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EDUCATION IN WORKS OF THE BRONTË SISTERS

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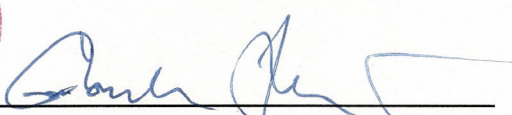
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ABSTRACT

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The Brontë sisters lived in the Victorian era, a time of much change in education. This thesis describes some of these changes and how the sisters' lives were influenced by education in this period. Both historical accounts of education in Victorian England, as well as the Brontës' own accounts in their fiction will be examined and contrasted. Moreover, the thesis aims to find similarities and differences between Charlotte's, Emily's and Anne's point of view and distinctions between their novels and the real situation in Victorian England. The whole thesis does not deal only with literary aspects but also with representations of pedagogy. This approach allows us to see the progress education has made since then, what were the crucial aspects leading to positive changes and if there are similarities between what was essential in pedagogy back then and now. This also provides greater insight into how the Brontë sisters approached education and what were their view on education in this period.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the Brontë sisters, education was an inseparable part of their lives. They were repeatedly said to be curious extraordinary students, which was mentioned several times in Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (2010), Chitham's *A life of Emily Brontë* (2012), Holland's *In Search Of Anne Brontë* (2017) and *Brontës and Education* by Marianne Thormählen (2011). They were also all involved at least once in pedagogical careers, even attempting to open their own school. So education strongly influenced their lives as well as their novels.

During the time of the Brontë sisters, Britain was ruled by Queen Victoria, and the whole educational system underwent many changes. New institutions appeared, and some ended; pupils from the lower class could finally reach some form of education; schooling became more open and diverse for both gender, school attendance was adjusted and last but not least the content of education also went through changes.

In the first part of this thesis I discuss changes in education during this period. Then follows chapters dedicated to the Brontës' lives with a focus on their education and teaching careers. Next comes a more general discussion of how education differed in the Victorian-era according to gender and social class. The significant impact of the Brontës' teaching careers, as well as the educational background of the Victorian era, can be observed in their novels *Jane Eyre*, *The Professor*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. The main objective of this thesis is to analyze how the Brontës' represent education in these novels. We will focus on content, availability of education, how gender and social differences in education are described in the novels, and the nature of the teacher-student relationship.

Generally speaking, the Brontës depict education similarly; however, there are disparities that derive from their personal experience, as they were not involved in same pedagogical activities, they spent different periods teaching, and of course they each had different their personalities. The aim is to identify how the novels reflect the reality of education as well as the Brontë sisters' lives by exploring the novels, comparing them with their other novels as well as associating them with historical records on Victorian education.

2. EDUCATION IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND DURING LIVES OF THE BRONTË SISTERS

For Victorians, education was seen mainly as a means of social control, marked especially in the education of the lower class and also a way to self-betterment for the middle class. Accordingly, education differed for various social classes. Nevertheless, social class was not the only such factor. The critical role also played a gender of people (Burstyn, 2018, p. 11).

In the first part of this chapter, I will describe changes which education during the Victorian era underwent, as a theoretical basis for the following sections, in which I will describe how Victorian education influenced the lives of the Brontë sisters and how they represented it in their novels.

2.1. Changes in education during the Victorian era

Education during the Victorian period underwent many changes in the areas of the content of learning, teaching careers and the school system. During the entire Victorian era, educational reform was long and constant.

The same year Charlotte Brontë was born, even before Queen Victoria's reign, the Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders in the Metropolis was set up. It aimed to examine schools for the working class. Another change before the reign of Queen Victoria was the foundation of Glasgow Normal School in 1824 meant to train teachers, and four years later in 1828 University College London was opened and later became the University of London. In 1834 The Poor Law Amendment Act was created, saying that pauper children should be allowed to and able to receive everyday education (Gillard, 2018).

At the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, a school was not compulsory yet, so whether children went to school or not, depended mainly on their parents and their resources: some parents could not have their children educated, and sometimes children were even required to go to work. This was mainly the case of families in the lower class. Children attending schools were from the middle and upper classes. A further factor was gender, as girls were mainly educated at home by the governess (Waite, 2016).

1839, two years after Queen Victoria's coronation, we saw the first significant change leading to the education we know today. The Committee of the Privy Council on Education was established, a government department which focussed solely on education (Gillard, 2018).

In the 1840s the so-called Ragged Schools appeared. They were led mainly by volunteers and were based on religion. This type of school was inspired by the Sunday Schools, but for poor children who were not allowed to go to Sunday Schools because of their improper behaviour or filthy appearance: the Ragged Schools provided their only educational opportunity. Pupils could learn how to read, write, count and the Bible. Ragged Schools also provided clothes or food for their pupils gratis. One of the Ragged Schools was, for example, Field Lane located in London and its teaching standard was depicted in the novel *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (Lee, 2014).

In 1843 the Governesses' Benevolent Institution was founded. During the Victorian era, one of the most important educational goals was to increase the quality of education and since the governesses were an inseparable part of education during this period, with a need for better education grew a need for well-qualified governesses. The Governesses' Benevolent Institution aimed to train and examine governesses to create an educational standard for schooling at home (Burstyn, 2018, p. 23).

The College of Preceptors was founded in 1846 as a teaching association (Delve, 2003). There was already an effort to qualify governess because of the need to raise the educational standard. As a consequence, the primary goal of the association was to train and also certify teachers. Their secondary goal was to promote education for the middle-class (Pedersen, 2018, Location No. 6952).

Education for girls saw its first breakthrough in 1848 when the Queen's College in London was founded and 1853 became independent from Governesses' Benevolent Institution (Pedersen, 2018, Location No. 882-893). Girls between 12 to 20 were given lectures and at the onset, the school had to defend against critics its aim to educate women (Banerjee, n.d.). In 1849 The Ladies' College in Bedford Square later known as Bedford College was founded. It was the first college providing higher education to women in Britain, and it desired to create education free of Anglican's church influence (Banerjee, n.d.). The Cheltenham Ladies College followed whose later principal was Dorothea Beale,

previously studying at Queen's College. Besides, the North London Collegiate for Girls was also formed. Both of them were not just schools but institutions training future teachers as well (History of College, n.d.).

Education for girls was different because during this period, it was thought that it is not proper for wealthy girls to study: it was presumed that their husbands should be wealthy enough to take care of them. I will return to this topic in later chapters (Burstyn, 2018, p. 65).

In the late fifties (1857 and 1858) Oxford and Cambridge universities began with local examinations. Universities began with such examinations because employers usually employed boys, who did not attend the university. Nevertheless, the employers wanted to know what skills and knowledge the boys had. The general objective was again to raise educational standards. Examinations were called local because boys could sit their exams in the nearest centre to their homes. Boards providing exams were The University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations and The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (Our heritage, n.d.).

In 1857 the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science was also formed. This involved men as well as women and together were besides other issues, also pursuing female education (Pedersen, 2018, Location No. 7129). With this organisation, Emily Davies later fought for local examinations to be open to women (Burstyn, 2018, p. 25).

Even later during the Victorian era in England, significant changes in education took place, although none of the Brontë sisters lived to see them.

2.2. Lives and teaching careers of the Brontë sisters

Charlotte Brontë, the third child of Patrick Brontë and Maria Brontë, was born on April 21, 1816, in Thornton, located in Yorkshire in England, to a middle-class family of a clergyman. Her younger sisters, Emily and Anna, were born at the same place on July 30, 1818, and January 17, 1820. Their father was of Irish origin. We can assume that the Brontë children inherited his pedagogical skills because he opened a public school when he was only sixteen and worked as a tutor as well (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 406).

Elizabeth Branwell, sister of Maria Brontë, also known as "Aunt Branwell", stayed with the family for 21 years, after the death of the mother of the sisters to take care of them, until she died in 1842. She did not move in only to babysit the children but also educate them. Sometimes girls in Victorian times were sent to private schools, but overall they were mostly tutored at home by a governess, or by their mothers.

In 1824, Charlotte Brontë was sent, along with Emily, to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge. It was not surprising that Patrick Brontë wanted to send his daughters to school instead of providing schooling at home. Since their mother was dead and the Brontë children were of different ages, it would have been difficult to arrange their education at home, even with the help of Aunt Branwell (Thormahlen, 2011, p. 37). At Cowan Bridge they were supposed to be trained in history, geography, grammar, writing, arithmetic, needlework and housework. All students had to wear the same clothes in the sake of uniformity (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 665-669).

Charlotte later used her school experience in her novels. As far as we can judge from her texts as well as what she and other students shared with Gaskell, this schooling was not pleasant. Food was said to be spoilt by the cook, so the Brontë sisters disliked to eat it. Teachers would sometimes treat students cruelly. Conditions in which the girls had to walk to a church on Sunday's could be considered quite severe, and the attitude of the school towards illness and medical help was inadequate (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 694-789). Although Emily's school experience was not as dreadful as Charlotte's and although teachers treated her as their pet, she developed an aversion towards all formal schooling. It could have been partly caused by seeing her eldest sister Maria being punished, maybe unfairly or too harshly, several times (Chitham, 2012, Location No. 618). It is not surprising that it was possible to run a school in such conditions. Firstly, at that time there was still very little oversight of formal schooling, and secondly, these problems were most apparent only to the students themselves and not to an average observer.

After the death of two of Patrick's oldest children, the remaining sisters were kept at home for the next six years. Patrick, along with Elizabeth Branwell, educated the children on their own (Aunt Branwell, n.d.). Except for reading lessons focused on the Bible and for domestic skills the girls were trained in, they mastering the piano, and according to some letters, Anne also used to sing a little. Although Charlotte never showed any further

significant interest in music, Anne was the true music lover in the Brontë family (Holland, 2017, p. 74). Miss Branwell conducted the teaching at regular hours while Patrick Brontë taught them languages, history, geography and enriched his children with public news, which could have contributed to Charlotte's interest in politics (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 657-1147). Because painting was considered a useful skill for a governess and the Brontë children showed a talent for it, Patrick Brontë even arranged individual tuition with the painter John Bradley (Holland, 2017, p. 73).

Schooling at home, especially for girls, was typical in Victorian England. By hiring tutors for specific subjects as painting Patrick Brontë showed his more significant interest in education as well as a practical concern about his daughters' future work. This was exceptional. Usually, girls were trained to manage a household and indeed to get a husband, not to get a job. Even the interest in politics was unusual.

In 1831 Charlotte was about to study again at Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head. This place, according to Gaskell, was more like a family than a school, most likely because of the kindness and consideration of Miss Wooler. Other students claimed that although Charlotte was well-read, she was weak in grammar. Miss Wooler, it seems, intended to place Charlotte in the lower class. Nevertheless, bright Charlotte did not accept this, so she was allowed to attend regular classes, with private tuition in her weaker subjects. Although Charlotte was deficient in grammar and geography, she was given longer tasks in other subjects than other students because regular reading was too insufficient for her mind. It proves she was a bright student even though she lagged in some fields in the beginning. Charlotte was delighted at Roe Head, making there two long-lasting friendships with Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor, with whom she exchanged letters and who later assisted with composing Charlotte's biography (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 1122-1325).

This type of schooling was not extraordinary for girls. However, Charlotte, perhaps for the first time, encountered a teacher interested in her as an individual student with special requirements, willing to adjust schooling partly for her. This may have motivated her to start her pedagogical career.

In 1835 her younger sister Emily should have been sent to study at Roe Head and Charlotte was offered to return there as a governess in the age of 19. Emily stayed at Roe Head for only three months, because of her dislike of formal schooling and her

homesickness; Anne then took her place (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 1561-1565). Charlotte did not want to show any favouritism for her sister, so she treated Anne the same way as she did other students, maybe even less amiably. This caused her feelings of loneliness and depression. Nevertheless, Anne made friends among schoolmates and at the end of her first year at Roe Head, she received a special prize for being a good student (Holland, 2017, p. 81-82). At school there were usually from 7 to 10 students. Due to this small number, attendance was not enforced strictly. Typically, girls carried out their tasks, and they came to Miss Wooler when they were ready (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 1189). Apart from the tuition at Roe Head, all students had to attend Sunday services at Hartshead Church because the school was Calvinist (Hollan, 2017, p. 82). Religion during this period was still one of the crucial parts of education, and even though it later changed and the influence of the church upon schooling waned, compulsory church attendance and Bible reading left its mark.

In 1838 Emily agreed to go to Law Hill near Halifax, where she was to work as a teacher for Miss Pratchett (Tompkins, 2019a). She spent there six months. In the beginning, it was thought that Emily would return there, but her homesickness along with weakening health, scotched this plan. Despite her short sojourn there, Law Hill nevertheless strongly influenced Emily with its surroundings as well as the people she met there. Although it was said that Emily's behaviour towards students was somewhat rough, she was popular among them (Chitham, 2012, Location No. 1848-1927).

It was Emily's only experience as a teacher. Even though her letters and poems attest to her unhappiness in her position, she did not complain to anyone. She could have acted thus because it was believed that once a teacher or governess complains about her job, she loses professional prestige. Another contributing factor probably was that the position of a teacher was considered by many as lower than the position of governess and teaching position was not generally highly respected (Thormahlen, 2011, p. 70).

In May 1839 Charlotte had to start working as a governess with the Sidgwick family, because of her brother's debts, where she stayed until July. She generally did not enjoy working as a governess, and the family made her experience even worse through their disrespectful behaviour towards her (Pfordresher, 2017). For some families, including this one, a governess was considered below their status, and the whole family, children

included, treated her accordingly. Sometimes she was tasked to take care of the children while their parents were out of the house and when Charlotte tried to criticise the behaviour of children, she was the one whom the parents accused. For them, their children's desires were paramount, not what was necessary or appropriate (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 1993-1997). In 1841 she was employed by the White family, where she worked for almost a year. This time the experience was more pleasant than with the first family, but it was her last position as a governess (Pfordresher, 2017). Except for keeping an eye on children in the family, her employers also required sewing and needlework from her (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 2338). This may seem surprising, but it was difficult to precisely define the work of governess during this period (Thormahlen, 2011, p. 70).

Anne took her first position as governess in April 1839, for the sake of family's finances, at Blake Hall, with the wealthy Ingham family. Even though Anne, in her letters home, mentioned that everything went well, she did so to save her father's worries. She faced there disrespect from 5 poorly educated children, and for their rebellions, bucking and outbursts she was the one blamed by Mr and Mrs Ingham, and was not allowed even to punish them. After less than 9months, she was dismissed (Holland, 2017, pp. 94-96). It again confirms the general status of governesses with their employers.

Subsequently, she was contacted through her advertisement by the Robinson family where there were five children, while the youngest, a two-year old baby, died during Anne's time there. Although their level of education was not as bad as in the previous family, they still demonstrated in Anne's view fewer skills than they should have had. She was educating all of their children, but her main task was to teach the youngest boy Latin so he would pass entrance exams for formal schooling. On the other hand, she was supposed to teach girls needlework, art and music, since history, geography and languages were considered superfluous. Although the Robinsons were said to treat Anne as a slave occasionally, they were amazed by her skills, and they later agreed to hire her brother Branwell as a tutor (Holland, 2017, pp. 108-111). The subjects which were required to be taught by Anne as governess shows the difference between boys' and girls' education. While boys were supposed to attend formal schooling and prepare for their future jobs, girls studied what was needed to get a wealthy husband.

Around the time of the beginning of the Ragged Schools, between 1839 and 1840, Charlotte and Emily began to think about opening their own school (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 2158), even though they were different types of school than what the Brontës envisaged. From a broader point of view, it was not generally unique idea during Victorian times at all because there were a lot of family-like establishments led by women, unfortunately, many times doomed to failure (Pedersen, 2018, Location No. 1069). Probably the obvious motivation for this idea was that all the Brontë sisters suffered homesickness; now they might be able to stay together and to take care of their father. Moreover, apart from their own home-schooling, their only experience of schooling was with small schools for girls, and since they had all discovered that they disliked working as governesses, this was a logical choice.

At the beginning of 1842, Charlotte and her sister Emily set out for school in Brussels, accompanied by their father, to receive a better education which they could then pass on to their students, once they would open their school (Tompkins, 2019b). Charlotte and Emily did not fit entirely among the students in Brussels even though Charlotte enjoyed the change, as she was a student and a teacher at the time. Their separation and also Charlotte's enthusiasm was evident even in one of Charlotte's letters as shows the following citation:

The difference in country and religion makes a broad line of demarcation between us and all the rest. We are completely isolated in the midst of numbers. Yet I think I am never unhappy; my present life is so delightful, so congenial to my own nature, compared to that of a governess. (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 2623)

There is also frequent information about Constantin Héger, a teacher in Brussels, who gave the Brontë sisters private lessons and had a significant impact on Charlotte's perception of the city (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 2632-2637).

The sisters' experiences in Brussels differed. Emily was disliked by some other pupils and was not on good terms with Héger. On the other hand, he stated several times that Emily was more intelligent than Charlotte. It may surprise us that even though Emily

was often said to be a very silent person, there are several records on her arguing with Héger, as the following quotation shows:

Emily spoke first; and said she saw no good to be derived from it; and that, by adopting it, they should lose all originality of thought and expression. She would have entered into an argument on the subject, but for this, M. Heger had no time. More evidence of Emily's interest in being much more than monosyllabic with her tutor! (Gaskell 2010, Location No. 2670)

Subsequently, Emily was not just a pupil, but she also became a teacher of music in Brussels. However, after the death of her aunt, Emily did not return to Belgium again (Chitham, 2012, Location No. 4550).

Charlotte returned to Brussels alone, this time as a student as well as an English teacher (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 2720-2723). By the end of 1843, because of anxiety and loneliness, Charlotte returned to England, with a French-teaching certificate (Gaskell, 2010, Location No. 3127).

We see a significant difference between the experience of English and European education of the Brontë sisters. Scholars and reformists who transformed British schools often came from Europe or at least drew influence from the continent. It is no wonder that Héger was quite a progressive pedagogue. He encouraged Charlotte and Emily to write. Grammar and overall correctness of French language were essential for him, but he also educated them in fields of register, tone, arguments and metaphorical effectiveness. He used in his lessons contemporary literature, reading aloud, and he always tried to understand each student as an individual, to create for them an environment that would encourage improvement. He often used the method of imitation, and he tried not just to teach his students, but also open their minds and use their senses (Thormahlen, 2011, pp. 166-167). This attitude of the teacher towards students was something new to the Brontë sisters and as yet unknown in English education.

In 1844 the Brontë sisters finally attempted to start their school in their house in Haworth. However, the school never opened, and their plans went no further than to issue

of prospectuses. One of the reasons for failure was the distance and isolation of Haworth, which seemed obvious even to Charlotte. Another reason was perhaps the school fee of £35, which for those times, distance and an unknown school, was high (Birch, 2008, p. 93).

We can draw several conclusions from their engagements with education in this period. Firstly, in Victorian England, there was a tendency to qualify governess and teachers to raise the level of education; the foundation of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution was an example of this. Even though this occurred almost at the end of the Brontës' experience with education, it embodies some of the important currents of thought in their times. We may assume that all of the sisters at least slightly differed in their levels of education, but still, all worked as governesses or teachers.

Secondly, they attended schools for different lengths of time, leaving those institutions obtaining different levels of education, and they left their pupils with various skills as well. Furthermore, there were still no set curricula during this period, so there was a plethora of opinions about what to teach, how to teach it, and what to achieve in education. This then could be one of the reasons for these differences.

Thirdly, it is evident in their personal experience, there were significant distinctions between education for boys and girls but also variations based on social class.

Last but not least, all of the Brontë sisters endured disrespectful behaviour in their teaching positions. Since they were still not trained explicitly for as governesses, and no one knew what this work required, they were left at the mercy of their employers, who turned out to be for the most part unmerciful; and this was one of the few jobs women could do. After all, there were many women who wanted to work as governesses, so they were mostly considered superfluous than deficient and when we realise the fact they were all just women in Victorians' eyes, it is not surprising they were treated this way and it gives us another insight into education in Victorian England.

3. GENDER AND SOCIAL CLASS IN EDUCATION

3.1. Gender in education

Education in Victorian England differed according to gender in many spheres. There were variations in the content of education, type of schooling, organisations providing schooling but also opinions about what pupils should study, how, and who should obtain specific knowledge.

When we consider students' goals, we see that men were prepared for their future jobs, while women were provided with the knowledge to be used in a domestic context. As these goals differed so did the educational means. It was common to pay formal schooling for boys and sometimes to hire expensive tutors or governesses to provide education (Burstyn, 2018, p. 14). Schools for boys were easy to recognise. Generally, they were more prominent, with higher fees, hiring more professional teachers (Birch, 2008, p. 85). Girls were likely to be educated at home, preferably by their mothers. Families could hire a governess for them, especially if there was no mother in the family, the family was affluent enough, or the parents could send them to boarding schools. The more prestigious the school was, the higher were the fees. Mothers as teachers were considered crucial even for boys, at least at a young age, at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Burstyn, 2018, p. 39). During the nineteenth century were tendencies to take more advantage of formal schooling, but for girls, it did not happen until the end of the century (Birch, 2008, p. 79).

As we remarked above, as the goals differed so did the content of education. Society expected from boys to provide finances for their future families, so they were more concerned with Latin, Mathematics, Geography, History and Natural Science, while girls focused from the beginning on getting a husband and fulfilling the role of wife (Thormahlen, 2011, p. 121). This meant supporting their husbands, managing the household or organising domestic staff if the family had employees, raising children and understanding social rules which would earn them a favourable position among other women (Burstyn, 2018, p. 36). In this respect except for domesticity, girls education consisted mainly of The Accomplishments, for example, music, drawing or needlework. To a certain extent, their education was also connected with the study of modern languages such as French and German, and the degree of such learning was frequently discussed in the early nineteenth century (Thormahlen, 2011, pp. 105-112). John Ruskin, for example,

claimed that women should study modern languages and even more, but only to the extent that would help them sympathise with problems of their husbands (Burstyn, 2018, p. 48). During the century were tendencies to let women take the same subjects as men, but it was more possible after opening universities and generally formal schooling for them. Despite disagreements about what, how and whom to teach in Victorian England, there is no one doubt that education was a crucial and necessary part of life during this period (Birch, 2008, p. 124).

Now, we may wonder why people were seemingly so willing to accept such prescriptions for their roles and education. We need to understand that society took boys as automatically created to use all that schools offered while girls were able to use everything in the roles of mothers or sisters (Birch, 2008, p. 77). One of the significant aspects of Victorian Education was also looking for reasons for such thinking and accepting reality.

First of all, there were reasons based on society. During the 19th century, there were worries that educated women would create unstable marriages by being too argumentative. It was not proper for women to be involved in political discussions or asking their husbands' opinions. Moreover, for educated women, it would be more challenging to get married at all, and that would lead to many unmarried women in England. Secondly, we may observe reasons coming from religion. According to Christianity, which held that woman was created from man and *for* the man; thus, to change this subordinate position would go against Christian values. From this opinion another followed: that education made women sterile, which was already a reproductive problem. Thirdly, women were generally considered on a lower intellectual level than men. It was deemed wrong to make them compete with men in education, and it was even improper to suggest that women could be able to do so. Last but not least, there appeared reasons based on anatomy and biology. According to examinations carried out in the 1860s with a human body, it proved that women's skulls are smaller than men's, which led to the conclusion that they need to have a smaller brain, with less capacity, convenient for a different type of knowledge (Burstyn, 2018, pp. 77-78).

3.2. Social class in education

As we are already aware, Victorian society was strongly influenced by class divisions, in many fields, not excepting education. Social hierarchy was defined by the family,

occupation and income of males. It was evident that class and gender distinctions existed contemporaneously, but women got their status through their fathers and husbands, not through their endeavours. If middle-class women wanted to be employed and to find a job, they could not do it without loss of the family's status. If a woman needed to get a job, it was required to find it in the female sphere (Burstyn, 2018, p. 19).

Education differed mostly with the incomes of families. While the upper-middle classes could afford boarding schools, tutors or governesses, families with fewer resources resorted to cheaper private schools or voluntary church schools – these were mainly for people from the lower middle class. Some families with lower incomes but more children were willing to send their sons to private schools, while their daughters attended local church schools. They could also use the Dame Schools available for very little money where poor children could get at least necessary skills. It was a cheap way to learn reading or writing. Nevertheless, there were problems with teachers who were sometimes illiterate. Middle-class education usually emphasised the importance of scholarships and competitive examinations, letting them win their place in society (Burstyn, 2018, p. 11).

Even though organizations differed with social class, there were also other reasons why families wanted to adhere to this system. For the upper-middle-class, sending their children to expensive schools and universities was not just a matter of getting proper knowledge, but also a way of showing their privilege to acquire it (Birch, 2008, p. 124). Generally, there were tendencies to completely separate schools according to classes because it was expected from everyone to stay in social class he or she was born in (Burstyn, 2018, p. 16).

We might conclude that tendencies in education were to teach people from the lower class to know their place in the hierarchy and to acquire only the basics of literacy. In contrast, for wealthy people education was not only a means of getting respect and preparing for a career, but it was a way of self-betterment. Despite this, it was sometimes possible for students from the lower class to climb to a higher social position thanks to their academic results. This demonstrates how much Victorians valued education. Even though everyone knew what desirable knowledge for each social class was, there were many discussions on whether taught subjects were essential ones, actually preparing

students for their occupations or if there were other fields which should have been covered in curricula. There was also some persisting fear so that lower-class people would not have been over-educated (Burstyn, 2018, p. 52).

We will have a look at how did the Brontë sisters reflect these differences in gender and social class, what did they think of them, and most importantly how did they incorporate these issues in their novels. When we go through their books, we need to consider the features mentioned above, as well as their personal experience, which we will use to illuminate specific ideas and themes.

4. DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION DEPICTED IN THE BRONTË SISTERS' WORKS

Judging by the Brontë sisters' novels, gender differences in education greatly influenced their thinking. They describe formal schooling, preferred subjects to be studied, and they also frequently express general Victorian way of thinking about those distinctions, which was slightly different from their own. So far, we focused on the theoretical description of education in Victorian England and on how the situation influenced the lives of the Brontë sisters. Now we will go through their novels to identify their opinions about the form of education and how they used their experiences in the novels.

4.1. Formal schooling and organising of education within institutions

Charlotte probably paid the most attention to formal education of all the sisters. She described the boarding-school Lowood in *Jane Eyre*, which according to similarities was influenced by the Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge, which she attended. Those similarities depend on the architecture of the building, the teachers described in the novel, the disgusting food and even the students' illnesses.

We can observe her distaste for boarding school when Jane met Adele after some time the girl had been in boarding school, noticing she was pale and thin because of strict and poor conditions (Brontë C, 1897, Location No. 7781). Jane lagged in subjects because homework was too long and too difficult for her, but still she wanted to excel, because students could have continued to the higher class only by their own efforts. This is an important feature showing us how classes were organised because age was not the decisive aspect. Jane, after some time, was in the position of a pupil, as well as a teacher. It is a combination of Charlotte's two experiences with schooling at Cowan Bridge and Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head. We cannot say that all boarding schools in Victorian England had such poor conditions, but it is what mainly the Brontë sisters experienced, and what lessons they took from it.

Also noteworthy is the connection between education and religion in the Victorian era. For example, when Mr Brocklehurst met for the first time Jane Eyre, he judged her suitability for schooling by asking her if she prayed, read the Bible and whether she enjoyed it. There are also remarks about students attending church. Besides that, reading of the Bible was one of the subjects in Lowood school. Last but not least, when we read about

Jane Eyre running a school in Morton, Mr Rivers visited the school to provide regular catechism lessons. We can see that even in a small school, religious lessons could not have been omitted.

They studied music, sewing or drawing in school what occurs through all of Charlotte's novels. Except that, they were also interested in Geography, History, Grammar, French or Arithmetics. Proof that girls' arithmetics was not at the same level as boys' can be seen in the following passage retrieved from Shirley where Joe. Mr Scott speaks with Shirley about the intellect of women:

It war only a bit of a sum in practice, that our Harry would have settled i' two minutes. She couldn't do it. Mr Moore had to show her how. And when he did show her, she couldn't understand him. (Brontë C, 1905, Location No. 4760-4762)

What is exceptional about the subjects studied by women is that Mr Paul Emanuel in *Villette* taught Lucy more classical education (Greek and Latin). It possibly expresses Charlotte's opinion that in Continental education was generally more open for women than in England, but more about studying in Europe later in this chapter.

In the Victorian era, it was not unusual for women to run their own establishments. The Brontë sisters desired to run their own private school, but they were not successful. In Anne's and especially in Charlotte's novels as *Agnes Grey*, *Jane Eyre*, *Villette* and *The Professor*, we find traces of this unsatisfied dream. On several occasions a central character opens or wishes to open his or her school as for example in *Jane Eyre*, where she hoped to save enough resources to set up a school in some little house (Brontë C, 1897, Location No. 3378-3386).

We can observe such intentions in *The Professor* as well when reading about Henri pursuing the protagonist William to begin a school once they possessed enough money (Brontë C, 2012a, p. 191), for instance, in the following passage where William described their success:

Our school became one of the most popular in Brussels, and as by degrees we raised our terms and elevated our system of education, our choice of pupils grew more select, and at length included the children of the best families in Belgium (Brontë C, 2012a, p. 192).

Moreover, in *Agnes Grey*, the main character planned to open her establishment, "I will exert myself, and look out for a small house, commodiously situated in some populous but healthy district, where we will take a few young ladies to board" (Brontë A, 1847, Location No. 2204-2206).

Opening one's own educational establishment appears in the Brontës' novels frequently and perhaps this unfulfilled desire strongly influenced their thinking.

4.2. Goals in education

We previously mentioned extensive discussions about the skills pupils learned for their future occupations, some of which were useful and others were not. The scepticism about the usage of the studied subjects was also marked in Charlotte's *The Professor* when the main character, William Crimsworth, applied for the job of a clerk and his future employer remarked that subjects involved in formal schooling were not that useful: "What can you do? Do you know anything besides that useless trash of college learning—Greek, Latin, and so forth?" (Brontë C, 2012a, p. 13). So, while Latin or Greek did not seem useful to Victorians, they valued French and German. For instance, Mr Hunsden, in the same novel, expressed the opinion that once William could speak French, he had an exceptional opportunity to travel and work on the Continent and to earn money that way (Brontë C, 2012a, p. 38).

In Charlotte's novels, we frequently observe how Victorians perceived women's education and how they considered women incapable in comparison to men. This indicates that she was aware of it and very likely did not agree. For example, in *Shirley*, where we read about Caroline's uncle as it is remarked: "I rarely talk to my uncle, as you know, and never about such things. He thinks everything but sewing and cooking above women's comprehension, and out of their line" (Brontë C, 1905, Location No. 1334-1335).

We can observe variations in preferred subjects according to gender even in Anne's novel. The boys, John and Charles, in the Murray family, in *Agnes Grey* are supposed to study Latin. Still, their sisters, Rosalie and Matilda, should be occupied with accomplishments making them more attractive for their future husbands. There are also often remarks about boys being sent to school and being prepared by governess for formal schooling.

There are also often comments about pupils who generally know too little. This is related to the fact there were no nationally agreed curricula in those times, and no one agreed at which age pupils should know what, as Anne writes when Agnes meets her employer who speaks about her students: "You will find them not very far advanced in their attainments," said she, 'for I have had so little time to attend to their education myself, and we have thought them too young for a governess till now" (Brontë A, 1847, Location No. 216-218). Similarly, in her sister's novel *Villette* when Miss Ginevra Farnshawe speaks about her present and future studies, she expresses her ignorance of many things except music or language basics: "I am going to school. Oh, the number of foreign schools I have been at in my life! And yet I am quite an ignoramus. I know nothing—nothing in the world" (Brontë C, 2012b, pp. 75-76).

There are further instances that show that students were generally at different levels of education. Firstly, we read about Jane Eyre being able to play the piano and being quite advanced in drawing, while Mr Rochester claimed her skills are peculiar but not extraordinary (Brontë C, 1897, Location No. 2154). Secondly, in *The Professor*, Mr William travelled to Europe, knowing he can speak French, but when he faced a local person he was surprised by the person's level of English, which makes us wonder whether his French was that good. Thirdly, when, in *Villette*, Lucy Snowe met Ginevra for the first time, she asked Lucy if she was smart by asking her about her musical skills and the number of languages Lucy knew. As Lucy did not possess those skills, she declared herself not to be clever while Ginevra thought Lucy might be still a smart person (Brontë C, 2012b, p. 77). This shows that her opinion about what is an acceptable level of education differs from other character's points of view.

We already mentioned that the primary goal of education for women was to get a convenient husband. On the other hand, the reader learns the covert goal of education. In Anne's view, knowledge can be a means of earning money, and not just in a position of a teacher, but also using the subjects girls studied, as we see with Helen Graham, who sold her pictures to provide for herself and her son. Those two different angles may express Anne's awareness of shallow Victorian thinking about the goals of education for women, while she saw more potential in it.

Charlotte shared this opinion, as we see in her novels. In *Shirley*, Caroline's uncle remarks: "Well, that will do. Stick to the needle, learn shirt-making and gown-making and piecrust-making, and you'll be a clever woman some day" (Brontë C, 1905, Location No. 1400-1401). While Caroline believes there is more potential in women, and there should be more opportunities for them. At the same time, she feels her opinion contradicts the general Victorian point of view:

I believe single women should have more to do—better chances of interesting and profitable occupation than they possess now. And when I speak thus I have no impression that I displease God by my words; that I am either impious or impatient, irreligious or sacrilegious. (Brontë C, 1905, Location No. 5636-5638)

From the observations we made, we see that the Brontës were aware of gender inequality in education and they implied that perhaps in the future women could demonstrate the same capacity for study as men.

4.3. Teacher-Student relationship

Charlotte's view of the teacher-student relationship is different from her sisters': she connects it with romantic ideas. There are couples in novels which proves such a statement. For example, Caroline and Robert Moore, who taught her in *Shirley* and Shirley and Louis Moore, who was her tutor, as cited "I have to tell you that for four years you have been growing into your tutor's heart, and that you are rooted there now" (Brontë C, 1905, Location No. 8952-8955). There are other couples in Charlotte's novels as Lucy

Snowe and Paul Emanuel, who was a professor, in *Villette*; William, who was a teacher as well, and Henri, in *The Professor*.

On the other hand, teaching, as she represents it, seems to express some favour between characters not based on a romantic relationship. In *Jane Eyre*, Diana teaches Jane German, and Jane expresses her gratitude and teaches Mary drawing as proof of their mutual sympathy (Brontë C, 1897, Location No. 6043). Also, we see Mr Rivers explaining Hindustani to Jane. We later discover that he wanted to marry her, even though he did not love her, but he could see teaching and studying as a good opportunity to get closer to Jane.

Also, pupils frequently express their wish to please their teachers by their results. For example in *Villette*, where Graham helped Polly with recitation, Henri when asking William for more homework or Lucy asking Mr Paul for the very same thing as follows: "[W]hen I voluntarily doubled, trebled, quadrupled the tasks he set, to please him as I thought, his kindness became sternness; the light changed in his eyes from a beam to a spark" (Brontë C, 2012b, p. 519). Furthermore, Jane Eyre wanted to impress her teacher, Miss Temple, with her achievements. An exception to all this is Mr Moore and Caroline in *Shirley*, where he expressed his displeasure with Caroline, as she was sometimes apathetic in her reading (Brontë C, 1905, Location No. 949).

Thus, in the Brontës' novels, education and language learning is a matter of social prestige. The novels dramatize the relationship between teachers and students. When we go through the stories, we see that all the Brontës agreed that pupils frequently wanted to get better results because of their teachers, who were models for them. As we said before, the romantic features related to the relationships is something unique only in Charlotte's novels.

4.4. Governesses and their position in society

Anne agrees with Charlotte about the unfavourable position of governesses in the community. In Anne's novels her main characters experience this at first hand. For instance, in *Agnes Grey*, when the governess's students, not wanting to listen to her, ran outside in wet clothes. Her employer saw this and reprimanded her, suggesting she was incapable of taking care of his children: "I was surprised that he should nominate his children Master and Miss Bloomfield; and still more so, that he should speak so uncivilly

to me, their governess, and a perfect stranger to himself" (Brontë A, 1847, Location No. 310-314).

In Charlotte's novels, she expressed the problem through the opinions of other characters not belonging to the governess's employers. In *Jane Eyre*, the heroine's employer invites a couple of friends to his house, who seem more prejudiced towards governess than Mr Rochester himself: "My dearest, don't mention governesses; the word makes me nervous. I have suffered a martyrdom from their incompetency and caprice. I thank Heaven I have now done with them!" (Brontë C, 1897, Location No. 3015-3017). These examples also show that there were not yet any schools for governess telling what should be their skills or knowledge.

We see that both sisters had bad experiences as governesses, which was typical in this period. The reason why Anne depicted this problem from a slightly different point of view than Charlotte might not be apparent. Still, Anne was the one who was the most dedicated to staying in her position of governess while Charlotte did not seem to insist that much on not losing the job. Thus, Anne may have suffered more in this role and that could be the reason for depiction of employers; she made no effort to make them amiable in her novels.

4.5. Mothers' position in the educational system

We already mentioned the importance of mothers in the educational system. In *Wuthering Heights* Catherine grew up without her mother and during that period she was a wild and problematic child; while staying at Linton's, however, there was a mother and she became quite a lady:

The mistress visited her often in the interval, and commenced her plan of reform by trying to raise her self-respect with fine clothes and flattery, which she took readily; so that, instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there 'lighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person. (Brontë E, 2017, Location No. 737)

We can see that Emily was aware of the importance of home-schooling, even though she did not grow up with her mother but aunt. It is something she agrees on with Anne. The latter's character *Agnes Grey* is said to educate her children on her own, and Helena in her second novel, refuses a governess, stating she is capable of teaching her son while he is still a child. We may assume that this opinion was also shared by Charlotte, showing in her novels families where girls were taught by their mothers or by other women once the girls did not have their own ones.

4.6. English and Continental education

The Brontës' experience with European education is also an important aspect of their work. Emily, it would seem, incorporated the experience into her novel almost unconsciously. When Heathcliff returned from his travels, she expressed a hypothetical question, whether he was studying in Europe and returned as a gentleman (Brontë E, 2017, Location No. 1319). It suggests that Emily may have valued education on the Continent more highly than domestic education. Though it is also difficult to say whether this was just the opinion of her character.

Charlotte, however, paid this topic much attention. Firstly, we may observe how the difference between English and Continental education Victorians generally viewed. In *Villette*, Madame Beck claimed that English people seem more intelligent and moral, but she believed that woman must not be raised in ignorance. Mr Paul, in the same novel, argued that England education is too pedantic. This alludes to the comment in one of the previous chapters that European education may seem more complacent in the matter of girls' education. On the other hand, continental education seemed more valuable as well for Charlotte, as her novels reflect. There are frequent remarks about characters travelling to Europe to study in order to receive a better education.

In general, continental schools had more students, even international ones, than English schools. European schools were less formal and strict, which we see in the following quote from *Villette*, where the main character was surprised by the behaviour of Madame: "Till noon, she haunted the house in her wrapping-gown, shawl, and soundless slippers. How would the lady-chief of an English school approve this custom?" (Brontë C, 2012b, p. 101). This also suggests a European laxness of morals, something that the heroine struggles with during her time in the Belgian school.

This point also refers to different pedagogical methods. In both styles of education, languages are usually taught by reading or translating of classical literature, as mentioned in *Villette* or *Shirley*. However, we may observe methods which were untypical for English education. Mr Paul in *Villette* taught girls composition by requiring them to compose answers to his questions, and sometimes tried to start a discussion by asking provocative questions. This is drawn from Charlotte's personal experience of her French teacher, Constantin Héger. Mr Paul was said to be patient even though Lucy had trouble understanding: "[H]e saw the sharp pain inflicted, and felt the weighty humiliation imposed by my own sense of incapacity; and words can hardly do justice to his tenderness and helpfulness" (Brontë C, 2012b, p. 518). This shows a more individualistic attitude towards students. She included another feature which supports the same point in *The Professor*, where Henri wants William to spend time with her students to get to know them and their characters better and to be interested in them as well (Brontë C, 2012a, p. 193).

Charlotte's novels also offer evaluations of a teacher. In *Shirley*, Caroline claimed she would be a better student if her lessons with Hortense were as interesting as Robert's lessons. In *Villette*, we find the very same point: "Meantime, masters came and went, delivering short and lively lectures, rather than lessons, and the pupils made notes of their instructions, or did not make them" (Brontë C, 2012b, p. 106).

Secondly, there are differences between students from England and the Continent and their mutual dislikes, which connects to Charlotte and Emily's personal experience. Those problems were based mainly on religious differences.

Thirdly, we can easily see differences in the schools' atmospheres. English schools are frequently depicted as too strict, with pupils fearing teachers, and also those pupils being in poor health, as mentioned before. Charlotte described continental schools as places where pupils were healthy, but teachers were hardly respected, and directors of establishments want their students to find their teachers amiable. Characters often wonder about these differences, for example in *The Professor*: "I say: discipline there was none in these rough ranks, and yet this was considered one of the best-conducted schools in Brussels" (Brontë C, 2012a, p. 66).

Generally, it seems that while in England, teachers had automatic respect of their students, European teachers needed to earn it. We may conclude that Victorians admired

continental education in some respects. Study in Europe seems more pleasant for students and teachers obviously considered the best ways how to educate their students and how to present themselves.

4.7. The Brontës' perspective on education

Each of the sisters deals with the problematic from a slightly different point of view. Charlotte's novels describe formal schooling the most in comparison with her sister's books as we are already aware of. In Anne's texts, she reflects up pedagogical methods and the impact of her behaviour on students, which is unusual in the Brontës' novels. These are more obvious in *Agnes Grey*, where the main character considered the punishment of her students for their misbehaviour:

I would remind them of the sins of the past day, solemnly, but in perfect kindness, to avoid raising a spirit of opposition; penitential hymns should be said by the naughty, cheerful ones by the comparatively good; and every kind of instruction I would convey to them, as much as possible, by entertaining discourse—apparently with no other object than their present amusement in view. (Brontë A, 1847, Location No. 365-368)

Nevertheless, those features can be found even in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* as well, when we read about Helen trying to prevent her son from drinking alcohol:

I have obliged the poor child to swallow a little wine-and-water without the tartar-
emetic, by way of medicine; and this practice I intend to continue for some time to
come; not that I think it of any real service in a physical sense, but because I am
determined to enlist all the powers of association in my service; I wish this aversion
to be so deeply grounded in his nature that nothing in after-life may be able to
overcome it. (Brontë A, 1920, Location No. 5275-5277)

Anne was quite naturally fond of teaching, while for Charlotte, it was more a way to do a job on her own. It can be found partly in her pedagogical thinking as well as her conscious desire to watch children grow and improve, as Agnes claimed in the novel.

Anne's experience with education dramatically influences the novel, *Agnes Grey*. There are many congruences between her life and the story. Agnes experienced uneasy work as a governess. The first family she worked for was worse than the second one, and there are clear similarities between the number and character of Anne's and Agnes's pupils.

Emily's novel *Wuthering Heights* only peripherally mentions formal schooling, and she does not refer much to pedagogical methods either. What is noteworthy about her text is the connection between the level of education and personality of characters. Generally, we can argue that characters depicted negatively as Heathcliff or Hareton Earnshaw at the beginning of the story lack education. She highlights their inability to read and write, and it is sometimes the reason that characters are teased. Here we read about Cathy mocking Hareton:

Yes, I hear him trying to spell and read to himself, and pretty blunders he makes! I wish you would repeat Chevy Chase as you did yesterday: it was extremely funny. I heard you; and I heard you turning over the dictionary to seek out the hard words, and then cursing because you couldn't read their explanations! (Brontë E, 2017, Location No. 4412)

On the other hand, when we consider the change in Hareton's character, from a bad, stupid man to a cheerful and good one, this is accompanied by his efforts at study. After all, that he learns to read is part of his and Cathy's happy ending, as depicted in here:

The male speaker began to read: he was a young man, respectably dressed and seated at a table, having a book before him. His handsome features glowed with pleasure, and his eyes kept impatiently wandering from the page to a small white hand over his shoulder, which recalled him by a smart slap on the cheek, whenever its owner detected such signs of inattention. (Brontë E, 2017, Location No. 4507)

This proves that education was not considered just a means of getting a job, or a determining feature of social class. For Victorians there was also a connection between the level of education and an individual's character; at the same time, it was a means of ensuring a promising future for them. We see another aspect of the significance of education in the fact that Heathcliff, illiterate himself, hires a tutor for his son Linton. Even though there is no mention of the subjects he studies, providing education for Linton is in the novel considered proof that Heathcliff meant to treat his son well, at least, in the eyes of society (Brontë E, 2017, Location No. 3070).

What is extraordinary in comparison with the situation in Victorian England is that in the novel male characters are frequently illiterate. In contrast, female characters seem to have some education or Emily does not mention it at all. As we already remarked, knowledge was at the beginning considered an especially male field, and so we may wonder how aware Emily was of this difference between gender. We can assume she was not satisfied with it.

Except for a few references to Hindley going to college, or hiring a tutor, the novel tells us little about the form of Victorian Education. This is probably due to the fact that Emily, of her three sisters, spent the most time at home, because she suffered much at school. So, even though education was significant in her view, formal-schooling was not that closely connected with her life and way of thinking.

4.8. Social class differences

When we look at the class differences described in the Brontë sisters' novels, we see they generally focus less on these variations than when we spoke about gender distinctions. This is perhaps because those gender differences influenced every step on their way through their education. Still, they belonged to one social class and thus did not confront how other classes were educated.

In *Wuthering Heights*, there are only small remarks about class differences in education. Firstly, we may feel that sometimes the only difference standing in the way of Heathcliff and Catherine is their class background and level of knowledge connected with it. Secondly, Heathcliff is almost illiterate and is according to hierarchy lower than Edgar Linton, who is educated. This exemplifies the connection between social class and

education, seeing that more affluent people could afford a better education. Knowledge was an index of wealth.

In *Villette*, there is a remark by Ginevra Farnshawe that her parents did not have many resources. At the same time, her uncle is quite affluent, paying for her education and her siblings' as we see here: "[B]ut my uncle and godpapa De Bassompierre, who lives in France, is the only one that helps us: he educates us girls. I have five sisters and three brothers" (Brontë C, 2012b, pp. 77-78). Even though she did not seem to possess any higher skills, she is accepted by society, which suggests that it was maybe more alert to what education could people afford than what they knew.

In *The Professor*, Henri did not have much money, and she was considered dull by other students, at least until the professor recognised her potential and helped her with studying. It again exemplifies the connection between money and education, highlighting the fact that school was not compulsory or even possible for some student yet.

From a few observations of the role of social class in education, in comparison with gender, we may assume that even though social standing was important for Victorians, those differences were not that important for the Brontë sisters or they did not see it as a main problem of the society.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to identify features of education in Victorian England and to find connections between these and the lives of the Brontë sisters. We examined their novels, discussing education from the Brontës' point of view. Specifically, we focused on goals in education, relationships between teachers and students, access to education, level of education, how education was viewed by society in this period and how it all differed according to gender and social class.

Even though the novels of the Brontë sisters depict almost identical features of Victorian education, they differed in their representations of these. Charlotte included romantic relationships in the academic field. Anne demonstrated interest in pedagogical careers and Emily highlighted how much the Victorians valued education. The picture of education according to the Brontës' novels accurately reflects the Victorian times, even as there are discrepancies or differences between their treatment of the subject. Nevertheless, we easily justify those once we look at their personal experiences, which shows us where those distinctions between their novels and general information came from.

Last but not least, when we study the materials, we realise how important it is to consider the individuality of students and how crucial this attitude is for teachers. European education led the way in this, before England and English education learnt it mostly after the death of the Brontë sisters. Still, we need to keep in mind that teachers are often models for their students and their behaviour influences not just their determination to study, but also the way they think about everything that surrounds them. The Brontës confirm this idea in their novels. Also, the thesis showed how we might approach literature as study material for a specific period. We always need to compare historical facts as well as personal experience of authors, which can lead to misunderstandings. On the other hand, literature is a unique source which sometimes reflects more than what an author initially wanted.

In conclusion, the Brontë sisters were highly aware of the situation in Victorian England. They dealt more with gender differences than the social class differences. When we read their novels, we may feel that they wanted to share their dissatisfaction with the situation and that they desired change. As we already know, Victorian England was full of

educational changes, but those the Brontë sisters were awaiting came when they were no longer alive.

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SUMMARY IN CZECH

Sestry Brontëovy žily ve Viktoriánské éře, což byla doba mnoha změn ve vzdělávání. Tato práce popisuje některé z těchto změn a také jak vzdělávání v této době ovlivnilo životy zmíněných sester. Práce ověřuje a porovnává znaky, zabývající se vzděláním z dob Viktoriánské Anglie a znaky, které jsou obsažené v dílech sester Brontëových. Cílem je najít podobnosti a rozdíly mezi názory Charlotty, Emily a Anne a dále mezi jejich romány a skutečnou situací ve Viktoriánské Anglii. Celá práce se kromě literárních aspektů zabývá i pedagogickými faktory. Tento přístup nám umožňuje vidět pokrok, kterého vzdělání od té doby dosáhlo, co byly důležité aspekty, které vedly k pozitivním změnám a také zda existuje podobnost mezi znaky, které jsou ve vzdělávání důležité dnes a které byly tehdy. Práce také umožňuje větší pochopení toho, jaký byl přístup a názor sester Brontëových ke vzdělávání.