social unity and the ideal of community. He says:

> Many of these calendar rituals might appear to serve no other purpose than that of providing an opportunity for merriment and festivity, yet their deeper significance can be discovered in the context of an attempt to enforce a view of corporate society.[31]

Similarly the event asserts the novel's middle class paternalistic model of Church, state and monarchical hegemony over the working classes. Whitsun is part and parcel of the social structure of rural life. Its main function in *Shirley* is to maintain social order and social

[31]Bushaway, *By Rite*, pp. 107-160, (p. 149).

cohesion. The singing of 'God Save the King' and the band playing 'Rule Britannia' controls any potential customary features of rebellion or dissent. No aspect of the communal process is left out. As to Luddism, folklore historian Norman Simms is convinced that Brontë knew the 'ritual power of the event, even if she can only articulate two young girls' fear of gruff men to give the feeling of the attack itself'.[32] The detail of Whitsun suggests Brontë's familiarity with the event and probable participation in it either in the joining of the three parishes of Haworth, Oxenhope and Stanbury or in the Spen Valley during her period at Roe Head School.

Folklore supports the novel's major incident: the Luddite attack. Although Luddism is central to *Shirley*, critics overlook Brontë's familiarity with folklore's use in nineteenth-century social protest. As stated previously, Norman Simms recognises her knowledge of ceremonial yells saying 'perhaps her own syntactic outburst is closer to the mentality of the rebellion than all the rest she has written',[33] identifying the yell to Yorkshire, to a specific district and to the community of textile workers. Brontë's localism is unequivocal with her 'a rioter's yell—a North-of- England—a Yorkshire—a West-Riding —a West-Riding-clothing-district-of-Yorkshire rioters' yell'.[34] Simms examines the northern machine breakers of 1811 from the point of view of folklore and notes the role of the Mummers plays, yells and dance, the mythical but ideological character of Ned Ludd and the use of various disguises such as blackened faces or masks, as Brontë draws on in *Shirley*. Simms is adamant not to trivialise these folkloristic activities but regards them as fundamental to 'archaic mentalities, those modes of thought which persist in conditions of actual or socially enforced isolation'.[35] Simms overlooks the fact that the attack takes place at midnight, a key feature of folklore that

[32] Simms, p. 173.
[33] Ibid., p. 174.
[34] Ibid., p. 174.
[35] Ibid., p. 166.

denotes the most negative time of day. On the Luddite theme, Mr Malone, the Irish curate, questions an earlier revolt of the Luddite men saying 'I do not see a mask or a smutted face present' (p. 30). Brontë knows the significance of disguise in the Luddite cause.

We can value the folkloric content in *Shirley* for its narrative function, its integral role in reconstructing Luddism, its embodiment of nostalgia, and potential similarities with the transformation and continuity of Yorkshire rural culture. Undoubtedly, folklore characterises many of the features of the novel's sense of place, period and identity of the people.

Brontë's Letters

The comparison between her letters and fiction relates more to *Jane Eyre* than to *Shirley*. However, it is clear that there seems to be a close connection between Brontë's magical thinking and her fictional heroines. Her magical thinking also compares with her local culture. The Brontës engaged in the various customs of rural life. Patrick attended a musical oratorio on the first day of the Rush Bearing custom at St Michael's Church in July 1846.[36] More than likely the Arvils or funeral customs described by Gaskell had ended in her lifetime.[37] Clearly, Brontë had heard of the ritual Charivari, signing off a letter to Ellen Nussey (17 March 1840) from Haworth with the term, 'Charivari'[38] as a sort of joke or derivation of her own name (and alluding to it once in *Jane Eyre*, p. 177). Brontë writes to Ellen Nussey (28 May 1836) stating her intention of visiting Miss Wooler on Whitsunday in Gomersal.[39] Brontë writes to Nussey (4 April 1847) inviting her to stay at Haworth in May at Whitsuntide.[40] Whitsun was part of Anglican life. Arthur Bell Nicholls (husband to Brontë)

[36] Juliet Barker, *The Brontës: A Life in Letters* (Viking Press, 1997), p. 152.
[37] Gaskell, pp. 56-57.
[38] Margaret Smith, ed., *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë with a Selection of Letters by Family and Friends*, 1: 1829-1847 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.212.
[39] Smith, *Letters* 1, p. 145.
[40] Smith, *Letters* 1, pp. 521-522.

felt unwell during his delivery of the sacraments on Whitsunday on 16 May 1853 and three days later, Brontë enquired in a letter, as to how Ellen got on at the traditional Sunday school procession and tea on Whit Tuesday (19 May 1853).[41] Given that the Whit parade continued to the early twentieth century, it is not inconceivable that Brontë attended the public event. She certainly would have attended the church service if not the parade and tea. Whitsun was an opportunity for fellowship, mutual help and Christian charity. As daughter to the Reverend Brontë and Sunday school teacher, she would probably be expected to participate in this ritual.

As to Caroline Helstone's proverb mentioned earlier, Brontë repeated the same saying to Gaskell which she included in her biography suggesting Brontë's knowledge of local lore:

> I remember Miss Brontë telling me that it was a saying round about Haworth, 'keep a stone in thy pocket seven year; turn it, and keep it seven year longer, that it may be ever ready to thine hand when thine enemy draws near'.[42]

More evidence is available regarding her use of folklore as descriptive tool. For the Victorians, the supernatural provided a metaphor to express emotion and attitudes and physical appearance. Brontë's letters typify Victorians' ubiquitous use of folklore as metaphor. Her knowledge of folk beliefs would emanate not only from fiction but prevailing belief in the community. Ghosts and the supernatural provided a tool for her to express not only mental states of anxiety and depression but also basic everyday feelings of joy and frustration. More light hearted, to Ellen Nussey (1 April 1841) whilst employed as a governess at Upperwood House, Rawdon, she reveals her wicked sense of humour, describing Mr and Mrs White's children as 'imps'.[43] But to Margaret Wooler (November/December

[41] Margaret Smith, ed., *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë with a Selection of Letters by Family and Friends*, 3: 1852-1855 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp. 165-166.
[42] Gaskell, p. 47.
[43] Smith, *Letters* 1, p. 250.

1846), Brontë recalls her bout of hypochondria whilst teaching at Healds House, Dewsbury Moor saying:

> I can never forget the concentrated anguish of certain insufferable moments and the heavy gloom of many long hours—besides the preternatural horror which seemed to clothe existence and Nature [...] I could have been no better company for you than a stalking ghost.[44]

To W.S. Williams (11 March 1848) Brontë echoes *The Professor's* Frances Henri Evans' reference to 'fairy-money' (p. 216) to express her frustration at neglecting her art saying:

> 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 sterling coin into dry leaves.[45]

In her preface to *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë reflects on its intimidating nature: 'with time and labour, the crag took shape; and there it stands colossal, dark and frowning, half statue, half rock: in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like'. To Ellen Nussey (14 July 1849) Brontë describes her 'nervousness [...] is a horrid phantom—I dare communicate no ailment to papa'.[46] The supernatural world best expresses Brontë's ecstatic reaction to the industrial advances shown at the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace (1851): 'it seemed as if magic only could have gathered this mass of wealth [...] as if none but supernatural hands could have arranged it thus [...] the multitude filling the great aisles seems ruled and subdued by some invisible influence'[47] On their honeymoon in July 1854, she and Arthur Bell Nicholls visited Lake Killarney, the site of a local ghost legend. Brontë wrote to Catherine Winkworth (27 July 1854) from Cork describing the event:

> We have been to Killarney—I will not describe it a bit. We saw and went through the Gap of Dunloe. A sudden glimpse of a very grim phantom came on us in the Gap. The guide had warned me to alight from my horse as the path was now very broken and dangerous—she seemed to go mad—reared—plunged—I was thrown on the stones

[44] Smith, *Letters* 1, p. 505.
[45] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 41.
[46] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 230.
[47] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 631.

> right under her [...] Of course the only feeling left was gratitude for more sakes than my own.[48]

The Brontës also described their health in supernatural metaphors with Patrick frequently annotating his copy of Thomas John Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine* (1827), explaining Branwell's 'delirium tremens' as the 'patient thinks himself haunted; by demons, see luminous substans, [sic] in his imagination'.[49] Paraphrasing or directly quoting from Robert Macnish's *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1830) Patrick describes 'nightmare' as 'being the most horrible that appals human nature—an inability to move during the paroxysm — fearful visions of ghosts etc'.

Not only was the supernatural metaphoric for Brontë, it also played a role in her imaginative world. In her infancy and adulthood, she seemed to experience magical thinking or 'imaginary thoughts' and unorthodox beliefs. Certainly, magical thinking is well placed in her novels.

In their studies of the imagination Karl Rosengren and Jason French revise current studies on magical thinking, explaining it as a universal cognitive process that certain actions or behaviours will influence the outcome of some event by some sort of supernatural means. They argue that superstitions such as ghost belief and premonitions are likely to happen when 'incomplete meanings of rituals are passed down from parents and adults within a culture to children'.[50] Magical thinking reaches a peak in childhood and can be maintained in adulthood. Very often these individuals recognise these beliefs as supernatural phenomena but interpret them as natural or instinctive and not supernatural. Rosengren and French view

[48] Smith, *Letters* 3, p. 280.
[49] Shuttleworth, p. 32.
[50] Karl S. Rosengren and Jason A. French, 'Magical Thinking' in Taylor, Marjorie, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Development of Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 42-55. See also Stuart Vyse, *Believing in Magic*: *The Psychology of Superstition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 5.

magical thinking as a logical extension of fundamental lifelong characteristics of human cognitive processes. Magical thinking is strongly associated with early play, magic and pretence, creation of imagined worlds, religion, and, crucially, engagement with the local cultural environment. It is the presence of cultural support that encourages magical thinking in childhood. This way of thinking fosters lifelong creativity and opens up the realm of what is possible. Both parent and the wider culture can foster magical thinking to become more well-defined.[51]

Throughout Brontë's letters there are references to folklore beliefs. Her magical or imagined thinking is evident in her early years. It may relate to the children's fictional engagement in magic, pretence, creativity and the imagination. This was to be the foundation of their Glass Town and Angria tales, the plots, settings and characters, of which many are focused on fairies, ghosts and omens. Brontë was aged five years when her mother Maria Brontë died on 15 September 1821. Sarah Garrs (1806-1899), the nursemaid, recalled standing at the foot of the death-bed with the children.[52] Four years later, her sister Maria died on 31 May 1825 and Elizabeth died the following month on 15 June 1825. Garrs sent the following information to biographer Marion Harland (nee Mary Virginia Terhune) for her *Charlotte Brontë at Home* (1899):

> One day in the autumn or winter succeeding Mrs Brontë's death, Charlotte came to her nurse, wild and white with the excitement of having seen 'a fairy' standing by baby Anne's cradle. When the two ran back to the nursery, Charlotte flying on ahead, treading softly not to frighten the beautiful visitant away, no one was there besides the baby sleeping sweetly in the depths of her forenoon nap. Charlotte stood transfixed, her eyes wandered incredulously round the room. 'But she *was* here, just now!' She insisted. 'I really and truly did see her!'—and no argument or coaxing could shake her from the belief.[53]

[51] Rosengren and French, p. 53.
[52] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 123.
[53] Barker, *Life in Letters*, p. 3. See Marion Harland, *Charlotte Brontë at Home* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1899).

This one event hardly constitutes lifelong fantasy orientation. Yet it might remind one of Jane Eyre's experiences in the red room. Jane Eyre's childhood fears are played out within the context of superstition. In the red room, Jane sees her reflection in the looking glass:

> A strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving when all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy half imp, Bessie's evening stories represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors. (p. 14).

In her reminiscences, Ellen Nussey describes Brontë as an entertainer at Roe Head School in January 1831. She was charmed by tales of the school's ghost legend of a lady in rustling silks who frequented the upper storey, unused by the school.[54] Again, fiction might be the setting for Brontë to reflect on her youth. Whilst Jane Eyre is convinced she has seen a ghost in the red room, having seen an eerie light gliding above her head, in her adulthood she is more sceptical. Yet, Jane is still keen to establish any legacy at Thornfield of ghost legends, traditions and stories attached to the third floor of the house saying to Mrs Fairfax, 'if there were a ghost at Thornfield Hall, this would be its haunt' (p. 106). She repels any thoughts of ghosts on hearing an uncanny laugh coming from the third floor:

> The laugh was as tragic, as preternatural a laugh as any I ever heard; and, but that it was high noon, and that no circumstance of ghostliness accompanied the curious cachination; but that neither scene nor season favoured fear, I should have been superstitiously afraid (p. 107).

Rochester, on the other hand, is credulous, believing that 'ghosts are usually pale, Jane' (p. 284). Gaskell recalls a friend of Brontë describing another occasion when Charlotte, on an outing with her school friends, turned pale and almost fainted at realising she was walking on graves at Hartshead Church. According to Gaskell, Brontë was afraid of death and never became indifferent to the funeral bell toll and the:

[54] Smith, *Letters* 1, p. 594.

> Chip, chip of the mason as he cut the grave-stones in a shed close by [...] Charlotte was certainly afraid of death, not only of dead bodies, or dying people, She dreaded it as something horrible. She thought we did not know how long the 'moment of dissolution' might really be, or how terrible. This was just such a terror as only hypochondriacs can provide for themselves.[55]

To Ellen Nussey, Brontë reveals a curiosity about them. On 5 September 1832 she writes:

> The Story of the white hen seen at Mrs W?* [sic] Woolers funeral savours very much of the supernatural. You seem to hint that there are suspicions that she was buried alive, if so how agonising must be the feelings of her relations![56]

The supportive notes explain that white birds sometimes presage disaster. On 29 October 1842, Aunt Branwell died. Five years later, the subject of omens re-emerges. On 24 March 1847 Nussey informs Brontë of an omen. Brontë responds: 'Could Miss Ringrose have learnt this superstition in Holland—? What superstition is it?' In the follow up letter (4 April 1847) Charlotte says:

> Allow me to compliment you on the skill with which you can seem to give an explanation without enlightening one—one whit on the question asked—I know no more about Miss Ringrose's supersti[ti]on now than I did before—what <u>is</u> the supersti[ti]on—when a dead body is limp what is the inference drawn?[57]

The accompanying notes say 'the inference is that there will soon be another death in the same house'. Although these letters hardly suggest a superstitious thinker they point to a keen interest. Brontë had told Gaskell that in her experience a misfortune was preceded by the dream such as that conveyed in *Jane Eyre*. She relayed feeling pitiful for the:

> Little thing, lying *inert,* as sick children do, while she walked about in some gloomy place with it, such as the aisle of Haworth Church. The misfortunes she mentioned were not always to her-self. She thought such sensitiveness to omens was like the cholera, present to susceptible people—some feeling more, some less.[58]

[55] Gaskell, p. 127. See also Shuttleworth, p. 235.
[56] Smith, *Letters* 1, p. 117.
[57] Smith, *Letters* 1, pp. 520-521.
[58] Gaskell, p. 127.

As the quote above reveals, Brontë experienced ominous thoughts. She also makes much more of the treatment of omens in *Jane Eyre* with Jane reflecting on the idea that 'signs, for aught we know, may be but the sympathies of Nature with man' (p. 220). She remembers an event in her childhood aged six years when she overheard Bessie tell Martha that:

> To dream of children was a sure sign of trouble, either to one's self or one's kin. The saying might have worn out of my memory, had not a circumstance immediately followed which served indelibly to fix it there. The next day Bessie was sent for home to the deathbed of her little sister. Of late I had often recalled this saying, and this incident; for during the past week scarcely a night had gone over my couch that had not brought with it a dream of an infant: which I sometimes hushed in my arms, sometimes dandled on my knee, sometimes watched playing with daisies on a lawn; or again, dabbling its hands in running water. It was a wailing child this night and a laughing one the next: now it nestled close to me, and now it ran from me; but whatever the mood the apparition evinced, whatever aspect it wore, it failed not for seven successive nights to meet me at the moment I entered the land of slumber (p. 220).

On the second week, she is then summoned to Mrs Fairfax's room only to find Robert Leaven, Bessie's husband, dressed in mourning clothes, informing her that John Reed had died at his chambers in London. This news will serve to reinforce Bessie and Jane's beliefs in death omens. On another occasion, prior to their wedding, when Rochester is away on business, Jane finds herself dreaming again, this time of 'bats and owls' as well as children, interpreting them again as signs of impending doom. She says:

> I was burdened with the charge of a little child: a very small creature [...] I dreamt another dream, sir [...] wrapped in a shawl I still carried the unknown little child: I might not lay it down anywhere, however tired were my arms—however much its weight impeded my progress, I must retain it (p. 282).

He rebukes her by saying 'I warn you of incredulity beforehand' (p. 282). When she wakens she is confronted with the nightmarish presence of Bertha Mason, whose image reminds Jane of the 'foul German spectre—the Vampyre' (p. 284), as she witnesses Bertha tearing up her wedding veil. Elsewhere, Charles Wellesley of the early tales fears the ominous sign of the

ravens and Frances Henri Evans of *The Professor* writes an essay in the style of 'the old Saxon ghost-legends', conjuring old ominous beliefs:

> A shadowy goblin dog might rush over the threshold; or, more awful still, if something flapped, as with wings, against the lattice, and then a raven or a white dove flew in and settled on the hearth, such a visitor would be a sure sign of misfortune to the house; therefore, heed my advice, and lift the latchet for nothing.[59]

Prior to writing *Jane Eyre*, Patrick handed over a packet of faded letters to Brontë in the presence of Nussey. A letter from Maria 'to my dear saucy Pat' (18 November 1812) includes:

> I really know not what to make of the beginning of your last: the winds, waves and rocks almost stunned me. I thought you were giving me the account of some terrible dream, or that you had had a presentiment of the fate of my poor box [...] On Saturday evg about the time when you were writing the description of your imaginary shipwreck, I was reading <the> & feeling the effects of a real one [...] the box was dashed to pieces with the violence of the sea & all my little property, with the exception of a very few articles, swallowed up in the mighty deep. – If this should not prove the prelude to something worse, I shall think little of it.[60]

In her reminiscences of Brontë, Nussey interprets the letter:

> Mrs Brontë had the inestimable blessing of a well-balanced mind, yet she <possessed> 'was imbued with' a degree of superstition, and Charlotte inherited its influence, presentiments made deep impressions upon her, she gave <full bent> 'the reins' to herself in this respect when she wrote "Jane Eyre": its escape seemed to have done her good, <'just'> as if she had braced herself up for ever after.[61]

Brontë inserts Maria's reading material in *Shirley*. Caroline Helstone is seen reading:

> Some venerable Lady's Magazines, that had once performed a sea voyage with their owner, and undergone a storm, and whose pages were stained with salt water; some Mad Methodist Magazines, full of miracles and apparitions, of preternatural warnings, ominous dreams, and frenzied fanaticism; the equally mad Letters of Mrs Rowe from the Dead to the Living. (pp. 327-8).

[59] Brontë, *The Professor*, p. 161.
[60] Dudley Green, ed., *The Letters of the Reverend Patrick Brontë* (Nonsuch Publishing, 2005), pp. 330-331.
[61] Smith, *Letters* 1, p. 609.

By the end of 1849 Brontë had lost all three remaining siblings, Branwell (19 December 1848), Emily (28 May 1849) and Anne (26 October 1849), within a ten month period when Charlotte was aged thirty-three years. In a letter to Nussey (16 February 1850) she says that her heavy moods are attributed to:

> The weather—Quicksilver invariably falls low in storms and high winds—and I have ere this been warned of approaching disturbance in the atmosphere by a sense of bodily weakness and deep, heavy mental sadness—such as some would call presentiment—presentiment indeed it is—but not at all supernatural.[62]

In this instance, Brontë is keen to allay any suspicion on Nussey's part of Brontë's interest in the phenomena of second sight or the power to futurity. Having conveyed an intense curiosity in death omens to Nussey years earlier, Brontë now makes a confession. In a letter to George Smith (18 April 1850) Brontë writes:

> On no account should you have dreamed that I was coming to Town; I confess with shame that I have so much superstition in my nature as makes me reluctant to hear of the fulfilment of any dream, however pleasant: if the good dreams come true, so may the bad ones, and we have more of the latter than of the former. That there are certain organisations liable to anticipatory impressions in the form of dream or presentiment—I half believe—but that you—a man of business—have any right to be one of these—I wholly deny.[63]

Rosengren and French state that superstitious behaviour is likely to occur under 'conditions of high stress and/or uncertainty and low levels of perceived control'.[64] Superstitions, they say, are thought to regulate anxiety and stress and 'provide a general feeling of control in chaotic or unpredictable situations'.[65] Years later, to George Smith (19 January 1852) Brontë writes: 'I have not heard a word from Miss Martineau and conclude her silence is of no good omen'.[66] A year later and *Villette*'s Lucy Snowe is afraid for the safe return of her lover Monsieur Paul who is working abroad, Lucy cries out:

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[62] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 346.
[63] Smith, *Letters* 2, pp. 386-387.
[64] Rosengren and French, p. 54.
[65] Ibid., p. 54-55.
[66] Smith, *Letters* 3, p. 9.

> ‘I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail! Oh guard it! The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee—keening at every window! It will rise—it will swell—it shrieks out long: wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong: by midnight, all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm’. (p. 495).

In April 1853 Brontë visited Gaskell in Manchester. Again, she confessed to being superstitious. Gaskell was surprised at Brontë’s recoil and absolute horror at the thought of hearing a dismal ghost story one bedtime, confessing that:

> She [Brontë] was superstitious and prone at all times to the involuntary recurrence of any thoughts of ominous gloom which might have been suggested to her.[67]

Brontë said that on visiting Gaskell, she had found a letter on her dressing-table from Ellen Nussey repeating a lurid story about a ghost that haunted a house she was about to visit. This information so preyed on Charlotte’s mind that she could not sleep, she was restless and woke up un-refreshed and afflicted with another of her headaches. The house in question belonged to Reverend Francis Upjohn, vicar of Gorleston. Brontë was particularly focused on Ellen’s visit to Reverend Upjohn (whose wife was frail) at Gorleston Hall in Yarmouth, Suffolk, because of Robert Clapham’s (Ellen’s brother-in-law) claim that it was haunted. To Nussey (16 March 1853) she says, ‘I quite agree with Mr Clapham that ‘<u>they</u> [have raised] a certain gentleman [in that] house, and can’t or won’t [put] him down again’. To Ellen (19 May 1853), Brontë is reassured that her friend will only stay at Gorleston for a month: ‘you surely may be made comfortable—unless the house be really haunted as Mr Clapham supposed’. Brontë, unnerved by its legend and by Ellen’s strange and unsettling visit there with such

[67] Gaskell, p. 421.

'strange and unhappy people', prompted her to cancel the proposed visit.[68] The ghost plot becomes the central action of *Villette*.

There are clear connections between Brontë's personal experiences of unofficial beliefs and her writing. The intensity of their presence in her fiction seems at times to correspond with her confessions in her letters. We can only trace Brontë's experience of ominous thoughts to the episodic references across her letters that span her adulthood. They may have plagued her more or less. There is no concrete evidence to associate the staff at the parsonage with these beliefs. It is only hearsay and assumption, initially, drawn from Gaskell's critical perspective of the working classes of Yorkshire (and of Penzance, the birthplace of Maria Brontë, nee Branwell) in her biography. In 1850, Gaskell visited Brontë after the death of her three siblings. She observed her friend's inconsolable grief, loneliness and insomnia saying that:

> No one on earth could even imagine what those hours were to her. All the grim superstitions of the North had been implanted in her during her childhood by the servants, who believed in them. They recurred to her now—with no shrinking from the spirits of the Dead.[69]

Gaskell also writes that 'no doubt she [Aykroyd] had many a tale to tell of by-gone days of the country-side [...] family tragedies and dark superstitious dooms'.[70]

Whether or not Brontë's seeming belief in omens is deemed relevant, one cannot ignore its prevalence and consistency as character trait in all of Brontë's major heroines and heroes. It is most pervasive in *Jane Eyre*. It is intriguing that although her characters embrace enlightenment values in their rejection of fairies and ghosts, the belief in omens persists. Its reference in her letters tempts us to read her fiction as psycho-biography. It is important to stress that within the Anglican Church, the belief in any power beyond the Christian God was

[68] Smith, *Letters* 3, p. 135, p. 166. See also Gaskell, p. 421, Barker, *Life in Letters*, p. 726, p.728.
[69] Gaskell, p. 337.
[70] Ibid, p. 94.

superstition. In *Oxford Dictionary of Superstitions* Opie and Tatem quote Henry Bourne, antiquarian and curate of the Parochial Chapel of All-Saints in Newcastle upon Tyne of *Antiquitates Vulgares*; *or, the Antiquities of the Common People* (1725). The sole intention of his text was to protect his parishioners from 'heathenism' or 'the Inventions of the Devil'. Such opinions or beliefs were drawing his flock away from a perfect trust in God's providence. Bourne writes: 'The Observations of Omens, such as the falling of Salt, a Hare crossing the way, of the Dead-Watch, of Crickets, &c, are sinful and diabolical [...] For by such Observations as these, they [the parishioners] are the Slaves of Superstition and Sin'.[71] With this in mind, it suggests, perhaps, Brontë's grappling with her nature, similarly to Jane Eyre, at times or crises in her life, even if it meant going against Protestant doctrine. Patrick might very well have sermonised on this topic. Whilst, in her fiction, some folklore allusions are obviously in widespread use such as the banshee (which derives from Ireland), and some literary based, others are region specific to Yorkshire.

In conclusion, it is likely that Brontë was familiar with the unofficial folk culture of West Yorkshire and this provided a source for the narrative features in *Shirley*. Having examined the local source of folklore, I now explore the influence of Walter Scott's literary use of folklore on the narrative development in Brontë's Glass Town and Angria.

[71] Iona Opie and Moira Tatem, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. viii.

Chapter Two

Brontë's Romantic Sources for Glass Town and Angria: Walter Scott's Narrative and Thematic Uses of Folklore

> Scott's sweet wild, romantic Poetry can do you no harm [...] For Fiction—read Scott alone all novels after his are worthless.
>
> Letter from Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey (4 July 1834).[1]

The influence of the Scottish novelist, poet, critic, historian, biographer and antiquarian, Walter Scott (1771-1832) on the work of the Brontës, and particularly Charlotte's Brontë's Glass Town and Angria stories, is widely recognised.[2] The family owned copies of George Allan's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1834), *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1806), *Tales of a Grandfather* (1828-31), *The Vision of Don Roderick* (1811) and *Rokeby* (1813), and as early as June 1829, the Brontë children were familiar with Scott's *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* (1827). Brontë completed a pilgrimage to Scotland to see his monument in East Prince's Street Gardens and his baronial home in Abbotsford. Brontë comments in a letter to W.S. Williams (20 July 1850) 'I always liked Scotland as an idea, but now as a reality, I like it far better'.[3] On the visit, Brontë would have seen Scott's library, family portraits and collections of armour and Scottish antiquities.

Critics are unanimously aware of Brontë's exhaustive reliance on Scott's narrative uses for her three novels. Carol Bock, for example notes the similarity between Brontë and Scott's attempt to balance the actual and the ideal or the harmony between realism and the

[1] Smith, *Letters* 1, p. 130.
[2] Alexander and Smith, pp. 444-6; Carol Bock, *Charlotte Brontë and the Storyteller's Audience* (Iowa University Press, 1992); E.A. Kneis, *The Art of Charlotte Bronte* (Ohio University Press, 1969); W.A. Craik, *The Brontë Novels* (London: Methuen, 1969); Florence Swinton Dry, *The Sources of "Jane Eyre"* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1940). See also Florence Swinton Dry, *The Sources of Wuthering Heights* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1937).
[3] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 427.

romantic imagination. This resulted, she argues in 'some of the most striking thematic and formal elements in her later work' such as the nature of introspective daydreaming in all three novels and Gothic horrors like Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* and the ghostly nun of *Villette*. Brontë incorporates them, she adds, into 'contexts that are otherwise credibly mundane'.[4] F.B. Pinion describes Scott's influence on Emily's *Wuthering Heights* as 'unmistakable, citing *The Black Dwarf* (1816) as the source for Cathy's delirious view of Nelly as an old witch 'gathering elf-bolts to hurt our heifers.'[5]

With specific reference to *Jane Eyre*, Florence Dry identified Brontë's imitation in *Jane Eyre* of Scott's *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose* and *Heart of Midlothian*. Brontë drew on these novels for plot, setting, descriptive detail and characterisation. Her comparative analysis of Brontë using Scott as the predominant source remains one of the most detailed studies to date. Rochester's disguise as a fortune-teller includes the elfin locks, red cloak and wide hat of Meg Merrilies, *Guy Mannering*. In the wilderness Jane cries out: 'that is an *ignis fatuus* [...] and I expected it would soon vanish' which can be compared with *Guy Mannering*'s 'it must surely have been a light in the hut of a forester, for it shone too steadily to be the glimmer of an *ignis fatuus*'. In *The Heart of Midlothian*, Whistler, the illegitimate son of Effie Deans and George Staunton, is described as a 'bedraggled lad with shaggy black hair descending into elf-locks giving an air of ferocity and wildness' providing material for Brontë's image of Bertha Mason as the mad woman with 'long dishevelled hair, thick and dark and a swelled black face'. Moreover, the following examples testify to the relationship between *Legend of Montrose* and *Jane Eyre*. Florence Dry compares Rochester's melancholy and superstitious thinking of divine intervention at Ferndean to Alan MacAulay's proneness to depression and his belief in second sight. Bessie's

[4] Bock, p. 19.
[5] Alexander and Smith, p. 445. See F.B. Pinion, *A Brontë Companion* (London, 1975), p. 207.

ballad with the refrain, 'the poor orphan child', sung to Jane, is most likely derived from Scott's ballad, 'The Orphan Child' which Annot Lyle sings to MacAulay to calm him down. At Ferndean, Rochester's 'You mocking changeling, fairy-born and human-bred! You make me feel as I have not felt these twelve months' bear similarity with Annot Lyle, regarded by MacAulay 'as the most beautiful little fairy he had ever seen'.[6]

But I am especially interested in Scott's influence on Brontë's use of folklore in Glass Town and Angria. Bock examines Scott's influence on Brontë's early narrative methods, arguing that Brontë was influenced more by his craft as storyteller than the ideology and content of his Waverley novels. Brontë modelled off Scott's understanding of the relationship with his readers. Bock adds that the Brontës 'perpetually strike poses in their writing and play games of identity with their readers'.[7] Scholar Christine Alexander notes that the 'manuscripts of 1833-5 show that Brontë devoured the works of Scott [and Byron] with something bordering on obsession', and describes the *High Life of Verdopolis* (1834) as an 'orgy of Scottism'.[8] For their Tales, Smith and Alexander are insistent that Brontë was indebted to Scott's concept of medieval romance, descriptions of regional realistic landscape, themes of Catholicism and romantic love, plots of heroine abductions and Scottish clan warfare, poetic devices, character and place names, German Romanticism, Scottish border ballads, Scottish history and dialect, as well as the Gothic. Across Brontë's Tales there are many references and direct quotes from Scott's poems and prose. The Waverley novels were particularly influential on her juvenilia (the early tales). Christine Alexander links Brontë's *The Green Dwarf. A Tale of the Perfect Tense* (10 July 1833) to Scott's *The Black Dwarf* (1816) in title and in form, drawing also on the concept of historical romance and the theme of abduction.

[6] Dry, *Jane* Eyre, pp. 30-83.
[7] Bock, pp. 16-18.
[8] Christine Alexander, ed., *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, 2, The Rise of Angria 1833-1835 Part 1: 1833-1834, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. xxi.

Alexander points to Brontë's constant allusion in her juvenilia to Scott. Alexander has Scott's Gothic in mind when she describes the juvenilia's melodramatic plots, exotic settings, violence, female victims and diabolical heroes.[9] Alexander's source explanations on Glass Town and Angria point overwhelmingly to Scott. Brontë's 'The Green Dwarf' (September, 1833), for example, imitates Scott's Locksley alias Robin Hood of *Ivanhoe* (1819), but more so, its character Bertha resembles Scott's Saxon Ulrica of Font-de-Bœuf's castle.

Alexander notes Brontë's use of many other sources pointing also to the Bible, especially Revelation, classical myth, Milton, Johnson's *Rasselas*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* Bunyan *Pilgrims Progress* and 'The Story of the Amours of Camaralzaman' in *Arabian Night's Entertainments*. Alexander states the influence of oriental romance on 'A Romantic Tale (1829 in which Brontë writes 'tradition has it that there were giants on the earth who went to the country of the Genii and were at war [...] these skeletons are evil genii chained in these deserts by the fairy Maimoune'. In the 'Tales of the Islanders Volume 2', *A Midsummer Night's Dream* offers a backdrop for Glass Town's fairy land in which the four inhabitants 'had to obtain leave of Oberon and Titania'. In Angria's 'Something about Arthur' (1834) Brontë quotes 'Sir John Barleycorn' from Robert Burns *Tam o'Shanter*. In 'Arthuriana: The Tea Party' (1833), reference to 'cantrips', described in the notes as a witch's trick or any mischievous, extravagant conduct of Scottish origin' is attributed to the works of James Hogg or Burns. In 'Corner Dishes: A Day Abroad' (June 1834) Brontë, instead, adapts the northern English form of 'boggle' for 'brownie' and 'bogle', common Scottish forms, following Burns in *Tam*, Hogg as well as Scott. In a similar vein, Brontë's knowledge of Zoroastrianism across the tales compares to Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. Other references include *Aesop's Fables*,

[9] Alexander, *Early Writings* 2010, p. 19.

James Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian*, Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*, and Coleridge's 'Christabel' to name several.[10]

Clearly, Alexander recognises Brontë's uses of a vast range of sources for Glass Town and Angria from the literary canon with Scott (and Byron) as the most influential.

In the main, critics examine Scott not only in terms of his Gothic romance but as a major source and influence on Brontë's developing narrative skills. They do not assess his writing as folkloric and tend not to discuss any ideological associations between Scott and Brontë. However, their evidence strongly suggests Scott's appeal to Brontë. When Alexander refers to the terms fairy, bogle, brownie, cantrips and boggle, she does not describe the material as folkloric. Biographer Juliet Barker notes a number of 'irregular serials on superstition and legends' in the Brontë children's favourite periodical, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1818) that provided material on magic and the supernatural for their editions of 'Young Men's Magazine'. They include: 'Remarkable Instance of Second Sight' (April 1818), 'Story of an Apparition' (September 1818) and 'On some Popular Superstitions in Wales' (May 1818). Welsh superstitions were divided into 'Witch Stories', 'Stories of Ghosts', 'Evil Spirits', 'Demons', 'Stories of Fairies', 'Dogs of Hell', 'Corpse Candles' and the ominous 'Kyhirraeth'.[11] The articles cited by Barker are, in fact, Scott's work. *Blackwood's* also published extracts from James Hogg alias the Ettrick Shepherd including 'Fairies, Witches and Brownies' (February 1828) and 'Fairies, Deils and Witches' (April 1828) from *The Shepherd's Calendar,* and 'The Brownie of the Black Haggs' (October 1828). Also published were extracts from Thomas Crofton Croker *Fairy Legends and Traditions of*

[10] Christine Alexander, ed., *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, 1, The Glass Town Saga 1826-1832 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), Christine Alexander, ed., *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, 2, The Rise of Angria 1833-1835 Part 1: 1833-1834 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), Christine Alexander, ed., *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, 2, The Rise of Angria 1833-1835 Part 2: 1834-1835 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), Christine Alexander, ed., *The Brontës: Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[11] Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London: Phoenix Giants, 1995), p. 160, p. 866.

South of Ireland (1825) such as 'An Autumnal Night's Dream in Ireland', 'The Legend of Knocksheogowna' and 'Master and Man' (1828). Scott's material typified the Romantic revival of folklore. These stories of fairy abduction, second sight, ghost encounters and images of witchcraft would eventually find their way into Brontë's tales. As broadly as she read, it is clear that Brontë's early reading material included Celtic sources. She read Hogg and Burns, probably Crofton Croker and especially Scott. In her Tales, Brontë also alludes to James Macpherson's *Ossian* (1759).

Having re-framed Brontë's narrative uses of the supernatural as owing as much to folklore in Victorian prose fiction and Romantic-era poetry as to the Gothic in my thesis introduction, in this chapter, I want to examine Brontë's engagement with Scott's literary sources, and suggest that these too can be understood as folkloric in part. I examine critical assessments of Scott's folklore and compare Scott's fiction (and his folklore sources) with Glass Town and Angria. Moreover, I argue that not only does Brontë imitate Scott's narrative use of folklore but also his ideology in the study of rationalism.

Scott and the Folklore Critical/Scholarly Canon

As discussed in the Introduction, a number of folklore critics do examine Scott from a literary folklore perspective, furthering my argument. Katharine M. Briggs recognises Scott's contribution to the Romantic revival of the fairy tradition rating highly his treatment, collection, authority and creative impulse. She adds that Scott shows the depth of knowledge of local folklore through his *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and of the ballad 'Alice Brand', sung by Allan-Bane of *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). Although Coleridge and Hood alluded to fairy lore in their poetry, they could not compete with the depth and scale of their Celtic

counterparts. Only Keats showed real familiarity with the fairy traits.[12] More recently, Silver's treatment of Scott's fairy lore is still akin to Briggs. Scott, she states, epitomised the romantic fairy poet. She develops his studies of fairy material, from his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3) to his prose fiction and final *Letters*. Both the nature of fairies and their origins permeate Scott's fiction with the fairy changeling, Fenella of *Peveril of the Peak* (1822), and the White Lady of Avenel, part banshee, undine, brownie, kelpie and sylph of *The Monastery* (1820). His Germanic duergars (or dwarfs) appear as Pacolet in *The Pirate* (1822) and Elshie in *The Black Dwarf*. As a child, Scott believed in fairies; as an adult he remained open to the idea of seeing 'things invisible to mortal sight including fairies'.[13] Silver promotes Scott as a historical realist or euhemerist in his analysis of the origin of the fairy superstition. Scott she says, promoted the scientific model.

In *The British Folklorists*: *A British History* (1968) Richard Dorson is also helpful, profiling in particular Scott's synthesis of his psychology of ghosts in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830). Dorson regards these essays as the 'full-scale treatise in English on what before long would be called folklore [...] the *Letters* promptly took a place beside Brand's *Popular Antiquities* as an immediate authority and reference in matters supernatural and archaic'.[14] Crucially, Dorson describes the *Letters* as a story of the battle between reason and unreason:

> Scott writes as a rationalist and latitudinarian Christian, weighing the evidence for and against apparitions, witches, and ghosts in the light of reason and with the guidance of the church, but at too early a date to benefit from empirical science, ethnology, and the Higher [Biblical] Criticism.[15]

[12] Katharine M. Briggs, *The Fairies in Tradition and Literature* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), pp. 204-210.
[13] Silver, pp. 10-13 (p. 10).
[14] Dorson, p. 115.
[15] Ibid., p. 115.

Yet, Coleman O. Parsons in *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction; with Chapters on the Supernatural in Scottish Literature* (1964) highlights contradictory elements in Scott's uses of folklore. Folklore combined mystery and fact, the artistic marvellous with common sense, but ultimately, it also reflected Scott's rhetoric of scepticism. Yet, referring indirectly to Scott's assertion that 'the abstract possibility of apparitions must be admitted by everyone who believes in a Deity and his superintending omnipotence'[16] in *Letter One,* Parsons is cognisant of Scott's ambivalence towards certain phenomena such as second sight. Parsons adds that Scott's 'allegiance to imaginative and rationalistic values is a fair reflection of the man and of his contemporaries. In both, receptivity was crossed by doubt and scepticism by glimmering conviction'.[17] Scott's inconsistent attitudes toward phenomena not only inhibited his narrative presentation but also conveyed self-consciousness, rendering his fiction as clumsy and uneven. J.M. Harris is also clear that Scott's intention with his short stories on second sight in 'The Highland Widow' (1827) and 'The Two Drovers' (1827) characterise cultural enlightenment. However, similarly to Parsons, Harris notes evidence of ambivalence in the two stories repudiating Douglas Gifford's assertion that Scott as sophisticated writer, relegated 'brownies and wraiths, wizards and kelpies to the cottage and the nursery'.[18] 'Ambivalence - not credulity or scepticism- seems to be the watchword of the Victorian era',[19] as Harris says. Scott (and Burns and Hogg) 'incorporated supernatural folklore into literary works that did not altogether dismiss such traditions as "phantasms of the braine"'.[20]

[16] Parsons, *Witchcraft,* p. 47. See also Coleman O. Parsons, 'The Supernatural in Scott's Poetry', *Notes and Queries,* 188 (1945), pp. 2-8, 30-33, 76-77, 98-101; Coleman O. Parsons, 'Minor Spirits and Superstitions in the Waverley Novels', *Notes and Queries,* 184 (1943), pp. 353-363; *Notes and Queries* 185 (1943), pp. 4-9.
[17] Parsons, *Witchcraft,* p. 136.
[18] Harris, *Folklore*, p.199, See Douglas Gifford, ed. 'Introduction', *The History of Scottish Literature* 3 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), p. 7.
[19] Harris, *Folklore*, p. 200.
[20] Ibid., p. 7.

Although rationalistic in *The Black Dwarf*, Scott was not consistent in his presentation of 'unequivocal scepticism'.[21]

Whilst acknowledging Briggs and Silver's work on Scott's fairy lore, I am more interested in the conclusive evidence of Dorson, Parsons and Harris. They all point to Scott's main thematic role of folklore as a measure of Enlightenment Rationality. The critical consensus is that for Scott as an enlightened cultural writer, folklore characterised the tension between rationality and tradition, conveyed through the narrator or editorial voice. In doing so, these critics acknowledge Scott as an ethnographer, social scientist and antiquarian, as well as a poet and historian. I wish to argue that Scott's deployment of folklore as an antidote to the progression of civilisation stands out as the main ideological influence on Brontë's uses of the supernatural across the Glass Town and Angria. In all, these critics provide the foundation for me to further Brontë's imitation of Scott's narrative and thematic uses of folklore.

Scott's Sources of Folklore

Scott owned and quoted from an enormous range of literary (British, Celtic, European, Oriental), philosophical, historical and antiquarian sources[22] positioning himself as the cultural and scholarly authority on folklore to support his ballads, prose fiction and essays. He relied on the folklore material of fellow Celt, ballad-writer and collector John Leyden (1775-1811) for the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The reference to mermaids in *Lord of the Isles* is based on Leyden's ballads 'Macphail of Colonsay' and 'Mermaid of Corrievrekin'. In Romantic nostalgic style, Scott recreates Christmas in *Marmion* (1808). He turns to

[21] Harris, *Folklore*, pp. 198-200 (p. 199).
[22] Walter Scott, *The Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1838)

antiquarians Francis Douce, Mr Ritson's memoranda and Ben Jonson (1572/3-1673) for his Court Masques to reconstruct chivalric culture at Mertoun House. Saying:

> The wassel round, in good brown bowls, Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls,carols roared while in the 'mumming see traces of ancient mystery, England was merry England, when Old Christmas brought his sports again.[23]

Scott also adapted *Marmion* from literary antiquarian and ballad editor, Joseph Ritson (1752-1803) in his *A Selection of English Songs, Robin Hood: a collection of all the ancient poems, songs and ballads now extant relative to that outlaw* and *Ancient English Romances*. Scott called upon medieval chronicler on folklore, Gervase of Tilbury, for his story of the fairy knight. For the Goblin Hall, Scott relied on Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1665) for the appearance of the magician or necromancer as the 'wizard habit strange, came forth'.[24] For the line 'the wizard's grave, that wizard Priest's whose bones are thrust, from company of holy dust' Scott imitated James Hogg's *The Mountain Bard* and Matthew Gregory Lewis *The Monk: A Romance* (1796). Scott knew of will-o'-the-wisp or Robin Goodfellow and Jack o' lantern in 'better we had through mire and bush, been lantern-led by Friar Rush'.[25]

Medievalism and Merry England is characterised again in *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) where Scott relies on poet Michael Drayton's (1563-1631) *Poly-Olbion Song 26* for his account of Robin Hood and his merry men. He refers to the early demonology of Delrio. He draws on a number of sources for tales of enchantment and witchcraft including the astrology and natural philosophy associated with Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie for 'the wondrous Michael Scott'[26] in Canto Second. He also turns to Burns' *Tam o'Shanter*, Scandinavian poets and fictions of the Edda, the 'Tale of the Fisherman' in *Arabian Nights*,

[23] Walter Scott, *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott,* ed. J Logie Robertson (London: Henry Frowde, 1913), p. 152.
[24] Ibid., p. 120.
[25] Ibid., p. 127.
[26] Ibid., p. 10.

and, again, Reginald Scot. For theories on the phenomena of immortality he turns to Joseph Glanville's *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681). For elementals, Scott refers to Ariel of *The Tempest*. Lord Cranstoun's Goblin page or 'the Baron's dwarf[27] was partly based on a local legend of a man named Gilpin Horner. Scott based his metrical ballad on Southey's *Thalaba* and Coleridge's 'Christabel' both of which provided material for the fairy tradition.

The concept of the theme of second sight is covered in *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) with 'a grey hair'd sire, whose eye intent, was on the vision'd future bent'.[28] Scott's source is Martin Martin's *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1716). The ballad 'Alice Brand' in stanza 15: 'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land, when fairy birds are singing' is drawn from a Danish ballad published in 1591. Scott reminds his readers of his tale of 'Young Tamlane' and illustrates his interest in the fairy faith with a translation of another Danish ballad, 'The Elfin Gray'. Scott's: 'who may dare on wold to wear, the fairies' fatal green' is drawn from local Celtic superstitions of the Daoinshe' Shie. He looks to the fairy romance of Opheus and Eurydice for images of fairy land. Robin Hood appears again with a lengthy description with Scott quoting from Ritson's 'Litil Geste of Robin Hood'. In all, the *Lady of the Lake* reads like a dictionary of folklore with definitions of local superstitious phenomena such as the belief in oracular power, or Taghairm, and beings including the 'Urisk', resembling Milton's Lubbar Fiend and the Scottish Brownie, the Kelpy, the 'fatal Ben-Schie's boding scream' and the Glaislich or female giant, to name a few.

In *Rokeby* (1813) Scott turns to Camden's *Britannia* for the Roman legend of the Magon, a giant or deity. In the Scottish set *Lord of the Isles* (1815), Scott recalls Coleridge's ballad 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1797) for the phenomena of the sailor's Sea-Fire. Scott writes: 'awaked before the rushing prow, the mimic fires of ocean glow, those

[27] Walter Scott, *Poetical Works*, p. 14.
[28] Ibid., p. 213.

lightening of the wave'.[29] Lastly, for the poem *Glenfinlas* (1803) Scott reads Dr Johnson's definition of the second sight, a recurring theme also of the narrative poems. In the poem he refers once again, to 'the seer's prophetic spirit found'.[30] Dr Johnson describes it as 'an impression, either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind by which things distant and future are perceived as if they were present'.[31]

Scott's presentation of folklore in his ballads and poetry seems to convey him less as the enlightenment historian but more the medievalist, national and Celtic historian. The material enhances narrative features rather than advances reason. However, Scott's revelling in the eerie, mystical, strange, romantic aspects of folklore is accompanied in the notes by the omnipotent authorial voice of reason. Brontë could imitate his creative use of folklore and his treatment of Merrie England. His ballads and poems provided sufficient material on the origins and meaning of folklore. Scott's sources for his historic romances were no less dense. For Locksley, alias Robin Hood of *Ivanhoe*, Scott drew on antiquarian Joseph Strutt's *Queenhoo Hall.* For cabalistic philosophy, Scott probably referred to *of the Nature of Things. Nine Books: Written by Theophrastus, Of Hohenheim, Called Paracelsus* (1674). In the introduction to *The Monastery* (1820) Scott writes the:

> Theory of astral spirits or creatures of the elements [...] known to those who have studied the Cabalistical philosophy by the names of Sylphs, Gnomes, Salamanders, and Naiads, as they belong to the elements of Air, Earth, Fire and Water.[32]

More so, the dichotomy between tradition and reason characterise Scott's historical romances. In *The Monastery* young Halbert Glendinning sets his visionary eyes on a female clothed in white. The White Lady of Avenel was a composite of Prospero's spirit or elemental, Ariel, of *The Tempest*, Chaucer's 'Queen of faery', Queen Mab of *Romeo and*

[29] Walter Scott, *Poetical Works*, p. 417.
[30] Ibid., p. 660.
[31] Ibid., p. 686.
[32] Walter Scott, *The Monastery* (London, 1830), p. xliii.

Juliet, Fouque's *Undine* and Coleridge's Geraldine of the ballad 'Christabel'. Likewise, in Scott's *Peveril of the Peak* (1823), Julian Peveril will bear the brunt as the credulous youngster in his irrational image of Fenella as a fairy changeling. The fairy changeling has similarities to Goethe's *Mignon* and is based on the Manx superstitions recalled in Waldron's *Description of the Isle of Man* (1731). Scott draws on Croker's *Fairy Legends* and Keightley's *Fairy Mythology* for material on fairy abduction.

Scott's characters are often witches, sybils or gypsies such as Ulrica of *Ivanhoe* (1819) Meg Merrilies of *Guy Mannering* (1815), Madge Wildfire of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818) and Norna of the *Pirate* (1821). For Scott, although witchcraft is a cultural anachronism, it still adds to narrative interest. Scott owned critical exposés of early modern witchcraft. Of one hundred and seven entries in Scott's library on witchcraft, a number of trial reports included *The Extraordinary Life and Character of Mary Bateman the Yorkshire Witch, executed at York* (1809). In *Letter Eight* of *The Letters*, he mocks the credulity of Edward Fairfax of Fayston (Fewston) in Knaresborough. Scott quotes William Collins' *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of Scotland*:

> How have I sate while piped the pensive wind,
> To hear thy harp, by British Fairfax strung;
> Prevailing poet whose undoubting mind
> Believed the magic wonders which he sung.[33]

For *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose* (1819), omens add to setting and atmosphere, Scott adapting from Macpherson's *Ossian*:

> Birds of omen dark and foul
> Night-crow, raven, bat and owl,
> Leave the sick man to his dreams—
> All night long he heard your screams.[34]

[33] Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830) (republished Wordsworth Editions, 2001), p. 148.
[34] Walter Scott, *A Legend of the Wars of Montrose,* ed. J.H Alexander (Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 49.

This time, the older Alan MacAulay has to grapple with his demons, believing in the second sight. For the incident of the supposed apparition of Morton in *Old Mortality* (1819), Scott looked to a story in Defoe's *An essay on the history and reality of apparitions: Being an account of what they are, and what they are not; whence they come, and whence they come not, also how we may distinguish between the apparitions of good and evil spirits, and how we ought to behave to them* (1727). In this novel, Lord Evendale mocks Edith Bellenden's credulity of the ghost of Henry Morton.

Scott went further back again in the Celtic literary tradition to medievalist John Barbour's (died 1395) study of astrology in *The Bruce* (1376) and Robert Henryson's (1430-1506) chronicles. Then onto the eighteenth-century verse of Allan Ramsay's (1686-1758) pastoral comedy *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725) with its reference to changelings, and Robert Fergusson's (1750-1774) supernatural poetry. Scott was indebted to Hogg's pervasive use of the Scottish brownie saying in *Letter Ten*: 'of a meaner origin and occupation was the Scottish Brownie—already mentioned, as somewhat resembling Robin Goodfellow in the frolicsome days of Old England'. He goes on to state that 'the last place in the South of Scotland supposed to have been honoured or benefited by the residence of a brownie, was Bodsbeck, in Moffatdale, which has been the subject of an entertaining tale by Mr James Hogg, the self-instructed genius of Ettrick Forest'.[35] Scott also held copies of Ludwig Tieck's *Volksmärchen* (1797), the Grimms' *Kinder Und Haus Märchen* (1812) and their *German Popular Stories collected from oral tradition* (1823) and the Scandinavian Saga, *Eyrbiggia Saga*, as well as broadsides and chapbooks. Obviously, as a ballad revivalist, Scott also relied on Bishop Percy's (1729-1811), *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). He owned both Hone's works and Grose's *Provincial Glossary* (particularly useful for the second sight).

[35] Scott, *Letters*, p. 207.

In sum, Scott was well placed to base much of his narrative poems, historical romances and *Letters* on folklore. In his role as literary antiquarian, he graduated from collector to quasi-scientist. Moreover, in Glass Town and Angria, Brontë could concentrate Scott's uses of folklore towards her theme of enlightenment. His Waverley plots provided her with material to base the binary opposition of reason and credulity in the juvenilia.

Scott more than Brontë read widely for folklore sources. He collected lore from local informants who had knowledge of the Scottish oral traditions, local Highland tales and old chronicles.[36] But they could both draw on local knowledge of haunted houses and ghost legends. Brontë may have read Scott's views on ghosts from the family copy of Allan's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1834). On a visit to Dunvegan Castle in 1828, Scott said, 'I cannot say that I am a believer in the return of departed spirits but I heartily regret the days when I did entertain the very interesting opinion [...] ghosts are only seen where they are believed. But [...] they are most interesting to the imagination'.[37] After the death of his wife Charlotte, Scott dreamt that she lay asleep beside him, believing that the 'phenomena of dreaming are in a great measure occasioned by the *double touch* which takes place when one hand is crossed in sleep upon another'.[38]

Scott researched the legends and folk tales of the Border around Abbotsford. The bank of the Tweed near to Abbotsford was reputed to be a place for fairy sightings. In 1822, Scott had supervised repairs to the ruins of Melrose Abbey, the burial site of the wizard Michael Scott (1175-1234) alluded to in *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Scott voyaged further to the Shetland Islands to learn of their lore, equipping himself for *The Lord of the Isles* (1815). For narrative settings of spectre-haunted dwellings, Scott had heard of the castle of Hermitage and slept a night in Glamis Castle in 1793. In the same way that Brontë was familiar with

[36] Dorson, p. 109.
[37] George Allan, *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: Thomas Ireland, 1834), p. 96.
[38] Ibid., p. 107.

Yorkshire spirits, Scott knew of the Highland Redcap, Brown man of the Muirs, Sidhe, Glaistig, Water-kelpie, Boddach, Bean-Sigh, Brownie, Daoine Shie (the collective term for fairies), Grugach and Urisk. Scott tells us that the Highland Urisk is a cross between a man and a goat like the Grecian satyr and similar to the Scottish brownie.

Scott was able to develop his knowledge of folklore from literary, antiquarian and local sources far more but in a similar manner to Brontë. Underpinning Scott's fiction is both a revelling in history and a commitment to social progress. His folklore material represents the opposition to enlightenment thinking. To what extent Brontë imitates Scott's theme becomes clearer in the next section. Reading Scott, Brontë became versed in the literary folklore canon, mediated not only through his works but through those Scott alluded to in his notes and prefaces. Importantly, Brontë could engineer her fantasy tales to ideas of social and cultural development. Scott's research reflects and confirms a scholarly framework for the aspiring literary antiquarian. In his footsteps, Brontë, too, could equip herself with the literary, antiquarian, philosophical and oral material to develop her folklore in fiction. They both apply this material for narrative and thematic functions. As in Scott's fiction, imagined thinking resonates as a key character trait in her fiction. Whilst Brontë was in no way a cultural historian, she ordered Johann Wilhelm Meinhold's romance *The Amber Witch* (1844), advertised as 'the most extraordinary Trial for Witchcraft ever known', which was listed on a cream sheet of paper among many other books requested from Smith and Elder on 18 March, 1850.[39] Crucially, while for both writers, Gothic romance would feature in their reading, there were many other major resources of folklore. Accepting Scott as a key resource, Brontë, like her hero, could easily read creative adaptations of fairy and ghost traditions in the standard works of the English literary canon. She as a quasi-student of folklore, and Scott as a literary

[39] Smith, *Letters* 2, pp. 361-362.

antiquarian, it would be inconceivable for Brontë and Scott not to notice the permeation of folklore throughout English literature. Obviously, as literary antiquarian, Scott, older, richer and male, would have more access to past and present material. Yet, the range of sources quoted in Brontë's tales reflects the fact that not only was she as well equipped to engage in literary folklore as her predecessor, but to an extent, she followed some similar reading trajectories on literature and antiquarianism for folklore sources. Her allusions to Scott are more frequent in Angria than Glass Town and Scott's presence is felt also in her later Angria tales, 'Caroline Vernon', 'Mina Laury' and 'Stancliffe's Hotel' (1838-9). It is fair to say that whilst all of these sources contain folklore, much of Brontë's material was drawn from Scott.

Glass Town and Angria

With the theme of rationality emerging, I want to centre my discussion on Brontë's imitation and adaptation of Scott's material for her artistic and ideological objectives of Glass Town and Angria.

Dwarfs

In great detail, Finic, the dwarf of *The Spell: Extravaganza* (1834), is based on Scott's character Elshie of Elshender of *The Black Dwarf* (1816) (and Gilpin Horner of *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805)). Brontë imitates Scott's use of dwarfs for the atmosphere of terror, excitement, horror and the vulgar. However, Scott more than Brontë was prepared to accept the reality of the phenomenon of second sight dramatized in his character Elshie. Brontë draws on Scott's supernaturalism in the Glass Town and Angria tales. Brontë draws on Scott's elemental beings: Scottish bogles, brownies, black dogs, Scandinavian dwarfs or duergars, English goblins and fairies. His list extends further though to Shetland drows or trows, German kobolds and northern dobbie. In particular, Brontë imitates Scott's dwarf,

Elshie, for her character Finic. Finic's male malevolent antecedents are the goblin and brownie. In Glass Town's *True Story* (August 1829) two goblins are described as 'not above three feet high, their heads very large in proportion to their bodies and covered with a profusion of black, shaggy hair'.[40] They speak in an unearthly tone of voice. Although taking the form of a goblin, the image fits with Jane Eyre's image of Rochester as a brownie with his 'shaggy black mane' (p. 438), while Lucy of *Villette* similarly imagines Monsieur Paul as a brownie, the 'freakish, friendly, cigar-loving phantom' (p. 343). This image develops in the dwarf Finic, the mute faithful servant of the Duke of Zamorna, offspring of an affair between Sofala, an African woman, and the eighteen year old Marquis of Douro (Duke of Zamorna) and features at times in the Angrian kingdom.[41] Seven months later in *A Leaf from an Unopened Volume* (17 January 1834) Finic was supposed to be killed off, but by *The Spell: An Extravaganza* (24 July 1834) he has resurfaced. Brontë's treatment of him is as unforgiving as Scott's of Elshie. Finic appears yelling, contorting his hideous features. Mary Henrietta Wellesley needs him in spite of his malevolence. Finic, similarly to Elshie, is believed to have prophetic powers, foreseeing the death of Wellesley's husband the Duke of Zamorna. Brontë describes him:

> The ghastly deformed figure of Finic glided into the light [...] forgetting that he could neither hear, nor answer, I asked, gently as I could, what he wanted [...] he lifted his huge head, and flinging back his matted locks so that the moonbeams had full leave to pour their revealing radiance on each wild and exaggerated feature of his unearthly visage [...] he fixed his eyes on mine [...] in his general moods he is sullen, ferocious, misanthropic and malignant [...] I sat down and, patting his shaggy head in order to soothe the morbid gloom of his temperament I again asked what he wanted, but this time it was by signs, not speech. I can converse with him pretty readily in that way, but then it's by the ordinary and well-known method, not those occult movements with which he and Zamorna hold communion in a manner intelligible only to themselves [...]. The following conversation ensued in terms as concise as a telegraphic despatch.[42]

[40] Alexander, *Glass Town Saga*, p. 55.
[41] Alexander and Smith, p. 197.
[42] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 2, pp. 182-183.

The response of the other characters to Finic is not to challenge or question his physicality, his racial origins or the idea that he has prophetic powers. He is not the subject of theoretical enquiry. The function of Finic is to shock and generate feelings of revulsion counterbalanced only by Mary Henrietta Wellesley's reliance on his prescience. Brontë is less concerned whether or not Finic does have supernatural powers. She most likely imitated Scott's Elshender of Mucklestane-Moor of *The Black Dwarf* (1816), based on the real David Ritchie (1740-1811). He was regarded as a misanthrope who lived in a cottage on the farm of Woodhouse in the parish manor of Peebleshire, and was a man believed to foretell the weather. Scott met him and was sympathetic about his physicality and social ostracism. Yet, in Elshie he felt compelled to dramatize his theory of the fairy origins, linking the dwarf to the diminutive Scandinavian Lapps, Letts or Picts. These people gained a supernatural reputation. Scott intended to create a character of the uncanny. The similarity to Brontë's creatures, notably Finic, is evident with Elshie described as:

> The being who he addressed raised his eyes with a ghastly stare, and, getting up from his stooping posture, stood before them in all his native and hideous deformity. His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled with age; his eyebrows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small, dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets that rolled with a portentous wildness, indicative of a partial insanity [...] to which was added the wild, irregular, and peculiar expression so often seen in the countenances of those whose persons are deformed. His body, thick and square [...] was mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and where uncovered in the eagerness of his labour, were shagged with coarse black hair [...] the person of a dwarf.[43]

In *The Black Dwarf*, Hobbie Elliot's grandmother is sure that the dwarf is the 'Brown Man of the Muirs'. Brontë may have modelled on Baron Cranstoun's Goblin-Page or Dwarf, 'scarce an earthly man', of *Lay of the Last Minstrel.* He was developed from the real Gilpin Horner, residing in another farmhouse among the Border mountain of Eskdalemuir, Dumfriesshire.

[43] Walter Scott, *The Black Dwarf & A Legend of Montrose*, Waverley Novels 5 (London: Gresham, 1903), p. 23.

Another contender for Finic is the son of Norna of Fitful Head, Nick Strumpfer or Pacolet of *The Pirate*. Scott drew on Zetland Dwarfs and ancient fairies called Trows and Drows. Pacolet is described as:

> A square male dwarf, about four feet five inches with a head of portentous size and features correspondent—namely, a huge mouth, a tremendous nose, with large black nostrils [...] blubber lips of an unconscionable size, and huge wall-eyes with which he leered, sneered, grinned and goggles [...] hideous, misshapen figure [...] eyes fixed and glaring.[44]

Even Geoffrey Hudson of *Peveril of the Peak* (1823) is portrayed as another physical oddity. In Scott's medieval romance *The Talisman* (1825), Sir Kenneth is contemptuous of the dwarfish couple Nectabanus and Guenevra who remind him of gnomes with their hideous bodies and shaggy browed faces. For Brontë and Scott these malignant beings embody horror. Scott's dwarfs are in bad taste and he has no interest in minimising their deformity.

Second Sight

But more explicit is her presentation of second sight. Brontë's writing clearly demonstrates her interest in the dichotomy between superstition or unreason and Enlightenment thinking. The regular feature of supernatural phenomena operates as a plot device, providing an acute sense of both atmosphere and character. For her interest in second sight Brontë might have drawn from Scott's *The Black Dwarf*, *The Two Drovers* (1827), *The Highland Widow* (1827), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), and *Glenfinlas* (1798). In addition to Dr Johnson, Martin, and probably Grose, Scott drew on Kirk's belief in the second sight as depicted in *The Secret Commonwealth* and Reverend Fraser's *Treatise on the Second Sight* in *Theosphilus Insulanus* Like Scott, Brontë explores second sight with a healthy scepticism. But the idea of prescience appealed to Brontë. In *Military Conversations* (2 September 1829), the

[44] Walter Scott, *The Pirate* (London: Gresham, 1903), p. 291, p. 322.

Duke of Wellington believes in second sight saying 'You know that I could divine things from my youth up'.[45] Albion of *Albion and Marina* (12 October 1830), having heard the common superstition that the prophetic words uttered by a friend on separating are ominous, is reassured that Marina's last words to him portend 'nothing but peace'.[46]

In *High Life in Verdopolis* (20 March 1834) Brontë is keen to depict Warner Howard Warner as a man with supernatural abilities. He exhibits the phenomenon of 'second sight'[47] He is a central presence in Angria, due to his roles as prime minister, barrister and head of the oldest and most influential Angrian family of Warners, Agars and Howards. During the War of Encroachment, Warner finances the Verdopolitan Government soldiers, supports the casualties at the Battle of Little Warner and is given the prestige of becoming a member of the Council of Six. Warner is based on Sir Robert Peel and as such is a prominent figure relating closely to the Duke of Zamorna. He marries Ellen Grenville, is a Calvinist and lives reclusively at his several manorial residences. In one notable scene, Mr Warner, in the tradition of the seer,

> Was seen to stop and look earnestly in the direction of a copse by the roadside. At that moment a shrill and remarkable sound, almost like the cry uttered by a bird of prey, rang through the valley. There was something appalling in it, something that chilled the blood of every listener, and a simultaneous tightening of reins plainly revealed how universal, was the feeling which it inspired [...] Warner remained still as a statue. All now galloped up to him, and at once he was assailed with a thousand questions, but he did not seem to hear one. His eyes were fixed like those of a corpse, his face pale. Large drops of sweat were starting from his forehead, yet there was no expression of horror in his still, mild countenance, but rather one of strange and composed solemnity. 'What can be the matter with him?' was the general question. No one could furnish an answer to it [...] at last Mr Charles Warner muttered, 'He sees something more than we do. The second sight is on him.[48]

In a collected tone, passing his hand over his noble head, Warner said: 'This is a fatal gift'. The party is now concerned with the whereabouts of the Duke. Prophetically, Warner has

[45] Alexander, *Glass Town Saga*, p. 74.
[46] Alexander, *Glass Town Saga*, p. 59.
[47] Alexander and Smith, p. 530.
[48] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 2, pp. 47-72 (p. 48).

instilled fear of his potential death. The Duke's wife urges Warner to communicate his warnings. He reassures her that 'my emotion, if I displayed any, arose from awe and not from horror. I merely wished to communicate to the Duke what I have just now beheld or imagined that I beheld'. Warner later states that his 'supernatural gift is a[n] heirloom which has descended to our family through many generations. Yet I could wish that the vision had not fallen upon me in such a time and place!' Warner is now afraid of the accusation of imposter and vows to never speak of his visions again. On his outward journey he sees Zamorna in the darkness and mist. As they ride together Warner utters, 'this is the hour, this is the scene [...] in which that disembodied spirit should have appeared to me. I could meet it now and welcome it'.[49] Zamorna asks, 'what spirit?' Warner is reluctant to reveal the subject of his vision. Sometime later a letter arrives addressed to the Duke. 'Great God', he exclaimed, 'There are things on earth indeed not dreamt of in our philosophy! Warner, Warner I know your secret!' He urges Warner to return with him to Percy Hall but Warner is afraid of Northangerland's scepticism. The Duke insists he accompany him. 'You saw only the shadow of a vanished vision'. Warner's mysterious claim of second sight is eventually resolved by a guiding rational narrator.

In working out her position on second sight, Brontë's most likely influence was the manifestation of the phenomena in Allan MacAulay of Scott's *The Legend of the Wars of Montrose*. It is clear that Brontë adapts second-sighted Warner Howard Warner of *High Life in Verdopolis* (1834) from MacAulay. For Brontë and Scott, second sight (Scott also uses the term *deuteroscopia*) adds to narrative drama as well as to the rhetoric of scepticism, yet it also appealed to Scott's interest in the psychology of depression and states of melancholy, and people's predisposition to it. Warner's supernatural event is similar to Allan MacAulay. Allan

[49] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 2, p. 51.

inherited this 'constitutional malady' from his mother and, like Warner, holds 'communion with supernatural beings, and can predict future events'. As Warner stares immobile, Allan also fixes his eyes with a ghastly stare and utters his prediction: 'Many a man will sleep this night upon the heath, that when the Martinmas wind shall blow shall lie there stark enough, and reek little of cold or lack of covering'. Eventually Allan recovers from his fit, saying, 'the mist hath passed from my spirit'. Northangerland's scepticism is matched by Anderson who puts the faculty down to imposters or enthusiasts, while Lord Menteith agrees that:

> I think that he persuades himself that the predictions which are, in reality, the result of judgement and reflection, are supernatural impressions on his mind, just as fanatics conceive the workings of their own imagination to be divine inspiration.[50]

More than Brontë, Scott had the capacity to suspend disbelief if only to engage his reader's fancy, amusement and imagination. Yet, unlike Brontë, Scott could not fully adopt a rationalist viewpoint on the second sight. As Parsons and Harris say of Scott's folklore, ambiguity was the watchword.

Astrology

Also up for ridicule and exposure is Manfred the magician or philosopher in Brontë's *The Foundling* (27 June 1833). Critics relate him to Byron's verse drama *Manfred* (1816-17) but he is also likely to be loosely based on Michael Scott, the wizard or necromancer of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.* For both Scott and Brontë, wizardry adds to historical authenticity as well as narrative role. Magic for Brontë offers another route to the theme of rationalism as well as characterisation and plot. It is also a pointer to Brontë's Anti-Catholicism and reassertion of the true faith of the Church of England. *The Tales of the Islanders Vol 2* (2 December 1829) is a satire on Roman Catholicism's apparent historical

[50] Scott, *Legend of the Wars*, p. 45.

affiliation with the science of necromancy. The Philosopher's Island appears in *The Foundling* (27 June 1833) with the great magician Manfred, philosopher and president of the university's secret society. The entrance of the white bearded old magician is a sight to behold:

> Iron lamps, suspended from the low arched roof, served to shed a dim glimmer on the numerous masked and black-robed figures who appeared beneath, gliding with a spirit-like tread through the surrounding gloom. Not a step or voice was heard, as they slowly arranged themselves in a half-circle before a lofty throne, which stood in the centre of the vault, on which sat an aged man who seemed to be more than a hundred years old. He was of kingly stature; his forehead was bald, but a long beard as white as snow flowed down lower than his girdle. In his right hand he held a sort of sceptre, and a golden circlet glittered among his grey venerable locks.[51]

Manfred professes to have formed a secret liquid compound that links mankind to the other world, to the soul. He teaches the children how to gather 'rare herbs whose subtile juice mingled in the celestial liquid, under what conjunction of the planetary signs to speak those mystic words [...] I summoned my familiar spirit'. Brontë draws on the Verdopolitan nobleman Hector Matthias Mirabeau Montmorency as the voice of reason: 'We do not understand the hypocritical jargon of superstition'. In his poetical verse *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott revives the famous thirteenth-century legend of scholar Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie who was learned in Aristotle, natural philosophy, judicial astrology, chiromancy, alchemy and physiognomy. Michael Scott was an ambassador sent to bring the Maid of Norway to Scotland upon the death of Alexander III. As the stuff of legend, the wizard is useful material:

> In these far climes it was my lot
> To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;
> A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
> That when, in Salamanca's cave,
> Him listed his magic wand to wave,
> The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
> Some of his skill he taught to me [...]

[51] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 1, p. 104.

> Some saw a sight, not seen by all;
> That dreadful voice was heard by some [...]
> *A shape with amice wrapp'd around,*
> *With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,*
> *Like pilgrim from beyond the sea* [...]
> It was the wizard, Michael Scott.[52]

Scott was intrigued in conjurors that were truly learned in the art. Obvious similarities can be drawn from Michael Scott and Manfred, but magic occurs also in Scott's short tale, *My Aunt Margaret's Mother* (1828) and the tale of enchantment in *Count Robert of Paris* (1832).

Omens

Now I turn to Brontë's treatment of omens and dreams. As early as 1829, Brontë mentions death omens of birds and dogs. In the *First Volume of Tales of the Islanders* (30 June 1829) Brontë writes:

> Emily and me one stormy night were going through the wood, which leads to school when we heard a familiar voice saying:
> 'Arthur, what was that noise I heard? Listen!'
> 'It is a raven, Charles. I am not much given to superstition but I remember hearing my grandmother say it is a sign that something bad is coming to pass.'
> 'If we were to die here tonight, and remember, Arthur, we came here by appointment of two of our worst enemies, what would my mother do and my father?'
> Here they both sobbed aloud, and we likewise heard strange and horrible noises weep through the wood.
> 'What is the matter with our dogs, Arthur? Are they dying?'
> 'No, Charles, but that likewise is said to be a sound of death'.[53]

Glass Town's Prince Leopold is also wary of the raven. Having created an atmosphere of doom, the omen recedes into the background. In the second part of *Strange Events* (1830), Lord Charles Wellesley tests his credulity in the form of a moon divination that foretells the hour of one's death recounted to him by an old man. The death of the old man confirms Wellesley's susceptibility to superstition. We can compare the witch-likeness of Bertha of *The*

[52] Scott, *Poetical Works*, p. 10, p. 46.
[53] Alexander, *Glass Town Saga*, p. 29.

Green Dwarf to Scott's Ulrica of *Ivanhoe* with both characters' allusions to omens. Brontë's Lady Emily enters the ruinous tower to meet Bertha:

> 'Well Bertha', said the footman, 'I have brought you a visitor. You must show her up to the highest chamber, for I suppose there is no other in a habitable condition'.
> 'No. How should there I wonder, replied the hag in an angry mumbling tone [...] there is no good in the wind, I think
> 'Silence, you old witch', said the man.[54]

The old crone Bertha orders Emily to stay with her, saying 'You may lie till tomorrow if spirits don't run away with you'. In *Ivanhoe,* Rebecca, awaiting her fate, is led to a little cell and finds herself 'in the presence of an old Sybil, who kept murmuring to herself a Saxon rhyme'. The old hag Ulrica cries out:

> 'Ill omens dog ye both! [...] What devil's deed have they now in the wind? [...] Thou wilt have owls for thy neighbour, fair one; and their screams will be heard as far, and as much regarded as thine own'.[55]

Brontë takes the topic of omens and divination seriously as evidence of supernatural phenomenon. Scott deploys them to inject dramatic intensity and tragedy. They both tighten interest by anticipating events. For Scott, the raven is the most potent representative of death omens alluded to in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Highland Widow* and *Anne of Geierstein*. The raven links to Scottish witchcraft. In *Ivanhoe* it is the Saxons who bear the brunt of superstitions whilst the Normans are profiled as educated. They manifest in many forms: birds, dogs, weapons, rings, dreams and natural phenomena. Omens and divination emerge as phenomena of the present time but equally attach to cultural heritage. In *The Antiquary* (1816) Scott's antiquarian Jonathan Oldbuck, mocking Lovel's dreams, refers affectionately to the formal study of them as the 'oneirocritical science'.[56]

Scott's omens and divination should not be taken seriously as they, like gypsy lore, ghosts, fairies, magic and astrology, function as amusement and scepticism, relegating the

[54] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 1, p. 174-175.
[55] Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (London and New York, 1910), pp. 248-249.
[56] Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* (London: Macmillan, 1908), p. 168.

unofficial belief system to the stuff of fancy and imagination. As we have seen, Brontë adapted Scott's folklore repertoire for the emerging theme of folk superstition versus Enlightenment rationality as well as for narrative strategy. Time and again, throughout Glass Town and Angria, characters' credulity is tested. These folk beliefs operate as a barometer of cultural progress. Brontë rejects those who profess second sight and magic as imposters and crackpots.

Ghosts

On the subject of ghosts in particular, I want to suggest that in Glass Town, Brontë adopts a very different position to Scott. Scott's amusement of the topic is not matched by Brontë's serious study of ghosts. She adapts her own stance on these phenomena, setting the scene for her characters' magical thinking in the later novels. For Scott, ghost speculation was yet another aspect of the national past and a resource for romance as well as an overriding theme of Enlightenment rationality. On Scott's consistent third person narrative accounts of ghosts, Parsons says, whether they are decorative or 'play havoc for a short time with the hero's imagination, or perform other tasks, Scott concentrates on metaphor, humour, local colour, tradition, folk character, repressed and doomed lives, distortion of reality, and psychological revelation'.[57] Ghost stories and haunted houses abound in the juvenilia. In *Military Conversations* after having heard the Duke of Wellington's ghost story, Marquis of Douro and Lord Charles Wellesley recount their experience of seeing a 'form clothed in a shroud [...] with its ghastly glazed eyes fixed on us [...] and gliding noiselessly to the bedside it stretched forth one white death-like hand and touched us'.[58]

[57] Parsons, *Witchcraft*, p. 121.
[58] Alexander, *Glass Town Saga*, pp. 75-76.

In Brontë's writing, however, the absence of the omniscient, rational and authorial voice is notable in *Strange Events* (1 September 1830) and *An Extraordinary Dream* (4 September 1830). Of the many ghost encounters in Glass Town and Angria, *Strange Events* stands out as the most complex and opaque, provoking much critical discussion. According to Heather Glen, this tale is another witty imitation of 'the quasi-scientific "anecdote" '[59] which offered a rational account of a supernatural experience or dream like those she read in *Blackwood's*. The tale, influenced by *Arabian Nights* and *Tales of the Genii* in its elaboration of the nature of the Genii, and referencing the idea of giants and creatures (echoing *Gulliver's Travels),* explores the actual nature of power and reality from the perspective of the powerless. As in *The History of the Year* (29 March 1829), the dilemma inherent in the tale (and in childhood) is the attraction to powers which are, in reality, denied. For theirs was a childhood nurtured by 'fantasies of power [...] spent in a time and place in which the cultural celebration of power – whether of literary "genius" or military heroism or romantic conquest – was extraordinarily compelling'. Alexander echoes Glen's interpretation of the tale as a 'parody of the insubstantiality of the imaginative world [...] we sense Charlotte's adolescent anxiety about the lack of real control she actually has as both child and female over her life'.[60]

However, I further Glen's claim to argue that *Strange Events* represents an ongoing theme of superstition versus rationality that characterises other tales of the Glass Town started in the even earlier tale such as the play *Military Conversations* (October 1829), and finally resolved adhering to Scott's Enlightenment viewpoint (with Lucy Snowe seeing the light) in *Villette*. *Strange Events* opens with the comment: 'It is the fashion nowadays to put no faith whatsoever in supernatural appearances or warnings. I am, however a happy exception to the

[59] Heather Glen, 'Configuring a World: Some Childhood Writings of Charlotte Brontë' in *Opening the Nursery Door: Reading, Writing and Childhood* 1600-1900 eds. Mary Hilton, Morag Styles, Victor Watson (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 215-232 (p. 224).
[60] Alexander, *Glass Town, Angria and Gondal,* p. xxii.

general rule, and firmly believe in everything of the kind'.[61] In his imagination, daydream, but most likely impression, of death, Charles Wellesley describes the following experience:

> It seemed as if I was a non-existent shadow, that I neither spoke, eat, imagined or lived of myself, but I was the mere idea of some other creature's brain. The Glass Town seemed so likewise. My father, Arthur, and everyone with whom I am acquainted, passed into a state of annihilation but suddenly I thought again that I and my relatives did exist, and yet not us but our minds and bodies without ourselves [...]
> I saw books removing from the top shelves and returning, apparently of their own accord [...] I felt myself raised suddenly to the ceiling, and ere I was aware, behold two immense, sparkling, bright blue globes within a few yards of me. I was in [a] hand wide enough almost to grasp the Tower of All Nations, and when it lowered me to the floor I saw a huge personification of myself – hundreds of feet high – standing against the great Oriel.[62]

Colonel Crumps walks in and the apparition immediately ceases. Charles can only conclude that:

> Is it not the height, depth, breadth of metaphysical insight, enquiry, illumination, science, knowledge, profundity, unsatisfactoriness or whatever else you can choose? I think it is. Who after this will disbelieve in Ghosts? None but sceptics, deists, atheists, infidels; or if anyone else do, here is another proof of my creed's verity.[63]

Critics tend not to examine Wellesley's evaluation of his bizarre experience. In this tale Brontë contributes to the Christian eschatological debate on the existence of the afterlife. Wellesley's ghost encounter is less metaphorical and more a religious or philosophical enquiry into the life beyond. Wellesley's conclusion suggests a spiritualist or bygone supernaturalism contrary to David Hume's rationalism. Wellesley denounces Deism: the rationalist belief in God's interaction with the Copernican universe and laws of nature. Given Wellesley's explanation for this odd event, it does seem that the naive young narrator seems to assert the belief in the return of the soul after death.

One might very loosely interpret Wellesley's encounter as involving a poltergeist. If so, it differs in form and intent to the encounter experienced by the Commissioners of

[61] Alexander, *Glass Town Saga*, p. 256.
[62] Ibid., p. 257.
[63] Ibid., p. 258.

Woodstock (1826) who are driven out of Woodstock Lodge by the antics of Roger Wildrake. He creates all the mayhem he can muster with:

> the violent shutting of a door, driving of nails, sawing, a loud clap of thunder, the rustle of silk, the mewing of a cat, growling of a dog, squeaking of a pig, puzzlingly familiar voices, music, sudden gleams of light, a tussle in which a head is broken, the overturning of Colonel Desborough's bed and a tub of ditch-water to drench him with the clash of fetters.[64]

Scott's novel concludes with the hero Markham Everard's 'rock of scepticism after a period of wavering'.[65] In contrast, Wellesley refuses to temporarily suspend the natural laws of nature, believing in the ghost phenomena with absolute conviction. Wellesley makes his unequivocal position clear again in *An Extraordinary Dream*, committing to 'further and indisputable proof of what I have advanced'. In *Albion and Marina* (12 October 1830) the confirmation of 'supernatural agency' is yet again endorsed with Albion deluded into thinking he can see Marina's wraith, witnessed at midnight on 18 June 1815. His vision is confirmed two years later when a child leads him to Marina's burial site. Seeing the same date chiselled into the white marble tombstone, Albion, rousing from a deathlike trance, witnesses again the spirit of his lost love murmuring 'Albion, I am happy, for I am at peace'.[66]

Although Brontë presents magic and second sight as cultural archaisms and divinations for horror and plot device, some Glass Town characters hold onto their beliefs in omens and ghosts. However, in Angria, Brontë adheres to Scott's increasing scepticism of ghosts. Even though the Angria tales conform to Scott's sceptic-led treatment of ghosts, Brontë differs in her presentation. She imitates Scott's rationalist framework in his tales of wonder and awe, but her writing lacks his sly humour towards ghosts. With Scott's stories of superstition in *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* in mind, Brontë has Napoleon of *The Green Dwarf* reject his ocular delusion of the ghost that had 'entirely deprived him of the capability

[64] Parsons, *Witchcraft*, p. 208.
[65] Ibid., p. 209.
[66] Alexander, *Glass Town Saga*, p. 297.

of either thinking or acting for himself'.[67] In a similar manner, this is reflective of Samuel Smith of *Arthuriana: Brushwood Hall* (1 October 1833). He is happy to return to Brushwood hall 'without fear of meeting any ghosts but such as his own bad conscience might raise'.[68]

The comparison between Scott's *Old Mortality* (1816) and Brontë's *The Secret* (January 1834) is obvious. In *The Secret*, Marian Hume's belief in her vision of Lieutenant Henry Percy's ghost (he is believed to be buried in the sea but is actually alive) is similar to *Old Mortality*'s Edith Bellenden's spectral apparition of Whig Captain Henry Morton's ghost (also found to be alive and well). Brontë's Marian listens to Henry's wraith:

> Death and the waters of a vast deep chain me to my place; be happy and think of your first love no more. The wraith then walked into air before me, and filled with horror, I hastened back to the house.[69]

Scott's Edith believes that Henry 'came to upbraid me, that, while my heart was with him in the deep and dead sea, I was about to give my hand to another'.[70] Marian must accept Miss Foxley's conclusion that it is all illusion. Miss Foxley:

> Endeavoured to persuade me that it was all the fruit of my own excited imagination, but, finding my belief in the reality of the apparition fixed, and likewise my determination to act according to its counsel, she grew angry and left me.[71]

Edith also refuses to accept Lord Evendale's logical explanation that the 'apparition was down to the influence of an overstrained imagination [...] you let your imagination beguile you; this is but some delusion of an over-sensitive mind'. In her rebuke she says, 'you are mistaken, Lord Evendale [...] I am not a sleep-walker, or a madwoman'. Evendale consults a chaplain who as a 'divine and a philosopher' could neither accept nor deny the existence of the spirit. The chaplain says that Henry Morton:

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[67] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 1, p. 141.
[68] Ibid., p. 231.
[69] Ibid., p. 298.
[70] Walter Scott, *Old Mortality* (London and Glasgow: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1910), p.470.
[71] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 1, p. 298.

> Being still *in rerum* natura, had appeared in his proper person that morning; or, finally, that some strong *deceptio visus*, or striking similitude of person, had deceived the eyes of Miss Bellenden and of Thomas Halliday.[72]

However, guided by his own judgement Lord Evendale concludes that 'the heated and disturbed imagination of Edith had summoned up the phantom [...] and that Halliday had, in some unaccountable manner, been infected by the same superstition'. Brontë could also draw on many Waverley ghosts including those in *The Bride of Lammermoor* (Scott's most realistic depiction of a ghost), *Ivanhoe*, *The Pirate*, *Rob Roy*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *St Ronan's Well*, *The Heart of Midlothian* and *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

To conclude, Scott's use of the supernatural helped to shape Brontë's developing skills and knowledge of narrative methods, third person narration and the art of storytelling. Scott's fiction, moreover, helped Brontë to examine eschatological debates on the existence of an after-life. For Brontë, like Scott and the other Romantics, the supernatural world, its beings and phenomena went further than the appeal of romance. Scott's ghosts, especially, helped Brontë progress to a position of cultural enlightenment. More than Scott's desire to examine early science, Brontë's objective is also to examine religious truths. For Scott, the laws of nature could be suspended for the sake of art. On second sight, Scott's inability to completely reconcile credulity with scepticism characterises Brontë's ambivalence towards ghosts. Certainly, in Glass Town's 'Strange Events', Brontë is working out contemporary beliefs in which character credulity lends itself to spiritualist thinking. Yet, Angria characterises the rhetoric of scepticism. As a young adult, Brontë was unable to adhere completely to Scott's brand of rationalism. Glass Town is more resistant to Christian truths and the emerging science, and her characters are susceptible to belief in ghosts. There is an underlying fear of death in Brontë's early writing on the supernatural not present in Scott. Fundamental

[72] Scott, *Old Mortality*, p. 473.

Christian issues were to haunt her again in *Villette* as I examine in the final chapter. For Scott, ghost belief provided a source of amusement and literariness. Although *Strange Events* is a spiritualist enquiry as are some of her other ghost tales, Brontë's writing will progress to the discourse of Victorian science.

Perhaps, above all, what distinguishes Brontë's folklore from Scott is the sense of inclusion with which her characters seem to interact with the material (echoing also the later Hardy). In her tales there is no hint of Scott's stereotypical association of folk belief with the less educated, the young and women. Brontë did not adhere to Scott's class consciousness accompanying his folk presentation, and neither was she influenced by religion or race. Perhaps also, writing in her youth, Brontë was guided by adolescent ideas of transformation, escape, enchantment and power embodied in fairy motifs. Brontë's use of language also differed from Scott's articulation of superstition as demonology. Likewise, she steered clear of Scott's interest in diabolism, witchcraft and German *Diablerie*. In Glass Town, first-person narratives lend themselves to credulity but by Angria she is more ready to adopt the third person narratives and progress in the narrative patterns of Scott's Enlightenment.

As a national and cultural historian, Scott introduced the unearthly as a component of the historical past. Brontë adapted his studies, tapping into the still-believing and pseudo-scientific present of mid-Victorian England. In their occasional ambivalence they deviated from late eighteenth-century rationalism. From their fictional presentation, Scott's interest in second sight was matched by Brontë's ghost interrogation. Explaining his interest in the supernatural in the *Chronicles of the Canongate,* Scott wished to 'throw some light on the manners of Scotland as they were, and to contrast them, occasionally, with those of the present day'.[73] To Scott, folklore was interesting 'as chapters in the history of the human

[73] Parsons, *Witchcraft*, p. 283.

race'. For Scott the unearthly presented a mirror on the past. Brontë, however, was interested in contemporary religion and science. As an aspiring novelist first and foremost, Brontë's supernatural prose were narrative and ideological. Brontë imitated and adapted many aspects of Scott's literary uses of folklore in her early works. His novels and ballads, steeped in antiquarian lore, provided a foundation in folklore studies. Scott's *Letters* and his romances, ballads and verse, provide a surviving collection of folklore beliefs and contribute to folklore scholarship. In her tales, Brontë inherits Scott's literary antiquarianism and Romantic legacy. Not only did she develop as a writer from Scott but also as a student of folklore. Perhaps, too, Scott helped to shape her philosophical interests.

Chapter Three

Jane Eyre's Fairy Motif: Symbols of Physical Difference, Sexuality and Aspects of Gender

> It was a fairy, and come from Elf-land, it said; and its errand was to make me happy.
>
> Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (p. 267)

Brontë's narrative use of imagery from Gothic, fairy tale, mythological, religious and nature sources to represent issues of gender and sexuality in *Jane Eyre* is acknowledged in critical studies.[1] In particular, feminist critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar examine Brontë's use of romanticized imagery to convey the novelist's ultimate aspiration for spiritual equality between the sexes. This is implied in the lovers' initial meeting with Rochester associating Jane's bewitchment of him with fairy tales, and conversely, her association of his dog Pilot with the spectral Gytrash. Gilbert and Gubar suggest that 'his playful remark acknowledges *her* powers just as much as (if not more than) her vision of the Gytrash acknowledged *his*'.[2] They go on to say that although in one sense Jane and Rochester begin their relationship as servant and master, in another they begin as spiritual equals. John Maynard in his persuasive account of the novel's major treatment of sexuality argues that social realism as well as romance is needed also to carry through much of the novel's moral dilemmas linked to the theme of sex. He points to Rochester's marriage to Bertha Mason, her incarceration and his preparedness to commit bigamy. But Jane, he says, is guided by passion and love as much as by reason and Christian faith. Brontë devotes the Thornfield and Ferndean sections to sexual

[1] Alexander and Smith, pp. 260-263.
[2] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Mad Woman in the Attic* (Yale University Press, 2000), p. 352.

awakening, courtship tensions, and sexual fulfilment. Brontë, he declares, precedes Hardy in recognising the 'restraints her society attempted to place on her freedom to present her vision of sexual experience'.[3] Contrary to the idea that Brontë's interest in sexuality is marginal, or at best subliminal, he argues that Brontë demonstrates a conscious understanding of the subject and refines it in different narrative configurations.

Although the theme of beauty does not receive much critical appraisal, it is noteworthy how explanatory notes, throughout her fiction, mention several Romantic images to convey men's idealization of femininity. The houri was a type of nymph used to describe a voluptuous and seductive eastern beauty. The undine was a spiritually empty water nymph who married a mortal to obtain a soul, having to endure all the penalties of humanity. In Persian mythology, the peri was a beautiful, delicate, gentle spirit. Sylphs were Rosicrucian spirits of the air denoting a slender, graceful girl. Whereas the terms undine, houri, sprite and salamander were used more negatively, the Romantics applied the terms fairy, peri and sylph to describe women who epitomised youth and beauty.[4]

To an extent, these interpretations (and supportive notes) of *Jane Eyre* resonate with my reading of the novel's fairy motif as a vehicle to examine issues of anxiety about physical difference, sexuality, female power and equality. To these ends, the fairy motif carries much ideological weight. It is pervasive throughout this novel. It has other functions but relates primarily to themes associated with the love interest between the two main protagonists. Folklore adds to the novel's realism in that it informs Jane's intellectual and sexual growth. Jane's self-development is in part her need to moderate her superstition and progress to rational thinking. This is also conceived of in her imaginary ghost encounter and subsequent questioning of Thornfield's ghost legend. It is clear that the theme of Enlightenment

[3] John Maynard, *Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 93-144 (p. 148).
[4] See explanatory notes in Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *The Professor* and *Villette*.

rationality is important for self-growth in Brontë's protagonists across her fiction as well as of philosophical interest to her.

In arguing for the symbolic role of fairy as a way to examine physical inferiority, we need to delve deeper into wider critiques on beauty. In her study on physiognomy and conventions of heroine description, Jeanne Fahnstock argues that it was hard for Victorian writers to repel the pressure of idealizing female characters and deviate from character descriptions of the ideal of 'gentle, innocent, truthful womanhood'.[5] Whilst most literary heroines of the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century conform to this ideal, Jane Eyre is among the very few complex and varied exceptions. The word 'irregular' may be a 'knell of doom', but in their imperfect state, these heroines have the freedom of irregular conduct. Fahnstock says that 'they can act, make mistakes, learn from them and grow, exercising a privilege usually only the hero's'.[6] The irregular featured heroines are allowed imperfection and the face remains a mirror of the character. Although her focus is largely with Charles Dickens's little female characters, Lillian Craton's examination of literary engagements of the Victorian freak show also relates to images of Jane Eyre. Her study of physical difference and the pervasive Victorian anxiety about human perfection resonates with Brontë's creation of a new type of heroine and the novel's theme of beauty. Fiction, Craton states, 'plays freely with images of difference as it reflects and articulates Victorian values of the normal and ideal'.[7] Beauty equated social status and reinforced the social order. For the Victorians, the body was analogous to society. It 'measured a collective culture, set norms of respectability and provided a source for societal conformity or, transgression'.[8]

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[5] Jeanne Fahnstock, 'The Heroine of Irregular Features: Physiognomy and Conventions of Heroine Description', *Victorian Studies*, 24: 3 (1981), p. 326.
[6] Fahnstock, p. 331.
[7] Lillian Craton, *The Victorian Freak Show*: *The Significance of Disability and Physical Differences in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Cambria Press 2009), p. 207.
[8] Ibid., pp. 206-207.

One aspect of Jane and Rochester's spiritual affinity is in their physicality, both unable to adhere to the ideal of Victorian beauty. This is in part expressed in folklore imagery. Both for Romantics and Victorians, fairies provided a coded discourse on cultural anxieties about marriage, divorce and issues of difference. Folklore criticism is most helpful. Simpson touches on several of these points, particularly the idea of Jane's otherness and difference from other women.[9] Carole Silver argues that not only did Victorian folklorists study the origins of the fairies but the many fairy bride tales written during this period 'constituted a socio-cultural history of the spectrum of Victorian attitudes towards women and marriage'.[10] Silver recognises Hardy, Eliot, Brontë and Wharton's adaptations of fairy bride tales. She notes their use of fairy imagery to describe male attitudes to women (similarly to Brontë critics), making reference to Jane's sexual power, force and otherness, heightened by her 'name that links her to the sylphs or spirits of the air'.[11] This legacy of coding of cultural definitions of Victorian femininity (found also in Romantic-era poetry and prose) resonates in my examination of folklore in Brontë's fiction, notably *Jane Eyre*. She also considers fictional representations of the changeling motif for its symbol of Victorian anxieties of difference in terms of class, physicality and race.[12]

Silver's introductory comment on the pervasiveness of fairies and how 'their lore infiltrated and transformed mainstream Victorian culture on what the fairy presence hints at or signifies [...] more often it is subtle, a matter of allusion, or metonymy or encoding',[13] particularly interests me. Fictional descriptions of women in fairy terms can be considered within Joan Newlon Radner and Susan S. Lanser's concept of coding in women's folk culture

[9] Simpson, *The Function of Folklore*, pp. 47-61.
[10] Silver, p. 93.
[11] Ibid., p. 107.
[12] Ibid., p. 60.
[13] Ibid., p. 5.

and folk literature.[14] Radner and Lanser describe coding as a 'set of signals—words, forms, behaviours, signifiers of some kind—that protect the creator from the consequences of openly expressing particular messages'.[15] Coding is necessary when audiences are likely to be unsympathetic to or disapproving of the subject matter. This act of coding is a common phenomenon for women writers who wish to highlight the historic trend of male domination, suppression and marginalisation of women. Women condemned by men to a peripheral position in society compelled them to create explicit coding to challenge cultural ideology. The term *appropriation* refers to coding strategies that are adaptable to feminist objectives that challenge male cultural images of femininity. Appropriation encompasses the notion of *symbolic inversion*, broadly defined as an act of expressive behaviour which 'inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms be they linguistic, literary, or artistic, religious or social and political'.[16] Arguably, we can consider Brontë's subversion of conventional images of women in folklore terms as an attempt to violate the 'patriarchal designated feminine position'.[17] Despite the fact that Radner's focus is less with the Victorian novel her ideas underpin my reading of the fairy motif in *Jane Eyre*.

This idea of coding fits well with Brontë's presentation of fairy sexuality. At Thornfield, moreover, the fairy image charts potential taboo territory of not only Jane's sexual awakening but Rochester's male sexuality. In Maureen Duffy's *The Erotic World of Faery* (1972), fairies and fairyland symbolise 'the realm of the unconscious, the dream world, duplicated in the unconscious in childhood and erotic day dreams'[18] and validates my reading

[14] Joan Newlon Radner, ed., *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
[15] Ibid., p. 3.
[16] Ibid., p. 25.
[17] Ibid., p. 10.
[18] Duffy, p. 74.

of the fairy element in *Jane Eyre*. Duffy studies the close and consistent association between fairy and the erotic in English literature, tracing its evolution in religious teachings. The church considered fairies to be the spirits of un-baptized children, souls of the dead and all things sinful. The fairy image as femme fatale began with the church's (and St Augustine's) endorsement of fairies as either un-fallen or blessed, or fallen angels or devils or demons. Fairies as fallen angels gained more ground and became embedded in the Christian psyche. In the very early works on witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), two Dominican inquisitors questioned whether children could be formed from incubi. Satyrs and fauns were regarded as the fallen angels 'now in devilish shape and have appeared to wanton women and have sought and obtained coition with them'.[19] The fairy association with witch trafficking served to exacerbate men's (and the church's) image of women as sinful and carnal. Fairies were seen as the guilty aspect of the defective imagination in their representation of 'those mainly erotic impulses forbidden by the church'.[20] It did not take long for the fairy image to be recast as the embodiment of sexual fantasy, eroticization, enchantment, temptation and every conceivable taboo of sex and violence, bisexuality, transvestism, lust, incest, castration and adultery. Yet, fairies communicated ideas of virginity, sexual liberty and women as victims too. Duffy scans the development of fairy sexuality in the medieval lays and legend, Renaissance, Augustan age, Romantic and Victorian period. Even the goblins, in their animalistic representation in Christina Rossetti's narrative poem, *Goblin Market* (1862), are equated with fantasy sex.[21] In short, the symbolism of fairies characterises the history of misogyny and in the English literary canon, fairies encoded female sexuality. Duffy's account offers another interpretation of reading the frequent allusions to fairies in *Jane Eyre*. In her later study of fairies, Diane Purkiss states that the fairy's symbol of sexuality intensified in the

[19] Duffy, p. 14.
[20] Ibid., p. 22.
[21] Ibid., p. 321.

nineteenth century: 'Fairies increasingly came to be seen *consciously* as symbols for what could not be said'.[22]

This chapter will explore folklore and the fairy motif through three key themes. Specific to *Jane Eyre*, it symbolises the anxiety of physical (and class) difference developing the idea of Jane's otherness. Secondly, it encodes sexual desire. Thirdly, on the theme of gender, the motif is seen as a subversion of narrow cultural definitions of Victorian femininity. It represents Jane's power and, lastly, it marks Jane and Rochester's spiritual equality. My reading of folklore in *Jane Eyre* thus extends current analyses of the novel. I define fairies, consider Brontë's adaptation of Scott's narrative use of fairies and examine its ideological functions across *Jane Eyre*.

Fairies in Literature and Culture

In the 1960s and 1970s Katharine M. Briggs examined literary evidence of the fairy tradition. Briggs surveyed both historical and fictional images of the fairy peoples and the belief in witches' reliance on fairies. Briefly, fairies were adapted from the classical mythological nymph, faun, naiad, satyr, incubus and dryad. Changelings were one of the oldest aspects of fairy belief referenced in the chronicles of Gervase of Tilbury (1150-1220). The earliest written record of fairies occurred in Anglo-Saxon charms against elf-shot disease. Medieval Arthurian romances describe the fairy lady, Morgan le Fay or Fata Morgana. The thirteenth-century chronicler Ralph of Coggeshall writes of the mermen and the later *Orfeo* is set in fairyland. Briggs refers to one of the earliest allusions to the demise of the fairy belief in Chaucer, the revival of the elfin knight in romances, and covers Shakespeare's fairy traditions in her text *The Anatomy of Puck* (1959). During the Reformation, Milton's *Paradise Lost*

[22] Diane Purkiss, *Those Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), pp. 244-5.

fuses devils and fairies. Briggs' literary focus is mainly from the eighteenth century on in which the fairy tradition remained intact although often treated satirically as in Michael Drayton's *Polyalbion*. The Victorians inherited the obsession with fairies from the Romantic counter-Enlightenment poetic and artistic revival of the fairy world.[23] Unlike Duffy, Silver and Purkiss, Briggs does not examine the fairy symbol of eroticization and sexual fantasy that clearly permeates the English literary canon.

To an extent Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud's study of the fairy tradition provides a context for Rochester's image of Jane Eyre. They state that the term fairies is broad, covering a range of non-human yet material beings with mesmeric magical powers, able to charm and cast a state of enchantment or glamour over the senses that rendered the subject under the fairy will. Fairies were of human proportion but diminutive (no more than three feet). Some were beautiful, often wore the colours of green or white. They were associated with the dead, ghosts and the un-dead. They could be visible and invisible at will, inhabited woods, water and caves. They shape-changed, some flew and some were friendly giving luck while others were capricious. They were morally ambiguous, luck-bringing, charmed pranksters and some were minor demons (according to Protestant and Catholic clergy). They were outside the Christian church, regarded as too good for hell but too diabolic for heaven. Fairies were also associated with witchcraft. Fairies were either solitary, attached to a human household like the brownie, or social, living in fairy land and investing in feasting and dancing. The Celts more than the English developed the theme of fairyland (or Elf-land), a place of beauty and luxury underground, of feasting and dancing but believed to be positioned alongside the human world and off-limits to humans, unless held captive. These humans had stepped into a fairy ring or suffered abduction. Fairies were seen as un-baptized

[23] Briggs, *Fairies in Tradition and Literature*, pp. 100- 210.

infants or Wills-o'-the-wisp but also kidnapped un-christened babies designed to replenish their dwindling stock, leaving a changeling in its place. The changeling phenomenon revealed a sinister side to Victorian society. Changelings were lovely or wizened and failed to thrive. Once baptized, the infant was assured of membership of the Christian Church and protected from fairy abduction. Simpson and Roud are cognisant that folklore and folk tales are far less preserved in England than in Celtic areas. Their preservation though is felt mostly in literary portrayals, especially in medieval, Shakespearean and modern fiction.[24] Victorian fantasy artists depict fairies as both beautiful and very odd looking. Like literature, fairy painting conveys ideas of the unknown and the unconscious, opposing elements of the psyche, counter-enlightened retreat from science, the pursuit of the truth, and attitudes toward sex. In so many of these phantasmagoria paintings, fairies are often strange and odd looking, dwarf shaped, grotesque and sensual.[25]

All of these critical and scholarly studies show that Brontë's treatment of fairies in some way follows Victorian narrative treatments of fairies and her interest in fairies is part of a long literary tradition. Furthermore, it is clear that she is intimately familiar with fairy tradition and nature of fairies weaving this knowledge thoroughly to examine cultural definitions of beauty, Jane's sense of her physical otherness, the novel's themes of sexual desire and female empowerment and equality.

Scott's Fairy Material

It is useful at this point to examine the ways in which Brontë might have adapted Walter Scott's knowledge of fairy traditions and traits and the link with changelings, Christianity, the dead, the otherworld and witchcraft, as material for Rochester's image of

[24] Simpson and Roud, pp. 115-117.
[25] Jeremy Maas, ed., *Victorian Fairy Painting* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1997), p. 11.

Jane as fairy-like. Moreover, Brontë might have imitated Scott's loose adaptation of fairy bride tales such are the similarities between Scott's fairy Fenella and mortal Julian Peveril of *Peveril of the Peak* and the White Lady of Avenel and mortal Halbert Glendinning of *The Monastery,* and the fairy Jane and human Rochester. As a child Jane notes the primitive landscape in 'Bewick's History of British Birds' (p. 8). As a symbol of her feeling of alienation her 'suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland [...] of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own (p. 8) might relate to Scott's materialist views on the historical origins of the fairy superstition. Scott traced the fairies to the Duergars or dwarfs of Lapland in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3) and later in the revised *Letters on Demonology of Witchcraft* (1830).

However, less obliquely, I suggest that Rochester's image of Jane as a fairy is based partly on Scott's Annot Lyle of *The Legend of Montrose*:

> Her stature, considerably less than the ordinary size of women, gave her appearance of extreme youth, insomuch that although she was near eighteen, she might have passed for four years younger. Her figure, hands, and feet, were formed upon a model of exquisite symmetry with the size and lightness of her person, so that Titania herself could scarce have found a more fitting representative.[26]

Brontë could nevertheless draw on many of Scott's romances. According to Coleman O. Parsons, the fairy tradition dominates many of the romances, ballads and essays such as 'The Tale of Tam Lane' of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802), preceding the 'Essay on the Fairies of Popular Superstition', *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, *The Lady of the Lake, The Fair Maid of Perth, Castle Dangerous*, *Rob Roy*, *The Pirate*, *Ivanhoe, Anne of Geierstein, and Guy Mannering.*[27] Yet, the most detailed profiles of the fairy tradition are encapsulated in Scott's White Lady of Avenel of *The Monastery* (1820) and Fenella of *Peveril of the Peak* (1823), and these are also likely sources for Jane Eyre's fairy image.

[26] Scott, *Wars of Montrose,* p. 49.
[27] Parsons, *Witchcraft*, pp. 169-177.

Scott's Highland 'White Lady' is drawn from Baron de La Motte Fouque's water-nymph *Undine*, a fairy ghost, angel, and elemental sylph, one of the Race of Ariel, drawn from Rosicrucian doctrine. Clad in white, she is both capricious and benevolent and endowed with healing powers (as opposed to human feeling and reasoning), chanting in rhyming couplets:

> What I am I must not show—
> What I am thou couldst not know—
> Something betwixt heaven and hell—
> Something that neither stood nor fell—
> Neither substance quite, nor shadow[28]

Compare this with the last line describing Rochester's surprise at seeing Jane return from Gateshead a month earlier. He asks:

> 'What the deuce have you done with yourself this last month?'
> 'I have been with my aunt, sir, who is dead.'
> 'A true Janian reply! Good angels be my guard! She comes from the other world—from the abode of people who are dead; and tells me so when she meets me alone here in the gloaming! If I dared, I'd touch you, to see if you are substance or shadow, you elf!'(p. 245).

Another likely model is Scott's Fenella of *Peveril of the Peak* based partly on Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe's Mignon of *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* and partly on his grandfather's time spent with 'Dumb Lizzie', a girl troubled in some way, who appeared one day at his door. Fenella, also described as the Elfin Queen, is also based on the Manx superstition of the changeling tradition:

> That the elves were in the habit of carrying off mortal children before baptism, and leaving in the cradle of the newborn babe one of their own brood, which was almost always imperfect in some one or other of the organs proper to humanity. Such a being they conceived Fenella to be; and the smallness of her size, her dark complexion [...] her supposed connexion with the 'pigmy folk' yet still her perpetually affecting to wear the colour of green [...] They perceived her deafness and dumbness were only towards those of this world.[29]

Uncommunicative with mortals, Fenella only whistles, writes notes or gesticulates with signs. Julian Peveril 'had scarce time to shudder at her purpose, as he beheld her about to spring

[28] Scott, *Poetical Works*, pp. 786-788.
[29] Walter Scott, *Peveril of the Peak* (London: Gresham, 1903), p. 177.

from the parapet, ere, like a thing of gossamer'.[30] The following description of Jane bears similarity with Fenella when Rochester attempts to break the news to Adèle of his intentions to marry Jane:

> It was as a little thing with a veil of gossamer on its head. I beckoned it to come near me: it stood soon at my knee. I never spoke to it, and it never spoke to me, in words: but I read its eyes, and it read mine; and our speechless colloquy was to this effect: — 'It was a fairy, and come from Elf-Land, it said; and its errand was to make me happy: I must go with it out of the common world to a lonely place' (p. 267).

I have not located any other sources conveying this fairy and mortal communication. The White Lady of *The Monastery* also says; 'Look on my girdle—on this thread of gold—'tis fine as web of lightest gossamer, but there is a spell on't, would not bind'.[31]

Scott's literary fairies often represent the sexual ambiguity of the child-woman. Sexual images projected in Scott's elemental spirits reflect societal attitudes to un-wakened and uncontrolled female sexuality. His female heroines are also allotted fairy descriptions such as Lucy Ashton's 'sylph-like form'[32] of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, conveying not only her grace and sweetness but Scott's idealisation of femininity with Master Ravenswood charmed by her angelic looks and nature. When her latent sexuality develops Lucy goes mad and stabs her husband. In *The Abbot* Scott describes Catherine Seyton's duplicity as 'rather that of a Hebe than of a Sylph'. Scott later describes her as 'having a light and lovely form' like a 'sylph or fairy'. But when his heroine is attired in men's clothing to imply her cruelty (or unnatural masculinity or alter ego), she is a 'will o'-the wisp'. Amy Ashton as a virgin 'possessed the form and hue of a wood-nymph, with the beauty of a sylph'. As 'yon black-eyed houri of the Mahometan paradise [...] Rosicrucian sylphid [...] Moorish sorceress and a sexless little fairy', Fenella's sexuality is both denied and affirmed.[33] Hence, folklore terms

[30] Scott, *Peveril*, p. 179.
[31] Scott, *Poetical Works*, p. 789.
[32] Parsons, *Witchcraft*, p. 168.
[33] Ibid., pp. 276-280.

and those of classical mythology and Rosicrucian ideas provide a communicative tool to examine masculine images of women. Scott's use of the fairy motif expresses female paragons of virtue and other non-threatening images of women such as those with childlike physiques, virgins, and mothers, reflecting contemporary attitudes to women. Conversely, Scott's literal portrayal of witches like Aislie Macclure and Madge Wildfire of *The Heart of Midlothian* and Ulrica of *Ivanhoe*, composites of witch, demon, heathen, goddess, evil angel and sibyl, arguably depict the other side of woman as ugly, spinsters, old, lame and evil.[34]

Brontë may well imitate Scott's sexist coding of women as witches as a counter-foil to the ideal compliant and beautiful heroine. Not only does Brontë imitate Scott's narrative uses of fairies but she also transforms his material into a gender context. When Rochester objectifies Jane, he describes her as 'sylph' but when displeased, he describes her as 'sprite' and 'salamander'. Brontë is highlighting sexist images of women. By situating the 'fairy' motif within the context of Jane's recurring rescue of Rochester, often occurring during the development of their relationship, however, Brontë subverts its stereotypical use to visualise a new kind of powerful woman.

Folklore Coding across Brontë's Victorian Heroines

Stereotypical language (suggesting Brontë's awareness of inherent Victorian sexism) to describe women is evident across Brontë's Angria tales. In *The Spell* (1834) the Duke of Zamorna addresses his wife Mary Henrietta Wellesley as 'my white witch, my seraphic hypocrite'[35] to convey his distrust of her. Likewise in *The Secret* (1833) Arthur Wellesley accuses Marian Hume of lying, calling her 'a vile old witch' and in *Lily Hart* (1833) Lily's

[34] Parsons, *Witchcraft*, pp. 167-169, pp. 276-281.
[35] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 2, p. 193.

feminine perfection is revealed partly by her 'small fairy-like feet and hands'.[36] In *Caroline Vernon* (1838) Quashia has his predatory eyes feasted on the very young Caroline Vernon (she is not more than ten years at this point) as a potential wife. 'I have it under her hand, sealed & signed in legal form [...] this fluttering, fickle felicitous fairy, this dear delicious, delirious morsel'. Caroline, apparently fat and dark-skinned, is another plain heroine. She says, 'I'm sorry I'm not handsome & that I wish a fairy would bring me a talisman like Aladdin's lamp that I could get everything I want'. The narrator adds 'sometimes indeed she ventured to think she had a nice foot [...] but then, alas, her form was not half slight & sylph-like enough for beauty, according to her notions of beauty'. Later, the narrator questions Caroline's whereabouts, saying: 'whether at this moment of time she was playing the houri or the fiend—kissing or cuffing the earl'.[37] Here, Brontë exposes the double nature of woman, encoding the ideal in the form of the sylph, and the seductive dark-eyed dangerous type in the form of the houri. Having revealed influences from Scott in Glass Town and Angria, Brontë was also likely to adapt and transform the metaphorical use of fairies from Scott.

Inheriting Scott's Romantic legacy in her writing of *Jane Eyre*, there is a high concentration of varying terms for fairies, especially in relation to Rochester's regular references to Jane as being 'fairy'-like. The range of and terms used to apply to fairies and other supernatural beings mentioned in the novel is striking: fairy, elf, changeling, sprite, sylph, salamander, *ignis fatuus*, will-o'-the-wisp, peri, houri, mermaid, genii, pigmy, gnome, giant, men in green, brownie, goblin, vampire, incubi, ogre, ghoul and imp. In all, there are references to twenty-four different terms for fairies and other supernatural beings. In *Shirley* there are references also to wood-nymph, Jack O' Lantern in *The Professor*, and the banshee, dryad, and undine in *Villette*. Yet Brontë also alludes to folkloric and mythological literary

[36] Alexander, *Rise of Angria* 1, p. 299, p. 304.
[37] Alexander, *Glass Town, Angria and Gondal*, pp. 256-262.

figures across *Jane Eyre* such as Mustard-Seed of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to describe Rochester's image of Jane as a fairy. In *Villette* Lucy Snowe conveys the ugliness of Madame Waravens in folklore terms as the evil fairy Malevola of Voltaire's *Candide* and the witch Sidonia of Meinhold's *Sidonie Von Bork die Klosterhexe*.

This seeming acquiescence to conventional sexual coding of women continues in the novels, with the character of William Crimsworth in *The Professor* (1857) measuring his pupils according to male standards. Of Adèle Dronsart he says 'she was an unnatural looking being – so young, fresh, blooming yet so Gorgon-like'.[38] Conversely, he says, 'Caroline de Blémont! Ah, there is beauty! beauty in perfection. What a cloud of sable curls about the face of an 'houri'.[39] When Frances Henri Evans deviates from the feminine and hence cultural norm—teasing and mocking him and thus threatening his masculine powers—she is relegated to images of 'white demon [...] elfish freak [...] sprite'.[40] Yet when she behaves with delicacy, Frances is no longer a 'vexing fairy' but a 'submissive and supplicating little mortal woman'. The alien nature becomes human again. But his friend Hunsden's 'ideal of a woman' is an 'Alpine peri' to a 'seraph'.[41]

In *Shirley* (1849), Robert Moore addresses Shirley and Caroline as 'fairies' and Caroline combs her hair like a 'mermaid'. Miss Mann's ugliness is witchlike and she is also described as 'Medusa' and like a 'Gorgon'. The lovely young Caroline Helstone seems to be a 'wood-nymph' to the infatuated youth Martin Yorke and the beautiful Shirley Keeldar, 'peri' to Louis Moore. On Shirley's ability to charm men, Moore's young pupil Henry Sympson questions whether she is a 'white witch'. On the topic of sexist images of women, Shirley and Caroline rely on the seductive image of mermaids to advocate that they are 'neither

[38] Brontë, *The Professor*, p. 129.
[39] Ibid., p. 124.
[40] Ibid., p. 276.
[41] Ibid., p. 268.

temptresses, nor terrors nor monsters' (p. 207). In *Villette* (1853) Dr John Bretton regards Paulina De Bassompierre as pleasing and non-threatening as a tiny woman or fairy. Adhering to her femininity he revels in the softness and beauty of her 'fairy's dance'. Anna Braun regards Paulina as a 'dainty nymph—an undine' (p. 303). Dr John is infatuated with Ginevra Fanshawe, adhering to the image of 'peri' as the embodiment of female perfection. Miss Walraven, the elderly woman is compared with 'the chief figure—Cunégonde, the sorceress—Malevola, the evil fairy' (p. 389) and 'that sullen Sidonia tottering and trembling like palsy incarnate' (p. 390).

Brontë's objective is to challenge narrow cultural definitions of Victorian femininity. Coding articulates deviations from the standard perception of female beauty. In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë maintains her stance as a tool to express sexual development but subverts this coding system by framing the fairy motif within the zone of female power and promotes Jane's physical difference as something positive.

Cultural Anxieties of Physical Difference

Initially, the fairy motif represents Jane's journey to rational thinking. Jane's own preoccupation with fairies occurs mainly, and understandably, during her childhood when she was endowed with a vivid imagination and exposed to Bessie's fairy tales. When she gazes in the mirror and sees a fairy/imp gazing back at her, we are made familiar with Jane's feelings of alienation. More so, Jane's episodic lament for the loss of the fairies is a Romantic attack on Enlightenment rationality, a theme more associated with the role of the ghost motif across Brontë's fiction. This sceptic/reason dichotomy begins in the red room when Jane, seeing her fairy/imp image in the mirror, responds by saying:

> Superstition was with me at that moment; but it was not yet her hour for complete victory: my blood was still warm; the mood of the revolted slave was still bracing me

> with its bitter vigour; I had to stem a rapid rush of retrospective thought before I quailed to the dismal present. (p. 14).

Although Jane can suppress superstition, her Romantic imagination propels her to search for the elves among 'foxglove leaves and under mushrooms' (p. 21), finally accepting their exodus to countries less industrial than England. Yet, she will pick up some *Arabian Tales*. Johnson's *Rasselas* has no charm for her, having no fairies or genii to arouse the imagination. Jane's self development, then, is in part revealed by her need to pursue reason and common sense. At Thornfield, Jane's educational growth is briefly hampered by her image of a room as a 'fairy place' (p. 104). She also subdues any notions of ghost tradition, legends or ghost stories at the house, rejecting the goblin laugher saying she was a 'fool for entertaining a sense even of surprise' (p. 107).

We can apply Silver's idea that folklore provided rhetoric to express Victorian experience of inferiority, subordination and dependence, to Jane's use of folklore. We might also perceive of Jane's difference in terms of the other. At Gateshead, the child Jane immediately informs her readers of her subordinate position in the family, saying that she is 'humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed.' (p. 7). Jane is at a disadvantage, being shorter and less attractive. The imp analogy as mischievous and ungovernable child makes sense given the attitude of Mrs Reed and the staff towards Jane. But the suggestion conjured when Jane peruses the images in Bewick's 'History of British Birds' of 'the bleak shores of Lapland [...] Iceland, Greenland' (p. 8) might eerily associate with Jane's imagined origins of her fairyland birthplace. Perhaps Brontë is drawing on Walter Scott's euhemerist view, explained by Silver, that the Laplanders, considered magical, were the sources of the original fairies, gaining their reputation as supernatural by

predicting the weather,[42] as well as acting symbolically for Jane's sense of alienation from a social group. Jane's image in the mirror sustains the tension between superstition and reality. She remarks:

> All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality; and the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp, Bessie's evening stories represented as coming up out of lone, ferny dells in moors, and appearing before the eyes of belated travellers. (p. 14).

In general, imps and fairies were commonly linked to mischievous but non-threatening children. But Jane's reference to imp also might carry a negative connotation as imps were a distinctive feature of English witchcraft. They were believed to be familiars or minor demons and/or servants to wizards.[43] At any rate, she feels inferior to her half-siblings. Sarah Abbot is scathing of Jane's unattractiveness saying: 'if she were a nice, pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness; but one cannot really care for such a little toad as that.' (p. 26). In her physical difference and social isolation, Jane's association with the fairy/imp image represents the idea of the 'other'.

Jane's phantom likeness continues to link to her feelings as 'a heterogeneous thing' (p.16) and of a dissimilar 'race' to Mrs Reed. Is Jane racially other as Celtic and not Saxon? The fairy motif represents Jane's sense of otherness, physically and possibly ethnically. Had Jane been, like her half siblings, 'a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child—though equally dependent and friendless', Mrs Reed would have treated her better and the servants would not have made Jane the 'scapegoat of the nursery' (p. 16). Brocklehurst reiterates the idea of her otherness, asking 'her size is small: what is her age?' (p. 31). So tiny is Jane that he is surprised at her being ten years. Bessie and Brocklehurst's allusions to Jane as 'little thing' and 'little girl' reinforce this image. Drawing also on Scott's creative interest

[42] Silver, p. 11, p. 47.
[43] Simpson and Roud, p. 118.

in the prototypes of fairies as dwarfs or duergars and cultural definitions of women, Brontë sets the scene for the reconstruction of a heroine with irregular features.

A notable characteristic of Jane as both a child and young woman is that she has irregular features. *En route* to her new servitude as governess at Thornfield, for example, she checks her appearance and thinks:

> I sometimes regretted that I was not handsomer: I sometimes wished to have rosy cheeks, a straight nose, and small cherry mouth; I desired to be tall, stately, and finely developed in figure; I felt it a misfortune that I was so little, so pale, and had features so irregular and so marked. And why had I these aspirations and these regrets? (p. 98).

This passage describes Jane as short in stature with a pale complexion. She refers to her face as odd or atypical, and noticeable, and the phrase 'so irregular and so marked' is emphasised by the assertive '*so'*. This impression fits in with Jane's formative description of herself as fairy/imp in the red room scene upon seeing her reflection in the mirror. As she dresses, Jane reveals her dissatisfaction with her looks saying 'I ever wished to look as well as I could, and to please as much as my want of beauty would permit' (p. 98). Jane's description of herself as irregular featured might remind her of her imaginative conception as a fairy figure that had symbolised her sense of otherness in childhood.

Crucially, in her developing adulthood, Jane has to contend with her own and others' image of her as different from Victorian conceptions of ideal femininity. Subverting the ideal, Rochester is enchanted at Jane's physical otherness at their meeting in the dining room saying 'I marvelled where you had got that sort of face' (p. 122). Instinctively, he associates her with 'fairy tales'. In her fairy likeness, Jane has the potential to move away from societal norms and values of beauty. Seen through Rochester's resolve to value inner rather than external beauty, the fairy motif both adheres to and subverts idealised images of women. In his desperate search for a new kind of woman, Rochester has finally met someone who is 'intellectual, faithful, loving' (p. 312). Brontë constructs a heroine who is physically

unconventional but morally superior. My analysis fits in with Purkiss' assertion that 'fairies are a kind of ultimate symbol of Otherness'.[44] Purkiss muses on the idea of fairyland as a place that represents an 'alternative, unauthorised kinship structure; if you are outside human kin relations, perhaps you can be inside something else, something more glamorous'. It may have been Brontë's intention to perceive of elf land as a parallel universe stripped of Victorian cultural mores and conventions.

The irregular-featured heroine is in diametric opposition to the character, Rosamond Oliver, conceived of as the novel's 'earthly angel' or 'Peri' (p. 363). Jane's description of Rosamond as Peri reflects male assumptions of ideal womanhood. The novel delineates between irregular and regular featured heroes and heroines, but endows the latter with internal defections in their moral nature or disposition in some way. According to Fahnstock, by 1868, the aesthetic of the imperfect heroine is endorsed with the classical tradition slowly going out of fashion.[45] By referring to Jane as a fairy (endowed with metaphoric power), Brontë presents a new kind of heroine, and one who deviates from the cultural ideal. As fairy, however, it is Jane's non-normative physique that carries the ideological weight, exposing society's treatment of those marginal to the cultural norm of beauty. At Ferndean, Rochester's former butler describes Jane 'as that midge of a governess' (p. 428). According to Silver, the term midget was coined in 1865 through analogy to a midge, fly or gnat.[46] Midgets or living dwarfs were often called fairies or elves. Silver says that tiny people were all mocked as freaks of nature.

However, Brontë opts for the physicality of the fairy motif rather than the more conventional use of the changeling creature (seen more in Silver's account) to examine

[44] Purkiss, p. 98. It may be that folkloric readings might benefit from literary concepts of Otherness such as in Tabish Khair, *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from elsewhere* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
[45] Fahnstock, p. 333.
[46] Silver, p. 118.

Victorian cultural anxieties of difference. Jane's fairy image symbolises the outsider: the alienated, physical other. Purkiss notes that for the Victorians, 'fairy difference from mortals became an emblem of female difference from the male'.[47] But in her very physical difference, Jane Eyre is also seen as a threat to the social order, conveying as Silver says of the changeling motif, 'an almost innate Victorian fear of the 'other', they are generally doomed to a borderland existence'.[48] In sum, the fairy helps in the construction of the new wave of heroines and is clearly linked to Brontë's awareness of society's disproportionate value of beauty.

Sexuality, Female Power and Equality

At Thornfield the fairy motif re-surfaces. More than in any other section of the novel, at Thornfield the fairy motif as a symbol contributes to the debate about women's right to equality, represents a female zone of power and expresses the nature of sexuality. Rochester's perception of Jane as a fairy is crucial for the gradual development of their sexual relationship. On the way to post a letter on Hay Lane, Jane says:

> This lane inclined up-hill all the way to Hay: having reached the middle I sat down on a stile which led thence into a field. [...] The din was on the causeway: a horse was coming; […] I was just leaving the stile; yet, as the path was narrow, I sat still to let it go by [...] I remembered certain of Bessie's tales wherein figured a North of England spirit, called a "Gytrash;" which, in the form of horse, mule, or large dog, haunted solitary ways, and sometimes came upon belated travellers, as this horse was now coming upon me. [...] the traveller, now stooping, felt his foot and leg, as if trying whether they were sound; apparently something ailed them, for he halted to the stile whence I had just risen, and sat down. (pp. 112-113).

Brontë may be alluding to a custom or love divination still practised in the nineteenth century, that if a girl sat on a stile to welcome the new moon she would dream of her future husband.[49]

[47] Purkiss, p. 247.
[48] Ibid., p. 80.
[49] Simpson and Roud, p. 244.

At any rate, we must interpret the stile as a symbolic site used by Brontë to play with ideas of power, sexuality and difference. The fact that this and other episodes take place on a field stile might suggest a symbolic significance. The stile sets the scene for Jane's sexual awakening and his sexual desire for her. The stile on Hay Lane as a site for their first encounter is important. This is the first of five references to the stile, chronicling its significance. This scene can be discussed from an anthropological perspective. In *Les rites de passage* (1908), anthropologist Arnold van Gennep developed the concept of boundaries or thresholds as symbols of major life transitions or rites of passage to be passed through in the life of the individual and the community from birth to sexual beginnings and courtship, betrothal and marriage to death. Folklorist Hilda E. Davidson adapts his ideas to examine the significance of boundaries at physical borders or between borders as places of enchantment, inspiration, protection and healing. At these sites, ghosts were seen and witches and demons met.[50] In folk belief, the stile was a key site for boundary symbolism. Symbolically, the 'threshold marks the boundary between a household and the outer world, and hence, between belonging and being an outsider and between safety and danger'.[51] The stile as a boundary site could be interpreted as symbolising may symbolise Jane's position as an outsider in terms of physicality as well as gender, class and possibly religion and race. It was believed that the stile was a favourite haunt for supernatural creatures such as Cheshire boggarts in the form of a fairy, ghost or demon 'depending on the presuppositions of the storyteller'[52] and as such, stiles were thresholds between natural and supernatural states. Barbara Spooner explains that:

> Boundaries between territories, like boundaries between seasons, are lines along which the supernatural intrudes through the surface of existence [...] the fact that un-baptized children used to be buried at boundary fences suggests that these lines, like

[50] Davidson, *Boundaries and Thresholds*, pp. 7-12.
[51] Simpson and Roud, p. 357.
[52] Jacqueline Simpson, *Folklore of the Welsh Border* (London: Batsford, 1976), p. 87.

> the un-baptized child, did not really belong to this world. Stiles were favourite perches for ghosts.[53]

Here, the collision between the Otherworld and human world is played out symbolically to emphasise Jane's status as other.

Victor Turner advances van Gennep's rites of passage in his study of traditional culture. Liminality (the Latin term *limen* meaning boundary) signifies the passing through (or transitional stage) of symbolic or cultural realms. Turner examines rites of passage in traditional cultures within the context of status elevation and status reversal. At certain times in the traditional calendar, people:

> Who habitually occupy low status positions in the social structure, are positively enjoined to exercise ritual authority over their superiors; and they, in their turn, must accept with good will their ritual degradation.[54]

He argues that sex role reversal and status reversal/inversion occurs at designated calendar events such as May Day. Halloween resonates with the trickery of hobgoblins, boggarts and fairies on the human world and the power of disguised children over adults.[55] Jane's rescue of her master might be read as status inversion. On 'the first of May' (p. 226), Jane finally asserts her power over the dying Mrs Reed, bids farewell to her without shedding 'a tear' (p. 240). Coincidentally, again, on 'the fifth of November' (p. 370), St John, preferring Jane to Rosamond, declares that 'something else is as deeply impressed with her defects: they are such that she could not sympathize in nothing I aspired to—cooperate in nothing I undertook (p. 374).

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[53] Barbara C. Spooner, 'The Haunted Stile', *Folklore*, 79 (1968), pp. 135-139 (p. 139). See also John Rhys, *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901).
[54] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 167. See Liminality and fairies in Regina Buccola, *Fairies, Fractious Women and the Old Faith: Fairies in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (Sussquehanna University Press, 2006).
[55] Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 172.

At their next meeting, Rochester develops the image of Jane as fairy, reminding her also of her mirror image in the red room. He comments on Jane's emaciation from years residing at Lowood School:

> 'No wonder you have rather the look of another world. I marvelled where you had got that sort of face. When you came on me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse: I am not sure yet. Who are your parents?'
> 'I have none.'
> 'Nor ever had, I suppose: do you remember them?'
> 'No.'
> 'I thought not. And so you were waiting for your people when you sat on that stile?'
> 'For whom, sir?'
> 'For the men in green: it was a proper moonlight evening for them. Did I break through one of your rings, that you spread that damned ice on the causeway?'
> I shook my head. 'The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago,' said I, speaking as seriously as he had done. 'And not even in Hay Lane or the fields about it could you find a trace of them. I don't think either summer or harvest, or winter moon will ever shine on their revels more.'
> Mrs Fairfax had dropped her knitting, and with raised eyebrows, seemed wondering what sort of talk this was. (p. 122).

Here, Rochester not only echoes the association between the stile and fairies but demonstrates his sexual attraction of Jane through the mediation of fairy lore. In its embodiment of the erotic and repressed desires, fairy lore is a chosen discourse for Rochester's sexual trajectory. He pulls out all the stops, focusing on fairy capriciousness, the colour green, elf land and the diurnal time of moonlight for fairy appearances and fairy rings. According to Duffy, fairy rings signal the hypnotic effect of the fairy's dance on men.[56] Jane's response, however, is less sexual but rational suggesting her coyness in responding directly to the codification of fairy. She, instead, taps into the symbolic use of fairies to denote cultural progress. She is, after all, governess to the master and knows her place. The fairy motif best expresses the literality of his being spell-bound, captivated, charmed, transfixed and enchanted by Jane, oblivious to the presence of Mrs Fairfax (who in fact does not understand this language).

[56] Duffy, p. 85.

Rochester may be unconscious of her power over him. Duffy states that enchantment offers a valid image for 'psychological phenomena' and that fairy imagery is itself already a projection of such unconscious states'[57] and unconscious wishes. Duffy suggests that fairies in Arthurian romances (and later Scott's 'Tam Lin') evoke:

> The dream atmosphere, that enables us to experience more deeply, because we have initially suspended rationalization, and that the events which on the surface seem to break conventional morality are acting as symbols for the breaking of a deeper taboo.[58]

This resonates strongly with Rochester's fantasy of his enchantment of Jane. All of Rochester's taboos or prohibitions are encapsulated in the fairy discourse. He is already married, almost engaged to another, is Jane's employer, and twice her age.

Bewitchment is a term used to describe sexual enchantment of white witches or sorceresses, a term Rochester also applies to Jane. We can draw again on Victor Turner's idea of liminality with Jane, habitually in a low social position, symbolically raised to a position of power in her fairy image. The ritual of status inversion emerges with the feminising codification of Jane as 'fairy' (as opposed to other fairy terms) as well as the fairy/human duality. To an extent, Gilbert and Gubar offer another example of this transposition in describing Rochester's impersonation of a female gypsy 'or puzzling transvestism' when they say that 'by putting on a woman's clothes he puts on a woman's weakness'[59] The stile site also reminds us of Jane's crucial progression from girl to woman.

The coding strategy intensifies as Rochester describes Jane in a sexist way. When he thinks he is being drowned by Jane, he cries out 'in the name of all the elves in Christendom, is that Jane Eyre?' he demanded. 'What have you done with me, witch, sorceress?' (p. 148).

[57] Duffy, p. 266.
[58] Duffy, p. 73.
[59] Gilbert and Gubar, p. 355.

But later, realising that she is actually rescuing him, he says: 'I have heard of good genii—there are grains of truth in the wildest fable [...] my cherished preserver, goodnight' (p. 151).

Time and again, we are brought back to the symbolic stile and its link with fairies. Months later, during the hay making season they will reunite on that very stile after Jane returns from Gateshead. This boundary site continues to signify Jane's girl-woman transition and her sexual awakening. This time, she has to cross two fields, a road, a gate and the stile. Jane is reminded of the link between boggarts and stiles seeing Rochester seated there. Continuing the seesaw power dynamic she says, 'well he is not a ghost; yet every nerve I have is unstrung: for a moment I am beyond my own mastery' (p. 244). Yet again, the fairy references reflect his increasing desire of Jane:

> 'And this is Jane Eyre? Are you coming from Millcote, and on foot? Yes—just one of your tricks: not to send for a carriage, and come clattering over street and road like a common mortal, but to steal into the vicinage of your home along with twilight [...] She comes from the other world—from the abode of people who are dead' [...]
> He did not leave the stile, and I hardly liked to ask to go by. [...]
> 'Tell me now, fairy as you are,—can't you give me a charm, or a philter, or something of that sort, to make me a handsome man?'
> 'It would be past the power of magic, sir'. (p. 245).

In her absence, his sexual feelings for Jane have increased, reflected in his extensive knowledge of fairy tradition. He banters with her and teases her, conjuring the association between fairies and the un-dead. Simpson says, 'fairies were fitted into the Christian frame of reference [...] they could be identified with ghosts—either of the dead in general, or of special categories such as un-baptized infants'.[60] In her power to change his life, Rochester is relegated to child as Jane, as a fairy with the symbol of 'power over life and death,[61] ascends to the parent figure in this fairy tale of wish fulfilment. The image of fairy becomes more and more symbolic of his fantasy of winning the heart of this girl. Hay making is yet another

[60] Simpson and Roud, p. 116.
[61] Duffy, p. 258.

symbolic time for status inversion. It is also a symbol of fertility signalling Jane being love-struck by her master.

Brontë exploits the folkloric setting of Midsummer Eve. Known also as St John's Eve (24th June) it has a powerful association with love divination and magic, often set in or linked to a garden (one of the key nights along with St Agnes's Eve and St Mark's).[62] Again, the date signals Jane's sexual development for this is the official night of their betrothal to each other. Brontë exploits Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* theme of love and courtship. In the morning, Jane echoes Rochester's fairy tale wish-fulfilment wondering if it were all a dream, saying 'I could not be certain of the reality till I had seen Mr Rochester again, and heard him renew his words of love and promise' (p. 257). Once betrothed to Jane, Rochester dispenses with all former formalities. Folklore images are now preceded with the possessive pronoun 'Is this my pale little elf? Is this my Mustard-Seed?' (p. 258). When Rochester resorts to the stereotypical references of Jane's 'fairy-like fingers' and 'sylph's foot' (p. 259) she challenges his objectification of her: 'I am your plain Quakerish governess', but he retorts insisting that: 'you are a beauty in my eyes; and a beauty just after the desire of my heart,—delicate and aerial'. (p. 259). Jane will be no angel unlike Rosamond Oliver as 'Peri' (p. 363). The fairy image conveys Rochester's adoration of Jane's physical otherness. In his admonishment of her protest, Rochester says: 'I as a Christian, will soon give up the notion of consorting with a mere sprite or salamander' (p. 262). As fairy, Jane's physical tininess hardly matches her internal strength, an image that potentiates the fluid power structure of the couple. When Jane goads Rochester to sing a song he expresses his disapproval of her deviation from the cultural norm of feminine propriety, using folklore terms such as 'capricious witch' (p.271), 'malicious elf' 'sprite' and 'changeling' (p. 274). All

[62] Simpson and Roud, pp. 238-9.

of these terms, though, are in contrast to Jane's image of Bertha Mason as the 'foul German spectre—the Vampyre' (p. 284). In literature, vampire symbolised corrupted beauty, promiscuity, sexuality uncontrolled, flesh-eating and over-developed fecundity. Silver suggests that this type of extreme evil fairy was seen as more threatening.[63] Yet, it had associations with the femme fatale and the dead similarly to fairies. The vampire image not only reminds Jane of Rochester's promiscuous sexual history but also his sexual desire of her and possibly her anticipation of sex with him.

It is puzzling that once Rochester has secured the love of this woman and their relationship is more equal, the fairy images do not cease. Rather, they continue for him unabashedly and perhaps, for the very first time, Rochester's image of Jane as a fairy is appropriate given the audience of his young ward, Adèle. The fairy image comes in handy when Rochester has to explain delicately to the child that they are to be married with the implication that Adèle may go to boarding school. Rochester enters into a detailed re-enacting of his reunion with Jane after she has returned from Gateshead. For the fourth time, we face the stile. Rochester remembers sitting on the stile after he and Adèle have finished haymaking. Rochester cleverly creates a sort of fairy tale, which of course it is to him. The idea that a much older and unattractive man can appeal to a young girl is akin to a fairy tale. He explains that he:

> 'Sat down to rest me on a stile [...] when something came up the path and stopped two yards off me. I looked at it. It was a little thing with a veil of gossamer on its head. I beckoned it to come near me: it stood soon at my knee. I never spoke to it, and it never spoke to me, in words: but I read its eyes, and it read mine; and our speechless colloquy was to this effect:-
> 'It was a fairy, and come from Elf-land, it said; and its errand was to make me happy: I must go with it out of the common world to a lonely place—such as the moon, for instance—and it nodded its head [...] I said I should like to go; but reminded it, as you did me, that I had no wings to fly.

[63] Silver, pp. 176-178.

> ‘Oh,’ returned the fairy, ‘that does not signify! Here is a talisman will remove all difficulties;’ and she held out a pretty gold ring’ [...]
> ‘Mademoiselle is a fairy,’ he said, whispering mysteriously (p. 267).

Rochester’s description of Jane as little girl is interesting. It illuminates their age gap. To Duffy, the fairy/mortal union can encode the taboo of the Oedipal Complex.[64] In Jane’s case, by her hiring from the master, she is entering into a potentially explosive incestuous daughter/father relationship. The fairy motif expresses the non-sacred, the culturally unacceptable. She has a childlike fixation on this experienced father figure and conversely, albeit illicitly, the bigamous Rochester is drawn to the daughter, virginal girl, uncorrupted innocence. Once they are betrothed, he relishes the idea of her as a ‘young Mrs. Rochester—Fairfax Rochester’s girl-bride’ (p. 258). Jane denies the possibility of such potential happiness saying ‘I was not born for a different destiny to the rest of my species: to imagine such as lot befalling me is a fairy-tale—a day-dream’ (p. 258). Duffy describes Elf-land as an irrational world of fantasy where real or mortal time and all natural physical laws are suspended. As in dreams, ‘fairyland is the realm of the unconscious, the dream-world, duplicated in the conscious of childhood and erotic daydreams’.[65] In Elf-land, wishes come true. It is the land of one’s heart desire. Enchantment may be fleeting though and short lived. As a fantasy place, Rochester envisions it above rather than underground (its more usual site close to the dead). It conveys the idea of fairies as part of the dream world, manifesting things usually below but here above and far beyond ‘the conscious level of the mind’.[66]

Finally, Rochester, now desperate to win Jane’s love, reflects on his first meeting with her at the stile saying ‘It was well that this elf must return to me—that it belonged to my house down below’ (p. 312). The idea of Jane as fairy has conveyed the sexual pattern of their

[64] Duffy, p. 101.
[65] Ibid., pp. 73-75 (p. 74).
[66] Ibid., p. 76.

relationship. It has expressed the idea of marrying Jane as a fantasy, a dream, a taboo, wish-fulfilment and an ideal.

Jane arrives at Ferndean in search of her master. Bumping into his old butler she hears her own narrative:

> She was a little small thing, they say, almost like a child [...] Rochester was about forty, and this governess not twenty; and you see, when gentlemen of his age fall in love with girls, they are often like as if they were bewitched: well, he would marry her (p. 427).

The dream-reality sequence recurs with Rochester, for the first time since Jane's rejection of him, able to feel a 'delightful consciousness' (p. 437). As he faces the reality of her presence, he enquires, 'You are altogether a human being, Jane? You are certain of that?' (p. 437).

The folklore images resume with Jane saying:

> 'Have you a pocket comb about you, sir?'
> 'What for, Jane?'
> Just to comb out this shaggy black mane. I find you rather alarming, when I examine you close at hand: you talk of my being a fairy; but I am sure, you are more like a brownie'
> Am I hideous, Jane? (p. 438).

For the first time her allusion to brownie might articulate her sexual desire for her master as much as his describing her as fairy. Their allusion to folklore indicates their spiritual affinity within the context of their physical difference from others. When Jane deviates once more from the feminine ideal, deferring his request for information, he calls her 'mocking changeling—fairy-born and human-bred! You make me feel as I have not felt these twelve months' (p. 438). This is the last folklore entry. After this, their power relationship is expressed in nature imagery with Jane recognising his physical dependence on her 'just as if a royal eagle, chained to a perch, should be forced to entreat a sparrow to become its purveyor' (p. 439). Folklore has contributed to the novel's ultimate goal of spiritual equality. 'No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone and

flesh of his flesh' (p. 450). The fairy signifies Gilbert and Gubar's argument that 'Brontë could not logically define, however she could embody in tenuous but suggestive imagery' that which contributes to the 'marriage of true minds at Ferndean'.[67]

Metonymic and encoded as Silver suggests,[68] the fairy motif does seem to indicate Brontë's conscious desire for counter-societal ideas of femininity, to celebrate otherness, explore gender equality and to express sexual politics. With Jane as fairy, Rochester, haunted by his bigamous trap, can escape into the safety of the fantastic. His 'unconscious is able to play with the unthinkable, to express a forbidden desire'[69] and that desire is in the form of plain, orphaned, governess Jane. Throughout *Jane Eyre*, Brontë steers away from the image of fairy as alien and unnatural. Positively, Jane's fairy likeness is the projection of Rochester's desire of a new kind of woman. So frequent and extensive are the allusions to the fairy tradition that one must conclude its importance to the author as a vehicle to communicate the unmentionable. This study is in keeping with Maynard's stance that the fundamental message of *Jane Eyre* is the 'continuity in concern with the strength of sexual forces in human life'.[70] However, where Maynard focuses mainly on the heroine's sexual journey, this study is orientated also to the hero's experience, mediated through the role of the fairy motif. Moreover, this study reveals a darker side to sexuality. It raises issues about sexual taboos such as father –daughter liaisons. It highlights Brontë's foray into forbidden territory of the relationship between a young girl and an older man. Despite divisions of class, occupation and legal constraints, their love for each other surpasses all obstacles. The fairy signifies Rochester's dreams and fantasies. The fairy formula is a heady mix of the projection of everything both desired and feared. As Duffy states, the faery world is simultaneously 'most

[67] Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 370-371.
[68] Silver, p. 5.
[69] Duffy, p. 300.
[70] Maynard, p. 93.

dangerous and most alluring'.[71] Relying so heavily on the symbolism of fairies, Brontë plays out the novel's ideas about otherness and physical difference, the dynamic of gender relations and sexuality.

[71] Duffy, p. 282.

Chapter Four

Villette's Ghost Motif: Superstition versus Enlightenment Rationality and Christian Truths

> Are there wicked things, not human, which envy human bliss? Are there evil influences haunting the air, and poisoning it for man? What was near me?
>
> Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (p. 244)

My final study of folklore in Brontë's work focuses on Lucy Snowe's interaction with ghosts in *Villette.* As is the case, Brontë critics situate *Villette's* ghost motif within a tradition of Gothic representation, which raises again my central argument about re-contextualising Gothic as folklore in nineteenth-century literature (including Gothic fiction). In the exploration of contemporary psychology across Brontë's *Villette*, Sally Shuttleworth's study of ghosts is minimal but she argues that Lucy's ghost is one that is fundamentally different from conventional Gothic.[1] Shuttleworth goes on to say that the novel's anti-Catholic theme, tied up with sexual fear and the legend of the nun buried alive for some sin committed, triggers an association between nuns, ghosts and the theme of sexuality. Lucy's sightings of the nun also represent moments of sexual tension with the ghost embodying her 'own activities of self-suppression'.[2] Michael M. Clarke agrees that Brontë's use of the supernatural contrasts with Lucy's pro-rational and empirical-scientific Protestantism.[3]

More specifically, Marianne Thormählen's examination of the Brontës' ideas about the afterlife argues that 'in poetry and fiction all of the three Brontë sisters reflect the

[1] Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 220. See also See also E. D. H. Johnson, '"Daring the Dread Glance": Charlotte Brontë's treatment of the supernatural in *Villette*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 20:4 (1966), pp. 325-336.
[2] Shuttleworth, p. 226.
[3] Michael M. Clarke, 'Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, mid-Victorian Anti-Catholicism, and the Turn to Secularism', *ELH*, 78:4 (2011), pp. 967-989. See also Rosemary Beattie-Clarke, 'Fables of Rebellion: Anti-Catholicism and the structure of *Villette*', *ELH*, 53 (1986), pp. 821-847.

conviction that the passion of love is never simply bounded by the span of human life on earth'.[4] Their novels convey differing attitudes to life beyond earthly existence: 'The death of the body is never viewed as the end of a person's life; but the conceptions of an afterlife vary considerably, and the three authors explore them from different stand-points'.[5] Moreover, Thormählen is persuaded that there is a powerful streak of otherworldliness in their writing pertaining to the world of spirits, death, the afterlife, eternity and the soul. All of the siblings familiarised themselves with post-Reformation debates on 'mortalism, annihilationism and soul-sleeping', regarded by orthodox Christians as heresies. Thormählen argues that the exhortation at the beginning of chapter thirty-eight of *Villette* with its suggestion of a belief in an afterlife bears some similarity to St John Rivers' idea of gaining entry into heaven in *Jane Eyre*. Yet, Lucy is more focused on the present life, accepting God's great plan that some are born to suffer. Lucy, Thormählen says, does not steady her gaze to Heaven like Helen Huntingdon of Ann Brontë's *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), or anticipate liberation in death like Helen Burns. Speaking especially of *Wuthering Heights,* Thormählen notes the sisters' shared reading or familiarity with nineteenth-century works on devilry and sorcery such as James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and his article 'Fairies, Brownies and Witches' in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Daniel Defoe's *The History of the Devil* (1727) and his conception of the reality of dreams in *The Secrets of the Invisible World Laid Open, or A General History of Apparitions* (1727), and Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*.[6] Thormählen states that the Brontës' allusions to earthly heavens and hells relate to the authors' explorations of the human soul into the general pattern of spiritual enquiry that was so characteristic of their time. She concludes that by mid-nineteenth century, 'earthly existence was no longer primarily seen as a period of preparation

[4] Marianne Thormählen, *The Brontës and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 90.
[5] Ibid., p. 90.
[6] Ibid., pp. 100-103.

for the hereafter; and it was acknowledged that this life and the next touch each other across the grave'.[7] Unequivocally, Lucy aspires to the concept of a loving and merciful God, recognised as the ultimate source of human love, a commonplace theme throughout all of Brontë's novels, as Thormählen states. This viewpoint is in contradiction with Christina Crosby's idea that Brontë's 'most pressing concern is not the state of her heroine's soul, but the state of her mind'.[8]

Even more relevant is Michael Wheeler's *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology* (1990), with his examination of the Brontës' treatment of Victorian eschatology, the study of the last four things: death, judgement, heaven and hell. The Victorian's obsessive interest in death and the future life, described also as the Victorian 'cult of death', focused particularly on the death bed and graveyard sites. Victorian writers addressed the 'double consciousness of faith'[9] that embodied the conflict between this-worldly and the other-worldly. Frederick W. Robertson describes this tension, 'Talk, as we will of immortality, there is an obstinate feeling that we cannot master, that we end in death; and *that* may be felt together with the firmest belief of a resurrection'. Brontë describes death as, 'that dread visitant before whose coming every household trembles'.[10] The Brontës' Romantic writing, Wheeler states, was possibly influenced by Thomas Carlyle's prophetic and apocalyptic views and his reliance on the language of the Revelation. Their writing, he argues, reflects the contemporary anxieties, sensitivities and controversies on the topic of the afterlife. He considers the Brontës' writing as a suitable context for the interpretation of the dying process. Their novels particularly *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* convey the theme of Victorian eschatology at moments of crisis. Brontë portrays orthodox Christian

[7] Thormählen, p. 115.
[8] Ibid., p. 247. See Christina Crosby, *The Ends of History: Victorians and the Woman Question* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p. 133.
[9] Wheeler, p. 27.
[10] Ibid., p. 25.

commentary on death, heaven and eternity in the death bed scenes of Helen Burns and Mrs Reed. As Jane fails to comprehend fully the words of Helen, she is reminded of Helen's previous introduction to the idea of 'eternity'[11] as a spiritual home. Jane is confronted later with death as she is summoned to Mrs Reed's death bed. In *Jane Eyre,* the demands of this world and the next juxtaposes the 'mundane and the supra-mundane'.[12] Although Emily's conception of death is nature-based, she also tackles the interaction between this world and the next. Helen Burns, Jane Eyre and Rochester, and Helen Huntingdon, all convey the sisters' (and Patrick Brontë's) ambivalence towards hell and the fourth view of eschatology of Universalism or Restorationism, the view that all men will be saved. Belief in purgation in a future state extended beyond Catholicism, with Anne Bronté's heroine saying that: 'whatever fate awaits it, still it is not lost, and God, who hateth nothing that He hath made, will bless it in the end'.[13]

Whilst I agree with much of the criticism above, the pervasive presence of the ghost trope across *Villette* warrants a fuller examination. The ghost motif is multi-functional. Firstly, it conveys characterisation. As a metaphor it informs Lucy's romantic imagination and emotional, psychological and physical states. Secondly, the motif is thematic illustrating Brontë's engagement with key debates in contemporary mental philosophy (or early psychology). Thirdly, we can re-read the nun ghost plot within the wider context of Victorian eschatology. The ghost plot directs the novel's central action with Lucy questioning, 'are there wicked things, not human, which envy human bliss? Are there evil influences haunting the air, and poisoning it for man? (p. 244). Wheeler's study is most useful in helping me to situate the ghost motif within Protestant faith and debate. The subject of death permeates the novel initially in the characterisation of Miss Marchmont and the death-bed scene, preceded

[11] Wheeler, pp. 38-41, p. 42, p. 44.
[12] Ibid., p. 41.
[13] Ibid., p. 76.

by the detailed description of the death of her lover, Frank. On the subject of death, Miss Marchmont confides in Lucy on the loss of Frank, thirty years ago. She says, 'he was not dead; he was not quite unconscious [...] I took my dying Frank to myself [...] 'Maria', he said, 'I am dying in Paradise' (p. 41). Lucy's physiological description of her lady's death state as 'nearly cold, but all calm and undistorted' (p. 42) might resonate with Wheeler's observations of Nelly Dean on Heathcliff.[14] The thought of being separated from Graham Bretton leads the child Paulina Home to quote Genesis 37:35: 'If you were to die [...] I should refuse to be comforted, and go down into the grave to you mourning' (p. 29). But it is *Villette*'s preoccupation with death that I am most interested in, notably Lucy's nervous breakdown and the subsequent nun-ghost plot. Intellectual debate centred on the philosophical belief that the dead could reappear to the living. One argument was that this provided evidence of immortality or the soul's existence. The novel also touches on purgatory, a doctrine not necessarily confined to Catholicism. One can easily track Brontë's ghost belief trajectory from the youthful anti-Deist spiritualist thinking of 'Strange Events' (1830) to the developing scepticism of Jane Eyre in which Rochester cannot quite jettison his beliefs (or half belief) in ghosts. By *Villette,* Lucy Snowe will finally reject her ghost seer. My study is not simply to tease out the tensions between science and religion in *Villette,* but to suggest a more nuanced approach to religious truths and secularist ideas. The conflict of interest in *Villette* between superstition and reason might reflect R.C. Finucane's idea that this ideological rupture developed as a consequence of Victorian industrialism, leading people to oppose 'sterile rationality' and resorting to the bygone era of 'emotional Romanticism'.[15] I intersperse my commentary with Scott's studies to highlight Brontë's imitation and influence of his *Letters*

[14] Wheeler, pp. 30-31.
[15] R.C. Finucane, *Appearances of the Dead A Cultural History of Ghosts* (London: Junction Books, 1982), pp. 175-176.

on Demonology and Witchcraft (1830). In his *Letters,* Scott challenges several seventeenth-century thinkers' endorsement of the existence of the afterlife.

Victorians and the Supernatural

In addressing Brontë's treatment of religious and philosophical debates on the supernatural in *Villette,* the discussion needs to include the wider historical context of Victorian views on the supernatural. The following studies provide a framework that validates my reading of ghosts, beginning with a general survey and moving more specifically to doctrinal ideas on death. This chapter also illustrates the benefit of inter-disciplinary approaches to my study of *Villette*. Ghosts are itemised as a major area of folklore study. Simpson and Roud explain that 'after the Reformation, in order to debunk Purgatory, some Protestants redefined all alleged apparitions of ghosts as devils in disguise, but others thought this went too far'.[16] Ghost stories and supposed sightings coalesced into local legends, printed and oral. In the eighteenth century, belief in ghosts was mocked, with Henry Bourne rejecting spirits as frightening and grotesque and arguing that good Christians should discard the belief.[17] The Victorian desire to reconcile empirical science with religious truth is a hallmark of much of the literature of the fantastic, as Harris states, 'doctrine contended with popular beliefs, as well as scientific evidence'.[18] The Victorians, emerging from Enlightenment and immersed in the industrial age, 'epitomise this split between reason and superstition that characterises the human mind [...] the Victorians projected, infantilised, and isolated magical thinking'.[19] Harris quotes Robert F. Geary's idea of a 'new synthesis merging science and supernatural', and Jack

[16] Simpson and Roud, pp. 142-143 (p. 142).
[17] Ibid., pp. 142-143.
[18] Harris, *Folklore*, pp. 7-8.
[19] Ibid., p. 11.

Sullivan's 'desire to have it both ways – to be both mystical and scientific – is the characteristic of the supernatural fiction of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods'.[20]

Advocating the Victorian age of faith as well as the age of science, historian Frank Turner revises the dominant secular world view on nineteenth-century intellectual history. He characterises Victorian Anglican and clerical life as highly intellectual, interactive, existential, political, social and moral. He argues that by 1800, religion rather than science influenced advanced modes of thought. Moreover, 'there was also little or no appreciation for the manner in which popular interest in magic, superstition, religious ritual, mesmerism, and spiritualism could shade into science or respectable religion'.[21] R.W. Dale, the leading British Congregationalist clergyman, writing in the 1880s, could still call 'Every-day business a divine calling', conveying the world as God's creation in which the divine will was to be realised throughout secular as well as spiritual life.[22] Turner argues that there was little or no differentiation between secular and religious life. For the Victorians, religious convictions resulted in civic action as well as direct personal morality and piety. Although studied as forces of opposition, in reality, Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians and intellectuals often shared progressive, secular, scientific and rational world views.

Richard Noakes also revises traditional historiography, arguing that the relationship between spiritualism, pseudo-science and science was far more nuanced.[23] His work is useful in its specific focus on the rising tide of spiritualism in the 1850s. Noakes argues that both spiritualist thinkers and Protestants debated evidence for the immortality of the soul, the existence of the other world and eternal life. However, they were to part ways over the idea

[20] Harris, *Folklore*, pp. 12-13.
[21] Frank Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 11.
[22] Ibid., p. 3.
[23] Noakes, pp. 23-27. See also Jen Cadwallader, *Spirits and Spirituality in Victorian Fiction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

that spirits of the dead could reappear to the living, and the independence of spirit and matter. Some Victorians argued that supernatural manifestations might derive from natural causes (mental or physical) or from intelligences in the spirit world. Protestants lambasted the idea of boundaries between the two worlds, and rejected eternal damnation and interactions with evil spirits. Noakes argues that spiritualism was seen to endorse Christianity, combating atheism, agnosticism, materialism and rationalism.[24] We can identify this viewpoint in Brontë's youthful 'Strange Events' with Charles Wellesley prepared to endorse his ghost vision. But Lucy will not compromise Protestant doctrine.

In *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul* (2009), Robert Swanson raises key fundamental questions in Christian faith. He asks, what happens at death? What happens after and beyond death? Where do the dead go? What happens to them there? Can something be done in this life to prepare for the next? Similarly in *Shirley* Caroline Helstone asks:

> 'What can my departed soul feel then? [...] Can spirits through any medium, communicate with living flesh? Can the dead at all revisit those they leave?' [...] '*Where is* the other world? In *what* will another life consist?' (p. 356).

Swanson examines the Protestant rejection of Purgatory as a doctrinal concept. For Swanson, theological doctrines on the afterlife lie at the centre of Christian faith. To engage with the afterlife and the fate of the soul is to engage with death. He says:

> Accidental encounters with the dead, as visitors or exiles from the other side [...] and deliberate attempts to establish contact with the souls of the deceased, enmeshed Christians in a world- very much this world - inhabited by ghosts and spirits.[25]

The potential reality of such phenomena was debated throughout the nineteenth-century and became integrated into ecclesiastical circles and authorities. Ghosts were by and large incompatible with Christian faith. Yet, the desire for contact with the dead was reflected in

[24] Noakes, p. 37.
[25] Robert Swanson, *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul,* ed. Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon (Ecclesiastical History Society: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), pp. xvii-xxiii (xxii).

people's need for confirmation of immortality and the fate of the soul. Brontë intimates at this topic across her fiction. Lucy Snowe, especially, questions and then rejects the Catholic prospect of purgation, considering Anglican issues on life after death. We find the very religious Lucy seriously prepared to believe in the nun-ghost as evidence of the interconnectedness of this life and the next. This is the context in which we need to examine the ghost motif in *Villette*.

Ghost as Metaphor

More than any other of Brontë's heroines, the ghost motif expresses Lucy's over-imaginative life. They are a marker of her journey to wisdom and self-hood beginning in Bretton during a visit to her godmother. We can commend *Villette* as a modern and confident novel written from the point of view of an insightful main heroine. As a successor to Jane Eyre, we will come to associate Lucy's imagination with magical thinking. However, it is important to acknowledge from the outset that the cultural origins of Lucy's superstitions (or psychological realities) are less explicitly explained than those of her northern heroines, Jane Eyre and Caroline Helstone. Brontë assumes the readers' acceptance of Lucy's cultural knowledge of fairies, changelings, ghosts and omens. Far more important is to observe how she navigates her religious identity within a Catholic and therefore opposing doctrinal environment.

Right from the start, the reader is confronted with the complexities of Lucy Snowe. On viewing little Polly she declares that:

> I, Lucy Snowe, plead guiltless of that curse, an overheated and discursive imagination: but whenever, opening a room-door, I found her seated in a corner alone, her head on her pigmy hand, that room seemed to me not inhabited, but haunted (p. 12).

Our first impressions of Lucy are as a strange, over-imaginative young woman who describes herself much later as having 'a soon-depressed [...] easily deranged temperament' (p. 315). She perceives little Polly Home as unearthly and aged, pointing out her elfish features. Lucy is unnerved when Polly rests her 'elfish hand on her elfish breast' and appears 'instantly, like a small ghost gliding over the carpet' (p. 34). Graham Bretton reinforces the image of Polly as a 'changeling'. He describes her as a 'perfect cabinet of oddities' (p. 27). Both the ghost and elfin references indicate Lucy's unregulated imagination. Her innocuous image of Polly foreshadows her more threatening response to the nun-ghost.

Back in the English countryside, Lucy becomes maid to the frail Miss Marchmont. Lucy's allusions to death omens reveal heightened anxiety more than magical thinking. The 'long lamenting east wind' reminds Lucy of the 'legend of the Banshee' (p. 38). Her sighting of a 'moving mystery—the Aurora Borealis' (p. 43) is less an ominous sign and more a 'new power it seemed to bring' (p. 44). Brontë might have drawn on Scott's reference in *Letter Ten* to one of the most beautiful superstitions, the Irish 'banshie (or household fairy), whose office it is to appear, seemingly mourning, to announce the approaching death of someone of the destined race'.[26] Scott adds that the subject is 'beautifully investigated and illustrated by Mr Thomas Crofton Croker and others'.[27] Scott also points out 'some uncommon appearance of the aurora borealis, or the northern lights [...] a common and familiar atmospherical phenomenon until the beginning of the eighteenth century'.[28]

We must understand Brontë's ghosts as an aspect of the novel's eschatological and Anti-Catholic themes. Lucy clarifies her anti-spiritualist enlightened position, suggesting that 'these are not the days of miracles' (p.39) on hearing Miss Marchmont's suggestion that a miracle might reverse her ill-health. Noakes argues that the miracle debate was linked to mid-

[26] Scott, *Letters*, p. 206.
[27] Ibid., p. 206.
[28] Ibid., p. 15.

Victorian Christian preoccupation with the afterlife and the immortality of the soul. Feeling undermined by higher biblical criticism, spiritualists' faith in spirit manifestations (such as ghosts) was seen as proof of the Scriptural miracles.[29] At the Pensionnat, Lucy scoffs at a Catholic text that contained the 'legends of the saints' and their invention of 'these miracles' (p. 117). In *Letter One*, Scott refers to 'the Roman Catholics, indeed, boldly affirm that the power of miraculous interference with the course of Nature is still in being; but the enlightened even of this faith [...] will hardly assent to any particular case, without nearly the same evidence which might conquer the incredulity of their neighbours the Protestants'.[30]

With a renewed strength and confidence, Lucy considers her options. Yet, still, she relies on the ghost motif, metaphorically, to describe her state of mind, saying 'a terrible oppression overcame me' and 'all at once my position rose on me like a ghost' (p. 46). The ghost motif even reveals Lucy's medical history when she explains her familiarity with the hypochondrias experienced by the King of Labassecour (a condition familiar to Brontë, herself):

> There sat a silent sufferer—a nervous, melancholy man. Those eyes had looked on the visits of a certain ghost — had long waited the comings and goings of that strangest spectre, Hypochondria (p. 213).

On the boat across the channel to Villette, the naive Ginevra Fanshawe's seemingly irrelevant comment regarding her inability to distinguish between Protestantism and Romanism is actually more significant in the light of the novel's doctrinal tensions. She says, 'into the bargain I have quite forgotten my religion [...] I don't well know the difference between Romanism and Protestantism' (p. 54). At the Pensionnat De Demoiselles, Lucy exempts herself from the Catholic rite of evening prayer but prays privately. Her initial response to Madame Beck: 'No ghost stood beside me, nor anything of spectral aspect;

[29] Noakes, p. 26.
[30] Scott, *Letters*, p. 49.

merely a motherly, dumpy little woman' (p. 65) betrays nothing more than Lucy's excessive tiredness and sense of anxiety. Lucy tells her reader that she leans more to the artistic nature, a point that becomes clearer in relation to her anti-materialist response to the spectral illusion of the nun-ghost. Building on her initial disclosure of her 'over-heated and discursive imagination' (p. 12), Lucy now reveals that she 'seemed to hold two lives—the life of thought, and that of reality; and, provided the former was nourished with a sufficiency of the strange necromantic joys of fancy, the privileges of the latter might remain limited to daily bread, hourly work, and a roof of shelter' (p. 77). This comment reflects the tension she will increasingly experience between the artistic or Romantic sensibility (life of thought) and the scientific (life of reality). Surely this path will become a dangerous one to tread.

Mental Philosophy

The nun-ghost plot seems to fit into the contemporary debate on spectral illusion theory. Lucy learns that the school was originally a medieval Catholic convent, her dormitory, once nuns' cells. Moreover:

> Something had happened on this site which, rousing fear and inflicting horror, had left to the place the inheritance of a ghost story. A vague tale went of a black and white nun, sometimes, on some night or nights of the year, seen in some parts of the vicinage [...] The legend went, unconfirmed and unaccredited, but still propagated [...] the bones of a girl whom a monkish conclave of the drear middle ages had here been buried alive, for some sin against her vow. (p. 106).

Simpson and Roud state that 'some remarkable tales written down by a monk in 14th century Yorkshire concern tormented souls who roam about in terrifying shapes'.[31] The reader will soon realise that Lucy cannot adhere to her initial dismissal of the ghost story as 'romantic rubbish' (p. 106). Lucy's sense of reason is tested in the attic where she is locked in whilst she

[31] Simpson and Roud, p. 142.

learns her lines for a vaudeville to be performed at the fete. She is not troubled by the 'rumour affirmed that the ghostly Nun of the garden had once been seen here' (p. 135).

Lucy's terror of death surfaces during the long vacation. She describes an avenging dream as 'a nameless experience that had the hue, the mien, the terror, the very tone of visitation from eternity' (p. 159) after which consciousness returns. Imaginary overload coupled with her psychological and physical state leads her to perceive that the 'ghostly white beds were turning into spectres—the coronal of each became a death's head (p. 160). Managing to get up and out of bed, Lucy seeks solace and support from a Catholic priest, Pere Silas, having no-one else to turn to, and engages in the ritual of confession.

After her consultation with the priest Lucy faints at the steps of a building and again, articulates her dream in the following way:

> Where my soul went during that swoon I cannot tell. Whatever she saw, or wherever she travelled in her trance on that strange night, she kept her own secret; never whispering a word to Memory, and baffling Imagination by an indissoluble silence. She may have gone upward, and come in sight of her eternal home, hoping for leave to rest now, and deeming that her painful union with matter was at last dissolved. While she so deemed, an angel may have warned her away from heaven's threshold [...] I know she re-entered her prison with pain, with reluctance, with a moan and a long shiver. The divorced mates, Spirit and Substance, were hard to re-unite: they greeted each other, not in an embrace, but a racking sort of struggle. (p. 165).

This passage echoes that of Jane Eyre and Rochester's explanation of their divine inspiration upon hearing each other's voices miles away, she saying 'it had opened the doors of the soul's cell, and loosed its bands—it had wakened it out of its sleep [...] independent of the cumbrous body' (p. 421). Rochester reinforces the idea, 'in spirit, I believe we must have met. You no doubt were, at that hour, in unconscious sleep, Jane: perhaps your soul wandered from its cell to comfort mine' (p. 448). In Lucy's case, the reunion between soul and matter (although a reluctant union) reflects Brontë's progress towards Enlightenment thinking from a decidedly more spiritualist view in *Jane Eyre*.

As aspects of early Victorian psychology (or Mental Philosophy), dream, sleep and trance states were also serious areas of enquiry. Nicola Bown provides a useful commentary on the subject. As in the ghost controversy, Enlightenment thinkers or sceptics such as physiologists, physicians and those holding theological perspectives, vied with spiritualists (including some members of the clergy), mesmerists and those with pseudo-psychological views. On both sides fundamental questions were mooted. Were dreams supernatural or physiological in origin? Did dreams originate in the soul or in the mind? Did dreams come from outside the dreamer? Were dreams endowed with prophetic or divinatory powers? Crucially, dreams (like ghosts) generated debates on the relationship between mind, body, soul, spirit, consciousness and supernatural phenomena.[32] Jane and Rochester's response to their experience seems to characterise the Spiritualist Reverend Thomas Millington's *A Lecture on Dreams, Mesmerism and Clairvoyance* (1852) in the belief that 'during sleep, the mind in its partial abstraction from the body learns from a higher, or at least a more independent order of spirits those future events which it could not otherwise foresee [...] the spirit which is immortal and therefore supernatural, is the source of all true dreams'.[33] Initially, Lucy describes her soul traversing upward to heaven's threshold and down again to the corporeal body. In his *On the Phenomena of Dreams* (1832), Walter Dendy challenges those who believe that 'a dream may be the flight of a soul on a visit to other regions and its observations of their systems from actual survey'.[34] Ultimately, Lucy advocates the materialist view but her interpretation is nowhere near as stringent as the robust theory of dreams of Robert Macnish in *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1830) (known to Patrick Brontë). He asserts that 'dreaming, then, takes place when the repose is broken; and consists of a series of thoughts or feelings called into existence by certain powers of mind, while the other mental

[32] Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, p. 159.
[33] Ibid., p. 162.
[34] Ibid., p. 161.

powers which control these thoughts or feelings, is inactive'.[35] Macnish's theory was seen as a satisfactory explanation of dreams.

Having become acquainted with the attic, this space, although creepy, becomes paradoxically a private place for Lucy to read her letter from Graham. But there she will witness the nun-ghost. Of course, what she sees is actually real (Count de Hamal in disguise as the nun). The problem is how Lucy interprets the nun-ghost trick She is unable to repel her credulity of the ghost as it appears to her literally, in the form of a hoax rather than as an actual product of her imagination. Lucy personifies the Romantic ideals saying: 'This hag, this Reason [...] might be right; yet no wonder we are glad at times to defy her, to rush from under her rod and give a truant hour to Imagination [...] Reason is vindictive as a devil' (p. 229). Also: 'Feeling and I turned Reason out of doors' (p. 253). Lucy's homage to the imagination is akin to proselytizing. Her greatest test will be to accept the true laws of nature rather than supernatural agency, and move towards the age of science whilst still pursuing religious truth in the supernatural deity. She cries out:

> Are there wicked things, not human, which envy human bliss? Are there evil influences haunting the air, and poisoning it for man? What was near me? [...] Say what you will, reader—tell me I was nervous, or mad; affirm that I was unsettled by the excitement of that letter; declare that I dreamed: this I vow—I saw there—in that room—on that night—an image like—a NUN. (pp. 244-245).

From a materialist viewpoint Dr John (Graham Bretton) makes his diagnosis:

> 'How do you feel physically? [...] You are in a highly nervous state [...] you saw, or *thought* you saw, some appearance peculiarly calculated to impress the imagination. [...] I am not so sure that a visitation bearing a spectral character would not shake your very mind. Be calm now. This is all a matter of the nerves [...] I think it a case of spectral illusion: I fear, following on and resulting from long-continued mental conflict. [...] Happiness is the cure—a cheerful mind the preventive: cultivate both'. (pp. 247-250).

[35] Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, p.160.

Lucy suspends judgement of his diagnosis. She refuses to speak further of the nun to Madame Beck, a woman of sound rational judgement, lest she associate Lucy with ideas of 'romance and unreality' (p. 252). But Lucy is prepared to believe both in the existence of ghosts and her own nervous disorder, speculating 'whether that strange thing was of this world, or of a realm beyond the grave; or whether indeed it was only the child of malady, and I of that malady the prey' (p. 252).

After the ghost shenanigans Lucy will endeavour to follow the advice of Dr John and pursue happiness. However, her comment, 'Feeling and I turned Reason out of doors' (p. 253) strongly suggests her ongoing propensity to credulity should the apparition resurface.

I now incorporate Scott's material on early psychology as a possible source for Brontë's ghost material. It is possible that Brontë imitated adapts Scott for ideological as well as narrative features. Dr John's diagnosis of Lucy's 'spectral illusion' might be drawn directly from Scott's first letter in *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830). Nowhere is this more articulated than in his first and last *Letters*. Notwithstanding Scott's ambiguity about second sight, the outcome of his ghost investigations is always based on common sense. We need to focus on Scott's contribution to science, and how Brontë imitates and advances his study of mental philosophy by developing his position on the afterlife and ideas of consciousness and dream states. Scott elaborates far more on ghosts than consciousness but of dreams he speaks of people's erroneous interpretation of dreams as spiritual communications or of a mystical nature that leads them to believe in a 'positive communication between the living and the dead'.[36] Scott's *Letters* were the culmination of study into the supernatural, worked out in the ballads, verse romance, and across the Waverley novels. Pointedly, Scott interweaves into his ghost anecdotes examples of Catholic figures afflicted with apparitions,

[36] Scott, *Letters*, p. 12. See also Louise Henson in Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, pp. 44-63 for spectral illusion theory and Dickens.

setting up at times the crude opposition between Catholic medieval ignorance and modern enlightenment. Scott refers to the 'learned and acute Dr Ferrier of Manchester' who assisted in identifying the cause of the celebrated bookseller of Berlin, Monsieur Nicholai's series of 'spectral illusions' tracing his illness to a 'depression of spirits'.[37] From Dr Ferrier's diagnosis of Nicholai's 'predisposition to see *phantasmata*', Scott turns to Dr Hibbert's philosophical and medical enquiry into this subject. Hibbert lists a number of physical causes of spectral illusion often associated with:

> Febrile and inflammatory disorders—frequently accompanying inflammation of the brain—a concomitant also of highly excited nervous irritability—equally connected with hypochondria—and finally united in some cases with gout [...] In all of these cases there seems to be a morbid degree of sensibility, with which this symptom is ready to ally itself.[38]

Scott also discusses the manifestation of 'optical illusions'[39] in individuals with a certain temperament or sudden temporary fever who experience deceptions of the senses. They differ from that of Nicholai's case in their shortness of duration and the fact that they constitute no 'derangement of the system'.

Similarly, to Dr Hibbert, Brontë's Dr John bases his diagnosis of Lucy's spectral illusion on his observations of her hypochondria, febrile state and depression of spirits. Lucy will not see the paradox between modern science and religious truth. But for her, as with Anglican reasoning, she will come to accept the supernatural in God alone. Ultimately, Lucy's goal is to accept Enlightenment rationality blended with Christian truths.

It does seem feasible to argue for Brontë's imitation of Scott's investigation into ghosts.

Returning to the novel's nun-ghost plot, prior to the evening of the theatre trip, Lucy collects her crape from the attic. She sees 'a solemn light, like a star, but broader. So plainly it

[37] Scott, *Letters*, p. 20.
[38] Ibid., p. 21.
[39] Ibid., p. 30.

shone, that it revealed the deep alcove with a portion of the tarnished scarlet curtain drawn over it. Instantly silently before my eyes, it vanished' (p. 256). Dr John mocks her, saying 'Ha, the nun again?' Lucy is 'vexed to be suspected of a second illusion' (p. 256). She says:

> He was so obstinate, I thought it better to tell him what I really *had* seen. Of course with him, it was held to be another effect of the same cause: it was all optical illusion —nervous malady, and so on. Not one bit did I believe him; but I dared not contradict: doctors are so self-opinionated, so immovable in their dry, materialistic views. (p. 257).

With her predisposition to the romantic life, Lucy guards against the materialistic invasion of psychological theory, willing to accept a metaphysical explanation. She is prepared to accept the spiritualist viewpoint. The stunt has to be elongated to represent Lucy's gradual progress to Enlightenment thinking and Protestant spiritual values. In actuality, Lucy does see a figure dressed up as a ghost.

Brontë may adapt the structure of Scott's comical ghost stories compiled in *Letter One* and *Ten* for her idea of the nun-ghost plot. Scott's ghost examples are either products of the imagination or actual disguise or trickery. One of his ghost stories might compare with Lucy's second vision of the nun-ghost. In Scott's story, a young lady and her father reside in a town of some size. The daughter, enjoying the 'romantic love of solitude' until twilight and then darkness, sits in a chapel garden and witnesses a 'gleamy figure, as of some aerial being, hovering as it were, against the arched window in the end of the Anabaptist chapel. Its head was surrounded by that halo which painters give to the Catholic saints'.[40] Her father kept watch with his daughter the following evening and witnessed 'the same shadowy form, the same pale light around the head'.[41]

Lucy's third sighting at the alley near to the 'Methusaleh, the pear tree' is near the site of the original convent's ghost legend. Having decided to bury the letter near to the pear tree,

[40] Scott, *Letters*, p. 227.
[41] Ibid., p. 227.

Lucy now accepts that her love for Dr John will never be reciprocated. She again sees the ghost image:

> Whiter and blacker, it grew on my eye: it took shape with instantaneous transformation. I stood about three yards from a tall, sable-robed, snowy-veiled woman [...]
> 'Who are you? And why do you come to me?'
> She stood mute. She had no face—no features: all below her brow was masked with a white cloth; but she had eyes, and they viewed me. [...] This time there was no Dr John to whom to have recourse: there was no one to whom I dared whisper the words, 'I have again seen the nun'. (p. 297).

Eschatology

The nun-ghost plot shifts to an eschatological enquiry. Lucy's developing relationship with Monsieur Paul reignites her critique of Catholicism and faith in Protestantism. Alone one day together he confides in her: 'I have seen, Miss Lucy, things to me unaccountable, that have made me watch all night for a solution, and I have not yet found it' (p. 366). Lucy becomes excited. As she is leaving, Monsieur Paul asks:

> 'Mademoiselle, do you Protestants believe in the supernatural?'
> 'There is a difference of theory and belief on this point amongst Protestants, as amongst other sects,' I answered. 'Why, Monsieur, do you ask such a question?'
> 'Why do you shrink and speak so faintly? Are you superstitious?'
> 'I am constitutionally nervous. I dislike the discussions of such subjects. I dislike it the more because—'
> 'You believe?'
> 'No: but it has happened to me to experience impressions—'
> 'Since you came here?'
> 'Yes: not many months ago.'
> 'Here? — in this house?'
> 'Yes.'
> 'Bon! I am glad of it
> [...] 'in former days a nun's ghost used to come and go here'
> 'Monsieur, what if it comes and goes here still?
> [...] Monsieur, I, too have seen it' (p. 367).

The apparition reappears and Lucy's reality of it intensifies. Now the whole night feels its presence. Then, for the fourth time, in the presence of Monsieur Paul and Lucy:

> Instantly into our alley there came, out of the berceau, an apparition, all black and white. With a sort of angry rush—close, close past our faces—swept swiftly the very NUN herself! Never had I seen her so clearly. She looked tall of stature, and fierce of gesture. As she went, the wind rose sobbing; the rain poured wild and cold; the whole night seemed to feel her. (p. 368).

Lucy's comments reflect contemporary debate on the afterlife and eternity. In the hullaballoo of spirit obsession there were serious ecclesiastical historical discussions; Monsieur Paul's question and Lucy's answer raises the complex phenomenon of the afterlife. Adrian Chastain Weimer's examination helps me to elucidate on Lucy's response. She argues that Protestant strategies for the afterlife were developed from models of holy living that assured salvation. Heaven and hell were separate entities unlike the more complex concept of Purgatory. Yet, Protestants still had to deal with the transition from death to judgement and the issue of the fate of the soul. In what form that intervening experience took remained controversial and much of the clerical world accepted the integration of the scientific community to help them to resolve it. By the late seventeenth-century, theologians had to consider the question of how 'souls might fare in an afterlife potentially constrained by the physical structure and limitations of an increasingly known Copernican universe'.[42] Sasha Handley explains how the 'accepted hierarchy of authorities' endorsed 'Scripture, human reason and the writings of the early Church fathers as more authoritative than extra-biblical revelations'.[43] By the early nineteenth-century, intellectual views and theories on the afterlife were more varied as Lucy points out. Clearly, the nun-ghost plot is a deliberate ploy on Brontë's part to set up a test for Lucy. Having seen the material ghost, she is temporarily poised to steer away from Enlightenment discourse. Among the range of belief, the Deists believed in God as the creator of the universe. To them, God could not influence natural

[42] Swanson, p. xxi.
[43] Sasha Handley, 'Apparitions and Anglicanism in 1750s Warwickshire' in *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul*, eds. P Clarke and T Claydon, (Ecclesiastical History Society, 2009), 45: pp. 311-323, (p. 314).

phenomena and the belief in divine powers was increasingly rejected. Ghosts and apparitions were included in this model. No longer did many Anglicans believe that outbreaks of natural phenomena were divine led. As Handley says, the wonders of God were reflected rather than realized, in aspects of the natural world'.[44] Although Lucy does not elaborate on these theories, Mortalist philosophy gained ground in its thinking that the human soul was immortal through Christ and the soul slept in the intervening period between death and the resurrection to eternity. By mid-nineteenth century, Christian theology shifted to Universalism – the idea that all humankind would be saved. The emphasis for Protestants was to follow the teachings of the Prayer Book burial service (that embraced a sense of sin and assured judgement), sermons and hymnody. Debates on the afterlife remained relatively unchanged but the focus certainly had. Thus, Protestants prioritised the spiritual life of the living and not the state of the departed. Spiritualist images did not offer intellectual weight but were seen increasingly as a forum to discuss the afterlife.[45] Lucy will progress to the Protestant spiritual ideal by the end of the novel.

Lucy's relationship with Monsieur Paul is intellectual as well as emotional. Coaxed into reading a theological tract, she examines the fundamental debate on Purgatory. She says of it, 'the Protestant was to turn Papist, not so much in fear of the heretic's hell, as on account of the comfort, the indulgence, the tenderness Holy Church offered (p. 412). She also says:

> I remember one capital inducement to apostacy was held out in the fact that a Catholic who had lost dear friends by death could enjoy the unspeakable solace of praying them out of purgatory. The writer did not touch on the firmer peace of those whose belief dispenses with purgatory altogether; but I thought of this, and on the whole, preferred the latter doctrine as the most consolatory. The little book amused, and did not painfully displease me. It was a canting, sentimental, shallow little book. (p. 413).

On eschatology and judgement, Wheeler defines purgatory:

[44] Handley, p. 317.
[45] Ibid., p. 362, p. 370.

> The view that Heaven, the final state of the blessed, and Hell, the final doom of the accursed, there is a state wherein those souls are detained and punished which are capable of being purified – an intermediate purification between death and judgment.[46]

He goes on to quote French historian Jacques Le Goff's concept of Purgatory as an intermediate place:

> The souls there are as neither as happy as the souls in Paradise nor as unhappy as the souls in Hell, and Purgatory comes to an end at the time of the Last Judgement. All that remained to make it truly intermediary was to assign it a location between Paradise and Hell.[47]

Originating in twelfth century doctrine, Wheeler states that essentially Purgatory was about hope. Yet it retained the sense of catastrophe within a scheme of purification. Lucy rejects the tract for its appeal to the senses and not the intellect. But this is a thorny subject between her and Monsieur Paul. He believes in the tract as the 'pure essence of faith, love, charity!' (p. 417).

Paul questions Lucy's belief system crying out: 'But *do* you believe in the Bible? Do you receive Revelation? What limits are there to the wild, careless daring of your country and sect?' (p. 418). Wheeler tells us that only the Book of Revelation describes the future life. Jesus Christ, he says, took life after death for granted and so discussion on the afterlife in the New Testament was minimal. The nebulousness of reference to what lies beyond in Revelation obfuscated doctrinal clarity. The last days were open to interpretation, figuratively.[48] Lucy insists that they share religious commonality in their trust in God, Christ and the Bible, of which the latter she ascribes as the absolute priority. Lucy, on her spiritual quest, visits the three different Protestant Chapels of Villette: Presbytarian, Lutheran and Episcopalian, concluding that one day they might be united in doctrine fused 'into one grand Holy Alliance' (p. 419). Lucy accepts that Paul's Romanism is pure and neither needs

[46] Wheeler, p. 75.
[47] Ibid., p. 75. See Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (University of Chicago Press, 1986).
[48] Wheeler, pp. 4-5.

converting. Accepting its errors, Lucy clings to Protestantism. Despite her and Paul's differences, she acknowledges their shared devotion 'to lifting the secret vision to Him whose home is Infinity, and his being – Eternity' (p. 421). Paul reaffirms this sentiment, aligning them together in their 'truth and faith of one mind according to the light He has appointed' (p. 422).

Despite Monsieur Paul's Romanism 'touched with superstition, influenced by priest-craft' (p. 396), Lucy respects him for his piety, faith, self-sacrifice and charity. When Paul points out the portrait of a nun he wonders if Lucy will associate the subject with her apparition: You did not, nor will you fancy, pursued he, that a saint in Heaven perturbs herself with rivalries of earth? Protestants are rarely superstitious; these morbid fancies will not beset *you*? (p. 408). Lucy, increasingly sceptical of the nun-ghost, wonders 'whether the "morbid fancies," against which he warned me, wrought in his own mind' (p.408).

For Lucy, the road to Protestant truth is now ahead. After her debacle with Paul, she seems to enter into spiritual introspection, a sign also of increasing unhappiness having learnt of the impending marriage between Graham and Paulina de Bassompierre. Covering half a page, she quotes fervently, with a deep devotion, the biblical language of the Puritan pilgrims:

> Proof of a life to come must be given. In fire and in blood, if needful, must that proof be written [...] Pilgrims and brother mourners, join in friendly company. Dark through the wilderness of this world stretches the way for most of us [...]For staff we have His promise, whose word is tried [...] Art thou not from everlasting mine Holy one? WE SHALL NOT DIE! (p. 438).

Lucy's meditation seems to compare with the elegy, prayer or catechism delivered by the early Pilgrim ministers, the content of which embodied the glorious pursuit of heaven. It is possible to compare Lucy's sermon with Weimar's study of an American Puritan minister, Jonathan Mitchell who wrote in his journal about the quest for heavenly mindedness: 'Heaven is here begun upon Earth: shall I be Thinking on, and Talking with Christ, to all Eternity, and

not discourse with Him, one Quarter of an hour in a day now'.[49] Lucy, too, suggests a sense of permeability between this world and the next. Like these ministers, Lucy intimates her experience of heaven on earth through her constant prayers and her devotion to Christ. Her quest though is not to die but to live well on earth. The paradise afterlife is on her mind as is the subject of Christ's resurrection. In this lament and various others, Lucy quotes from Matthew and Luke on the last days before the second coming. Wheeler argues that for Christians the end-time was set for completion in the *Parousia* (or presence) and linked to the second coming of Christ. Millenarians believed in the time between death (or the *Parousia,* for those still alive at that point) and the last judgement. Christ's second coming represents the hope that Christ will reign upon earth and in Revelation 20 only the Christian martyrs had the security of living with Christ.[50]

Lucy's spirituality is not in question. Yet she must be clear of her position on ghosts. Momentarily, Lucy must resolve her confusion that she is not witnessing the long-deceased nun-ghost of Justine Marie resurrected, but the very living Justine Marie, heiress and orphan, guardian to Professor Paul and relation to both the Becks and Walravens. Her baptismal name is derived from the sainted nun who would have been her aunt had she lived. Rejecting Romantic sensibilities, Lucy says:

> Ah! When imagination once runs riot where do we stop? What winter tree so bare and branchless—what way-side, hedge-munching animal so humble, that Fancy, a passing cloud, and a struggling moonbeam, will not clothe it in spirituality, and make of it a phantom? (p. 464).

Scott ends *Letter One* in a similar vein, stating that 'imagination is apt to intrude its explanations and inferences founded on inadequate evidence'.[51] Scott's *Letter Ten* concludes

[49] Weimer in Clarke and Claydon, p. 260.
[50] Wheeler, p. 2, p. 4, pp. 78-80.
[51] Scott, *Letters*, p. 35.

that ‘tales of ghosts and demonology are out of date at forty years and upwards; that it is only in the morning of life that this feeling of superstition comes o’er us like a summer cloud’.[52]

From her spiritual journey, Lucy’s magical belief in ghosts is over. She will reject superstition for Enlightenment rationality, fact, reality and Protestant doctrine. Speaking in simile and not metaphor, Lucy, sedated on opium and enthralled by the carnival, finally accepts that the nun she sees at the fete is none other than Justine Marie, dressed up like the nun of the attic clad in black skirts and white head-clothes. Lucy rejects the idea that she looks ‘like the resurrection of the flesh, and that she is a risen ghost’ (p. 464). The crisis has abated and she accepts that her spectral illusions are: ‘All falsities—all figments! We will not deal in this gear. Let us be honest and cut as heretofore from the homely web of truth’ (p. 464). Lucy now embraces the power of ‘TRUTH’ saying ‘Truth, you are a good mistress to your faithful servants! (p. 467). Referring to Lucy’s experience of the actress Vashti’s performance, Thormählen confirms that the entire novel rests on Lucy’s ‘allegiance to truth without which one’s whole life project must flounder’.[53] Handley affirms that Enlightenment discourse replaced Romantic claims for miracles, visions and wonders. Divine providence or the wonder of God was no longer discerned in plagues but reflected in the natural world. The way forward was the discourse of enlightened empiricism and civic humanism.[54]

Lucy upholds the idea that despite God as the Holy Ghost and an un-embodied spirit sharing a kinship with disembodied spirits such as the idea of ghosts, only God is supernatural. But, yet again, Lucy imagines that she sees the nun-ghost stretched on her bed. Now equipped with reason, Lucy remains objective. The long nun proves to be ‘a long bolster dressed in a black stole, and artfully invested with a white veil’ (p. 470). Her:

[52] Scott, *Letters*, p. 232.
[53] Thormählen, p. 115.
[54] Handley, p. 320.

> ‘Nerves disdained hysteria’, she ‘defied spectra [...] all the life, the reality, the substance, the force; as my instinct felt. I tore her up—the incubus! I held her on high—the goblin! I shook her loose—the mystery’. (p. 470).

Lucy ‘relieved from all sense of the spectral and unearthly’ accepts that the nun vision is all illusion, as Dr John had originally said. She is so unafraid that she falls asleep with the stole, veil and bandages underneath her pillow. Lucy, we assume, will now follow the true path of Anglican worship of prayers, revelation and reason and the set forms of liturgy. She will follow the moral and spiritual devotional life according to God’s providential will. Monsieur Paul can continue his superstitions if he sees fit, but he ‘freely left me my pure faith. He did not tease nor tempt. He said: “Remain a Protestant. My little English Puritan, I love Protestantism in you [...] There is something in its ritual I cannot receive myself, but it is the sole creed for Lucy” (p. 494). No longer is Lucy credulous to the supernatural, ghosts or ‘miracles’ (p.39), prophecy or any other extra-biblical revelations. Brontë intercepts Lucy’s pivoting on spiritualism, steering her instead to spirituality. The journey to truth and faith has been an important one for Lucy. The nun prank has helped her to re-process the conception of death. Death is the point of entry into the afterlife, a seamless transition passing to the next life. One is immortal but the soul does not reappear. It has also helped Lucy to modify her love of the imagination. Any ghost vision must be allegorical, there for the pleasure only of the imagination. Rather than rely solely upon theological arguments, Lucy turns to the Protestant version of religious rationality for answers. She can now replace folk folly with metaphysical truths.

Romantic Lucy has been too dismissive of science and she has had to pay the price. She must now lay the groundwork for a less Romantic-led existence and live a more Protestant, active, rational, practical life. *Villette* does not follow the trajectory of Victorian spiritualism. The nun plot is framed comically, reflecting Brontë’s assured scepticism of

supernatural phenomena. Yet, it is central to the dramatic action of *Villette*. It has been a vehicle for Brontë to reassert her empirical approach to the spirit world and to reinforce her belief that the supernatural exists only in the conception of God. In her belief in divine providence, only God can interfere with mankind with extraordinary signs, wonders and warnings. The nun-ghost is a manifestation of Lucy's appetite for the Romantic life of fancy, imagination and the fantastic as well as a product of her emotional states. Yet, in terms of her necromantic fancies, it takes on a more macabre aspect of her psyche. The imposition of the hoax is an opportunity for Lucy to engage in a genuine enquiry into the afterlife.

How did Brontë intend her readers to respond to the ghost, and how seriously was she treating the subject? Certainly, Lucy and Monsieur Paul engage in serious debate on religious doctrine. The ghost motif is central to Lucy's mental state, as is the nun-ghost plot to the narrative action, the central relationship between Lucy and Paul, and the theme of Enlightenment. Brontë's intention was not to imitate the melodrama and terror of Gothic (as Shuttleworth also says). The reader is spared a shocking and fearful experience. At the end of the novel Ginevra comes clean in a letter to Lucy relaying the actions taken by her lover, Monsieur de Hamal, in their pursuit of the nun-ghost joke conducted in the attic, twice by the Methusaleh pear tree, and finally discarding the idea in the park. Ginevra writes: Nearly a year ago, I chanced to tell him our legend of the nun that suggested his romantic idea of the spectral disguise, which I think you must allow he has very cleverly carried out (p.474). Both she and de Hamal congratulate Lucy and Monsieur Paul as 'capital ghost-seers and very brave' (p. 474). Arguably, Brontë intended to entertain her reader with the ghost plot device and to enquire into contemporary and wide-ranging debates on ghostly phenomena. In the early 1920s Virginia Woolf wrote that:

> We read Charlotte Brontë not for exquisite observation of character—her characters are vigorous and elementary; not for comedy—hers is grim and crude not for a

> philosophic view of life—hers is that of a country parson's daughter; but for her poetry.[55]

Challenging the claim that Brontë's novels are purely domestic, I argue that the role of folklore in Brontë's fiction takes the reader on a journey of philosophical enquiry into eschatology and psychology (mental philosophy). Spanning twenty years or so, Brontë is seen to work out her position from the impressionable 'who after this will disbelieve in ghosts?' in the spiritualist thinking of 'Strange Events' (1830), to Lucy's Protestant disbelief of ghosts: 'All falsities—all figments' (p. 464) in *Villette*.

Michael Wheeler's inclusion of the views of northern visionary painter (and influence of later fairy artists) John Martin (1789-1854) and reverend Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872) on eschatology furthers my association of Brontë's ghost motif with the subject of death. They both figure in Brontë biography and scholarship. Martin certainly influenced the Brontës. Indeed, Brontë saw one of Martin's original works at the Royal Academy in 1850. The parsonage hung three of Martin's prints: *The Deluge, Belshazzar's Feast,* and *Joshua Commanding the Sun to stand still* and a watercolour copy of his *Queen Esther*. Rejecting his artistry, she maintained an emotional attachment to his visionary and phantasmagorical designs.[56] Martin's subject matter of the last four things in *Belshazzar's Feast, The Last Judgement, The Great Day of his Wrath* (its original title was *The End of the World*) and *The Plains of Heaven* appealed to apocalyptic tastes and those intrigued by mid-nineteenth century millenarianism. His *Paradise Lost* evoked the hell of the industrial revolution.[57]

If Martin was a formative influence on Brontë, in her later years, she had listened to Maurice preaching in London in 1851. She was shocked at his dismissal as professor of

[55] Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader*, 1 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1984), p. 158.
[56] Smith and Alexander, p. 319.
[57] Wheeler, pp. 83-85, p. 112, pp. 197-198, p. 203.

theology at King's College saying to Mrs Gaskell (27 December 1853): 'When men—calling themselves Churchmen condemn teaching like Maurice's [...] Who that seriously anticipates an Eternity of Torment for half his race—can keep sane?'[58] As a liberal theologian and Universalist, Maurice believed in universal salvation and rejected the idea that 'sinners were doomed to eternal punishment in the afterlife, claiming that it was contrary to the Christian affirmation of a loving God.'[59] Brontë's Helen Burns advocates these beliefs, a point she makes in a letter to Margaret Wooler on 14 February 1850. Wheeler cites Maurice as one of the key thinkers on eschatology. His discourse on the fourth gospel touches on the fundamental question, 'after death, can light ever penetrate into the darkness?' In his *Theological Essays* (1853) Maurice wrote, 'I sink into death, eternal death, if I do so' and prophesising his own death wrote 'I am not going to *Death*...I am going into *Life*'.[60] Newman based his study of purgatory on the authority and theology of the Catholic Church. He also rejected the translated bible as 'the stronghold of heresy'.[61] Clearly, Brontë, interested in matters of the invisible world and biblical authority, noted the differing positions of doctrinal thinking on these issues in *Villette*. Conclusively, Brontë was one of several Victorian writers' engaging personally and creatively with the subject of the future life and the nun-ghost motif provided a forum to explore it.

Bown et al explain that the controversy of the supernatural continued to reign in mid-late Victorian intellectual circles, with John Eagles, in 'A Few Passages Regarding Omens, Dreams, etc' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1840) touching a nerve with the question: 'How little, in fact, do we know of the material world, and how much less of the spiritual, and nothing of the connection between them?' As late as 1854, a year after *Villette* was published,

[58] Smith, *Letters* 3, pp. 214-215.
[59] Ibid., p. 215.
[60] Wheeler, p. 27.
[61] Ibid., p. 11.

John Radcliffe of *Fiends, Ghosts and Sprites*: *Including an Account of the Origin and Nature of Belief in the Supernatural* was able to state that the belief in the supernatural existed throughout history and among all nations. By 1859, definitions were in place to distinguish supernatural from the preternatural. Certainly, the supernatural was not simply a metaphor for the mind but represented another realm existing above and beyond the physical.[62]

Echoing Brontë's theme of Enlightenment in *Villette*, Patrick Brontë writes of his optimism that 'True Religion and Science, with the lately invented, ready communication, by the power of them, will under providence work, hard—and, in the end effectually—against flimsy delusion, of whatever description'.[63] He took up the cause set by his daughter in writing to Martineau (13 November 1857). In the letter he comments on 'your unfortunate Book on Atheism and its implication that "there is no God."'[64] Martineau replied (5 November 1857) attacking Charlotte and Patrick for misinterpreting her and Atkinson's *Letters,* categorically stating 'that it is not an atheistical, book & that I have never said 'there is no God'.[65] Patrick replies (11 November 1857) to her letter reassuring her that he has indeed read the *Letters* praying heartily that he is mistaken. In signing off, Patrick hopes 'that God may restore you to health and strength, and give you long life, and eternal salvation, through Jesus Christ [*sic*] his Son and our Saviour, is the sincere wish and ardent prayer'.[66]

Lastly, Brontë's vehement response to her friend Harriet Martineau and George Henry Atkinson's (1815-1884) atheistic-leaning work, *Letters on the Laws of Man's Social Nature and Development* (1850) might resonate with her interest in the afterlife theme of the nun-ghost plot of *Villette*. Her attitude provides evidence of the anti-materialist Christian (and metaphysical) world viewpoint later expressed by Lucy Snowe. To James Taylor (1 January

[62] Bown, *Victorian Supernatural*, pp. 3-7.
[63] Green, p. 262.
[64] Ibid., p. 266.
[65] Ibid., p. 267.
[66] Ibid., p. 268.

1851) Brontë writes: 'I cannot speak in terms too high without being able to share all her opinions philosophical, political, or religious, without adopting her theories'.[67]After she returns from her visit to Martineau in Ambleside, Brontë writes to Laetitia Wheelwright (12 January 1851), saying: 'though I share few of her opinions, and regard her as fallible on certain points of judgement—I must still accord her my sincerest esteem'.[68] Brontë had trembled at the idea of Martineau's publication of the *Letters*. Eager to criticize Atkinson rather than threaten her friendship with Martineau, Brontë says to Mrs Gaskell (22 January 1851):

> She [Martineau] described him [Atkinson] as a combination of the 'antique' Greek sage with the modern European Man of Science. Perhaps it was mere perversity in me to get the notion that torpid veins and a cold, slow-beating heart lay under his marble outside; but he is a Materialist; he serenely denies us our hope of immortality, and quietly blots from Man's future, Heaven and the Life to come. That is why a savour of bitterness seasoned my feeling towards him.[69]

Then to James Taylor (11 February 1851) Brontë reiterated her contempt for the book:

> It is the first exposition of avowed Atheism and Materialism I have ever read; the first unequivocal declaration of disbelief in the existence of a God or a Future Life—I have ever seen [...] Sincerely—for my own part—do I wish to find and know the Truth—but if <u>this</u> be Truth—well may she guard herself with mysteries and cover herself with a veil. If this be Truth—Man or Woman who beholds her but can curse the day he 'or she' was born.[70]

Contrary to Martineau's description of her, Brontë was not tolerant or liberal, but she attempted a conciliatory tone to preserve their friendship. However, while maintaining a kindly attitude towards her she found it difficult to assuage the feelings of disgust aroused in her by Martineau's work. To James Taylor (24 March 1851) Brontë says, 'I deeply regret its

[67] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 543
[68] Ibid., p. 552.
[69] Ibid., p. 561.
[70] Ibid., p. 574.

[Martineau and Atkinson's] publication for the lady's sake—it gives a death-blow to her future usefulness—who can trust the word or rely on the judgement of an avowed Atheist?'[71]

As to the Catholic controversy, there is no doubt that Lucy's love for Monsieur Paul in *Villette* lessens critical assessments of Brontë's antipathy to Romanism. Brontë says that Catholics appear 'as good as any Christians can be to whom it the bible is a sealed book and much better than scores of Protestants'.[72] Lucy's love for the professor is based on the author's real love for M. Constantin Heger. Smith and Alexander go on to say that Brontë had perceived the 'beauty of some Catholic prayers even while she disparaged them'. And, whilst Brontë accused the Pope's promotion of the Roman Catholic prelate, Nicholas Patrick Stephen Wiseman (1802-1865) to cardinal in 1850, describing him as 'an oily, sleek hypocrite' and 'a wolf in sheep's clothing',[73] she not only went to hear him speak but attended several lectures by theologian, poet, priest and cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890) on Anglican obstacles to submitting to the Catholic Church in June 1850.

It seems then that *Villette* reflects Brontë's complex and at times ambivalent views on the Catholic faith. Moreover, the nun-ghost plot provided the forum for her to negotiate the nuances of Catholic doctrine. Far from trivial, the ghost trope in *Villette* is significant as a vehicle for Brontë to interrogate serious and controversial mid-Victorian philosophical and religious debate as well as s metaphor for characterisation.

[71] Smith, *Letters* 2, p. 589.
[72] Smith and Alexander, p. 119.
[73] Ibid., p. 545.

Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis is to shift critical perceptions of Brontë's Gothic to the framework of folklore in her realist novels. In differentiating between Gothic and folklore, I have argued that folklore is an older, orally transmitted belief system, with roots in the cultural primitive past and linked to pre-Christianity. Gothic is a literary mode or genre. But fundamentally, folklore is a primary source of the supernatural element across Gothic romance and realist fiction. Folklore is adapted to the English literary canon. In revisiting the critical canon we can conclude that Jacqueline Simpson and Robert B. Heilman both allude to folklore material in *Jane Eyre* but with different objectives in mind. Heilman's commentary on Brontë's transformation of the Gothic to new psychological heights gained ground. Simpson's analysis of folklore to convey the themes of love and ideas of difference or otherness and her analysis of Emily's study of ghosts in *Wuthering Heights* did not springboard into mainstream criticism in the same way. Somehow it got overlooked in the critical canon. Now as then, Gothic criticism predominates in Brontë scholarship. It is still unclear as to why the study of Brontë's folklore remains on the periphery. Given folklore's previous critical reception as something antique or 'immoral, irrational, or unrespectable'[1] as Harris says, perhaps literary critics consider it as low rather than high culture. If this is the case, this thesis aims to resurrect the reputation of folklore material.

I have argued for a new critical approach to the study of Brontë's uses of the supernatural, offered an account of Brontë's sources of local and literary folklore, examined the narrative and ideological functions of folklore in her novels and considered her letters in the light of her fiction. In Brontë's folklore, allusions to fairies in *Jane Eyre* symbolise ideas of otherness, gender and sexuality. Brontë's treatment of the fairy motif can be seen as

[1] Harris, Folklore, p. 33.

undermining structures of cultural authority. The role of folklore as a sentiment of Merrie England in *Shirley* suggests a love of romance and tradition. In *Villette,* Lucy's engagement with ghosts is both metaphorical and doctrinal with Brontë's ultimate goal as the reassertion of social progress. We can conclude then that Brontë's use of folklore in the realist novel echoes J.M Harris' idea of the 'divided mind' in his interpretation of the literature of the fantastic:

> Science did not rout any more than industrialism altogether destroyed fantasy; in literature, as well as occultism, science and reason interacted with popular belief [...] Just as literary fairy tales melded traditional motifs and beliefs with ironic sophistication that depended on a sense of reality, so too ghost stories evoked the literary fantastic by posing folk beliefs against the conventions of rationality [...] Dickens believed that the form of the fairy tale offered balance to a nation that in an 'utilitarian age', risked losing its imagination.[2]

Brontë was influenced especially by Scott's use of folklore. Her and Scott's writing embodies the tension between scepticism and tradition. Brontë's local environment provided a second key source of folklore. I suggest that her inclusive treatment of folklore is distinguished from Scott's all-too-often critical class-based perspective.

This study has considered Brontë's fiction in relation to her cultural world. This has required a critical engagement with inter-disciplinary approaches in cultural history, anthropology, psychology, and especially folklore studies. Frank de Caro claims that the study of folklore and literature 'has come to seem a bit of a scholarly backwater, an area of study venerable, but lacking in the way of intellectual pizzazz'.[3] Analysing Brontë's literary uses of folklore might go some way to redressing this inferred scholarly stagnation. This project has attempted a critical enquiry on the interrelationship between folklore and Brontë's fiction. It therefore adds to cultural critical approaches within the Brontë literary canon.

[2] Harris, *Folklore,* p. 33.
[3] de Caro, p. 7.

Areas for further enquiry

Previously, in *Jane Eyre* I examined the idea of liminality in relation to the theme of sexuality and difference. However, I propose liminality could be further investigated within the context of rites of passage of death in *Jane Eyre*. In the dying scene of Helen Burns' separation from life to death, Jane says:

> 'You are sure, then, Helen, that there is such a place as heaven; and that our souls can get to it when we die?'
> 'I am sure there is a future state; I believe God is good: I can resign my immortal part to him without any misgiving.' [...]
> 'And shall I see you again, Helen, when I die?'
> 'You will come to the same region of happiness: be received by the same mighty, universal Parent, no doubt, dear Jane.' (p. 82).

In his study of eschatology, Michael Wheeler applies Victor Turner's anthropological model of liminality to death. Wheeler describes how the deceased moves from the fixed state of life to the dying or liminal phase and on to the other fixed state of death. The deathbed is the site of transition from a this-world perspective to the grave. He also applies the model to 'the "intermediate state" between the moment of death and the last judgement'.[4] But Wheeler does not apply this model to *Jane Eyre*. I suggest that we can apply Turner's ideas about liminality in relation to death and bereavement to *Jane Eyre* as well as to the subject of sexuality in the novel.

In addition, we might describe Brontë's allusion to nature as 'Mother' as animism. In his discussion on judgement, Wheeler refers to Jane's dream of a visionary figure after Rochester has described his married life with Bertha Mason as the 'bottomless pit of hell'.[5] At a moment of crisis Jane cries:

> She broke forth as never moon yet burst from cloud: a hand first penetrated the sablefolds and waved them away; then, not a moon, but a white human form shone in

[4] Wheeler, p. 70.
[5] Ibid., p. 114.

> the azure, inclining a glorious brow earthward. It gazed and gazed on me. It spoke to my spirit: immeasurably distant was the tone, yet so near, it whispered in my heart—
> 'My daughter, flee temptation!'
> 'Mother, I will.'
> So I answered after I had waked from the trance-like dream.[6]

Far from a Christian context, to Wheeler, 'this moon resolves itself into a figure who represents the "feminine principle" in the novel and who is akin to the "Great Mother", the lunar goddess of pagan religions'.[7] We can interpret Jane's communication with Mother Nature as another element of traditional culture or animism. In her examination of fairies, Duffy refers to an Anglo-Saxon belief in a mother earth goddess:

> Hail to thee earth, mother of men
> Be fruitful in (the) god's embrace
> Filled with fruit for the use of men[8]

Duffy describes the above as a ritual for restoring fertility to fields believed to be bewitched, which combines Christian and pagan elements. Patrick Joyce describes an industrialising age in which there prevailed 'clear signs of popular beliefs expressing a kind of Animism, notions that the natural world was full of spiritual forces with which "religion" had to deal'.[9] Anthropologist Edward Burnet Tylor (1832-1917) applied the theory of Animism (as well as the doctrine of survivals) to his study of fairies. Fairies, he argued, derived from animistic perceptions of nature, and 'primeval humans personified nature and perceived it as living'.[10] Perhaps we might re-think early biographer Winifred Gerin's description of Tabitha Aykroyd as an 'unconscious poet, filling the hills and woods and streams with an anthropomorphic life'[11] within the context of animism.

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[6] Wheeler, p. 114.
[7] Ibid., p. 114.
[8] Duffy, p. 25.
[9] Joyce, p. 162.
[10] Silver, pp. 44-45.
[11] Winifred Gerin, *Charlotte Brontë: The Evolution of Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 38.

Interpreting liminality and animism in *Jane Eyre* further reinforces its folkloric identity.

Secondly, having re-contextualised Brontë's fiction as folkloric, I propose that there are similarities between her texts and Hardy's character and environment novels. I have suggested that Brontë demonstrates folklore both as a cultural anachronism and a measure of scientific development. Hardy's novels also employ folklore to typify the pattern of tradition and progress. Keith Wilson argues that in the plots of *The Mayor of Casterbridge: The Life and Death of a Man of Character* (1886) and *The Return of the Native* (1878), Hardy's goal is to 'fulfil superstitions while implying their absurdity and providing alternative rational explanations'.[12] He notes the tension between the characters of Henchard embodying tradition, superstition and community and Farfrae 'figuring modernity, science, reason, mind, the written word, calculation, and society'.[13] In his study of cultural history, Bob Bushaway points to Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) as conveying the pattern of continuity and change in the rural social and cultural structure:

> The recent supplanting of the class of stationary cottagers, who carried on the local traditions and humours by a population of more or less migratory labourers, has led to a break in continuity in local history, more fatal than any other thing to the preservation of legend, folk-lore, close inter-social relations and eccentric individuals.[14]

Yet Bushaway argues that Hardy's view of folklore is characteristic. Hardy, he says, sees it is as eccentric and melodramatic rather than as part of a general culture.[15] Bushaway points to the sentiment of nostalgia again in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), with Hardy feeling that the rate of change is felt also inter-generationally between Tess and her mother:

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[12] Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 352.
[13] Ibid., p. xxv.
[14] Bushaway, *Popular Culture*, p. 192.
[15] Ibid., p. 192.

> Between the mother with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally-transmitted ballads, and the daughter with her trained National teaching [...] When they were together the Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed.[16]

More recently, Jacqueline Dillon points to Hardy's 'instincts of Merry England lived yet'[17] at Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native* (1878). There does seem to be narrative and ideological commonality in the treatment of folklore in the realist novels of Hardy and Brontë's northern novels, particularly *Shirley*. Despite attitudinal differences, their similarities go some way to re-contextualising Brontë's writing as folklore in the realist novel. This comparison is beyond the scope of this project but it is a plausible sequel.

Lastly, another area of enquiry relates to Brontë's literary sources of folklore. Whilst Scott is a major source, there is much potential to examine more fully other literary sources that Brontë alludes to frequently in her fiction such as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Arabian Nights Entertainments*.

[16] Bushaway, *By Rite*, p. 1.
[17] Jacqueline Dillon, *Thomas Hardy: Folklore and Resistance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

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