Charlotte Bronte: The Evolution of Her Heroes

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Charlotte Brontë: The Evolution of Her Heroes

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English of the State University of New York College at Brockport, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Date

May 1, 2003
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Abstract

Charlotte Bronte, through her novels *The Professor* (published posthumously in 1857), *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853), attempted to resolve the issues she faced as a plain, unmarried, independent-thinking woman in the nineteenth century. As each story is told the author takes another step toward defining her ideal of love and coming to terms with what she was not given by her father Patrick, brother Branwell, and first love M. Heger. William Crimsworth, Edward Rochester and M. Paul Emmanuel have much in common with the men in Bronte's life, yet these similarities end when they overcome their selfishness, egotism, and weakness to win the women they love. The heroes transform for love and in the process grow to be better men that deserve the heroines' love and devotion as well as becoming the ideal man Bronte longed for.
Chapter One: Introduction

Charlotte Brontë’s unfortunate experience with the men in her life no doubt had much to do with her preoccupation with the transformation of the male characters in her novels *The Professor* (published posthumously in 1857), *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853). Brontë’s heroes brought to fruition a world that was not possible for the author in her lifetime through the selfless love they offered the heroines, which was not given by the men she loved. What seems to be the most obvious discrepancy between the novels and Brontë’s own experience is the fact that in Brontë’s written world the woman gets her man.

The focus of this thesis is Brontë’s perception of love, which was “to show true love one should be prepared to offer one’s breast to the hoofs of a kicking horse” (Wilks xv). The author’s perception of love evolves throughout her novels as her experiences with the men in her life become more trying, and her attempts to resolve the issues she had with men continued (Wilks xv). Brian Wilks used this quote from the young author in his book *Charlotte in Love: The Courtship and Marriage of Charlotte Brontë* in his attempt to prove her marriage to Arthur Bell Nichols was a union of love. Wilks does apply Brontë’s philosophy of love to the heroes she created as well as to the author’s own experiences with the men in her life, as does Brontë biographer, Lyndall Gordon. What Wilks and Gordon do not do in their work is to reach the conclusion that Brontë was becoming more independent of the Victorian notion that she needed a husband to be whole. Brontë longed to feel passionately for the man she would marry, yet what is more important in relation to
this thesis is how she wished her impending husband to feel for her. Each hero expresses this passion differently as the author’s own definition of love evolves: The Professor, Jane Eyre and Villette illustrate Brontë’s state of mind concerning her attitudes about love and men, and as each tale is written there seems to be an evolving awareness by Brontë regarding the importance placed upon a woman’s need for a man to be complete, as well as what she expected from the man who would love her. Brontë reevaluates and reconstructs her concept of love as she creates each story, ending with Villette whose hero becomes her ideal mate.

When Brontë wrote Villette, her last novel in 1851, she was still unattached and seemed to consider the possibility that marriage was not her only chance at happiness. The hero’s death and subsequently the heroine’s being left to her own devices displeased her publisher, Smith Elder & Co., as well as her father Patrick who felt “anxious that [Brontë’s] new tale should end well, as he disliked novels which left a melancholy impression upon the mind” (Gaskell 266). Patrick Brontë suggested to his daughter that she “make her hero and heroine marry and live happily ever after” (Gaskell 266). Brontë’s father and publishers did not grasp the fact that this was a promising ending because the heroine experiences selfless love with a man and achieves success on her own. The melancholic element of this conclusion is that the heroine does not hold both gifts at the same time.

I chose this subject for this thesis because throughout the research process I found much criticism dealing with the Victorian male, yet very few critics have captured or uncovered what I feel is the true role of Brontë’s nineteenth century hero.
Dianne Sardoff, for example, describes Brontë’s male characters as muses, and to some extent, this is accurate in that they are the ideal men the author creates in order to fulfill, or relive, her desperation to achieve fulfillment or completion. Yet the aspect of this criticism I do not agree with is that Sardoff claims once muses have become attainable, they lose their idealness (132). By contrast, Carol Bock writes that the persona of Jane Eyre was Brontë’s chance to gain all denied in her own existence (130). She also asserts that Lucy Snowe’s invisibility was “not just an undesirable consequence of her oppression but also a mode of observation that she herself deliberately cultivates as a means to gain power over others and protect herself” (130). I plan to extend this philosophy to Brontë’s male characters by looking at them through the same contemporary eyes as the female characters have been, and evaluate the heroes as equal to women in their emotional needs and desires.

As Brontë creates each novel, she seems to form a different ideal of an Eden-like existence by creating a heroine that demands of her hero more independence from story to story. Lyndall Gordon wrote of Brontë’s struggle with the internal and external aspects of her life, “the view of Charlotte Brontë has been a figure of pathos in the shadow of tombstones. But if her inward and creative life is seen to coexist with externals, the picture shifts” (Gordon 4). I will utilize this statement when analyzing the author’s personal life and the life she experienced as a Victorian woman.

To analyze the author’s internal inspiration for her novels I will investigate her personal life and her experiences as an unmarried, plain middle-class woman,
whose disappointment with her father Patrick, brother Branwell and first love, M. Heger was constant throughout her life. In each novel, Brontë recreated the men in her life to be more giving, accepting and loving.

Patrick Brontë, Charlotte’s father, was the most “dominant man in [her] life, demanding unswerving love and obedience from his daughter” (Wilks 99). Charlotte came to understand from her father “the habitual dominance of the male, the husband, the parson, an authority deriving from St. Paul and the traditions of the Church of England as well as from society’s teaching at that time. Obedience was the order of the day at Haworth Parsonage” (Wilks 99). Patrick’s demands on Charlotte created in her a woman who would love completely not only because it was her nature, but also because it was demanded. This practice of self-interested behavior by a man is a condition the author would re-create in each of her novels, especially Jane Eyre.

Charlotte Brontë also respected her father for his successes in education, society and in his work as a parson. “Patrick Brontë’s father, Hugh Brunty, was a farm labourer, virtually illiterate but something of a storyteller” (Gordon 5). Patrick, the eldest of 10 children, had “a love of Pilgrim’s Progress, Paradise Lost, Homer and other Greek and Latin classics that transformed his life” (Gordon 6). This interest in literature moved him from “a peasant position, apprenticed to a blacksmith at the age of 12, to village schoolmaster at the age of 16” (Gordon 6). Five years later Patrick caught the attention of “Revd Mr. Tighe, a Methodist and friend of Wesley” who saw the young man’s intelligence in religion and sent Patrick to St. John’s College in Cambridge to study theology and the classics (Gordon 6). From this opportunity,
Patrick was able to secure a position at Haworth where he settled with his wife Maria and started a family (Gordon 6). Patrick Brontë’s upward climb in status and education by his own determination is a theme we see in *The Professor*, whose hero achieves success through his own fortitude.

M. Constatin Heger is the next man I will discuss regarding Brontë’s disillusionment with the men in her life and the motivation for her heroes. In this man, her teacher, “Charlotte perceived all the virtues of her father in a younger man” (Wilks 101). M. Heger was the most crucial in Brontë’s life because she applied what she had learned from her father about relationships to Heger and found only heartache and grief. Her unswerving love did not win Heger over, but in fact repelled him, and as time went on, caused a distance that was never overcome between them. The condition of loving someone out of reach is a scenario found in all three of the novels I will analyze; yet, unlike Brontë’s own experience, her heroines are given heroes who become reachable through their transformation and sacrifice.

Brontë described her teacher as “a little black ugly being who soon revealed himself to be a man of power as to mind, but very choleric and irritable in temperament” (Gordon 94). The author also claimed that Heger’s, “mind was indeed my library, and whenever it was opened to me, I entered bliss” (Gordon 96). This is relevant to *The Professor* and *Villette*, whose heroines and heroes have an academic relationship as well as a romantic one. M. Heger’s choleric personality is evident in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, whose heroes’ dispositions include brusqueness and ill temperaments.
Heger also introduced a sense of partnership and reciprocation to Brontë that began when she began to tutor Heger in English. “She was teaching her own language, while Heger taught his, and for about two months, there was this reciprocity” (Gordon 107). She had become an equal; yet more important is the fact that he had allowed her to become his equal. These experiences forever become a part of the author’s expectations of love and marriage. Unfortunately, Madame Heger, M. Heger’s wife, ended these sessions soon after they began, but the author’s brief moment of equality would influence her expectations of love forever. “Her licensed expressiveness with a man she had grown to love was a new experience which, in time, she would bring to bear on the ringing tones of Jane Eyre in her speeches to Rochester and on the heat of Lucy Snowe in Villette” (Gordon 107).

The final impression M. Heger would leave upon Brontë was his ability to “see” her. In a letter he wrote to another student years after his relationship with Brontë, his first line reads, “I have only to think of you to see you” (Gordon 99). Gordon suggests this letter, which indicates a relationship beyond student/teacher, is much like what Brontë experienced with her teacher. It is Gordon’s contention that the words “to see you” mean more than just visualizing the young girl physically. She suggests when M. Heger claims to “see” his pupil, as he did with Brontë, he really means he sees her mind, her heart and her soul. The author creates her heroines as women who need to be “seen;” as well as giving her heroes the ability to view the heroines in such an untainted fashion.
The last man who would shape Charlotte Brontë's perception of love is Branwell Brontë, the author's brother. "Branwell had offered, and received, congenial companionship in imaginative play until his post adolescent collapse" (Wilks 102). "Branwell had the confidence of a boy expected to distinguish himself and lead the family" (Gordon 11). The only Brontë son, though adored by all the family, was a constant disappointment to those who loved him. When he turned to alcohol and opium "[Brontë] had to face the loss of her dream partner" (Gordon 41). These characteristics are all reminiscent of Rochester, who is a young man with a wonderful future, yet because of circumstances out of his control, is ruined.

The external influences Brontë experienced were those rooted in the Victorian era she lived in. The author’s novels are somewhat indicative of the time in which she lived and the pressure men and women were under in the nineteenth century. These expectations are shown in the author’s treatment of the heroes and heroines of her stories and how she approaches the issues of marriage, love, finance and family. The criticism of John Reed, Lyndall Gordon, Andrew Dowling, among others, will be used in the following chapters to analyze the lives of the heroes and heroines of Brontë’s novels. I will also utilize the work of historian John Tosh to show the parallel lives of Brontë’s characters and the men and women of the Victorian era. In creating heroes who would act contrary to their nature for love, Brontë injected her heroes with the social, familial and economic expectations of a man in the nineteenth century. She used the Victorian culture as one of the barriers the heroes must face in order to attain the women they love. Rochester was a victim of primogeniture;
Crimsworth was an orphan without money or a good name, and Emmanuel was unable to marry his first love because he was poor. These circumstances are all the product of the Victorian society Brontë lived through.

Brontë created the tale of the woman who had neither financial worth nor beauty, left to find her own way in the world. Jane Eyre becomes a governess, Frances Henri a teacher of lace mending at a girl’s school, and Lucy Snowe a teacher of English, though her original post was governess to Madame Beck’s children. Brontë describes women in these situations as “having no existence” (Gordon 1). She goes on to write in a letter to her sister Ann, “when the eyes of ladies and gentlemen fell on a governess, it seemed as if they looked at vacancy” (Gordon 1). Gordon continues that “this apparent vacancy was the space they made their own; here, protected by its obscurity, the rising character of Brontë took shape” (1).

It almost makes one feel sympathy for those women who had the commodity of either beauty, wealth or rank, who could purchase further success for their families by attaching themselves to men they did not love. The plain woman without social status and wealth was left, in turn, unbound by these expectations to ensure her family’s name and fortune. The author herself, by 25 years old, had “turned down two proposals from wooden Henry Nussey and airy David Bryce” because she awaited her true love (Gordon 94).

Another societal influence that contributed to Brontë’s novels is “the idealization of a type of woman who is saintly, yielding, forgiving and faithful which openly accents the Victorian view of men as makers and doers, and women serving as
their moral consciences” (Reed 475). The service of women as moral conscience to men has been a long-standing theme in literature. For example, Coventry Patmore’s *Angel in the House*, published originally in 1854, captures the sense of moral superiority that Victorian women upheld (qtd. in Reed 476).

Frances Henri, Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe exist in Brontë’s stories to act as the moral barometer to the male characters. This role is given to these women who with their honorable and ethical behavior guided and inspired William Crimsworth, Edward Rochester and Paul Emmanuel to become better human beings.

The circumstances and expectations of the male in the Victorian era affected Brontë’s writing as well. Brontë, when asked in a letter whether she thought men were strange, responded:

You ask me if I do not think men are strange beings. I do indeed—I have often thought so; and I think that the mode of bringing them up is strange, they are not sufficiently guarded from temptations. Girls are protected as if they were very frail and silly indeed, while boys are turned loose on the world as if they, of all beings in existence, were the wisest and the least liable to be led astray. (Dowling 21)

Dowling goes on to write, “the hegemonic truth about manliness in the nineteenth century was established through metaphors of control, reserve and discipline” (21). He continues by writing, “repression of the self became a fashion statement in the Victorian period” (13).
In *A Man's Place*, John Tosh unfolds the role of male in the nineteenth century as an individual whose "self-respect certainly demanded that a man provide for his family, and great shame was attached to one who ‘failed’" (14). This demand upon men is another pressure that exaggerates or reveals the faults each male character must overcome in order to be with the women they love. Crimsworth, in *The Professor*, must find a post to provide for a wife, Rochester marries a lunatic to ensure his family’s wealth, and Emmanuel donates funds to others in a selfless manner. Each man becomes a slave to this ideal life he must provide for his family, dictated not only by his own need to give those he loves a good living, but also by society and his standing as a respectable man.

Marriage in Brontë’s era is also important to consider when reviewing the circumstances of these men and their development as partners to the women they would love. In *Victorian Conventions* Reed claims, “a female’s real existence only begins when she has a husband” (105). This statement in itself is far from the attitudes we have today regarding women and marriage. “‘Getting settled,’ was a woman’s goal; [and] any other future was bleak” (Reed 105). “Getting settled” also included ‘improving’ a man so he became worthy of her. Thus, Brontë, like most Victorian novelists, works out a dual plot: the marriage of the worthy maiden and the conversion of the errant bachelor.
G.R. Drysdale remarked in 1854 that, “most marriages were the result of some interested motive other than love, and that romantic love could be found only in fiction” (Reed 105). Brontë must have been well aware that readers might initially view her heroes as stock characters in novels that married for money or rank, or her heroes viewed as domineering, selfish husbands. Those against the marriage of convenience refer to the women as mercenaries, oftentimes saying their families from financial or social ruin by marrying the “right” man. This is seen in William Makepeace Thackeray’s *The Newcomes*, published in 1852:

A bad selfish husband had married a woman for her rank: a weak, thoughtless girl had been sold to a man for money; and the union, which might have ended in a comfortable indifference, had taken an ill turn and resulted in misery, cruelty, fierce mutual recriminations, bitter tears shed in private, husband’s curses and maledictions, and open scenes of wrath and violence for servants to witness and the world to sneer at. We arrange such matches everyday; we sell or buy beauty, or rank or wealth; we inaugurate the bargain in churches with sacramental services, in which the parties engaged call upon Heaven to witness their vows—we know them to be lies, and we seal them with God’s name. (qtd. in Reed 110)
Crimsworth and Emmanuel reject marriages to women who would elevate them socially and financially. Rochester accepts a marriage of convenience and pays for his rash decision with a mad wife.

For the sake of better understanding Rochester, I will also quickly review the procedure of divorce, which though available, was not easy to obtain. The divorce a vincula matrimonii was granted to those who discovered [after marriage] "an improperly close blood relationship, insanity, impotence, or a similar impediment. It permitted you to remarry but made your children illegitimate" (Pool 185). Rochester, in his circumstances, would certainly have been a candidate for such a separation, but the process was one of grueling bureaucracy that would have led to all of England discovering his marriage. As Mr. Bounderby says to Stephen Blackpool in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, published in 1854, "Why, you'd have to go to Doctors' Commons with a suit, and you'd have to go to court of Common Law with a suit, and you'd have to go to the House of Lords with a suit; and you'd have to get an Act of Parliament to enable you to marry again" (qtd. in Pool 185). A discrete divorce was not a possibility in the 1800s. Rochester was bound to his wife legally, and for social purposes and his own pride, tethered to her forever. This is why bigamy seemed the lesser of the two evils to Rochester.

Beauty— for a woman eligible for marriage, was possibly even more important among the Victorians than it is today. Yet physical plainness was the foundation of all Brontë's heroines. Much as Brontë appeared to turn M.
Heger's head with her intellect, so did her heroines in *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. In addition to the selflessness Brontë dreamed of from the men in her life, she also yearned to be recognized for her inner talents. This was another motivating force when she created her novels about true love. Thus, Brontë elevates the mutual attractiveness of her heroes and heroines.

The intelligent woman can see the potential goodness beneath the surface faults of the flawed men, and, eventually, the men see the quality character of their future brides. This is where the romanticism comes in, the aspect of love that defeats all common sense, social standings, and appearances. Brontë has created stories that are based on the fairy-tale of the working class non-beauty of the nineteenth century who lack the striking looks, the funds to buy baubles, satin and lace, and the dowries to make them attractive to possible suitors. These women have developed character, intelligence, and kindness because of the absence of other qualities, and have come to rely on and hold sacred these characteristics. Brontë has created tales, through her own personal aspirations, that appeal to all of her kind.

The Victorians were among the first to widely recognize a romantic love leading to marriage. For instance, the Valentine’s Day card first appeared in the 1840s. As a part of this cultural shift was a growing awareness, that love can change people. In each novel the reader is distinctly aware of the changes the hero undergoes because of love, and, in going against his nature for that love, we applaud him in his efforts to become worthy of the
heroine. Brontë rewards each hero with the love of the woman for whom he would transform himself. As Tosh notes:

Husbands looked to a partner in life to whom they could pour out their anxieties, their doubts and their aspirations. Home was felt to be the only place where the vulnerability that lay behind the public mask of strength and imperturbability could be shared with someone else. The sympathetic ear and soothing tongue of the wife were regarded as much the most important dimension of the healing power of home. As long as these qualities were in evidence, failings in other areas were overlooked. (54)

This ideal existence is not only beneficial to the husband, but as the first sentence implies, grants the wife a partnership or equality in her marriage. Brontë rewards a man in her novels by being given an equal to live with, a woman who would share his burdens, relieve his sorrows and increase the quality of his life.

Influenced by the literary culture of the nineteenth century, Brontë created Crimsworth, one of her heroes, in part, from Victorian self-help literature and the social perceptions from which it came. Crimsworth is a penniless orphan, who tells us his Byronic self-imposed seclusion, has come from a lifetime of rejection. Only after he clears this hurdle through self-help is he able to become worthy in his beloved’s eyes.

Frances Wilson portrays another example of a stereotype used for analyzing the men of the Victorian era in the book Byromania. The Byronic male, taken from
the work—but more often the life of Lord Byron—is widely utilized in nineteenth century literature. Byron was an author whose escapades and tendencies to ignore social restrictions, and moral boundaries, made his reputation infamous in the nineteenth century. Rochester fits the Byronic stereotype perfectly throughout most of the novel because of his wealth, his relationships with prostitutes and his selfish behavior to obtain Jane at all costs. Rochester’s own seclusion at the end of the novel, when he thinks all is lost, is ended by Jane when he becomes Jacobian: what John Reed calls a man who would sacrifice the one he loves if that sacrifice means her happiness (Reed 90).

Emmanuel is the Good Samaritan, another stereotype in John Reed’s book, who will sacrifice his own happiness, comfort and existence for others. Emmanuel, who took on the responsibility of his lost love’s family, must relinquish this responsibility, and in turn surrender a piece of his Catholic identity, in order to live a life with Lucy Snowe.

I will also analyze both Rochester and Emmanuel by using disguise in the Victorian novel. Both men, not who they portray themselves to be, must relinquish their identities in order to win the women they love. Rochester is disguising his marriage to a mad woman and his behavior following his eternal tie with a woman he detested. Emmanuel’s mask is less obvious and more confusing to the reader because what he conceals are acts of kindness, loyalty and forgiveness.

Brontë deliberately depicted these heroes as wounded, lost and selfish to show that the transforming act of love had the power to bring them from their lost states.
Each of these male characters have such fear and pride that when they finally become the men worthy of the heroines by acting contrary to their nature, the reader is completely aware of the lengths to which each would go in order to find love.
Chapter Two: The Professor

Brontë began writing The Professor in 1846 at the age of thirty. She was unmarried and the motivation for writing a novel was said to be the opportunity to “do what she most loved and allow her to stay together at home” with her sisters (Barker 146). At this time Brontë is a year past her final visit to Brussels and M. Heger’s rejection. Her brother was turning to drugs and alcohol to dull his own pain concerning a lover who refused him, and her father was becoming increasingly ill and demanding of Charlotte’s time (Barker xxi). This is important when looking into Brontë’s inspiration for Crimsworth and how he is triumphant despite his fallibilities, unlike the men in her life. It also explains Brontë’s tendency to resolve these issues in her fiction.

One of the dilemmas Brontë resolves in this novel is the Victorian expectation placed upon her as a single, middle-class woman. The author’s solution to the notion that a woman needed a husband and master is to portray a relationship based upon equality and mutual need. Brontë also copes with M. Heger’s refusal to leave his wife, who is physically beautiful but cold and unkind. Brontë deals with the injustice placed upon plain women, whose inner-charms go unseen, by depicting the Madame Heger-type in all three of the novels I will discuss. In The Professor, Zoë Reuter, though physically appealing, is vindictive and petty. The hero sees Frances Henri, the plain governess, as good and kind and Crimsworth, unlike M. Heger, chooses wisely.

I will also discuss Crimsworth and the progress he makes as a male character in The Professor. The personal elements examined consist of Brontë’s own
experience with her father Patrick and first love M. Heger, and how in her writing she
gives to her heroines what she lacked. Crimsworth also represents the starting point
for which I plan to determine Brontë’s evolving opinion of men as she grows older,
and her experiences with men intensify. Brontë created Crimsworth with innate
weakness, fear and crippling pride, but unlike Patrick and Branwell Brontë and M.
Heger, Crimsworth overcomes these obstacles for the woman he loves.

The external obstacles placed before Crimsworth lay in Brontë’s depiction of
him as a “self-made” man and orphan. These attributes intensify the character’s
reticence to accept aid from others, the very thing he must do in order to marry the
woman he loves. This sets the stage for the character’s redemption and sacrifice for
Frances Henri. Another external feature that affects Crimsworth is his being a
Victorian male and the expectations put upon him because of the era in which his
story is set.

Critics such as Heather Glen found the novel reminiscent of a biography of a
"Self-Help" biography. In 1829, the Society for Diffusion of Useful Knowledge
launched its library of knowledge with the publication of George Lillie Craik's The
Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties, "a compendium of biographies of scientists,
scholars, engineers and inventors, intended to serve as models for those without birth
or connections who wished to make their way in the world" (Glen 10). This is
reminiscent of her father in his determination and fortitude to succeed regardless of
his underprivileged beginnings. Patrick Brontë, one of ten children born to an
illiterate farm laborer, rose in education and station through his own determination.
Crimsworth, because he refused to succumb to his uncle's demands, lands in a similar circumstance regarding his deficiency in name and connections.

Though Crimsworth had the advantage of an Eton education, his rejection of one of his uncle's daughters, and a rectory post offered by his other uncle following his graduation, essentially orphaned him for the second time in his life. He wanted to make his own way, on his own terms, as Patrick Brontë had done. Though Brontë may not have intended The Professor to be of this genre, it certainly has many qualities similar to it, and considering Patrick Brontë and his rise in education and society through his own resolve, we can see why Brontë would depict a character that must make his way without aid from others.

Crimsworth's refusal of a guaranteed living and a wife of quality adds dimension to his character because he would not marry for money or convenience. "Crimsworth succeeds not because of his birth or good fortune but despite handicaps, and through his own unaided efforts. The values he invokes are the classic standards of the Self-Help tradition industry-perseverance, self-reliance and independence, self-respect and self-control" (Glen 11). As the story of Crimsworth unfolds, the reader continuously witnesses his choosing the road less traveled as well as the road more difficult, and he advances from one who is orphaned as an infant to a man who owns his own school, and in the process makes a suitable marriage of "love and common interests" (Glen 11). With the same determination Patrick Brontë transformed from "a peasant position, apprenticed to a blacksmith at the age of 12, to village schoolmaster at the age of 16" (Lyndall 6).
In addition to Crimsworth’s similarity to Patrick Brontë as a “self-made” man, Brontë also instills the trait of pride in Crimsworth, who is unable to ask for assistance for fear he will lose control of his own destiny. His desire to achieve his goals without the aid of others is suggestive of Brontë’s father, whose successes had become legend to the Brontë children. Yet Wilks writes that Patrick Brontë “took perhaps too great a pride in himself and in his judgment” (Wilks 98). A portion of this pride stems from Brontë’s father’s success. Yet, unlike Crimsworth, Patrick never overcame this sense of great self-importance. Crimsworth, by comparison, has a tendency to make righteous decisions based upon his own beliefs, but gains clarity because he may lose the opportunity to be with Frances Henri, the woman he loves, because of his convictions. An example of this conviction is when Crimsworth is notified Zoraide and M. Pelet will be married soon, M. Pelet offers him an additional two hundred francs per annum to continue in his post at the school. Crimsworth, in love with Frances and well beyond his feelings for Zoraide, refuses this opportunity because he fears Zoraide, who insinuated that though she would be married, a romance could still occur between them. He relinquishes his post and the additional salary because of Zoraide’s offer. At the moment of his decision Prudence said to him, “you know not where to go, nor how to live”; and then the dream of true love came over me: Frances Henri seemed to stand at my side [...] I could not relinquish my right to it, nor could I withdraw my eyes forever from hers, where I saw so much happiness” (Brontë 214). Crimsworth goes on to consider, “My hopes to win and possess, my resolutions to work and rise, rose in array against me; here I was to
plunge into the gulf of absolute destitution; ‘and all this,’ suggested an inward voice, ‘because you fear an evil which may never happen’ (Brontë 215).

He further regrets this righteous decision when he receives a letter from his love stating she has acquired a position that pays £50 per annum, which with his salary could afford them a good living (Brontë 221). Crimsworth immediately sees the impulsiveness of his actions and berates himself for his decision to leave his post, thinking, “instead of a correct, just, honourable act, it seemed a deed at once light and fanatical” (Brontë 221). This is evidence that he has come to the conclusion that all of his decisions are not entirely sound ones. He has acted rashly and righteously and in consequence lost his chance to marry Frances Henri. As I will discuss later in this chapter, he does not make this mistake again; in going against his character, he gains an opportunity that allows him to marry and prosper with Frances Henri.

Crimsworth resembles Patrick Brontë in ambition and need for success, as well as possessing excessive pride. Yet the way in which Brontë portrays M. Heger in this novel is not by personal traits as much as circumstances. Brontë loved M. Heger, yet he was unavailable to her because he was married. Crimsworth love Zoraide but learns after some time she is engaged to M. Pelet. The most telling and intriguing likeness between these two situations is the fact that Zoraide, like M. Heger, did not always behave as if she were promised to another. She flirts coyly, seeks out Crimsworth’s adoration and is receptive to his attention. At one point Brontë, while in Brussels, wrote a letter to her friend Ellen claiming she had told M. Heger’s wife she would be leaving her teaching position to return home. In her letter
Brontë reported M. Heger, "having heard of what was in agitation—sent for me the day after—and pronounced with vehemence his decision that I should not leave—I could not at that time have persevered in my intention without exciting him to passion" (Barker 118). We must remember that by this time in 1843, Brontë had been very much in love with M. Heger and his reaction to her possible departure translates as a sign of love. Though he could have been sorry to see her go because she was a wonderful teacher of English and an inspirational student, to the love-obsessed Brontë his plea for her to stay was that of a man who could not bear to see the woman he loved leave him. Crimsworth is also given false hope by Zoraide, as Brontë did from M. Heger. The perpetrators of this falseness were, based upon Brontë's interpretation of Madame Heger in her creation of Zoraide, left with individuals unkind and duplicitous.

As Crimsworth is learning of Zoraide's unkind nature, partially by her treatment of Frances Henri, he comes to care for the poor, plain girl who is the brunt of Zoraide's cruelty, as Brontë was by M. Heger's wife who she claimed was unkind to her. One example of this malice is when Zoraide dismisses Frances from her post as teacher of lace mending. When Crimsworth approaches the schoolmistress about her actions, the reader is already aware that Zoraide is jealous of Crimsworth's attention to the young girl. She does not want Crimsworth, yet wants no one else to have him. Zoraide explains to Crimsworth how she went about releasing Frances from her position by making the circumstances of the job so unbearable, and decreasing her salary so dramatically, that the young girl would have not option but to
quit. Crimsworth responds, “Just like you. And in this way you have ousted Middle. Henri? You wanted her office, therefore you rendered it intolerable to her” (Brontë 184). Crimsworth also says of Zoraide that she is “so calculating, so self interested” (Brontë 210). Crimsworth has now fully seen Zoraide for the mean spirited and trifling woman she is and his love for Frances increases. As to Mme. Heger, Brontë describes her to her sister in a letter from Brussels by writing, “I am convinced she does not like me—why I can’t tell, nor do I think she herself has any definite reason for the aversion [. . .], M. and Mme. Heger rarely speak to me. • M. Heger is wondrously influenced by Madame” (Brontë 116). The author, in a letter to Branwell, describes the students she instructs in Brussels by writing, “nobody ever gets into passion here— such a thing is not known—the phlegm that thickens their blood is too gluey to boil—they are very false in their relations with each other.” Brontë then refers to Mme. Heger again, “for Madame, always cool always reasoning is not quite the exception” (Barker 114).

The difference is that Crimsworth left his first love, which is not worthy of his affections, and married Frances. M. Heger stayed with his wife and broke Brontë’s heart. As I have stated earlier, Crimsworth has a chance to make the right decision concerning the woman he loves. M. Heger, in staying with his wife, who Brontë depicted as unworthy of him, made the wrong selection of women as far as Brontë was concerned.

Another quality Crimsworth shares with M. Heger is the relationship between teacher and student. In Annette Federico’s article concerning gender ideology, she
writes, "The social form of power is based, of course, on the narrator's role as tutor; but it is equally based on gender and is endowed with the eroticism that Brontë must certainly have felt simmering in the classrooms of the Pensionnat Heger, but which would have been unacceptable if described from a female point of view" (7).

Brontë's only option then was to describe her experiences from a man's point of view.

Crimsworth also recognizes women's beauty beyond their plain exterior, as well as identifying those who are physically attractive as shallow and without kindness. This is evident in a number of different ways throughout the novel. We witness it when Mrs. Crimsworth, William's sister-in-law, greets William warmly, but is soon seen through by the perceptive William who "sought her eye, desirous to read there the intelligence which [he] could not discern in her face or hear in her conversation; it was merry, rather than small. By turns [he] saw vivacity, vanity, coquetry, look out through irid, but [he] watched in vain for a glimpse of soul" (Brontë 46). Crimsworth continues, "I am no Oriental; white necks, carmine-lips and cheeks, clusters of bright curls do not suffice for me [. . .]" (Brontë 46). Though her childish lisp and infantile expression were pleasing to his older brother, William found her qualities not those of a wife he wanted. Her beauty and outward charm did not impress William, and her lack of intellect left him cold.

Crimsworth's brother's wife and Mademoiselle Zoraide Reuter are the opposite of Frances Henri. Frances is not a heroine the reader knows much about except for the reality that she is nothing like Mrs. Crimsworth and Zoraide. Frances
Henri, with her plainness and kindness, captures the heart of Crimsworth and he pursues her and overcomes his fears to win her for his own. This makes the reader aware that he is able to see women differently than the average Victorian male, as Brontë felt she was “seen” by M. Heger.

In analyzing Crimsworth, who would deem it “like a nightmare” to marry one of his six cousins, and especially abhors “the large and well-modelled statue, Sarah,” we see the same perception of what makes a woman worthy. The “young, tall, and well-shaped” wife of his rich brother is dismissed as childish, and “other tall, well-made, full-formed, dashingly dressed” dressed young ladies are completely uninteresting (Federico 4). “Brontë did not approve of the accepted standards of female attractiveness—tall and full-figured, vain, coquettish—any more than she approved of the social ideal of masculinity” (Federico 5). These incidences pave the way for Frances Henri and her plain and unassuming qualities.

Annette Federico writes that Brontë, by taking on a man’s voice, is confronting the issue of power. “Each of Brontë’s novels confronts issues of power. The Professor deals not with how to obtain power (the problem for Brontë’s heroines), but how to outgrow the need for power” (9). Federico goes on to write: In other words, Crimsworth, though a man, can be likened to Brontë’s heroines in his lack of complete control over his own destiny. He is left to make concessions only a woman of that time would consider, in order to make his way in the world. Crimsworth is disinherited and strange-looking, and he is brought low; obviously he is an example, along with Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, of Brontë’s misunderstood
misfits. (2)

Federico also comments, “by pretending to be male, Brontë can better analyze what really concerns her: being female” (2). Brontë’s relationship with the three men in her life must have confused the author regarding the male gender, and with this confusion must have come some puzzlement regarding her place as a woman. The outcome of this experiment with the male narrator is a story “that is not about a heroine’s growth into power, but instead authorizes a masculine growth out of power by asserting the need to temper male authority . . .” (Federico 2).

As mentioned previously, we discover at the beginning of the novel that Crimsworth is orphaned as an infant. Brontë, in her creation of this male character, shows a circumstance that would have a certain impact on his behavior and motivations. In literature, “orphanhood” served as a symbol of incomplete characters. “Literary orphans frequently embody a pervasive sense of the yearning for fulfillment of a vague desire usually stipulated as human love” (Reed 58). The status of orphan was at the foundation of all the male character did. His lack of intimate relationships relate to Crimsworth’s lack of any familial ties or love. From the beginning, Crimsworth is a burden to his uncles, and later to his older brother. Crimsworth’s immediate reaction to the lack of acceptance he receives is to view his current position with Edward as unworthy, and move on.

This is an ideal foundation for a character depicted in self help type biographies. Yet, in Crimsworth’s case, it also creates a character that seemed cold, hesitant to reach out and repressed.
Crimsworth does not yield to help from others gracefully, as I have stated before. An air of disdain or resentment always accompanies his acceptance of help. "Good will is either so arbitrary, so inexplicable, as to appear to be a kind of perversity, or it is part of these universal, self interested struggle to maintain the advantage" (Glen 15). This attitude is presented to the reader through Mr. Hunsden, who takes peculiar interest in William and aids him by claiming Crimsworth has been speaking ill of his brother Edward, his employer, at the milk. Crimsworth loses his job because of the false statements Hunsden makes at a public meeting. Though Crimsworth is relieved to be free of his brother and the employment of tradesmen, he will not show his gratitude towards Hunsden, whose intentions are pure in trying to save Crimsworth from an unbearable post as well as his unkind brother. He even doubts the older man's intentions, thinking upon their first meeting after his dismissal, "I wondered in my own mind what motive had induced him to interfere so actively between me and Edward; it was to him, it appeared, that I owed my welcome dismissal; still I could not bring myself to asking questions to show any eagerness of curiosity" (Brontë 78). Crimsworth's hesitant acceptance and need to justify an act of kindness attributes to his lack of experience where this behavior is concerned.

This pattern emerges when Crimsworth begrudgingly asks M. Vandenhuten for aid in securing a new position, which is the turning point in the novel. Crimsworth only asks for help because he needs employment so he can ask Frances to marry him. He justified his plea for help because he had saved M. Vandenhuten's son from drowning at a school outing, but upon receiving a position through the
grateful man's aid, Crimsworth immediately turns the man's good deed into
“discharging the obligation under which he affirmed I had laid him” (Brontë 223).

After saving this man's son, Crimsworth still has great difficulty in procuring
the help of another and it is a great leap for him that he does it. His love for Frances
has precluded his sense of pride and upon reviewing his options in obtaining a new
position, Crimsworth ponders, "it was not the ground of merit I could apply to him;
no, I must stand on the back of necessity," he goes on by justifying:

I wanted work; my best chance of obtaining it lay in securing his
recommendation. This I knew could be had by asking for it; not to ask
because the request revolted my pride and contradicted my habits, would, I
.felt be an indulgence of false fastidiousness. I might repent the omission all
my life; I would not then be guilty of it. (Brontë 223)

Crimsworth, because he wants Frances as his wife, finally allows himself to
seek help from another and in his mind, give someone else power. Until this point his
lack of trust and pride, hindered his ability to rely on anyone but himself, as he
asserted, though asking for help was against his nature, he would not lose his
opportunity to marry Frances because of his ego. The relationship between
Crimsworth asking for assistance and marrying Frances Henri is that without aid from
an outside source a marriage would not be possible because of financial difficulty.
Crimsworth's story evolves through his search for money as in Lucile, written in 1860
by Owen Meredith (Lord Lytton), whose hero Alfred Vargrave is ruined by Sir
Ridley's financial maneuvers, Crimsworth’s “loss of fortune gave value to life”
(Burkhart 48): Brontë develops Crimsworth's character and story around his efforts to gain financial autonomy.

Unlike Rochester and Emmanuel, who actively go after the women they love, Crimsworth passively participates in his life, most times rejecting various options to protect his pride, thereby changing the direction of his future by default. "From the very beginning, Crimsworth's story is framed in imagery of opposition, antipathy of rejection and resistance" (Glen 13). The first refusal was his rejection of a position in a church and marriage to a cousin. When his uncles propose this path to Crimsworth, his response is, "I declined both the church and matrimony" and "his daughters, all of whom I greatly dislike" (Glen 14). As Crimsworth's tale develops, his search for economic security is motivated by his desire to marry the woman he loves, and not just about proving himself to his brother and uncles. His goal becomes honorable, his motivations pure.

Each of Brontë's male characters possesses characteristics that complicate his journey toward the ultimate Victorian existence of love, marriage, financial security and children. In addition to those I have mentioned concerning Crimsworth's personality and character, a very real and tangible difficulty affected all men in the nineteenth century regardless of status, wealth or personality. This pressure was the way in which society would view him. Though not a major piece of the plot, the demands on a man to provide for his wife, or even have a suitable living in order to propose to the woman he loved, was an underlying theme in all of Brontë's novels.

The historical truth that a man was judged, in large part, by how well he
provided for his family, cannot be ignored. In Crimsworth's instance, it intensifies because he has to face that he could not provide an equal part financially to the relationship. It seems Crimsworth accepts the fact both would work, and in the end of the novel, their partnership in running the school is more common than I thought. Husband and wife run enterprises were a widely accepted practice in middle-class families. "The bourgeois wife often acted as her husband's junior partner in his business. The contemporary term which best summed up the wife's economic role was 'help-meet'" (Tosh 15). So it would seem, in the end, that Crimsworth has given his wife a respectable life, but his problem lay earlier on in not having a position which would allow him to become her equal partner, and work with her toward the ideal middle-class life. His self-ridicule regarding his decision to leave his post with M. Pelet because of his righteous impulsiveness, then, involves not only his own perception of himself, but also the perception of the Victorian society in which his story is set.

The societal aspect of Crimsworth's circumstances offers further explanation to his refusal in asking Frances to marry him because he was without a post. Crimsworth, as a nineteenth century male, could not ask Frances to marry him if he had no financial security himself. It went against who he was not just in the sense of his character and personality, but also as a man in the Victorian era.

Knowing, as a reader, what circumstances shape him, gives us the information we need to identify when the hero has gone beyond his nature. With Crimsworth, it was asking for help and relinquishing his power and control, two attributes Brontë
instilled into this character that would cripple him throughout the novel. Brontë bestows these weaknesses upon her heroes in order to create male characters unlike the men in her own life. Crimsworth's likeness to her father and M. Heger were only in their impediments. It is in the hero's salvation that the author starts to create a story of a man who would overcome such obstacles for love, unlike what she experienced in her own life.

Crimsworth evolves enough that his seemingly unremarkable walk to M. Vandenhuten's home, the ringing of his bell at his grand door, and the inevitable meeting to ask for assistance, is against his pride and instinct of self-preservation, yet he does it anyway for Frances. William Crimsworth, as a character, is determined not to reveal his character, for to him "the better, inward self is a hidden treasure to be salvaged. Yet Crimsworth does not realize his powerful sense of confinement is largely the consequence of his reserve until he is able to admit his love for Frances Henri and release his inner feelings" (Reed 315).

Brontë's first attempt at novel writing, as I have stated, was not as successful as her later accomplishments, but the success of The Professor and the acceptance it received from critics is not the issue. My theory that Brontë used her novels to inadvertently create an existence, or Eden, as mentioned in my introduction, that would go beyond her own experiences and satisfy her need for love, is what I hope to prove. In this novel, Brontë used her father's pride in his judgment, his self help success and his need for control to create Crimsworth. She put this hero in a situation that is similar to her own regarding M. Heger and his wife, who she obviously felt
was beneath him. In her life, at the time this novel was written, neither man lived up to her expectations or changed selflessly for her. In *The Professor*, Frances Henri, the poor plain teacher of lace mending, was granted both and therefore achieved the Eden Brontë did not.

Through this novel Brontë was evaluating her existence as a single woman caring for an infirm father, rejected by her first love and coping with her problematic brother. In this tale, as well as *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, Brontë was trying to discover what she desired as an independent woman in the nineteenth century. In *The Professor*, Frances Henri was given marriage and a son as well as a husband who allowed her to keep her post as teacher; yet only because it was financially necessary for both to be employed in order to marry. It would seem as if Brontë has created Eden in this novel, but for the fact that as she conceived each great romance she continued to modify her previous definition of an Eden-like existence. As the author grew older and wiser, her definition of love, marriage and a happily ever after ending evolved, creating heroines whose expectations increased and heroes who were capable of granting the heroines what was vital to their happiness. In *The Professor*, Frances craved love, marriage and a more industrious life. In the following chapters, we will see the heroine’s demands challenge the hero further than the one before, increasing the value of the hero’s sacrifice.
Chapter Three: *Jane Eyre*

In the course of creating each love story, Brontë resolved the issues that haunt her as an independent Victorian woman whose own life fell short of her expectations because the men in her life failed her. In *The Professor*, her issues lay predominantly with the notion that a woman in the nineteenth century must marry in order to succeed, as well as coping with the reality that the man she wanted to marry was not available. Brontë resolves the matter of marriage by providing her heroine with a husband who would be partner and not master. Through *The Professor*, Brontë settles the issue of M. Heger's marriage to a woman considered beautiful by Victorian standards, yet unfeeling, by revealing the pretty Zoraide Reuter as malicious, while the plain Frances is depicted as kind and virtuous.

One year later, in 1846, Brontë conceived the romance of *Jane Eyre*. Two years had passed since the author's last visit to Brussels and M. Heger, who remained in her heart as her only love and whom she continued to write to faithfully. Her letters went unanswered, and Brontë was left to endure "the bitter isolation of one whose offerings in love are ignored—not even rebuffed or refused, but callously ignored [and] [...] the inspiration and joy she had tasted in Brussels would now sour" (Wilks 45). At the same time Brontë was "in the throes of her brother's infuriating self-pity," and "was having to read to and to write for her blind father" (Wilks 46). These circumstances "fed her increasing anger with men, men whom she admired, but who nevertheless let her down" (Wilks 46).
Yet the creation of Rochester exposes Brontë as still optimistic in her quest for a man who would love her selflessly. Brontë redefines her archetype of love and marriage by recreating the hero whose transformation is the heroine’s only hope for a partnership between man and woman, yet because of her changing circumstances the author’s ideals of love transform as well. This also leads to the evolution of Brontë’s belief that to show true love one should be prepared to change and sacrifice one’s self. The author fashions great love stories with male characters that sacrifice all, act against their nature and become the ideal mate because her own endeavor to secure such a man was unsuccessful.

The following chapter examines the life of Rochester, using Brontë’s personal experiences and external circumstances the author placed before him. Rochester resembles M. Héger, Patrick Brontë and Branwell Brontë. Brontë also uses the issues of primogeniture and the expectations placed upon a Victorian man to create Rochester. These characteristics Brontë instills in her hero are the impediments Rochester must overcome in order to become the “spiritual” Rochester Jane Eyre would wait for throughout the novel, and in doing so, be the ideal man Brontë wished for.

Rochester is similar to the men in Brontë’s own life who made her existence lonely and hopeless. “While Jane Eyre is fiction, the story nevertheless embodies Charlotte’s preoccupations as she found herself ‘caged up’ in Haworth Parsonage, caring for her blind father while her brother set about drinking himself to death” (Wilks 52). She takes Rochester further than she did Crimsworth in her attempts to
shape the ideal man she wished for by bestowing upon him a transformation much more tumultuous and painful than Crimsworth’s. Brontë would punish Rochester because of her own growing dissatisfaction, but when he overcomes the faults and obstacles he shares with her father, brother and M. Heger, she bestows upon him the ultimate gift of a wife and son.

Brian Wilks claims that M. Heger’s wife trapped him, as Bertha did to Rochester, and the fictional fire “would consume the impediment of the wife who stood between Jane Eyre and her marriage to Edward Rochester. It is arguable, even likely, that Brontë might have wished just such a fate for Madame Heger” (Wilks 45). Once Bertha was dead, Rochester was free to marry Jane, just as Madame Heger’s end would have paved the way to the marriage of Brontë and her tutor.

Lyndall Gordon, on the other hand, suggests M. Heger did return the love Brontë felt for him. This assumption is based, in part, upon a letter written by M. Heger to another English female student he had instructed 40 years after Brontë was in Brussels. This letter captures M. Heger’s “enlivened response to English reserve, his bristle at the independence of a Protestant [as well as] his belief in the silent communication of ‘two distant hearts’ and his wish to penetrate the emotional guard, had the cover—and license—of a firmly married man. M. Heger was adept at verbal caresses” (99). This letter confirms that M. Heger was capable of such emotional demonstrations regardless of his marital status. The following letter, written in the twilight of M. Heger’s life, raises more questions than answers about the relationship between Brontë and Heger. Did he love her? Was this the old story of a young.
woman, awed by a man in power, who mistook his intentions? Were his intentions toward Brontë forty years earlier more “noble” than can be inferred here, the overheated imagination of an older male teacher who picked a favorite student for the year? Whatever the answers to these questions, the following letter reveals M. Heger’s persuasive abilities as well as confirming his attraction to young English women:

I have only to think of you to see you. I often give myself the pleasure when my duties are over. When the light fades I postpone lighting the gas lamp in my library, I sit down, smoking my cigar, and with a hearty will I evoke your image—and you come (without wishing to, I daresay) but I see. I talk with you—you with that little air, affectionate undoubtedly, but independent and resolute, demanding to be convinced before allowing yourself to submit . . .

(Gordon 99)

This correspondence is also reminiscent of the voice Rochester has “as he contemplates Jane in his library and becomes aware of a resolute woman, who does not deny feeling but who will not allow it to shake her reason” (Gordon 9). Themissive also encapsulates, as I have mentioned previously, Brontë’s theme regarding the appeal of a man who responds to a woman’s intellect. “Heger had responded to her intellect. It was to her mind, to the attention of an apt pupil, to her skill as a teacher and gifts as a writer, that he had reacted. Lacking beauty, the sensitive young woman craved intellectual recognition” (Wilks 46). She yearned to be “seen” by a man who would look deeper than her plain exterior. This recognition was certainly
evident in the relationship. Brontë created between Jane and Rochester, who would choose the plain governess over the beautiful Blanche Ingram, claiming upon his explanation to Jane that he desires her because:

What love have I for Miss Ingram? None: as I have taken pains to prove: I caused a rumor to reach her that my fortune was not a third of what was supposed, and after that I presented myself to see the result; it was coldness both from her and her mother. I would not—I could not—marry Miss Ingram. You—you strange—you almost unearthly thing—I love as my own flesh. You—poor and obscure, and small and plain as you are—entreat to accept me as a husband. (Brontë 380)

Jane’s appearance paled when compared to the lovely Blanche Ingram, yet her character, kindness and intellectual superiority are what Rochester craved. Brontë, as in The Professor, pits physical beauty against unadorned simplicity, revealing once again her wish to be seen for who she was and not what she appeared to be. As Zoraide Reuter is vindictive and cruel in Brontë’s first novel, Blanche Ingram is a heartless gold-digger in Jane Eyre.

This fight Rochester would wage for Jane becomes desperate because of the resemblance he shares with Charlotte’s brother Branwell Brontë, who was ruined by the loss of the woman he wanted to marry. Mrs. Robinson, the married woman Branwell loved, chose financial wealth over marrying Branwell and he could not bear the impending consequence of her choice. Rochester would trick, manipulate and
deceive Jane because of his marriage to a woman he could never experience love with.

Branwell, like Rochester, was a good young man who was capable of bringing those around him joy, until circumstance made him a man who would do anything to escape the pain he felt at losing the possibility of love. As I stated in the introduction, “Branwell had offered, and received, congenial companionship in imaginative play until his post adolescent collapse” (Wilks 102). Branwell's downhill spiral seemed to have begun around the time he was relieved of his post as tutor to Edward Robinson because of his affair with the boy's mother. Soon after Mr. Robinson died it was discovered that he supposedly left instructions in his will forbidding the union of his widow with Branwell by threatening that she be cut from his estate if a marriage were to occur. Mrs. Robinson adhered to her husband’s wishes and her decision drove Branwell to despair and alcohol (Barker 134). Branwell was shattered by this turn of events and became one of the men who would cause Charlotte pain and disappointment.

Rochester is similar regarding his wayward behavior and self-interested conduct. When Rochester enters Jane's life, she is ignorant of what conditions created such a complicated man. Speaking to Jane, Rochester explains:

I was your equal at eighteen, quite your equal. Nature meant me to be, on the whole, a good man, Miss Eyre: one of the better end; and you see I am not so... I am not a villain: you are not to suppose that—not to attribute to me any such bad eminence; but, owing, I believe, rather to circumstances that to my
nature bent, I am a trite commonplace sinner, hackneyed in all the poor petty dissipations with which the rich and worthless try to put on life. (Brontë 201)

Rochester and Patrick Brontë were in similar situations, including their loss of sight, their selfishness, and need for control. Charlotte began writing Jane Eyre while caring for her father following an operation to remove his cataracts (Barker xxvii). Rochester loses his sight when he attempts to save his insane wife from his burning home. Both men are literally as well as figuratively sightless, but unlike Patrick, Rochester realizes his selfishness when he loses his sight and is faced with what he had attempted to do to the woman he loves by tricking her into a bigamous marriage. Rochester, until this point of the novel, was so desperate to acquire Jane as his own that he was blind to all else. When Jane discovers his secret, he suggests that she become his mistress, proving further he does not clearly see the woman before him. He offers her a partial arrangement that Jane will not accept because she will do nothing halfway in love; she will only accept a complete offer that would make her "bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh" (Wilks xvii).

In the same respect, Patrick Brontë was equally blind to what his daughter sacrificed for him, and how she had limited her own life to offer him comfort and solace in his world. Following the death of her siblings “[Charlotte] found a way of living with [Patrick] that suited them both and which seems to have worked admirably, she accepting the role of devoted, dutiful and caring daughter, while he fully exploited that of the elderly and often infirm parent” (Wilks 98). This exploitation increased when she cared for him after his surgery, and her submission to
his tyrannical needs is documented well in her letters to friends and her publishers. Upon refusing an invitation to visit Ellen Nussey in June of 1845, six months before beginning *Jane Eyre*, Brontë explains, “I feel reluctant indeed to leave papa for a single day—his sight diminishes weekly and can be wondered at—that as he sees the most precious of his faculties leaving him, his spirits sometimes sink” (Barker 129). She responds to Ellen’s accusation that her refusal was indifferent by writing, “You thought I refused you coldly did you? It was a queer sort of coldness when I would have given my ears to be able to say yes, and felt obliged to say no” (Barker 129). It is obvious Brontë felt “caged up” with her father but was never given leave by him to visit friends or experience new places. This resistance to allowing her to leave his side certainly must have added to her feeling that he did not appreciate her or see what she was giving up for him.

Rochester shows his need for control attempting to restrict her financially. Jane, upon hearing of her aunt’s illness, requests from Rochester time off for a visit. Rochester answers with immediate trepidation regarding Jane leaving him and says, “Promise me only to stay a week.” Jane responds that she will not say that because she does not want to make a promise she may not be able to keep. Rochester then moves to the subject of her financial welfare for her journey and asks how much money she has, remembering he had not yet paid her salary. Jane responds by handing over her small purse, “He took the purse, poured the hoard into his palm and chuckled over it as if its scantiness pleased him” (Brontë 252). Rochester’s relief is because it is evident Jane would be going nowhere without his monetary aid and he
could control the amount of time she is away by how much money he gives her. When he offers her fifty pounds Jane reminds him that he does not owe her that much money, and Rochester replies, “Right, right! Better not give you all now: you would, perhaps, stay away three months if you had fifty pounds. There are ten: is it not plenty” (Brontë 252).

Though this is somewhat playful in spirit, there remains the undeniable truth that Rochester rations the amount of money he would give to Jane because he does not want her extending her absence. This is reminiscent of Brontë’s father’s desire to keep her selfishly close to him.

The circumstances with her ailing father seem responsible for the blindness that becomes Rochester’s savior. He finally relinquishes his hold over Jane because he would not have her become caretaker to a pathetic blind man, as Brontë was to her father. His blindness seems to have become the line he could not cross regarding what he would do to make Jane his own. He would not manipulate her sympathy and pity, as Brontë’s father had done. He became the “spiritual” Rochester Jane held out for, that would “offer [his] breast to the hoofs of a kicking horse” for the woman he loves by suggesting she marry John Rivers instead of staying with him (Wilks xv). He says to Jane at the end of the novel after she describes the man who courted her, “The picture you have just drawn is suggestive of a rather too overwhelming contrast. Your words have delineated very prettily a graceful Apollo. […] Your eyes dwell on a Vulcan—a real blacksmith, brown, broad-shouldered; and blind and lame into the bargain” (Brontë 490). Rochester, in letting Jane go, has been made a better man
than Brontë’s father, who would devour her youth and happiness for his own comfort and well-being.

Rochester, whose deceit and desperation is well explained by the author, has a difficult time when he first returns to Thornfield and meets his new employee, Jane. Until this point, he has lived a life of escape and immediate gratification, feeling justified in his selfish endeavors because of his circumstances. As he began to see Jane as honest in nature, loyal to her moral standing and true to others, he realizes Jane is his superior. Her unwavering character, despite her own unfortunate situation, set a standard he felt beneath, and he soon became overwhelmed by his desperation to secure her love.

This female representation of goodness that saves the rogue occurs often in the Victorian novel. For instance in Samuel Warren’s *Ten Thousand A-Year*, published in 1841, the main character Gammon sees himself more clearly when near Kate Aubrey, the novel’s heroine (qtd. in Reed 297). “He was a fiend beside an angel. What an execrable hypocrite was he! He caught, on the memorable occasion, a sudden glimpse even of his own inner man—of his infernal selfishness and hypocrisy—and involuntarily shuddered” (qtd. in Reed 297). As with Gammon, Rochester becomes aware of his deficiency when he faces Jane’s impeccable and unwavering genuineness and says to Jane while discussing repentance, “I am a trite common-place sinner, hackneyed in all the poor petty dissipations with which the rich and worthless try to put on life” (Brontë 154). Convinced that he is beneath Jane, he
sentences himself to a life of lies, a bigamous marriage and the great probability that if she were to discover his deceit, he would lose her forever.

Rochester continuously tests Jane's ability to forgive and her fairness. For example, when he tells Jane of his affair with Adele's mother, revealing the young girl's status as one born out of wedlock, Jane accepts Adele without reserve and does not condemn him for his past. Rochester is humbled and relieved by her fairness and her favorable reception of Adele's circumstances, which suggests that she will accept Rochester's situation without judging as well, if he would give her the chance. However, he is too fearful of losing her, so he continues to hide the mystery of the woman in the attic.

Robert Kendrick notes that the character of Rochester is a result of his privileged world. "Jane and Rochester are both victims of the conventions of the English landed class—he by virtue of being an insider, she . . . by virtue of being an outsider. It may not unreasonably be argued that Rochester's miseries and corruption stem from his subservience to the demands of his situation" (Kendrick 7). Examining the Victorian society Rochester is set may also aid the reader in comprehending how a man who seems so strong is somewhat powerless to control his own fate. The world in which Rochester belongs was that of wealthy landowners. During much of the 1800s, "land was socially prestigious which produced rent from tenant farmers that was probably the major source of income for most of the landed gentry" (Pool 85).

When *Jane Eyre* was written, land meant status, wealth, influence, and affluence; the gentry's concern was to "transmit their enormous landed estates intact,
generation after generation, to their descendants in order to protect the family name and fortune” (Pool 90). The practice of primogeniture assured the “land in each generation was left to the eldest son instead of its being divided among all the children…and thus protected “a family’s greatness” (Pool 90).

Primogeniture is what led Rochester to his marriage to Bertha Mason. As was common in the 1800s, the younger sons were often married to wealthy men’s daughters who may not have been as wealthy, or well named, but were still considered a fine match for the unlanded son. In *Pride and Prejudice* Colonel Fitzwilliam says to Elizabeth Bennett, “younger sons cannot marry where they like” which led to fathers and eldest sons searching for suitable matches for the younger sons to ensure they would not be penniless and bring shame on the family name (qtd. in Pool 90). Rochester’s father’s hope to secure the family name led to his dishonest omission of the information regarding the insanity running rampant in the Mason family. Rochester’s only accountability in his disastrous marriage to Bertha was his ignorance regarding his wife’s madness. The fact that Rowland, Rochester’s older brother, would inherit the entire estate was expected. Rochester’s marriage into a wealthy family was not a unique solution to the family’s plight, yet the deceit by which his family ensured this marriage was not common.

The deception concerning Rochester’s impending bride was successful because she is hidden from him and only shown at parties, beautifully dressed and on her best behavior. Her insane mother and “idiot” brother are also hidden completely from the young man in order to ensure the marriage. Rochester was also unaware of
the fortune his family would receive upon their nuptials, which is the reason Rochester's father arranges the marriage.

Like a large number of authors in the nineteenth century, Brontë developed Rochester in the image of Lord Byron, who is said to represent "lust and pride, and to be an aristocrat and world-weary protagonist ... Byron represented at the same time solitary elegance and gross libertinism, physical indulgence and emaciation; the sharp dandy as the disheveled wanderer" (Wilson 6-9). Byron's poem Lara captures the true persona of the famous author. This poem describes Rochester just as accurately in his search for love in Europe, his association with mistresses, and his impatience and desperation where Jane is concerned:

In him inexplicably mix'd appear'd
Much to be loved and hated, sought and feared;
Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot:
His silence form'd a theme for others' prate—
They guessed, they gazed, they fain would know fate.
What had he been? What was he thus unknown?
Who walk'd their world, hid lineage only known?
A hater of his kind? yet some would say;
With them he could seem gay amidst gay;
But own'd that smile, if oft observed and near,
Waned in its mirth, and wither'd to a sneer;
That smile might reach his lip, but pass'd not by,

None e're could trace his laugh to his eye. [. . .] (qtd. in Wilson 9)

This poem fittingly describes Rochester until the final chapters of the novel. Byron's reputation as a "vampiric seducer" is much like Rochester's. Given the pervasiveness of the Byronic hero in nineteenth century contemporary literature, many of Brontë's initial readers could assume that Rochester would destroy Jane in his desire to survive. This Byron-like Rochester depicted by Brontë was all the reader knew until the last few pages and it was reinforced continuously throughout the novel.

Perhaps unexpectedly, however, Brontë merges nineteenth century contemporary novel conventions so that the victim would change a perceived vampire, and Rochester's love for Jane overcomes his Byronic desires. The reader anticipates the evolution of such characters for the love of the right woman; however, love at a distance cannot reform Rochester. After appearing to lose Jane's love following the attempted false marriage, he is stripped of his giant manor and servants and even of his handsome appearance by Bertha's fire. Only when he loses all he values does Brontë allow Jane to bring him to a new wholeness.

The Jacobian male represents this wholeness in literary criticism; the Biblical reference describes a faithful, patient lover whose "constancy Victorians found comforting" (Reed 79). He is the faithful lover; the man who would deny himself happiness in order to ensure the happiness of the one he loved. In Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House*, (1854-1863), Frederick Graham, in love with his
cousin Honoria Churchill, does not declare this love because she is in love with Félix Vaughan, to whom she is to wed. Frederick’s love, though unreturned, remains constant to the degree that her happiness with another man gives him consolation (qtd. in Reed 79).

The Jacobian male will “offer his breast to the hoofs of a kicking horse” (Wilks xv). In Rochester’s situation, this translates to advising Jane that she marry John Rivers, her other suitor, who is described as Grecian in looks, tireless in his good deeds, and well educated. Rochester, in his “spiritualized” state, pleads with Jane, stating, “I am no better than the old lightening-struck chestnut tree in Thornfield orchard . . . And what right would than ruin have to bid a budding woodbine cover its decay with freshness” (Brontë 493). He will no longer get the girl at any price. The vampiric lover is no longer willing to feed his hunger without regard for the very thing he needs to survive. He is now a man so in love he would trade his happiness for Jane’s fulfillment of joy.

Jane’s response to Rochester’s plea that he is not worthy of her is to reject his description of himself. She continues to assure him by saying, “You are green and vigorous. Plants will grow about your roots, whether you ask them or not, because they take delight in your bountiful shadow; and as they grow they will lean towards you, and wind around you, because your strength offers them so safe a prop” (Brontë 493). With this response, we know Brontë’s reward to Rochester for his transformation is Jane not only loving Rochester, but also truly knowing him. He would live out his days in a home “where the vulnerability that lay behind the public
mask of strength and imperturbability could be shared with someone else” (Tosh 54).

Jane’s reward for waiting for the “spiritual” Rochester is to be that partner in life to
the man she loves.

As Brontë develops as an author, and more importantly as a woman, it is also
important to point out the circumstances she creates for her heroines. As we have
seen with Jane Eyre, the heroine, in the end, did not have to get married in order to
live a life of contentment. Though it is obvious Jane would have suffered greatly if
Rochester had perished in the fire, she has an alternative that Frances Henri does not.
She receives a large inheritance from her uncle and has family who love her.

Perhaps, as Brontë became older with no prospects of marriage, she felt more inclined
to provide for her heroines an option other than marriage, regardless of whether those
resources were necessary. Frances Henri had no other alternative for a happy life
than to marry William Crimsworth. This, in a small way, makes The Professor seem
more of a fairytale than Jane Eyre, because the hero literally saves the heroine from
an unpleasant and lonely fate. Jane, on the other hand, is given the financial and
personal wherewithal to exist without Rochester if necessary.

Unlike Crimsworth and Frances, who are gifted with health, success, love and
a son, Rochester, though seemingly happy at the end of the novel, is maimed and
partially blind. He is witness to the life he has finally earned but these blessings are
not without a price. His transformation is much more tumultuous than Crimsworth’s
because he has further to go in his redemption, and he will have the scars of his sins
for the rest of his life. It seems as though Brontë became a bit more realistic in the
salvation of her hero and though he gains a loving marriage and son, he will always bear the marks of his past transgressions.

Brontë's attempt to define an ideal husband and marriage progresses from The Professor to Jane Eyre. In this novel, the hero offers the heroine a partnership based upon mutual respect, love and individuality. This is evident when Jane defines her relationship with John Rivers stating, "He does not love me: I do not love him [...] I am not happy at his side, nor near him. He has no indulgence for me—no fondness. He sees nothing attractive in me; not even youth—only a few useful mental points" (Brontë 493). Jane expected and waited for the "spiritualized" Rochester. When the couple marries, we are certain the hero has become the very best because Jane would not settle for less. In contrast, Frances Henri has no other suitors and no real choice as to what she desires in a man.

Rochester advances further than Crimsworth as a man who will ultimately sacrifice his own happiness for the woman he loves. Brontë, through time, has settled more distinctly on her ideal of a man and what he should offer his wife. Rochester, upon Jane's return to him at the end of the novel, bends his "sightless eyes to the earth, he stood in mute devotion," and says, "I thank my Maker, that in the midst of judgment he has remembered mercy. I humbly entreat my Redeemer to give me strength to lead henceforth a purer life than I have hitherto!" (Brontë 675). We have witnessed the redemption of Rochester for love and Brontë has created a more ideal marriage of a man saved to a woman who chooses to marry for love and not
necessity. Frances Henri has no such choices, and Crimsworth does not offer so much of himself to his wife.

I also believe, from Rochester's declaration, that Brontë has expanded her definition of what love is and her belief that "to show true love one should be prepared to offer one's breast to the hoofs of a kicking horse" has taken on a more powerful connotation (Wilks xv). It seems that as she grew older and her experiences with the men in her life worsened, she has reached the opinion that what a man offers or does for a woman to gain her love must be a continuous. Rochester's statement to Jane that he will "lead henceforth a purer life" suggests that his transformation is one that will not end once he marries her (Brontë 675). Rochester will live the rest of his days with the purpose of becoming worthy of Jane. Brontë has established her resolve that sacrifice and transformation for love should not end when the vows take place, but continue throughout the marriage.
The resolution and understanding that Brontë achieves in *Jane Eyre*, though seemingly complete, is just a stepping stone toward her final depiction of love, selfless deeds and the ideal life for a woman in Victorian society. In *Villette*, Brontë settles upon the notion that a man is secondary to a woman's own accomplishment and the heroine's acquired independence is a significant statement in this novel. Yet what remains even more significant is the fact that this independence is given to Lucy Snowe by the man who loves her. In the following chapter, I will illustrate M. Paul Emmanuel's transformation for love and his gift of autonomy to Lucy, as well as how Brontë's own experiences with men translated into the death of Emmanuel at the end of the tale.

Brontë began writing *Villette* in 1851, and despite failing health and extreme unhappiness, finished the novel in November of 1852. By this time, Brontë had lost all of her sisters and was, at 35 years old, still single and caring for her infirm father (Barker xxviii). Brontë also had to "face the loss of her dream-partner" when her brother Branwell died on September 24, 1848 (Gordon 41). These circumstances certainly had much impact on the romance Brontë would create for Lucy Snowe because the ideal of love she struggles to define in her novels increases her own disappointments where men are concerned. In addition to Brontë losing her brother and caring for her father, she also experienced the loss of the dream of romance with M. Heger.
Brontë’s final attempt at restructuring the men in her own life can be seen by comparing M. Paul Emmanuel to Patrick Brontë, M. Heger and Branwell Brontë. Emmanuel’s similarities to those men end when her hero acts against his nature for love. Emmanuel will also be analyzed using the Victorian culture his character is set as well as being a man refused marriage to the first woman he loved because he was poor. Evaluating Emmanuel as a devout Catholic whose second love interest, Lucy Snowe, is Protestant, will also be useful in understanding his character. I will be using the criticism of John Reed, Lyndall Gordon, Laura E. Ciolkowski, and others to explain Emmanuel’s behavior and sacrifice for love.

Emmanuel from Villette reveals himself when he aids Madame Beck in judging the character and honesty of Lucy Snowe, who is applying for the position of governess for her children. Lucy’s reaction to Emmanuel’s scrutiny foreshadows the dynamic of their relationship in this novel. As she observes him at their first meeting she deliberates upon “the little man [who] fixed on me his spectacles. A resolute compression of the lips, and gathering of the brow, seemed to say that he meant to see through me, and that a veil would be no veil for him” (Brontë 66). When he recommends that Madame Beck should engage her for the position, and her that nature, seemingly good, would reveal itself, Lucy, upon his exit ponders, “this vague arbiter of my destiny vanished” (Brontë 67). This also foretells the importance Emmanuel would have in Lucy’s life because he would have much more to do with her destiny than just aiding in her acquisition of the post of governess for Madame Beck’s children.
Emmanuel, who is not known to us throughout much of the novel, and who, for a portion of this tale, seems of minimal interest to Lucy, does become the “arbiter of her destiny” and “sees through her” in a very unobtrusive way (Brontë 67). He is unlike Rochester, who charges the gates of Jane Eyre’s emotions frenziedly. He is unlike Crimsworth who seems to follow the ideal pattern of courtship and marriage.

Brontë has instead created a character we do not quite grasp; we are aware of his significance, but what he is significant to, and in what manner, we are not sure. We forget him at some points in the reading because either Lucy is involved with other distractions, such as Dr. John, or he is out of the country. The first genuine interaction between Lucy and Emmanuel is when they see each other at a museum. Lucy is there with Dr. John, and Emmanuel has just returned from a trip to Rome. Emmanuel taps Lucy on the shoulder as she is viewing a painting titled “Cleopatra,” wondering at its meaning and the woman’s lack of modesty. He questions her unchaperoned presence at the museum with Dr. John, as well as the inappropriateness of the painting she is appraising. He leads her to a chair in the corner and commands, “sit down and don’t move—do you hear? Until someone comes to find you, or I give you permission” (Brontë 201). Whether Emmanuel’s reaction to Lucy’s attendance at the museum is one of jealousy or his strict sense of propriety is unclear to the reader. Lucy’s interpretation of this event is that Emmanuel is “a religious little man, in his way: the self-denying and self-sacrificing part of the Catholic religion commanded the homage of his soul” (Brontë 203).
Lucy’s own reaction to the figure of the Cleopatra painting is ironic because her observations could have been Emmanuel’s in their stringent values. Laura E. Ciolkowski writes that Lucy, who finds “Cleopatra” objectionable, formulates “a critique that could very well have been made by M. Paul himself (3).

This is relevant to my thesis because as Emmanuel reprimands Lucy for her unladylike behavior she is actually displaying very Victorian-like beliefs of her own, but will not tolerate having them forced upon her by Emmanuel:

Brontë lingers over the dangerously open and unfinished figures of Victorian womanhood. Insubordination like that which is dramatized in the gallery consequently emerges for Brontë from within the disciplined spaces whose claim to master all insurgency Brontë necessarily discredits. In the gallery space Lucy restages a gendered drama of vision in which she is also firmly implicated. Her breaking of bounds in the gallery follows from a response to the portrait Cleopatra that displays her assimilation into (and investment in) the very disciplinary structures of Victorian femininity that M. Paul later accuses her of violating. (3)

Emmanuel goes on to say, when he returns for her in the corner where he had left her that he had heard Lucy was ill and left alone at the Rue Fossette during the vacation. She replied that she was left with Marie Broc (the cretin/idiot) and she has tried her best but it was terrible to be with her. Emmanuel responds, “You have, then,
a weak heart! You lack courage; and, perhaps charity. Yours are not the qualities which might constitute a Sister of Mercy” (Brontë 203).

This is important not only because this is the first conversation Brontë has constructed between these two characters, but also because we learn Emmanuel is quite stringent in his Catholicism as well as his conviction regarding how Victorian woman should behave. It seems he is attempting to evaluate Lucy’s character; attempting to disillusion himself of the Protestant heathenism he fears she may possess through her attendance unchaperoned at the museum and her failure to care for an “idiot.”

Emmanuel’s constant evaluation of Lucy’s morality does not anger or upset her, which pleases him greatly. Lucy, like Jane, shows no fear of her suitor, which seems to instigate further teasing from him. As with Rochester and Jane, Emmanuel and Lucy have a volatile and rousing rapport with each other.

Lucy is establishing herself in Emmanuel’s mind as one who is unshakeable and worthy of further consideration, though her Protestant standing is certainly a mark against her. Emmanuel says to Lucy while still at the museum “you nurslings of Protestantism astonish me. You unguarded Englishwomen walk calmly amidst red-hot ploughshares and escape unburned. I believe, if some of you were thrown into Nabuchadnezzar’s hottest furnace, you would issue forth untraversed by the smell of fire” (Brontë 204).

This quality is reminiscent of the stern and religious zealot Patrick Brontë. Both craved obedience and order in their lives and demanded the same for those they
cared about, as well as being drawn to women who would challenge their need for such structure. It is a known fact Patrick Bronte, who clawed his way upward in education and station, was a sort of legend in his family for his tenacity. This same tenacity in his daughter was tolerated, and perhaps even celebrated. Charlotte Bronte's waywardness, given the attitudes towards women in the nineteenth century, could easily be excused (Wilks 99). She was allowed more flexibility than her brother was because of her gender, talent and independence. This attribute is also seen in Lucy, who is not intimidated by Emmanuel's stern manner, and expresses herself openly to a man who normally would not tolerate such displays of independence from a woman. Emmanuel is attracted to Lucy because of her uniqueness and lack of trepidation where he is concerned. Patrick felt this same way for Charlotte, who, as many biographers such as Brian Wilks state, was his favorite child (99).

Emmanuel is similar to M. Heger in his interest in Lucy's autonomy as a Protestant as well as her intellectual capacity. Bronte wrote of a "recurring scene: the way [M. Heger] would smoke into her desk when he left his surprises—books, sometimes with cryptic notes" (Gordon 95). This recurring scene is one we also see in the novel Villette where Emmanuel secretly places books and essays in Lucy's desk, which he "generally pruned before lending [...] especially if they were novels" (Bronte 435). Like M. Heger, Emmanuel also leaves behind the distinguishing scent of his cigar when leaving gifts in her desk.
Emmanuel's pride in Lucy's intellect reveals itself when he submits an essay she has written to Messrs. Boissec and Rochmorte, who doubt her authorship of the work. Emmanuel demands that Lucy write another essay in the presence of the two college professors in order to prove her talent and wit. Lucy goes on to wonder, "It seems M. Paul had been rashly exhibiting something I had written—something he had never once praised. Or even mentioned in my hearing, and which I deemed forgotten" (Brontë 399). This behavior is much like M. Heger in his recognition of Brontë's intellectual capacity. Yet this scene is also reminiscent of Patrick Brontë in the respect that Emmanuel had never praised or even acknowledged the essay he found worthy of submitting to his peers as Patrick Brontë "managed to know little of his daughters' potentialities and nothing of their writing" (Gordon 11).

M. Heger was also quite impatient and easily frustrated and "his fury, [Brontë] came to see, was a mark of his regard" (Gordon 95). In the same way Brontë became used to M. Heger's brusqueness, even coming to consider his stern manner as a sign of affection, Lucy also views Emmanuel's severity with understanding. As Lucy claims of Emmanuel, "truly his bark is worse than his bite" (Brontë 355).

We also question Emmanuel's righteous observations of Lucy, and doubt his ability to interpret her, because we see Lucy as her friends do, having "over-gravity in tastes and manner—want of colour in character and costume" (Brontë 334). But, as the novel progresses we find there is more to Lucy than what we suspected, though we are left with the question of whether this spirit was there all along and unearthed by Emmanuel whose attention unveiled the "obtrusive ray" (Brontë 334).
Emmanuel's connection to Catholicism and his opinion of Protestants is quite clear, which is essential also as his relationship grows with Lucy. The conflict regarding the difference of religion between Lucy and Emmanuel is due to Brontë's relationship with M. Heger and his attraction to her Protestant-like independence. M. Heger's "bristling at the independence of a Protestant" as well as his "enlivened response to English reserve" has been written of in the letter I mentioned in previous chapters (Gordon 99). In the letter, M. Heger writes "you with that little air, affectionate undoubtedly, but independent and resolute" which makes it quite clear that he is drawn to the strong-mindedness he has associated with the Protestant religion (Gordon 99). Emmanuel repeatedly attempts to dispel this independence through his teasing and interrogation-like dialogue with Lucy. It seems he is attempting to prove to himself that Lucy's Protestantism does not mean that she is inherently bad in nature, yet he admires her individuality.

"Protestantism is, in Brontë's eyes, an individualistic faith and the Roman Catholic an authoritarian creed which suppresses and enervates, thus acting as an obstacle to Lucy in her struggle towards self-identity and self-expression" (Burkhart 100). We see continuously throughout this novel the individualistic aspect of Lucy that Emmanuel finds so appalling yet seems so drawn to. The struggle for Emmanuel is his need for the authoritarian restrictions of the Catholic Church and because of this need Lucy's individuality troubles him. As a Catholic, he believes such independence is morally wrong. His attraction to her uniqueness confuses him and unearths feelings that, because of his circumstances, he tries to resist. Toward the end
of this novel, Emmanuel, like M. Heger, accepts Lucy’s Protestantism, stating, “Remain a Protestant. My little English Puritan; I love Protestantism in you: I own its severe charm. There is something in its ritual I cannot receive myself; it is the sole creed for Lucy” (Brontë 494).

In the previous chapters, I have mentioned Brontë’s ongoing theme of the heroines being truly “seen,” which can be attributed to M. Heger. Emmanuel “sees” Lucy as Brontë wished to be seen by the man who would love her. This reveals itself in the novel through the social life that Lucy leads upon her reacquaintance with her old friends Dr. John and his mother. Emmanuel admonishes her for her interest in socializing and assaults her with bitter accusations when he sees her at the Hotel Crecy, stating, “you little cat, you coy one, you coquette! ... You seem sad, submissive, dreamy, but you aren’t; this is me telling you this: Savage! Your soul is ablaze, your eyes are alight” (Brontë 318).

Lucy is surprised that anyone would see her as anything other than plain, overly serious and in “wanting of colour of character” (Brontë 334). Following one of Emmanuel’s numerous attacks she contemplates, considering the plain way her friends perceive her, “there starts a little man, differing diametrically from all these, roundly charging you with being too airy and cheery—too volatile and versatile—too flowery and coloury” (Brontë 334). Lucy goes on to ponder in amazement, “this harsh little man—his pitiless censor gathers up all your poor scattered sins of vanity, your luckless chiffon of rose-colour, your small fring[e] of a wreath, your scrap of ribbon, your silly bit of lace, and calls you to account for the lot, and for each item”
(Brontë 334). At this point we are unsure of Lucy’s feelings concerning Emmanuel’s sense of her person, until, at the end of her reflection she acknowledges, “It is a new thing to see one testily lifting his hand to screen his eyes, because you tease him with an obtrusive ray” (Brontë 334). Emmanuel has discovered a light in Lucy that no one else recognizes and Lucy, upon realizing his perception of her, reevaluates her opinion of Emmanuel.

John Reed’s Victorian Conventions, and his description of the Good Samaritan, is also valuable in understanding Emmanuel and his behavior. This nineteenth century portrayal describes a character that would not allow others to suffer, sometimes at his own peril, be it physically or emotionally. William Makepeace Thackeray, known to use the Good Samaritan persona in his work, said imitation of the worthy Samaritan, “like the imitation of Christ, could have a favorable effect, and Samaritans were needed in a society well populated with thieves and victims” (qtd. in Reed 90). Emmanuel is the Samaritan in Villette; his aid to those who once despised him and, in essence, ruined his life, went beyond mere kindness and concern for his lost love’s family.

Emmanuel’s journey to becoming the Samaritan began when he fell in love with a young girl named Justine Marie who was the daughter of a wealthy jeweler. His father left Emmanuel in poverty, and because of this, his courtship of Justine Marie is squashed. The most adamant against the marriage was her paternal grandmother, Madame Walravens. The young girl, giving up her first suitor, and refusing to marry another with a “heavier purse,” went to a convent, and died soon
after. Justin’s father passed away shortly afterward, leaving her mother and grandmother in ruin because of bad investments. Emmanuel, hearing of the financial condition these ladies were in:

took on their insolent pride the revenge of the purest charity—housing, caring for, befriending them, so as no son could have done it more tenderly and efficiently. The mother—on the whole—a good woman—died blessing him; the strange, godless, loveless, misanthrope grandmother lived still, entirely supported by this self-sacrificing man. (Brontë 395)

Emmanuel lived his entire adult life dedicating three parts of his income to Madame Walravens, his elderly tutor Père Silas and a servant who worked for his family when he was a boy (Brontë 395). He kept one-fourth of his income to “provide himself with bread and the most modest accommodations” (Brontë 395). Père Silas tells Lucy, “by this arrangement he has rendered it impossible for himself ever to marry: he has given himself to God and to his angel-bride as much as if he were a priest, like me” (Brontë 395).

Emmanuel’s unwavering dedication and kindness to those who denied him the woman he loved, captures the ideology of the Samaritan. The fact that his caring and kindness requires no thanks or recognition and few knew of the burden he placed upon himself, is also reminiscent of the Samaritan.

The ties Emanuel had with this family, as Père Silas states to Lucy, were one hindrance to a possible relationship with her. He was bound to care for this strange trio, placing their needs and wants above his own. It would be against his nature to
even consider his own happiness at this point in his life. As a Catholic, he has taken on the role of martyr, a part he seemed destined to play for quite some time. These three people, as well as his staunch Catholicism, would be part of the barrier that lies between him and love. As Pere Silas relates the story of his benefactor's life to Lucy, he mentions that Emmanuel, twenty years after the death of his beloved Justine Marie, still worships her loyally and without distraction. Lucy asks if he still weeps for her when he visits her picture. The priest responds, "his heart will weep her always: the essence of Emmanuel's nature is—constancy" (Brontë 395). It is this "constancy" he will have to overcome in order to live a happy life with Lucy.

Emmanuel must not only relinquish his dedication to Justine Marie's family in order to have a life with Lucy, but he must also surrender his devotion to the first woman he ever loved.

Emmanuel was not forced to marry a woman with money, as was Rochester, but he was denied marriage to the woman he loved because he was not wealthy. This external influence upon Emmanuel certainly had much effect on him as a man who would provide financially for the very family who refused him because he was not prosperous.

His dedication of three fourths of his income to his first love's family would also hinder Emmanuel in the respect of ever being able to provide for a wife and children of his own. As was common in the nineteenth century, a man was measured by his ability to bestow upon his family a good living. His donation to Justine's
grandmother and Pere Silas made the possibility of Emmanuel marrying almost impossible.

Emmanuel wears many masks in order to conceal his true self, even though that “self” he labored so hard to contain, when finally revealed, was kind, loyal and unlike the side he usually shows Lucy. Emmanuel hid his aptitude for passion and his loyalty toward his first love’s family and it is unclear why he would conceal such a warm part of himself. Perhaps in masking this side from others he could continue with the façade of eccentric bully and never risk falling in love again. A love he could not pursue because of the responsibility he felt for Justine Marie’s family. Yet Lucy, though “slow to discover Emmanuel’s genuine character [and] content to view him as a friendly but obtrusive eccentric, changes her view when she learns the secret of his lost love and of his generosity” (Reed 316).

Disguise was also practiced by Patrick Brontë, whose marriage to Maria Branwell in 1812 is described by Wilks as being “a tale of a joyful, impatient passion and of a happiness that produced six healthy children” (xiii). Patrick never revealed this side of himself to his daughter Charlotte, whose relationship with her father has been described as dutiful, obedient and controlled (Wilks 99).

The women in Brontë’s novels develop in their independence of the men in their lives as each novel was written. Frances Henri is completely dependent upon achieving marriage in order to live a quality life. She is under-developed, and only a symbol or goal toward which Crimsworth must work. Jane Eyre is more independent of her love interest and has choices, or at least alternatives, to marrying Rochester.
We then come to Lucy Snowe, who is by far the most developed of all Brontë's heroines because at the end of the novel she is without man, marriage and family, and yet is still a complete woman. Emmanuel, like Frances, is merely an instrument the author uses in order to get Lucy Snowe to the end of her journey. In the end, he is unnecessary for the heroine to achieve her goals of fulfillment.

It seems as if Brontë has made great leaps and bounds regarding her own feelings about the love of a man. In addition, if The Professor is a message of pain to M. Heger and his lack of love and sacrifice for her, then Villette is a message of growth and awareness. Emmanuel transformed for love, but in the end, Lucy did not need him. His love enlivens Lucy, but his death in a shipwreck affords the heroine a life of independence. She seems to have been given it all by the author, who at the time had not experienced love and marriage.

Brontë was growing older and becoming less fanciful as a woman who would dream of the ideal man, marriage and family, and it is no wonder that her novels became more realistic when the life she was living was creating a woman who would become more pragmatic and rational.

Brontë now successfully portrays a woman who is self-sufficient, intelligent and single which are the very characteristics one would use to describe the author throughout most of her adult life.

What Brontë accomplishes with this novel, in her attempt to define love and the ideal relationship, is the autonomy Emmanuel offers Lucy. Before Emmanuel leaves Lucy in order to increase his financial standing, he sets her up with a school
and recommends her to a few good families. His dedication to Lucy has gone beyond his life with her, and by providing a living for her separate from himself, he has taken the final step toward loving selflessly. His concern for her welfare apart from her becoming his wife is significant because he has granted her a career based upon her independence, intelligence, and talent as an educator. He has placed his reputation in her hands and is confident she will succeed. When Lucy questions Emmanuel about the new school's cost, he replies, "The disposal of my large teaching-connection put me in possession of a handsome sum: with part of it I determined to give myself the richest treat that I have known or shall know" (Brontë 487). Emmanuel's greatest joy is not that he has gained a post which makes it possible for him to marry, like Crimsworth, or, like Rochester, when he discovers that Jane loves him and not another. His happiness has come from giving Lucy an independence she could not afford herself. He provides Lucy with a "wonderfully changed life, a relieved heart" (Brontë 494). Emmanuel, unlike Crimsworth and Rochester, considers Lucy separate from him and makes certain she would be prosperous with or without him: He would not have her tied to him financially or professionally, and thus becomes the most selfless and successful of Brontë's heroes.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

*The Professor, Jane Eyre* and *Villette* portray the transformation men underwent for love by conquering the impediments the author placed before them. The challenges became more difficult from novel to novel; the sacrifice each makes for love is more selfless. In each novel, the hero is plagued with the encumbrance of the very characteristics Brontë found so hurtful by her father, brother and M. Heger. The heroes must also withstand the weight of the expectations placed upon them by the Victorian society in which their stories were set, as well as carry the burden of being male in that era. Brontë utilized these elements to fashion heroes who would have to sacrifice and go against their nature in order to win the heroine. The author shaped men who experienced all of the obstacles the men in her own life faced, yet unlike Patrick, Branwell and M. Heger, the heroes were successful in their transformation.

What drew me to this topic was the conspicuous absence of criticism concerning the male hero and their changing role in the Victorian novel. They seem to exhibit the persona of master, and with this label, readers are likely to interpret their behavior as dominant and archaic. Yet to examine the hero as insecure, overburdened and in need of love, casts a different light on the Romantic novel. Uncovering the motivation for the male characters’ behavior, such as orphanhood or primogeniture, gives the reader the insight required to redefine the hero from a husband who would be master to a husband who would be partner. In this light, the sacrifice each hero makes for the heroine is in the name of love, which redefines the
male as vulnerable, and fearful of an existence without the woman he loves. This principle is present in all three novels I have examined, but most prevalent in Jane Eyre, whose heroine is a governess whose mere presence ties the hero in knots of insecurity and desperation. Jane waits patiently for the spiritualized Rochester with the confidence and conviction of a woman who would settle for no less; her position as governess, lack of name and fortune do not make her feel less worthy of this landed, wealthy gentleman. Jane has the power and she wields it gently but firmly. This is significant because Rochester’s mishandling of his control at the onset of their relationship ended in disaster with the loss of Jane, his eyesight and home, as well as the death of his first wife. In The Professor Crimsworth had to relinquish his power to another in order to obtain a teaching position and this surrender is the key to his transformation. Emmanuel’s forfeit of power in Villette is less dramatic than Rochester’s, but much more profound, because when he procures a school for Lucy he bestows upon her the ability to live independently.

The foundation of these characters and the surrender each makes of their accustomed behavior relies upon Brontë’s philosophy of love. Brontë’s father, brother and M. Heger held the power in her life for a number of reasons, the most obvious being the patriarchal attitudes prevalent during the Victorian era in which they lived. Add to this Patrick Brontë’s personal demand for obedience in his home and the author’s falling in love with a man who, because of his marriage, solely held the destiny of their relationship in his hands and it is no wonder that Brontë created men who were at love’s mercy.
By the time she wrote _The Professor_, Brontë was without a husband and had no prospects of attaining one. She was a self-proclaimed “old maid” who poured her dreams and disappointments into her novels. Her heartache gave birth to the characters of William Crimsworth and Frances Henri, Edward Rochester and Jane Eyre, and M. Paul Emmanuel and Lucy Snowe. These heroes develop beyond the men in Brontë’s life by surpassing their capabilities in order to deserve the heroines. The heroines who proved worthy of such transformation share many of the author’s qualities such as her intelligence, independent spirit and strength of character, as well as resembling the author in her physical plainness. Brontë’s female characters shone so brightly—from within that a professor, a wealthy landowner and a teacher fell in love with them and transformed themselves for love, despite the heroines’ lack of physical beauty.

Brontë’s resentment about physical beauty occurs because she herself was without such external charms. It is also obvious that Zoë Heger, M. Heger’s wife, is also responsible for Brontë’s bitterness toward outward attractiveness and her feelings that those women who have such attributes can be internally unattractive. Brontë has described Zoë Heger as “cold, calculating and unamiable” (Gordon 102). These same characteristics occur in Brontë’s depictions of Zoë Reuter, Ginevra Fanshawe, Lucy’s glamorous, yet-vapid acquaintance, and Blanche Ingram, who are in her novels to represent and mock what the Victorian masses found appealing. They are all physically beautiful but lack the intelligence, kindness, and compassion the heroines possess. Zoë Heger was “pretty, with a white neck and arms, which showed
to advantage in evening-dress, and abundant hair of a striking color” (Gordon 102). Brontë’s perceived rival was the kind of beautiful woman men found alluring and wanted to marry: This is one more motive the author had to indulge herself literally by not only showing her contempt for the Victorian standard of beauty, but Zoë Heger as well. Brontë also reveals her disdain for the Victorian’s perception of beauty by constructing male characters that would not be taken in by superficial charm. The very features she herself possessed such as empathy, intelligence and individuality captivates Bronté’s heroes.

The Professor, Jane Eyre and Villette collectively illustrate Brontë’s various stages of emotional development regarding the role men play in women’s romantic lives. Brontë created Crimsworth approximately one year after her last visit to M. Heger’s school when she was 29 years old and still obsessed with a man who was married with children. As shown in the previous chapters, M. Heger did welcome, and perhaps even instigate, Brontë’s tender feelings. The author had also, by this time, grown used to her father’s dominant and selfish ways as well as her brother’s unsteady employment, gambling, and his addictions. In 1844, Brontë and her sisters attempted to establish their own school at Haworth Parsonage, but failed. Juliet Barker suggests that this attempt to open a school, as well as Brontë deciding to publish her work, were the result of the author wanting to stay with her sisters always. It seems Brontë had grown accustomed to relying on her own devices to gain what she desired—because the men in her life could not be relied upon. Yet it seems the author still holds on to her dream that a man can reform for love and improve a
woman’s lot by marrying her, as Crimsworth does for Frances Henri, who has no other circumstances or opportunities that would improve her life without marriage. Brontë is frustrated by her experiences with the men she loves, but has not given up hope.

In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë has become a bit more disillusioned as well as bitter toward the men in her life whose behavior only worsened. In 1846 Brontë, who had written regularly to M. Heger, had not received any letters in return; Patrick Brontë had just undergone an operation to remove his cataracts and was being cared for by Brontë. Branwell had been romantically refused by his former employer Mrs. Robinson and was driven to despair and further abuse of drugs and alcohol (Barker xxvii). Brontë’s frustrations with these men affect the novel in many ways. The most obvious is the punishment Rochester endures for the errors he commits in his courtship of Jane Eyre. He is maimed and blinded in a fire set by his mad wife, and loses his home to that same blaze. His transformation was the most painful and violent of all Brontë’s heroes because at the time she was the most resentful of her personal relationships. Yet, she still displays a sense of hope in the power of love, though she was cautious enough to provide for her heroine financial security as well as relatives who would have gladly taken her in. Unlike Frances Henri, Jane-Eyre has options to rely upon if Rochester did not transform into a man worthy of her love.

In *Villette*, we witness resignation that love may not be enough to save a woman from her plight as an old maid. By this time in Brontë’s life, at the age of 35, the author has no prospects of marriage, her brother and last two sisters had died, and
she had become full-time caretaker to her father. All of her hopes had been squashed by the death of all of her siblings, the coldness and rejection she received from M. Heger, and the selfishness of her father, who wanted nothing more than to have his daughter spend her life tending to his needs. Yet Brontë seems less bitter in this novel. She gives her heroine love through Emmanuel, but bestows upon her an independent living through the ownership of a school as well. An autonomous living is given to Lucy Snowe by Emmanuel, and not through an inheritance, as was Jane Eyre. Lucy Snowe has the means to support herself through her own endeavors. She does not need to rely upon a man for anything, and to prove this Brontë removes Emmanuel from the equation altogether. Though Emmanuel acquires the school for Lucy, the outcome of self-sufficiency remains untarnished because the school flourishes because of Lucy’s accomplishments alone. We are confident, when we turn the last page, of the certainty that Lucy Snowe is without a husband, but content nonetheless.

Each male character develops as well. In Crimsworth’s offer of marriage to Frances, he sacrifices his pride by asking another for assistance in obtaining a post as teacher. The difficulty of this compromise is understood because Brontë portrays him as one who took solace in his self-reliance. Rochester’s act of selflessness for love is more dramatic because we are certain than Jane would be his only salvation, yet he would sacrifice this opportunity of rescue if it meant the woman he loves would be happier elsewhere. In Brontë’s final narrative of love, Emmanuel does all that is in his power to secure for the heroine a comfortable existence, whether he will share
with her in that life or not. Emmanuel’s fundamental interest was not in acquiring Lucy for his own, as is the case with Crimsworth and Rochester, but to insure her happiness regardless of whether he is with her or not. Brontë has fashioned the ideal man who would selflessly strive to enrich the life of the woman he loves for her contentment alone.

The death of Emmanuel in Villette reveals to the reader that Brontë has become awakened to the concept that a man is not necessary to a woman’s well being. She finally produced the ideal hero and perhaps felt, in her increasing realism, that he was too good to be true.
Works Cited


