#Brontë2020
Abstracts & presenter biographies

“There was no possibility of visiting the Parsonage that day...So, Reader, we met on Zoom.”
Keynote abstracts and biographies

Keynote Talk 1: Dr Eleanor Houghton, ‘Charlotte Brontë’s Moccasins: The Wild West Brought Home’

Buried amongst Charlotte Brontë’s surviving possessions is a pair of curious objects. Far removed from the collection of expected middle class, Victorian ephemera, there exist a pair of heavily-beaded moccasins and matching ankle cuffs. The significance of these shoes cannot be overstated; they not only link Brontë with newly emerging global markets, but also silently connect us to one of the most poignant periods of the novelist’s life. For in May 1849, Charlotte would set out for Scarborough with her sister Anne who was in the final stages of pulmonary tuberculosis. Despite their trust in the benefits of sea air, it was here that Anne would take her last breath. Significantly, when the time came for Charlotte to depart, the deerskin moccasins, that she had taken with her, were left behind – a casualty of a fractured mind and a broken heart.

With his positive associations ‘of bravery, loyalty, dignity’ the ‘Indian’ was a recurring presence in nineteenth century society. James Fenimore Cooper’s 1826 work, The Last of the Mohicans had excited great interest. It was read by Brontë during her youth and its influence is evident; most particularly in Shirley (1849), the novel that she was writing at the time of Anne’s death. For Charlotte, the endless, untamed wilderness of North America was perhaps evocative of her own Yorkshire moors – where she and her siblings had enjoyed unfettered freedom and independence.

Biography

Eleanor Houghton read English at the University of Oxford before setting up her own business as a couture milliner. Following her MA in Eighteenth Century Studies at the University of Southampton, in 2014, she was awarded a full Wolfson Postgraduate Scholarship and has recently completed her PhD, entitled Decoding Clothing: Charlotte Brontë, ‘Plainness’ and the Language of Dress. Over the past five years, Eleanor has worked closely with the Brontë Parsonage on a number of exciting projects, including the BBC2’s Being a Brontë and Sally Wainwright’s recent BBC adaption To Walk Invisible. As well as reworking her thesis for a commercial book, she is currently working as historical costume consultant on the BBC/HBO series, ‘Gentleman Jack’. You can find out more about Eleanor via her website: https://www.eleanorhoughton.com/

Keynote Talk 2: Glass Town, Isabel Greenberg

From the pen of New York Times bestselling graphic novelist, Isabel Greenberg, comes Glass Town, the enthralling story of the Brontes’ childhood and imaginary world. Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne invented a world so real and vivid that they can step right into it. But can reality be enough, when fiction is so enticing? And what happens to an imaginary world when its creators grow up? Plots are spiralling, characters are getting wildly out of hand, and a great deal of ink is being spilt...Welcome to Glass Town, a graphic-not-quite-biography of the Brontës. Join Isabel as she talks through her enthralling graphic creation.
Biography

Isabel Greenberg is a writer, illustrator and lecturer. She is the author of three graphic novels: The Encyclopedia of Early earth, The One Hundred Nights of Hero, both of which were NY Times graphic books bestsellers and have been translated into several languages, and her most recent book, Glass Town. Glass Town tells the story of the Brontës and the imaginary worlds they created in childhood.

In the Evening Standard, Clare Harman described Glass Town as a ‘wonderful book. Greenberg is impressively well-informed about the Brontës, but handles her facts lightly, allowing full power to the beautiful and sensitive images.’

You can find out more about Isabel via her website: https://www.isabelgreenberg.co.uk/
Panel 1A: The Brontës: Representing Wrongs

‘Follow the Hatred: The Production of Negative Feeling in Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847)’ (Dr Caroline Koegler, University of Muenster)

This paper scrutinises what generations of readers have perceived to be *Wuthering Heights*’ “general air of sour hatred” (Gilbert and Gubar 2000: 260) and its disconcerting density of violent and abusive exchanges. Taking up readings of the novel as a story of anti-colonial retaliation (Heathcliff) and feminist portrayal (Catherine; Isabella), I focus on Brontë’s affective politics in (re-)producing and channeling negative feeling in and beyond the text. In so doing, I follow an approach that I call ‘follow the hatred’ which is inspired by Sara Ahmed’s research on the ‘politics of emotion’ (2014; 2004) and, particularly, the ‘fantasy of violation’ (Ahmed 44). Utilising Ahmed’s understanding that emotions are based on processes of attribution that are structured by power relations, I trace *Wuthering Heights*’s instalment of Heathcliff as a source of hatred—a hatred that gradually infects all relationships and characters in the novel and, not least through occasional hints at romance, seamlessly blends in with mid-nineteenth century boundary panic regarding miscegenation and inverted colonial hierarchies. Illuminating also how the novel sets incentives for readers to feel likewise, the analysis shows how Brontë installs Heathcliff as an expansive force of injury and (emotional) infection with a particular effect: consolidating white English, particularly female, identities. Over two main sections—“Heathcliff’s Hatred” and “Catherine’s Liberation”—I thus go beyond popular readings of Heathcliff as either aggressor or underdog, instead offering new insights into how ‘feeling negatively’ is indebted to literary production, tying in with both writing and reading in an age of empire.

Biography

'The Ethics of Reading Intimate Violence in Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*’ (Dr Sophie Franklin, Tübingen University)

In a discussion of the history of domestic violence in England, James Sharpe identifies ‘The Tenant of Wildfell Hall’ (1848), with its ‘pioneering portrait of an abusive husband’, as a seminal moment in the history of fiction (2016, p.444). Indeed, despite its first sceptical – and sometimes scathing – reviews in the 1840s, Anne Brontë’s second novel has experienced something of a renaissance in recent years to position it as a radical proto-feminist text. Much of this reclamation of Brontë’s voice centres on the – rarely physical, often emotional, and frequently formal – violence of her second novel. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* was denounced by its first reviewers for its apparently “vulgar” representations of violence, alcoholism, and debauchery; and, somewhat paradoxically, its depictions of intimate violence are now central to re-evaluations of the text.

What Janina Hornosty calls the ‘eerie and persistent’ nature of the novel’s violence has led to several critics seeking to pinpoint and even over-determine the extent and kind of physical violence committed against Helen Huntingdon (2014, p.130). This critical interest in the violence – particularly the insinuations of physical and sexual abuse – of the novel has shaped its legacy from initial publication to more recent screen adaptations, such as the 1996 BBC adaptation. It is this ongoing preoccupation with the novel’s representation of violence (and lack thereof) which this paper explores and, by implication, becomes part of.

This paper asks: what happens when we read *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* through its scenes and insinuations of physical and sexual violence? How does such a reading alter our perception of the novel, and are there ethical concerns at play when critics seek “evidence” of physical abuse?

Focusing primarily on representations of intimate violence against women, defined by Suzanne Rintoul as ‘depictions of physical and emotional brutality in marriage, courtship, or sexual relationships’ (2015, p.1), this paper takes a self-reflexive approach, seeking to examine the nature of intimate violence in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* in order to interrogate the very process of identifying and analysing such abuse in Victorian fiction.

**Biography**

Dr Sophie Franklin’s research specialises in nineteenth-century literature and culture with particular expertise in representations of violence, the Brontës, and afterlives. Having recently worked as a lecturer at Nottingham Trent University, she will take up the position of postdoctoral fellow at Tübingen University from October 2020. Her new project focuses on violence and contamination in the nineteenth century, intersecting with current conversations around public health, disease, and the spread of violence. Sophie’s first book, *Charlotte Brontë Revisited: A View from the Twenty-First Century* (Saraband), was published in 2016 and reissued in 2018, and considers the ongoing legacy of Brontë’s work and life. She has previously worked with Dr Claire O’Callaghan on the coarseness of the Brontës project, which included the Brontë Society conference in 2017 and a special issue of *Brontë Studies* in 2019.

“‘An act of creative vandalism’: Andrea Arnold’s black Heathcliff’ (Dr Anna Gutowska, University of Kielce, Poland)

This paper explores the reception of Andrea Arnold’s adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* (2011). As one critic writes, “chances are, if you know anything about this movie, it is that it has got a black Heathcliff” (Rose 2011). Arnold’s casting choice dominated the film’s reviews and its reception. Whereas in Emily’s novel Heathcliff is variously described as “a dark-skinned gypsy” and “a Lascar or an American or Spanish castaway,” the precise nature of his racial Otherness is never explicitly described. In previous
film and television adaptations of the novel he was always played by Caucasian actors – usually much older than the character and with an established leading man status (e.g. Laurence Olivier, Timothy Dalton, Ralph Fiennes, Tom Hardy). Thus, Andrea Arnold’s choice of a young black first-time actor can rightly be seen as a departure from the racially exclusionary tradition of casting the part.

Interestingly, in her publicity appearances and press interviews, Andrea Arnold explicitly dismissed any claims that her decision ideologically motivated. She maintained that it was purely practical: the Leeds-based Afro-Caribbean James Howson was cast through an open call audition after a long and unsuccessful casting search among the Romani community in the UK. The film’s publicity campaign stressed the fact that Howson, who had no prior acting experience, was actually sent to the audition by the Jobcentre. Arnold liked his air of authenticity and suppressed anger, and only after she decided to offer him the part, started thinking about the implications of offering this iconic role to a young black actor.

The critical reactions to the film for the most part seem to disregard the apparently accidental nature of Arnold’s casting choice and praise her radical and subversive vision. In my analysis, I will use a production-based approach, analysing the development history of the film and Arnold’s description of the many production pressures and challenges during her work on the project.

I will also use the concept of “re-righting”, introduced by the French literary scholar Chantal Zabus. In an article titled “Subversive Scribes: Rewriting in the 20th Century,” Zabus defined it as “a kind of rewriting that aims at redressing certain wrongs and restoring an apocryphal script that has been suppressed due to ideological pressures present at the time of writing the original text” (Zabus 2001). While “re-righting” seems to aptly describe such rewritings of classical texts as Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* or Michel Tournier’s *Vendredi*, I would like to argue that the concept can also be useful in the field of adaptation studies.

Biography

Dr. Anna Gutowska is Assistant Professor of English Literature at the University of Kielce. From 2017 to 2019 she held a Marie Curie Fellowship at the Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies at Linnaeus University.

Panel 1B: Voices from the Parsonage

‘Charlotte Brontë’s rudest joke’ (Dr Amber Regis, University of Sheffield)

During her lifetime, Charlotte Brontë did not speak to her readers directly in her own voice—rather, she spoke to them as Currer Bell, her pseudonym and an alter-ego who lives in and through her prefaces. Currer Bell could be outrageous, and never more so than in a suppressed preface to *Shirley*. This preface took the form of a letter addressed to the critic Elizabeth Rigby, and it is a letter so rude that Bronte’s publishers refused to set the type. This talk holds by the maxim that those who laugh last laugh loudest, and so, it will re-tell Charlotte Bronte’s rudest joke.

Biography

Amber Regis is Senior Lecturer in Nineteenth-Century Literature at the University of Sheffield, UK. Her essays have appeared in the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, *Brontë Studies* and the *Times Literary Supplement*. She is the editor, with Deborah Wynne, of *Charlotte Bronte: Legacies and Afterlives* (MUP, 2017) and the forthcoming *Edinburgh Companion to the Brontës and the Arts*. 
‘Charlotte Brontë’s Afterlives in Neo-Victorian Crime Biofiction’ (Dr Barbara Braid, University of Szczecin, Poland)

Biofiction represents the conflict between the fact-based biography and a fictional text of a novel, yet, in the context of neo-Victorian fiction, it is part of a bigger cultural phenomenon of utilizing parody, pastiche, rewriting or appropriation for the nostalgic re-evaluation of the Victorian past. Neo-Victorians define biofiction as “biographilia” (Kaplan 2007: 37-84), or “a vampiric and cannibalistic enterprise” (Kohlke 2013: 13); in the former term, Cora Kaplan stresses the voyeuristic and nostalgic element of biofiction, virtually necrophilic in its sensational fascination with the past. Marie-Luise Kohlke, on the other hand, uses a gothic metaphor to stress the exploitative aspect of biofiction’s relationship to history. It is a fiction which appropriates the past, transforming it freely into a story fitting the current cultural milieu. Nevertheless, neo-Victorian biofiction, despite its essentially fictitious nature, makes claims to authenticity, drawing in their audiences with suggestions that the sensationalised versions of the famous lives are the “true” ones, and often resists the existing grand narratives of Victorian personages that had been disseminated throughout most of the twentieth century. My presentation is going to briefly analyse the negotiations of authenticity, sensationalism and presentism in a corpus of recent literary biofictions that adapt the life and work of Charlotte Brontë to the convention of crime fiction. The current fashion for biofiction has yielded sensational appropriations of the Brontë myth, which position Charlotte Brontë as a stock character in detective fiction, either as a criminal (James Tully’s The Crimes of Charlotte Brontë, 1999) or a detective (e.g. Laura Joh Rowland’s The Secret Adventures of Charlotte Brontë, 2008 and Bedlam, 2010, or Bella Ellis’s The Vanished Bride, 2019). Representing varied degrees of anachronism and distancing their texts from documented information about the Brontës, these adaptive novels nonetheless attempt to do away with the Brontë myth, which becomes subverted to offer new, sensational, but equally performative representations of the Brontës.

Biography

Dr Barbara Braid currently holds a position of Assistant Professor and Deputy Head at the Institute of Literature and New Media in the University of Szczecin, Poland. She has published a number of academic works on neo-Victorianism, adaptation, gothic fiction and popular culture. Her most recent publications include: “A Psychiatrist as a Detective: Laszlo Kreizler, Stratham Younger, and Max Liebermann”, in: Victorian Detectives in Contemporary Culture, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, or “Queering the Madwoman: A Mad/Queer Narrative in Margaret Atwood’s Alias Grace and Its Adaptation” in Neo-Victorian Madness, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. She is currently working on a book on female madness motif in neo-Victorian fiction.

‘Anne Brontë Reimagined: A View from the 21st Century’ (Adelle Hay)

Anne has often been harshly compared to her sisters Charlotte and Emily ever since works by the three sisters first appeared in print. Anne is even referred to as the means by which we can measure her sisters’ genius, rather than as a legitimate literary figure in her own right. How and why have opinions about Anne and her writing changed since she was first published? This presentation will follow some of the points discussed in Anne Brontë Reimagined: A View From The 21st Century (Saraband, 2020) that aim to unravel the preconceptions and misinformation surrounding Anne and her works, while highlighting the themes she wrote on that are still relatable for the modern reader. From her realistic characters to her social conscience, there are many things a modern reader can relate to in Anne Brontë’s works.
Biography

Adelle Hay is a lifelong Brontë aficionada and a passionate advocate for Anne Brontë’s place in the canon of classic English writers, alongside her better-known sisters, Charlotte and Emily. Adelle is due to start a PhD at Loughborough in 2020, focusing on textual criticism of Anne’s work and how it has been edited.

2A: “Unpalatable Truths“ – Adapting and Staging The Tenant of Wildfell Hall for a Modern Theatre Audience’ led by Alison Farina (writer) and Shane Morgan (director)

Join our discussion about how we approached developing a new and original adaptation of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall in 2014-15, which was part of a three-show tour featuring each of the Brontë sisters’ most popular works, under the collective title, The Brontë Season.

We will explore the process of adapting a text that is, at the same time, beloved by many die-hard fans and virtually unknown to large portion of the population. Alison will discuss how she concentrated a 383-page text with its many characters and settings into a 1h 10m script for two actors, with a set that had to fit in the back of 2004 Honda Civic! She will also talk about handling material that deals with challenge and often triggering issues and how she sought to create a sensitive, truthful and relevant world that still captures Anne’s humor, heart and wit (as well as keeping to the overall ‘family friendly’ project approach).

Shane, the project’s director, will talk about giving voices to these characters that in an alternative format and the challenge of making it theatrical. He will also discuss the pros and cons of having a writer in the room and most importantly, how tens of characters can be played by just two people.

As well as exploring the joys and challenges of taking classic literature to the stage on a small budget, we will also talk about collaboration and how the insights of two immigrants (Shane is Australian, and Alison is American) fed into a classic English text.

Biography

Alison is a writer, director and theatre practitioner with a special interest in Heritage. She has created Heritage-based theatre for Museums around the British Isles and her most recent project was a production of Moby Dick aboard the SS Great Britain in Bristol. Alison has worked with Bath Preservation Trust to write and direct projects as part of the national celebrations for #Vote100. Her adaptation of Orpheus and Eurydice was performed in the vaults under Bristol Suspension Bridge (Gold Award for “Tourism Experience of the Year 2017”). On the Isle of Man Alison worked with Manx National Heritage to create Mythology-based theatre and helped set up their Heritage outreach program, Possain Straddey (‘street theatre’ in Manx) with the Isle of Man Arts Council. Her writing has been shortlisted/longlisted for the 2020 DYSPLA Residency Prize (2020), Salisbury Playhouse Theatre Fest West Prize (2017), 2014 Old Vic, New Voices: TS Elliot Commission (2014), 2014 Salisbury Playhouse’s Original Drama Prize (2014). Alison will be in conversation with Shane Morgan about their adaptation of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, which was part of The Brontë Season, a three-show tour featuring each of the Brontë sisters’ works.

Shane Morgan is a Director, Writer, Producer and Facilitator of Theatre and Theatre History. He is Director of award-winning company RoughHouse Theatre which was established in Sydney in 2000 and now based in the South West, UK. His most recent
work was *Getting the Third Degree*, commissioned by Kick It Out, which toured the UK in 2019 and won Salford Star’s Play of the Year award. This has been developed into a radio documentary called *N17* which focuses on the people of Haringey and Tottenham, their connection to the Windrush generation and led by the young people of Harris Academy, Tottenham. *N17* is due to be broadcast in October 2020. Shane is Associate Director of Bath’s Rondo Theatre, is a regular contributor to BBC Radio Bristol and is a syndicated writer for *My Theatre Mates*. Shane and Alison Farina will be in conversation about their adaptation of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, which was part of *The Brontë Season*, a three-show tour featuring each of the Brontë sisters’ works.

Panel 3A: Brontë Influences

‘British and German Romanticism: The Brontës and Robert Schumann’ (Mr John Hennessy)

There has always been a close relationship between literature (especially poetry) and music, dating at least from the time of the Greek and Roman odes. That the four surviving Brontë siblings had, from an early age, read voraciously is beyond dispute. It is also clear that they all, to greater or lesser extent, loved music. That Emily was the most musically talented is reliably clear – judging from her music scores she might well have been a tolerably accomplished pianist. In my book, *Emily Jane Brontë and Her Music*, published in her bi-centenary year of 2018, I considered the extent to which music might have impacted upon her literary creativity, and in the book, as well as in my paper to the Brontë Society Conference at York in 2018, I discussed the possible similarities between Emily and Beethoven – personality, philosophy and *modus operandi*. Much, of necessity, was acknowledged as being subjective, on occasions speculative – with Emily this is inevitable. The subject is, nonetheless, intriguing and worthy of study.

But this paper, which may be considered a follow-on from the previous one, considers the extent to which comparisons might also be made between the Brontës, not just Emily, and another composer, Robert Schumann – *prima facie* a strange proposition, given that the family owned none of the composer’s music scores – and leads into a look at the links between British and German Romanticism.

Biography

John Hennessy is a retired university lecturer in banking, law and international trade. A pianist and harpsichordist, in 2018 he published *Emily Jane Brontë and her Music*, and in the same year presented a paper at the Brontë Society Conference: ‘Was Emily Brontë influenced by the Life and Works of Beethoven?’ He has presented a number of music-related Brontë concerts in Haworth and its environs and has set up the Brontë Parsonage Piano Maintenance Fund.

‘The Brontës and Penzance’ (Dr Charlotte MacKenzie, U.K.)

New and direct connections between real life events in Georgian Penzance and the Brontës’ novels, including *Jane Eyre*, are revealed in this presentation. Living at Penzance Maria and Elizabeth Branwell knew a man who had children in Jamaica with a woman who was partly of African descent; and a woman living on Chapel Street who died of burns after her clothes caught fire at home. Victorian myths about the Branwell family and Penzance are debunked by the historical facts. Penzance was a cosmopolitan port during the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Cornwall was a centre for transatlantic and other shipping with a Lane’s circulating library, bookshops, printers, poets, novelists, artists, and scientists living locally or travelling.
to Penzance. Women worked including members of the Branwell family. Thomas Branwell first traded as an innkeeper. Many of his fellow retail traders were women. As a merchant Branwell later participated in trade with the West Indies during the sugar boycott organised by abolitionists.

**Biography**

Charlotte MacKenzie lives in Cornwall where she is an historical researcher and writer. Her current research is on women writers and eighteenth-century Cornwall. Charlotte won the 2016 Cardew Rendle prize awarded by the Royal Cornwall Museum. In addition to publishing books she has contributed articles for the National Maritime Museum Cornwall journal *Troze*, the Royal Institution of Cornwall journal, *Cornish Studies*, and *Cornish Story*. She was previously a senior lecturer in history at Bath Spa University.

‘Fugitive Music: Irish storytelling in the early writing of Charlotte Brontë’, Ms Kathryn Hollie Wells (University of Cambridge, U.K.)

In part as a means to consider what is at stake when we unpick the polymorphous cultural cross-wires at the heart of English literary institutions, my paper aims to raise again the vexed question of the Irish influence on the Brontë corpus. In 2014, Edward Chitham's 'The Brontës' Irish Background Revisited' argued that the transmission of traditional Irish stories was 'vital' to the development of the Brontë sisters' writing, in both content and style. My paper will unpack Chitham's use of the word 'transmission' to consider how some conventions of Irish storytelling might be fundamental to the style and substance of Charlotte Brontë's earliest writing.

As Chitham notes, Charlotte's grandfather, Hugh, was 'a traditional Irish seanchaí, with a fund of Irish hero legends and Ulster narratives'; these stories, he argues, were passed down to Patrick Brontë, and through Patrick to his children. If this is the case, their effects must surely be legible in the Brontë juvenilia. Through attention to the tropes and figures of Irish storytelling in Charlotte's earliest writing, and its virtuoso performances of orality, I want to trace her early negotiations of voice and text as narrative forms - negotiations which I consider a function of the family's culture of oral storytelling. My paper ultimately aims to suggest some ways in which the figure of the Irish seanchaí might continue to exert power throughout Brontë's lifetime writing, and to consider how we might apply the work of contemporary Irish scholarship in reading that writing.

**Biography**

Kathryn wrote her MPhil dissertation at the University of Cambridge on Irish storytelling and song in the Brontë juvenilia, and is currently preparing for a PhD on the notebooks of John Ruskin. Her research interests include Romantic and Victorian botanies (chaste and unchaste), short fiction by Modernist women, and the idea of Emily Brontë’s Heathcliff as a fían warrior.
Panel 3B: The Brontës in Peril

‘The Brontë’s and War’ (Dr Emma Butcher, University of Leicester)

‘War is an ecstasy, Risk is Wild’ – Charlotte Brontë, 1837.

The Brontës, as children, created fantasy worlds based on war. From Charlotte and Branwell’s fictitious battles between their fantasy kingdom, Angria, and Frenchysland, to Emily and Anne’s creation of a warrior queen, Augusta Geraldine Almeida, in their militant imaginary land of Gondal. This talk delves into some of the key themes of my new book, The Brontës and War, and discusses the siblings’ fascination with all things military, ranging from battles to military men, and even war widows and soldiers’ mental health. To finish, we’ll look at how these youthful stories filtered through into their later works, pondering if war had a part to play in their published works, both in a literal sense and in their representations of violent masculinity.

Biography

Dr Emma Butcher is a Leverhulme Early Career Researcher at the University of Leicester. In 2017 she was named as a BBC New Generation Thinker and has since regularly appeared on radio and TV talking about the Brontës. In 2015 she co-curated the Brontë Parsonage’s exhibition, ‘The Brontës, War and Waterloo’, and has since had a long-held partnership with the Brontë Parsonage Museum, taking part in numerous events, ranging from collaborating with Professor Simon Armitage to speaking at Bradford Literature Festival. In January 2020 her first academic book, The Brontës and War, was published, and she is currently contracted to write her first trade book, ‘Children in the Age of Modern War’, which will be published by Oxford University Press in 2022.

“‘A Flattering Malady”: The Brontës “Romantic Consumption”’ (Dr Jo Waugh, York St. John University)

This paper suggests that the familiar reading of Romantic and Victorian tuberculosis as signifying individuality, ethereality, and genius is partial, limiting, and much less applicable to the Brontës and their representations of “consumption” than is often supposed.

Elizabeth Gaskell’s gossipy speculation that Charlotte Brontë was “already tainted” with consumption (TB) and Brontë’s own description of Cowan Bridge as the cradle of both typhus and consumption, suggest that consumption for the Brontës was no ethereal concept but a complex and troubling threat. Charlotte Brontë’s observation that “consumption is a flattering malady” has been interpreted as evidence that she subscribed to the belief that it made the sufferer beautiful: on closer analysis, it is clear that the statement refers rather to its deceptive capacities to fool (or “flatter”) the sufferer and onlookers into believing that a brief remission might be permanent. In their novels, Charlotte and Anne Brontë position consumption as an endemic threat far more often than as a Romantic condition, and one which preys especially on the weak or indeed the working class; Emily includes both the “saintly” consumptive and the degenerate weakling in Wuthering Heights. Jane Eyre’s Helen Burns is perhaps the most famous literary Victorian consumptive, and indeed is often produced as confirmation that the Victorians thought of the disease as aesthetic and ethereal: in this paper, I argue that although Brontë draws on certain affordances of the disease and explicitly distinguishes it from typhus in the narrative, Helen’s saintly death from consumption is a conscious evocation of the “Romantic TB” narrative which Brontë understood to be limited and limiting. In fact, Helen’s exceptionality among the pupils at Lowood is a model of isolated individualism which the novel increasingly rejects as it progresses.
Biography

Jo is a Senior Lecturer in Nineteenth-Century Literature at York St John, where she directs the modules “The Victorian Novel” and “Sick Novels: Literature and Disease.” Her interest in both the Brontës and in Victorian contagion and contagion theories emerged from her doctoral chapter on the Brontës and climate: she has published an article, “Staying Calm and Seizing the Iron: Contagion, Fermentation, and the Management of the Rabies Threat in Charlotte Brontë’s Shirley” was published in Victorian Review in 2016. Her proposed monograph Charlotte Brontë and Contagion: Myths, Memes, and the Politics of Infection is currently under consideration by Palgrave Macmillan, and she’s interested in the representation of contagion, the metaphors contagion affords, and the contagious dissemination of Brontë myths and memes in popular culture and merchandise.

‘Helen Huntingdon, the Brontëan Amazon: The Tenant of Wildfell Hall and the Feminist and Feminine Literature of the “American Renaissance”’ (Mrs. Elisa Fierro)

Although Anne Brontë’s The Tenant of Wildfell Hall is a much more audacious novel than Jane Eyre, it is still comparatively less known to the public at large and Anne is still often regarded as the least gifted of the Brontë sister. However, it is a work of great complexity that can lead to interesting connections, like unexpected affinities with the American popular feminine narrative of the years preceding the Civil War, a period called “American Renaissance.”

It is generally held that between 1800 and 1860 America saw the publication of a large number of literary works written by women for women, aiming at reinforcing the ‘cult of the home fireplace’. However, while some heroines in such literature were undoubtedly highly traditional, there were also important connections between several authoresses and the women’s rights movement, which led to the creation of boldly alternative feminine figures, strong and brave ‘American Amazons’.

Women’s writing in the United States was at first influenced by the English tradition, but that tradition was soon transformed and adapted to a different historical, cultural, and social context, where the Civil War played a role of considerable importance. American feminists considered the English literary heroines as passive and weak and there certainly existed precise cultural reasons for the American heroines being more ‘Amazonian’ than their British cousins.

However, the Brontë heroines are definitely very different from the literary stereotypes of their time. Helen Huntington, powerless victim of unjust marriage laws and of an abusive husband, endures her situation until she realizes that her child is in danger – at which point, she decides to regain control of her own destiny. Anne Brontë’s novel is a strong polemic against the abuses of human rights and is just as eloquent as the works of her American fellow women writers. By escaping and hiding with her son, by earning her own living, by bravely defying the social conventions and the laws of her time, Helen manages to tell the definite version of her own story and to become a ‘British Amazon’.

Biography

Elisa Fierro is a retired Italian Lecturer at the University of Kansas (USA), holding an MA in English and German from the University of Naples (Italy). She has taught English, German, Speech, World and Multicultural Literature, ESL, and Italian in Italy and in the USA. Her publications include articles on literature and education, book reviews, translations, and papers in the European Studies Conference Proceedings (University of Nebraska in Omaha, USA). Elisa is the Representative of the West Region of the Brontë Society, an American Chapter, and previous editor of the Region’s Brontë Wings e-zine, as well as previous
contributor to the society’s American blog. She received the University of Kansas Fraser Award and departmental awards for pedagogical excellence from 2011 to 2013. Elisa is currently a resident of Washington State, USA, but she also spends much of her time in Italy and in Portugal. She continues to nurture her passion for the Brontë sisters and for British Literature as an Independent Scholar.

Panel 3C: The Brontës around the World

‘Minds At Work – The Brontë Sisters’ Lives Re-Visited in 21st-century Adaptations’ (Maria Juko, University of Hamburg)

May Sinclair in her 1912 biography of Emily, Charlotte and Emily, entitled The Three Brontës, states that she has “been calling up ghosts for the mere fun of laying them; and there might be something in it, but that really these ghosts still walk. At any rate many people believe in them, even at this time of the day.” (1) Almost 100 years later the Brontë sisters continue to fascinate fans and scholars alike. This fascination expresses itself not merely in the literary but also in the cinematic and graphic realm. Whereas Elizabeth Gaskell and Sinclair were confined to the blank pages of their notebooks, with the possibility of intermedial approaches, biographies have become a source for film and comic adaptations.

In my talk I aim to sketch how these two types of adaptations attempt to re-evok[e] the lives of the three exceptional sisters by emphasising the differences between the three women while also highlighting the shared background that shapes all of their narratives. For this purpose, I have chosen Sally Wainwright’s 2016 BBC adaptation To Walk Invisible and Isabel Greenberg’s 2020 graphic novel Glass Town – The Imaginary World of the Brontës. Both adaptations “call up the ghosts” by retelling the story of how the Brontë sisters became the celebrated and cherished authoresses they are today, highlighting that their “ghosts still walk” among us. While Wainwright expresses this by incorporating the scenery of Haworth, Greenberg takes the reader on a tour to Glass Town, the Brontë siblings made up kingdom.

Biography

Maria Juko completed her B.A. and M.Ed. in English and Biology for Secondary Education with a focus on Victorian Literature at the University of Hamburg. She currently holds a scholarship by the university where she is working towards her PhD on female self-reliance in late 18th to mid-19th-century novels. In her research project she shows how female self-reliance constitutes an elementary motif in early feminist writings, closely corresponding to the contemporary discourse of self-reliance promoted in Victorian society, picked up by women writers such as Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot.

‘The shadows of the Bronte family in Anton Chekhov’s Three Sisters: A Myth or reality?’ (Dr. Olha Honcharova, HS Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Ukraine)

The ongoing bicentennials dedicated to the Bronte family, the last year of which has coincided in time with the 160th birthday of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, provide an excellent opportunity to renew discussions about the widespread assumption that Chekhov modelled the characters of his drama Three Sisters (1901) on the Bronte siblings. The idea that Chekhov borrowed the history of the Bronte family has been debated for nearly two decades. Its supporters focus on similarities between the real and fictional households and their inhabitants, as well as common concerns, values and circumstances that preoccupied both the
Brontes and the Prozorovs. The opponents of the idea emphasize the Russian roots of the Chekhov’s play and note the absence of mention of Bronte names or writings in the letters and works of the Russian writer. In this paper, I scrutinize the possibilities of Chekhov’s hypothetical acquaintance with the Brontes’ writings and their family biography and what impact it could have had on his literary creativity. The brief survey of Russian translations of the Bronte novels showed that the only Bronte work that Chekhov could have known was Charlotte’s *Jane Eyre*, though this is an unlikely fact. At the same time, the probable passing acquaintance with Olga Peterson’s monograph about the Brontes (1895) might have influenced Chekhov’s imagination primarily due to the striking resemblances between the Yorkshire family and his own one, including both fathers’ religiousness and eagerness to educate their children in a proper way, both the Bronte and the Chekhov siblings’ obsession with literature and arts, the deaths of talented but weak brothers Branwell Bronte and Nikolai Chekhov at the same age and because of the same reasons, and tuberculosis infection that killed all Bronte children but Charlotte, and which caused the sufferings and premature death of Anton Chekhov. I suppose that it was the projection of the Bronte family history on Chekhov’s own family that could impress him most of all and a few years later be consciously or unconsciously embodied in his play *Three Sisters*.

**Biography**


‘Domesticating the Brontës: The Spanish Television Adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (1971)’ Dr Sara Medina Calzada, University of Valladolid, Spain

My paper will analyse the television adaptation of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* produced in 1971 by Televisión Española, the national state-owned television broadcaster in Spain. This fifteen-episode adaptation was part of Novela, a popular television format in which classical novels were dramatized and serialised in short episodes of around 20 minutes that were broadcast daily from 1962 to 1979. The list of adapted novels also includes *Emma*, *Les Misérables*, *Anna Karenina*, *David Copperfield*, *Little Women*, or *Agnes Grey*, to mention a few.

This Spanish version of *Jane Eyre*, starring María Luisa Merlo and Rafael Arcos, was adapted by José María Font-Espina, who transformed it into a melodrama introducing certain changes in the plot but keeping the focus on the relationship between and Jane and Rochester. Censorship did not force major omissions, but there are some striking changes and additions connected with the ideology promoted by Francisco Franco’s dictatorship (1939-1975), particularly in relation to Catholicism and Spanish nationalism. For example, Jane and Rochester meet for the first time in a chapel where there is a crucifix hanging on the wall, and Jane’s geography lessons to Adele become a pretext to voice Spain’s claims on Gibraltar. The adaptation is thus an
interesting example of appropriation by which Charlotte Brontë’s novel is domesticated to make it more appropriate and apparently more appealing to Spanish viewers who, by the way, were already familiar with the text as translations of this and other Brontë novels proliferated in Spain since the 1940s.

Biography

Sara Medina Calzada is a lecturer at the English Department at the University of Valladolid (Spain), where she also obtained her Ph.D. in 2017. Her main research interest is in Anglo-Hispanic historical and cultural relations in the nineteenth century. Relevant publications include “Thomas Moore in the Hispanic World” (in The Reputations of Thomas Moore: Poetry, Music and Politics, eds. Sarah McCleave and Tríona O’Hanlon, Routledge, 2020) and “Jane Eyre on the Nineteenth Century Spanish Stage: Intertextuality and adaptation in Francisco Morera’s Version of Charlotte Bronte’s Novel” (Odisea, 2016).

4A: Author Roundtable: The Brontës, The Twenty-First Century and Us.

Join six authors as we explore the Brontës from the twenty first century and look at the way that the family’s lives and works have informed our own creative responses to them.

Almost since the first publication of the Brontës’ novels, biographers and other novelists have held strong opinions on what the sisters really meant by their works of fiction and what they were really like. Each sister (and Branwell too!) has gone through a series of reinterpretations in biography, contemporary fiction and historical fiction.

In this panel, we will look both at the family’s world and examine how we, as writers and readers, bring our own twenty-first century perspective to interpreting them. We will explore what the siblings may have thought about the progress of feminism and the lives and expectations of Victorian women when viewed through a modern lens. We will consider the siblings’ responses to issues such as the secular and fundamental divide in religion, globalisation and the current pandemic. We will also explore the creative potential generated by the siblings’ lives and fictional worlds, and think about how the scandals and dramas associated with the Brontës remain a source of interest today. What is it about the Brontës that keeps inspiring writers (in so many different ways) today? Join us to find out.

Biographies

Finola Austin is an England-born, Northern Ireland-raised, New York-based historical novelist. She’s been running her blog, The Secret Victorianist, for the last six years to share her love of all things 19th-century. Her first novel, Brontë’s Mistress: A Novel, about Lydia Robinson, the woman who had an affair with Branwell Brontë, will be published by Atria Books (part of Simon & Schuster) in Summer 2020.

Rowan Coleman is the internationally best-selling award-winning author of fourteen novels, including The Memory Book and The Summer of Impossible Things. Her latest novel The Girl at the Window is set in Ponden Hall, and the search for Emily Brontë’s lost novel. Most recently she has begun writing under the Brontë inspired pseudonym as ‘Bella Ellis’, author of The Vanished Bride the first in a series of mystery novels that imagines that before the Bronte sisters were renowned authors, they were amateur sleuths.
Julie Cohen is an award-winning bestselling author of *Together, Louis and Louise* and her most recent novel *Spirited* concerns the rise of spirit photography, cultural identity and sexuality in Victorian life. Julie is also the vice president of the Romantic Novelists society. You can find out more about Julie and her work via her website or Twitter: @julie_cohen

Syrie James is the USA TODAY and Amazon bestselling author of thirteen novels, including the critically-acclaimed *The Secret Diaries of Charlotte Brontë*, which won the Audio book Association Audie award and was named a Great Group Read by the USA’s Women’s National Book Association. Syrie has written three novels about Jane Austen including *The Lost Memoirs of Jane Austen, The Missing Manuscript of Jane Austen,* and *Jane Austen’s First Love.* Her books have been translated into twenty-one languages, made many Best of the Year lists, and been designated as Library Journal Editor’s Picks. A member of the WGA, Syrie has also sold twenty screenplays to film and television. A commissioned playwright, her work has been produced in regional theatres in New York City and across the U.S. Syrie has addressed numerous organizations as a keynote speaker, served on a variety of guest panels, has written, directed, and performed in theatraicals at JASNA AGMs and regional chapters, and has appeared frequently on stage as Jane Austen. In 2016 Syrie was delighted to present a paper at the Charlotte Bronte Bicentennial Conference at Chawton House Library.

Sarah Shoemaker is the author of the best-selling novel, *Mr. Rochester,* the story of the vulnerable and complicated man who won Jane Eyre’s heart, and who has, in the last nearly two hundred years, intrigued, angered, and beguiled readers of *Jane Eyre.* Shoemaker is a former university librarian and the author of three previous novels (under the pseudonym S.K. Wolf), *Long Chain of Death, The Harbinger Effect,* and *MacKinnon’s Machine.* You can find out more about Sarah’s work via her website.

Lucy Powrie is an award-winning author, blogger and BookTuber from the UK, and started writing the first book in The Paper & Hearts Society series while she was still at school. To date, her YouTube channel has attracted over 40,000 subscribers and over one million views. In 2018, she was named the Brontë Society’s Young Ambassador. When she’s not reading, Lucy enjoys cuddling her herd of guinea pigs and her three dogs, but let’s be real: she’s almost always reading.

Nikita Gill is a British-Indian poet who writes poetry collections and plays that offer a largely female readership the chance to recognise the value of their own experiences. She discovered her own poetry vocation as a schoolgirl in New Delhi through reading the work of Emily Dickinson, Maya Angelou and Robert Frost: she now champions the work of others, particularly the new generation of young poets who discovered the power of poetry on-line and are as happy streaming new work as reading it in books. Her novel in verse *The Girl and the Goddess* is due out in September, as is her new anthology *SLAM! You’re gonna wanna hear this* which is billed by publisher Macmillan.

4B: Brontë Legacies

‘Return to Honresfeld: Place and Personality in the Textual Authentication of Emily Brontë’s ‘E.J.B.’ Poems’ (Dr Tricia Ayrton)

On 12 June 2018 ‘Rochdale Online’ ran a story about the theft of lead from the roof of a local historic building. The house, previously a Leonard Cheshire Home but empty for two years, had been granted a ‘local listing’ by Rochdale Council in 2017 and the new owner, wishing to preserve the original character of the house, was concerned about water damage to the building following the removal of the lead. The article gave a brief summary of the history of the building, but so brief that readers
might have missed the hints of its fascinating history. This house is Honresfeld in Littleborough, and it holds a central place in the history of Brontë MSS, and particularly in the establishment of textual authenticity for several of Emily Brontë’s poems.

Honresfeld was built in 1873 for mill owner William Law and his brother Alfred. William Law was a keen collector and established an extensive collection of rare books, MSS, holographs, and art, which was housed in a library situated in the rear of the house. The use of the house has changed over the years – from domestic accommodation to private nursing home, to Leonard Cheshire Home – but significantly, the one room that has retained its original purpose and appearance throughout that time is the library. Even today it is immediately recognisable as the room that housed the famous Law Collection in the very earliest photographs; and recent visitors who knew the house during its time as a Leonard Cheshire Home report that the library of the Home was situated in the same room throughout that time.

This paper describes the place of Honresfeld in the textual history of the poems of Emily Brontë’s ‘E.J.B.’ notebook, and reveals the value of the achievements and discoveries of visitors to the Law Collection from 1897 to 1934 – as well as uncovering some of the problems created by certain of those visitors and their collaborators.

Biography

After a career in School Leadership in Special Education, Tricia Ayrton received her PhD from the University of Edinburgh in 2018. Her thesis title was ‘Studying the Post-Genetic: Emily Brontë’s ‘E.J.B.’ Poems from 1844 to the Present. She has written a chapter for a book on ‘Dream and Literary Creation’ in 18th and 19th Century Women’s Literature’ to be published by Anthem Press later this year. Chapter title: ‘And this shall be my dream tonight: Dream as Narrative in Wuthering Heights’. She has reviewed for the Times Literary Supplement.

‘Nirmalabala Shome’s Saralā: An Early Twentieth-Century Bengali Adaptation of Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre’ (Dr. Ramit Samaddar, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, India)

In Chapter 35 of Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre Diana Rivers learns about her newfound cousin Jane’s refusal to accompany her brother St. John Rivers to India on missionary work. She tells Jane: ‘You are much too pretty, as well as too good, to be grilled alive in Calcutta.’ While Jane never travels to Calcutta, the land of Indian Bengalis, and is therefore saved from being ‘grilled alive’—probably a (xenophobic?) reference to the Hindu practice of sati/widow-burning—Brontë’s famous triple-decker did get a Bengali makeover in early twentieth-century Calcutta in the form of Nirmalabala Shome’s Saralā. My paper will examine Shome’s 1914 novel as an adaptation of Brontë’s 1847 classic, demonstrating how Saralā preserves the essence of its fictional elder while working to transform it in ways that are remarkably ingenious. Beginning with a brief introduction to who Shome was and why she chose to retell Brontë’s masterpiece, my paper will move on to discuss how Shome in her adaptation maintains the basic premise of Jane Eyre—the eponymous heroine’s Cinderella-like journey from misery and repression to happiness and freedom—while competently relocating the Brontëan hypotext to her native milieu and in doing so not only ensures its survival beyond British borders, but also revitalizes it.

Biography

Dr. Ramit Samaddar is Assistant Professor of English at Jadavpur University, Calcutta, India. His areas of research interest are eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and culture, postcolonial studies, and film criticism. His publications include a co-

‘The Brontës’ Literary Children’ (Sara Zadrozny, University of Portsmouth)

Motherless from an early age, the Brontës spent childhood in relative isolation, honing creativity that made them gifted adult writers. How did then did the Brontës view the concept of childhood? Despite living at a time, and in a place, with a very short life-expectancy, the Brontës’ ideas about the influence of childhood on the adult, brings a psychological realism, even against the Gothic or supernatural aspects of their stories.

Moving through the Brontë juvenilia, this paper will examine conflicting constructions of childhood in the Brontës’ literary children Jane Eyre, Cathy Earnshaw, Heathcliff and Arthur Huntingdon. Charlotte Brontë present suffering in early childhood in the Jane Eyre’s life as the catalyst for wisdom, along the lines of Lockean principles. Cathy Earnshaw and Heathcliff have aspects of the Celtic changeling, and of Romantic children, happiest in natural surroundings. Rousseauian Arthur Huntingdon, rescued from his father’s corrupting influence, has his innocence restored and is able to act as the catalyst for his mother’s happiness.

While these child protagonists necessarily differ in their representation, and although the Brontës were drawing on an array of personal literary sources and “eclectic interests” (Alexander and Smith 54), this paper will show how the Brontës were unified in expressing a surprisingly modern view of child psychological development through their literary children.

Biography

Sara is completing doctoral research on women’s ageing in Victorian literature, gerontology and culture at the University of Portsmouth. She teaches “The Brontës” online for Oxford University’s School of Continuing Education. Interested in ages and stages, Sara has taught Victorian children’s literature at the universities of Reading, Oxford and Portsmouth. She is a Fellow of Higher Education Academy.

4C: Inspired by the Parsonage: Author Readings

‘A Brontë-inspired Poetry Reading: *The Jane and Bertha in Me* by Rita Maria Martinez’ (USA)

American poet Rita Maria Martinez will entertain attendees during “A Brontë-inspired Poetry Reading: *The Jane and Bertha in Me*. She rewrites the myths of *Jane Eyre*, interrogating these stories and their lasting effects on young female readers, while also entwining them with popular culture. A chancellor of the Florida State Poets Association, Denise Duhamel writes of *The Jane and Bertha in Me*: “Each poem is a smartly annotated, hauntingly revisionist homage to Jane Eyre. Martinez’s astounding poems are literary, conversational, personal, fun, as she confidently transports her Janes from the Moors to Macy’s, from Thornfield Manor to the world of tattoos.” Martinez’s reading aims to honor the creative spirit and writings of the Brontës, foster excitement for contemporary poetry, and encourage creative writers to pay homage to their favorite literary family by creating Brontë-inspired poetry of their own.
Biography

Rita Maria Martinez loves all things *Jane Eyre*. Her poetry collection—*The Jane and Bertha in Me* (Kelsay Books)—celebrates Charlotte Brontë’s classic novel through inventive persona poems, which often re-imagine *Jane Eyre*’s characters in contemporary contexts, from Jane as an Avon saleslady to Bertha as a Stepford wife. The Brontë Babe Blog lists Martinez’s collection as one of the Best Brontë Books Read in 2018, and the Diary of an Eccentric blog listed it as the Best Poetry Book of 2016. Martinez has been a featured guest on the podcasts Bonnets at Dawn and Lay Back and Think of England. Her poetry appears in the anthology *Gondal Heights: A Brontë Tribute Anthology* and the textbook *Three Genres: The Writing of Fiction/Literary Nonfiction, Poetry and Drama*. Individual poems appear in publications like The Notre Dame Review, Ploughshares, and The Best American Poetry Blog. The poem St. John Rivers Pops the Question was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Martinez has work forthcoming in the anthology *Grabbed: Poets & Writers on Sexual Assault, Empowerment & Healing* (edited by Inaugural Presidential Poet Richard Blanco et al.). Follow Rita @cubanbrontëite or order signed copies of *The Jane and Bertha in Me* by visiting [http://comeonhome.org/ritamartinez](http://comeonhome.org/ritamartinez).

‘Livings: From a Book in Progress’, Ryan Guth (Jackson State Community College, USA)

*Livings* is a collection of poetry, short prose pieces, and closet-dramas focusing on the Parsonage household from 1845 to 1850 – a period which begins, inauspiciuosly enough, with the four adult siblings’ final failure to establish conventional careers or “livings” for themselves, thus forcing a return to their elderly father’s home in an attempt to regroup. How did these five brilliant but eccentric personalities get along, at such close quarters, from day to day? How did allegiances amongst them shift over time, especially with regard to Branwell’s catastrophic decline? Most importantly, given their intimately shared yet extremely limited fund of prior life experience, how did they come to such widely differing responses to matters of unrequited love, professional success and failure, religious feeling, sex, grief, mortality? Told from multiple perspectives – including those of the author and the reader as well as the five family members, their friends and associates, and the village of Haworth itself – *Livings* will present these 19th century lives and sensibilities both from their own time and ours.

Biography

Ryan Guth is the author of two full-length mixed-genre collections, *Home Truths* (2nd edition, Transcendent Zero Press, 2018), and *Body and Soul* (Lummox Press, 2015). Both books have been featured titles at the annual Southern Festival of Books in Nashville, TN. Selections from Ryan’s book in progress about the Brontë family, Livings, have been read at the Louisville Conference on Language and Literature Since 1900, and have also appeared in journals such as *Dodging the Rain*, *Miramar*, and *Harbinger Asylum*, as well as two special bicentennial issues of *The Brontë Society Gazette*. Ryan teaches writing and literature at Jackson State Community College in Jackson, TN, USA, and has been a member of the Brontë Society since 2012.

‘Fiery Daughters’, Lorna Faye Dunsire

The brand-new poetry pamphlet ‘Fiery Daughters’ is entirely devoted to The Brontës and their stories. *Fiery Daughters* is forthcoming with Yaffle Press.
Lorna Faye Dunsire is a Yorkshire poet. She is a member of The Beehive Poets, in Bradford, with whom she performed at Bradford literature festival 2016. Her poem 'Bicentenary Brontës' was featured on TV and BBC Radio Leeds as part of Charlotte Brontë’s 200th birthday events run by Brontë Parsonage museum. Lorna has performed some of her more political poetry to the vast crowds at the NHS rallies for fair pay. Her writing is influenced by The Brontës, political protest, nature and relationships. She works as an Occupational Therapist in the NHS. Lorna creatively weaves themes of politics, justice, love, loss and nature through her poetry; speaking with warmth, passion and purpose. Her poems have been published in Beautiful Dragons anthologies (A Bees Breakfast, Watch the birdie, Well, dam!) and Indigo Dreams 'For the Silent' anthology. Her poetry also features in a YAFFLE press collection of poems about Bradford's film and TV culture, called 'Reel Bradford'.