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## THE BRONTËS AND THE IDEA OF THE HUMAN

What does it mean to be human? The Brontë novels and poetry are fascinated by what lies at the core – and limits – of the human. *The Brontës and the Idea of the Human* presents a significant re-evaluation of how Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë each responded to scientific, legal, political, theological, literary, and cultural concerns in ways that redraw the boundaries of the human for the nineteenth century. Proposing innovative modes of approach for the twenty-first century, leading scholars shed light on the relationship between the role of the imagination and new definitions of the human subject. This important interdisciplinary study scrutinises the notion of the embodied human and moves beyond it to explore the force and potential of the mental and imaginative powers for constructions of selfhood, community, spirituality, degradation, cruelty, and ethical behaviour in the nineteenth century and its fictional worlds.

ALEXANDRA LEWIS is Senior Lecturer in English Literature, and Director of the Centre for the Novel, at the University of Aberdeen. She is editor of the Norton Critical Edition of *Wuthering Heights*, and has published extensively on the Brontës, memory and trauma, and nineteenth-century literature and psychology.

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# THE BRONTËS AND THE IDEA OF THE HUMAN

*Science, Ethics, and the Victorian Imagination*

EDITED BY  
ALEXANDRA LEWIS  
*University of Aberdeen*



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## Contributors

**Isobel Armstrong** is Emeritus Professor of English Literature, Birkbeck, University of London and a Fellow of the British Academy. Her publications include *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Politics and Poetics* (1993), *The Radical Aesthetic* (2000), *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination* (2008) and *Novel Politics: Democratic Imaginations in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (2016).

**Dinah Birch** is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Cultural Engagement at the University of Liverpool. She is the general editor of the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* (2009). Her publications include *Our Victorian Education* (2007) and editions of *John Ruskin: Selected Writings* (2004), *Elizabeth Gaskell's Cranford* (2011), Anthony Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* (2012) and *The Small House at Allington* (2015). She co-edited, with Mark Llewellyn, *Conflict and Difference in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (2010) and, with Francis O'Gorman, *Ruskin and Gender* (2002), and contributed the chapter on Emily Brontë to the *Cambridge Companion to English Poets* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

**Janis McLarren Caldwell** is Associate Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara, United States. She is the author of *Literature and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Britain: from Mary Shelley to George Eliot* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). She has published widely on science, sympathy and disease in nineteenth-century literature.

**Helen Groth** is Professor of English at the University of New South Wales. Her publications include *Victorian Photography and Literary Nostalgia* (2003), *Dreams and Modernity: A Cultural History*, co-authored with Natalya Lusty (2013), *Moving Images: Nineteenth Century Reading and Screen Practices* (2013) and, as co-editor with Chris Danta, *Mindful Aesthetics: Literature and the Science of Mind* (2014).

The late **Barbara Hardy** was Emeritus Professor of English Literature, Birkbeck, University of London, a Senior Fellow of the British Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Her publications include *Forms of Feeling in Victorian Fiction* (1985), *Thomas Hardy: Imagining Imagination in Hardy's Poetry and Fiction* (2000), *Dickens and Creativity* (2008) and *Dorothea's Daughter and Other Nineteenth-Century Postscripts* (2011).

**Alexandra Lewis** is Senior Lecturer in English Literature and Director of the Centre for the Novel at the University of Aberdeen. She is editor of the 5th *Norton Critical Edition of Wuthering Heights*. Her publications on the Brontës include chapters in *Acts of Memory: The Victorians and Beyond* (2010), *The Brontës in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Picturing Women's Health* (2014), *Feminist Moments* (2016) and *Charlotte Brontë: Legacies and Afterlives* (2017). She contributed the chapter on 'Psychology and Psychiatry' for the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (2015) and serves on the executive committees of the British Association for Victorian Studies and the Australasian Victorian Studies Association.

**Simon Marsden** is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Liverpool, and the author of *Emily Brontë and the Religious Imagination* (2014). His writing on aspects of theological and scientific discourse in nineteenth-century literature includes articles on Charlotte Brontë and creation theology, and imagination, materiality and Emily Brontë's diary papers.

**Blake Morrison** is Professor of Creative and Life Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Blake is an award-winning poet, novelist and journalist, best-known for two family memoirs and a study of the Bulger case, *As If*. He has also translated and adapted plays, written libretti and critical studies, and edited anthologies of contemporary writing.

**Deborah Denenholz Morse** is Sarah E. Nance Professor of English and Emerita Inaugural Fellow, Center for the Liberal Arts at The College of William and Mary. She is the author of *Women in Trollope's Palliser Novels* (1987), and *Reforming Trollope: Race, Gender, and Englishness in the Novels of Anthony Trollope* (2013). Deborah is the co-editor of several collections including *Victorian Animal Dreams: Representations of Animals in Victorian Literature and Culture* with Martin Danahay (2007), *A Companion to the Brontës*, with Diane Long Hoeveler (2016) and *Time, Space, and Place in Charlotte Brontë*, with Diane Long Hoeveler (2016).

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She contributed the chapters on Emily Brontë and Charlotte Brontë for the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (2015).

**Jan-Melissa Schramm** worked as a lawyer before undertaking a PhD on the changing idea of evidence in the long nineteenth century. She is now University Reader in Literature and Law, and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CRASSH), at the University of Cambridge. She is the author of *Testimony and Advocacy in Victorian Law, Literature, and Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), *Atonement and Self-Sacrifice in Nineteenth-Century Narrative* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), and *Censorship and the Representation of the Sacred in Nineteenth-Century England* (forthcoming, 2018). She has also co-edited two volumes of essays: *Fictions of Knowledge: Fact, Evidence, Doubt* (2011), and *Sacrifice and the Modern Literature of War* (2018).

**Sally Shuttleworth** is Professorial Fellow in English, St Anne's College, University of Oxford, and a Fellow of the British Academy. Her publications include *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) and *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine, 1840–1900* (2010). She co-edited, with Jenny Bourne Taylor, *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts, 1830–1890*.

**Helen Small** is Merton Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of Pembroke College. Her publications include *Love's Madness: Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity, 1800–1865* (1996), *The Long Life* (2007), *The Value of the Humanities* (2013) and as co-editor, with Trudi Tate, *Literature, Science, Psychoanalysis, 1830–1970: Essays in Honour of Gillian Beer* (2003).

**Rebecca Styler** is Principal Lecturer in English at the University of Lincoln. She is the author of *Literary Theology by Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (2010) and has published articles on nineteenth-century women's religious literature including spiritual auto/biography, the fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell and the poetry of Anne Brontë.

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## Abbreviations

Unless otherwise stated in the notes to a chapter, references to the Brontës' novels are to the following Oxford World's Classics editions and the below abbreviations are used in parentheses where required for the sake of clarity.

### Anne Brontë

- AG* *Agnes Grey*, Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden, eds., with an introduction and additional notes by Sally Shuttleworth (2010)  
*T* *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Herbert Rosengarten, ed., with an introduction and additional notes by Josephine McDonagh (2008)

### Charlotte Brontë

- JE* *Jane Eyre*, Margaret Smith, ed., with an introduction and revised notes by Sally Shuttleworth (2008)  
*P* *The Professor*, Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten, eds., with an introduction by Margaret Smith (2008)  
*S* *Shirley*, Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten, eds., with an introduction and additional notes by Janet Gezari (2007)  
*V* *Villette*, Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten, eds., with an introduction and notes by Tim Dolin (2008)

### Emily Brontë

- WH* *Wuthering Heights*, Ian Jack, ed., with an introduction and additional notes by Helen Small (2009)

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