

Engaging through Seeing: A Reading of Bewick and Brontë's Imaginative Illustrations

Jaelyn Glennemeier is a senior majoring in English and History. She is from Rose Hill, Kansas. This article was supervised by Dr. Ann Rowland.

Abstract:

The opening scene of Charlotte Brontë's best-known novel, *Jane Eyre*, reveals a young Jane pouring over the pages of Thomas Bewick's *History of British Birds*. Her eyes are drawn to the mysterious vignettes of the forlorn arctic and the lone ship on the rough sea. The images take over and inspire her imagination, but her deep connection to these images suggests something far more complex than a moment of childhood daydreaming. More than a simple literary allusion, the scene calls for a closer look into the relationship between imagination and illustration. This paper examines how both Bewick and Brontë understood the useful application of imagination in their roles as artists and as writers. It recognizes the nineteenth-century visual reading experience and argues that these authors intentionally used illustrations as integral parts of their texts. It also argues that young Jane's ability to imaginatively partake in reading, and in life, make her both Bewick and Brontë's ideal reader.

Introduction

"Each picture told a story; mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings, yet ever profoundly interesting..."
(Brontë, 10)

These lines appear in the opening scene of Charlotte Brontë's best-known fiction, *Jane Eyre*. Here, the reader encounters a young Jane hiding from her malicious cousins while finding refuge in the pages of a book, or more specifically, its images. The captivating book, Thomas Bewick's real-life work *The History of British Birds*, is a 1798 natural history famous for its extensive ornithological contribution and, more importantly, the vividness of Bewick's engravings. Jane's young mind lingers on the images and their dark, adventurous effect on her imagination.

Though Bewick was primarily known for his incredibly detailed specimen engravings, Jane does not compliment him on his ability to accurately illustrate the characteristics of the birds he describes. Her attention falls not on the technical skills required to create the images, but rather on the imaginative work of illustrations and how they transform reading into a visual experience. Jane's ability to engage and recognize the visual experience draws attention to Brontë's and Bewick's abilities as authors to metaphorically and literally illustrate the imagination.

Many Brontë scholars have written on Brontë's fascination with Bewick. Her love for his work is shown in both Brontë's reference to *British Birds* and in various biographies about her. Some scholars described Bewick's appearance in *Jane Eyre* as nothing more than a compliment to the "father of wood engraving" and one of Britain's best-

known naturalists. Others argue that the allusion's significance comes from the revelations it makes about Jane herself. They assess Jane's attraction to the drearier vignettes as an early indication of her dark and haunted character. However, the most common argument made in the analysis of this brief scene, an argument this paper disputes, is that Jane's attention to the images in Bewick's work suggests an indifference to the text. According to this claim, Jane's self-formed imaginings of the "broken boat stranded on a desolate coast," and the "sea of billow and spray" turn *The History of British Birds* into nothing more than a blank canvas for her excessive daydreaming. Therefore, according to recent scholarship by Leah Price in her work *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain*, the scene becomes one not of textual engagement, but one of *non-reading*.

Price defines non-reading in several ways. Her book examines scenes in various novels, including *Jane Eyre*, to explore a cultural era in which books "[m]ade to be seen through...find themselves seen," implying that she sees a difference between looking at a book and reading it. She draws a strict distinction between the text and the materiality of the book and examines the ways characters in Victorian novels use books other than simply for "the mental act of reading" (Price, 2). Her definition of reading is limited to "doing something with the words" of a book, and she establishes the act of "reducing books to a front for daydreaming" as one of non-reading (Price, 3). Though her analysis does not provide commentary on Jane's interaction with Bewick, she establishes a framework for understanding acts of reading and ways in which they have been defined. Those definitions are often absent of discussion of visual

aids, in spite of the huge growth in illustrated works during the nineteenth-century.

This materiality versus content analysis proves very useful in the study of book history, yet Price leaves out this very important element of books, complicating her clear distinction. She does not determine whether book illustrations can be categorized as either purely visual or as part of books' reading content. This begs the question: is the act of looking at an illustration an act of reading or non-reading? According to scholars such as Debra Gettelman, the images Jane examines are strictly material, and serve no purpose other than to cater to her imaginative whimsy. Jane therefore "reduces" the book to a front for daydreaming, aligning with Price's definition of non-reading. Gettelman claims, "The heroine is rarely seen actually reading in the sense of paying attention to the book's content" (565). In this analysis, to use Price's model, it appears as though Jane merely sees the book rather than sees through it. However, what Brontë scholars have yet to consider is that Jane's daydreaming is actually a crucial part to her reading experience, specifically her connection to Bewick's words. Scholars have also paid little attention to Bewick's role as an author and his intentional placement of images that are not specimen drawings. Each edition of *History of Birds* contains the images that Jane describes in *Jane Eyre*'s opening scene, making those images integral to the text and its contents.

In the pages of *History of British Birds*, Bewick's reputation as a naturalist and an artist come together in a rather unconventional way. His engraving of a ship on a stormy sea is designed to appear directly before a page containing the classifications of the elusive little stint, one of his various British birds.

Though these two images may seem unrelated, Bewick's mysterious vignettes cannot be separated from his ornithological study. In her book, *Nature's Engraver*, Jenifer Uglow claims Bewick's woodcuts "were never meant to hang on walls. They were designed to appear in books and belonged with the letterpress that ran alongside them" (312). This type of analysis—one that insists images are to be read—complicates Price's strict division between the visual, material elements of books and their content.

This paper argues that not only does Jane read Bewick's *History of British Birds* by paying attention to its images, but also that her imaginative response is one that was crafted by Bewick and fully understood by Brontë. Both authors recognized the artist's craft as a tool for translating and expressing imagination. They firmly believed that accessing and applying that imagination, particularly through illustrative means, is essential in creating and embellishing literature and in enriching real life. These ideas intersect in *Jane Eyre's* opening scene. Through her fascination with the images, Jane demonstrates full engagement as a reader and as an imaginative child.

Rather than study Jane's visual reading experience, scholars who interpret Jane's daydreaming as an act of non-reading often analyze one of the more evident elements of the scene: Jane's imagination. In her article "Making Out Jane Eyre," Gettelman uses the phrase "to make out," to describe Jane's fantasies as "straining to decipher something not fully...comprehensible" (558). This matches Jane's confession of her own childlike "underdeveloped understanding" and identifies the images in the text as sources for her daydreams. Scholar Jennifer Gribble argues that Charlotte Brontë uses *Jane Eyre* to "examine

the workings of the creative imagination" as well as its possible dangers (Gribble, 280).

Gettelman claims that Victorian novelists "were keenly aware that both author and reader contribute imaginatively to a book" (559). These scholars also bring attention to the Victorian social anxieties concerning "overactive" imaginations, particularly in women, and in turn Charlotte Brontë's awareness of such anxieties. However, in reducing Jane's interaction with Bewick to one of non-reading, many scholars risk validating the same nineteenth-century anxieties they try to work against by assuming that a Victorian girl's interaction with an image can only illicit whimsical daydreams rather than incite a meaningful connection to the text.

The relationship Jane forges between images and imagination throughout the novel gives evidence to Brontë's narrative construction of imagination as something applicable, deliberate, and inextricably linked to illustration. Though they both make strong cases for the contribution of author and reader to the discussion of imagination, neither Gettelman nor Gribble notices Brontë's deliberate use of illustrations as Jane's source for imaginative engagement. Nor do they recognize Bewick's role as an author: actively engaging with his readers' imaginations by deliberately crafting illustrations that embellish his text. To fully grasp Bewick and Brontë's understandings of imagination, it is important to evaluate the contexts in which they argued on behalf of imagination and its benefits.

In order to successfully analyze these intersecting ideas of illustration and imagination, this paper divides into two chapters. The first chapter will provide evidence for Bewick's stance on the discourse of imagination through his philosophy on the education

of children. It examines Bewick's memoirs, in which he expresses very strong beliefs in the significance of allowing children to engage in imaginative ideas and experiences. The chapter then demonstrates how his illustrations in *The History of British Birds* intentionally bridge the gap between the material and textual, or in this case, the literal and the metaphorical. More importantly, it will lay the foundations for understanding illustration as Bewick and Brontë did: as a catalyst for inspiring, expressing, and translating the imagination. The second chapter re-assesses Brontë's familiarity with Bewick as not only an aspiring artist's admiration for a master, but as a future writer molding her narrative style and developing ideas about illustration and visual reading. It also looks at this developing style through Brontë's correspondence with various critics, asserting her strongly held convictions about the necessity for imaginative and poetic writing and the ability of women to engage with that writing. Finally, this paper will argue that *Jane Eyre*, Brontë's most influential and poetic fiction, creates a visual reading experience similar to Bewick's. Brontë does this through Jane's character, whose artistic abilities demonstrate the imaginative and applicable power of illustration. It is through her imaginative prose that Brontë asks her readers not only to read her novel, but to *see* it.

Chapter One

"Having all my life, at home, at school & during my apprenticeship lived under perpetual restraints—when I thus felt myself at liberty, I became as I suppose, like a bird which had escaped from its Cage." (Bewick, *A Memoir*, 60)

In the late 1790s, Thomas Bewick used his artistic skill to solidify his place on the bookcase of nearly every household in Britain. His famous natural histories, *History of Quadrupeds* and *History of British Birds*, established his reputation as an "observant and accurate naturalist" as well as "an artist of skill, originality and humour" (Uglow, 313). Praised for its accuracy to nature, his work also went on to inspire wood engravers and artists through the entire British "age of illustration" in the latter half of the nineteenth-century. However, more telling of Bewick's success are the numerous references to his work as integral parts of his readers' childhoods.

Many who read Bewick in their youth described dedicating hours to studying his various woodcuts and learning the names of his animals. Because of this, scholars acknowledge Bewick's ability to "entirely take over a child's imaginative vision" (Uglow, 307). Some of these children included those who would go on to become the nineteenth-century's most prominent writers such as Alfred Tennyson, Beatrix Potter, and of course, Charlotte Brontë. Bewick's very presence in *Jane Eyre* suggests that his influence went far beyond the art of drawing and engraving. It also reflects a significant impact in the world of literature and on the eighteenth-century understandings of imagination and its functions.

In explaining his ideas on education, Bewick taps into a discussion of fantasy versus reason, making a strong case for the importance of encouraging children's imagination in laying foundations for educational development. This chapter references *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick*, a collection of letters he wrote to his daughter, to explore not only his own experiences as a child engaging in

art and imagination, but also to uncover his thoughts on using imagination and illustration to engage with reality. These ideas come to life in Bewick's *History of British Birds*, in which his engravings reveal a model that allows readers' imaginations to be accessed through illustration. In arguing how the *History of British Birds* expresses Bewick's ideas on imagination and its useful applications, this paper can then analyze Jane's reading of Bewick beyond the context of whimsical daydreaming.

To understand Bewick's own ideas on children's education, it is important to understand the eighteenth-century discourse of his contemporaries. Debates over the upbringing of children became crucial as intellectual philosophers such as Locke and Rousseau convinced middle-class society of the significant role children's education played in creating capable and moral participants in the world (Summerfield, 135-136). In a culture previously informed by the Enlightenment, the urge to uphold the pillars of realism and rationalism notably slowed the acceptance of imagination in education.

By the end of the century, literature for children featured strong foundations in science while also expressing moral and social sentiments through metaphor and poetry (Richardson, xvi). Such drastic shifts in ideas concerning children and education elicited responses from prominent Romantic poets and authors who sought to portray their own down-to-earth observations of the common man by inciting imaginative responses from readers (Richardson, 3). Yet even in this burgeoning age of fashioning reason and fantasy as complementary ideas in the construction of literature and education, there remained

voices that spoke out against the dangers of imagination in the minds of children.

Maria Edgeworth, one of the leading voices in the discussion of children's education at the time Bewick was writing, openly favored the precedence of passing down *useful* information to youth. To her, imagination and reason do not mix and certainly do not belong in the education of a child. For example, her work *Practical Education* claims telling children that the sun "goes to bed" at night as an explanation for sunsets could have potentially harmful repercussions on their education (Summerfield, 136). She identifies the imagination as something active and dangerous in young boys, particularly when incited by fictitious, Crusoe-like tales of voyages and travel. In her own words, "No child can ever read an account of a shipwreck, or even a storm, without pleasure" (Summerfield, 136). She believed that stories such as *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe* would distract young minds and amuse their imaginations in ways that hinder their education and growth. However, there is a gendered divide regarding how those attempting to regulate education perceived imagination and its effects. Edgeworth assures her readers that adventurous stories do not pose a threat to young girls who "must very soon perceive the impossibility of their rambling about the world in a quest of adventures" (Summerfield, 136).

Such perceptions of young women's ability to use imagination—and the consequences if they did—were riddled throughout Victorian discourses. Gettelman poignantly notes that writers of conduct books tended to describe women's minds as "empty of content" (561). The separation of sex creates a distinc-

tion between discussions over the education of boys and of girls. Edgeworth recognizes the limited opportunity to young girls, but insists they are not *able* to engage their imaginations as a result. This type of distinction is one with which Bewick did not primarily concern himself. However, it was an obstacle that Charlotte Brontë navigated as a writer and even as young woman attempting to use her imagination in her creative pursuits. In a way, Edgeworth's claim foreshadows the reviews of some of Brontë's harshest critics that will be further investigated in the next chapter. Nevertheless, Edgeworth's philosophy on education provides an example of how Bewick's contemporaries often deemed imagination and daydreaming as dangerous. It also creates a sense of how imaginative discourse was distinctly gendered, an idea Brontë would encounter in her career as an author. Nevertheless, the Romantic writers who chose to complement reason with poetry metaphor subvert Edgeworth's argument. It is with them that Bewick aligns his understanding of reason and fantasy as integral and complementary parts of children's lives.

The purpose of analyzing Bewick's educational philosophy is not to directly compare him to Maria Edgeworth. Properly understanding his perspective and testimonies on imaginative work allows for a more comprehensive examination of his illustrations. In his collection of memoirs, Bewick critiques British society's most pressing problems such as poverty and prostitution, and even touches on subjects such as war and tyranny in the midst of the American Revolution. Yet perhaps his most passionate argument is that of providing a "rational & virtuous education" to all children (*A Memoir*, 148).

Restless in his childhood, Bewick describes his early life as one of "warfare" (*A Memoir*, 19). His own imagination manifested itself into childhood play, often inspired by the dangerous stories of Crusoe, and into a keen interest in nature and drawing. His behavior led to consistent beatings both at school and home, where his father berated Bewick's determination for such "idle pursuits" (*A Memoir*, 4-5). Bewick's interest in nature played a major role in inspiring his natural histories, as did his disappointment in reading his classroom copy of *A Description of over Three Hundred Animals* in which the poorly rendered illustrations did little to ignite his imagination or interest in the natural world (*A Memoir*, 105). In his professional career, Bewick spent his early years illustrating children's books such as *Aesop's Fables* and some of the works of Oliver Goldsmith; this provided him with experience in creating images to actively engage young readers (Uglow, 317). While these biographical details provide evidence for Bewick's interest in "administering to the pleasures & amusement of youth," it is his memoirs that clearly illustrate his philosophy of imagination.

Bewick's memoirs state his belief that the best way to eradicate the evils of society and secure a better future was to ensure that "rational and virtuous education" shape the reasoning powers of children (*A Memoir*, 148). Yet his ideas on what this rational education looks like differ greatly from the practical teachings of Edgeworth. He writes that in teaching children, instructors should indulge their amusements and "enliven their spirits" (Bewick, 165). For boys, he argues that guardians send them to school too early where they are "harassed with education

before their minds are fit for it" (*A Memoir*, 169). He also recommends they be allowed to indulge in their own amusements (*A Memoir*, 165). Where Edgeworth emphasizes a danger in allowing children's pleasure to factor into their education, Bewick insists on its necessity in developing reasoning minds. Though his memoirs emphasize enlightenment and knowledge, scholars recognize that "his language belonged to the Romantic age" (Uglow, 310). Bewick's ideas of utilizing imagination to engage children resonate with the Romantic responses to the changes in British society in the late eighteenth-century, as both focused on reconciliation between fantasy and reason.

According to Bewick, children's pleasure should come from the exploration of nature, specifically in the countryside. This philosophy resembles that of Romantic writers, to whom nature was an ever-present muse. In his preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth explains that his own work describes incidents from common life, told with a language accessible to all men over whom he wishes to throw, "a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect" (Uglow, 310). Wordsworth was also a great admirer of Bewick, praising his work in a poem titled "The Two Thieves"; he writes, "Oh now that the genius of Bewick were mine" (Uglow, 311). Bewick mentions admiring poets such Thomson and Burns in his youth for their abilities to use art or poetry to ornament everyday life. His memoirs encourage communities to discover the talents of their youth and promote their interest in art, poetry, and music. Bewick believes that it is the "Naturalists & Artists [who] are be-

fitted to enlighten, to charm & to embellish civilized society" and that everything they produce is created intentionally rather than by chance (*A Memoir*, 204). Therefore, the results of their labors are not manifestations of their whimsy or overactive imaginations, but are intentionally crafted. Bewick's memoirs clearly articulate his thoughts on the roles of artists in literature and life. However, his contemporaries would have only been exposed to his ideas through his work where he fully applied his imaginative talents as an author and an artist. Bewick intentionally crafted a novel designed to take over the imaginations of children and enlighten society. To prove this intent, and more importantly how it actively engages with reason and fantasy, it is necessary to look at Bewick's images in the manner in which they are best examined: through reading.

A History of British Birds became one of Bewick's signature works in part for its usefulness in identifying various species of birds, and also for its vivid images. The specific volume Jane reads in *Jane Eyre* is the second installment of Bewick's *Birds*, which includes his ornithological survey of water specimens. Bewick uses the introduction of this volume to explain his artistic intent while also discussing his ideas on the role of imagination in developing knowledge and supplementing reading. He expresses the need for society to direct its attention to "sowing of the seeds of knowledge in the minds of youth" (Bewick, iv). Using rhetoric similar to his memoirs, he claims that those who undertake the task of educating the young "are often assisted by the fertile genius of the artist, who supplies their works with such embellishments as serve to relieve the lengthened

sameness of the way” (Bewick, iv). Through art, Bewick insists that a child’s imagination can be accessed to encourage rational learning. However, these embellishments often come in the form of illustration, threatening to create a reading such as the one Gettelman sees in Jane, “[rotating] between the print, the illustration, and the narratives she invents” (Gettelman, 567). Though Leah Price does not categorize illustrations in her discussion of reading, Gettelman suggests that the “embellishments” Bewick describes are disruptive to the text, eliciting daydreams and therefore turning a child’s engagement with them into an exercise of non-reading.

Bewick saw illustrations not as disruptions, but as relief to a text’s “sameness” that could enhance reader comprehension. He believes—along with other Romantics of his time—that through the embellishments of the artist “a flow is given to the imagination, which banishes early prejudices and expands the ideas; and an endless fund of the most rational entertainment is spread out, which captivates to attention and exults the mind” (Bewick, iv). He goes on to say, “For the attainment of this science, in any of its various departments, the foundation may be laid, insensibly, in youth, whereon this goodly superstructure of knowledge can easily be raised at a more advanced period” (Bewick, V). Bewick engages his readers’ imaginations, not for the sole purpose of entertainment, but as a “scientific” tool for expanding their minds. In his understanding of the imaginative power pictures possess, Bewick uses illustrations that are designed to both capture readers’ attention and also to encourage them to use their imaginations to read beyond the page in front of them.

Bewick’s naturalist engravings in *History of Birds* can be divided into two categories: the images of the species he describes and the vignettes that have very little to do with the survey of animals. The first type of engraving would most likely pass Edgeworth’s test of practicality. They supplement the volumes’ function as field guides, which readers can then use to identify specimens out in the wild. These particular engravings are crafted with incredible detail and realism, helping establish Bewick’s reputation as the father of modern wood engraving. In *Water Birds*, the vivid renderings of the Little Stint and the Turnstone match their descriptions down to the last feather, allowing readers to see how these birds might look in nature. These have a clear educational purpose and engage children’s minds by encouraging readers to picture the specimens as they actually exist. This is a very limited example of how Bewick believed education could unlock childlike fancy. The real imaginative work, which sets Bewick apart from other naturalists, appears in his vignettes.

Bewick’s miniature scenes may seem out of place to a reader expecting to use *Water Birds* for ornithological study. The distant ships on the billowing sea and the lonely country fisherman, while engaging, have very little to do with educating the British public about birds. And yet they too remain integral to Bewick’s design. Uglow observes, “Bewick left his vignettes open, as if leaving us free to make our own reading and go our own way” (xv). The lack of borders or limits to his illustrations allows readers, especially children, to fill in the blanks with their own fantasies.

The images in *Water Birds* also capture the essence of the Romantic poets in various ways. The whimsical, rustic images of country folk and rural life, while partially created to amuse Bewick's fondness of the country, parallel the work of Wordsworth in detailing the "every day" and common life of man. Meanwhile, the mysterious and somewhat dreary images of storms and ships lost at sea resonate with works such as Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." These vignettes, the ones that capture young Jane's imagination, encapsulate the power of the natural world alluded to by Romantic poets. These are the images with which Bewick admits readers must exert their most vivid and creative imaginings. In defending the role of these vignettes, Bewick uses his introduction to acknowledge that nature has a barrier "beyond which the prying eye of man must not look, and there his imagination only must take the view, to supply the place of reality" (Bewick, xiv-xv). His illustrations mimic the very shipwrecks and storms that Edgeworth warns never fail to inspire the imaginations of young boys. They are dangerous, foreboding, and adventurous. They are the unassuming yet commanding tools by which Bewick hopes to access the imaginations of his readers and expand the boundaries of reason in children. As Uglow remarks, "[t]hey ask us to look deep, as children stare at illustrations when they first start to read, drawn into the pictured world" (xv). Bewick, aware of the importance of engaging imagination, intentionally designed these vignettes to be a part of the reading experience.

The illustrations in *Water Birds*, though not always directly relevant to the text, are integral to the book's creation and content.

While they seem to be embellishments to the words on the page, they are no less important to creating an educational and imaginative text. Every rendering is intentionally placed with its own purpose in aiding the act of reading. Bewick's artistic renderings prove how the literal and metaphorical can be complementary forces. They also act as physical manifestations of his philosophical idea of imagination being wielded for scientific knowledge. By inspiring imaginative responses, the vignettes strengthen readers' connection to the illustrated and scientific materials. Studying Bewick's own philosophy on the role of imagination in children's education and the way it is reflected in his work demands an understanding of engagement with his images as acts of reading. It also begins to fill a gap in the scholarship surrounding nineteenth-century literary allusions to Bewick's work. Children did not stumble upon Bewick's illustrations in his natural histories. Rather, Jane Eyre looked at his vignettes and allowed her imagination to wonder, instilling the small illustrations with as much reasoning and imaginative power as Bewick intended. Jane's engagement with Bewick according to his own artistic design is clear, but the question remains: even when the images prompt her imagination to look beyond the pages in front of her is she still, in fact, reading?

Chapter Two

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you." (Brontë, 293)

As ten-year-old Jane balances Bewick's *History of British Birds* on her knee in her secret hideaway, her eyes linger on the "two ships becalmed on a torpid sea" and the scene of "the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast" (Brontë, 10). Her attraction to these images does not escape scholars who have written on Jane and her active imagination. However, their analysis focuses on the manifestations of her imagination, stripping power away from the images or incidents that inspire it. They also insinuate that Jane allows her imagination to interfere with her comprehension of the text rather than enhance it. The lack of attention paid to Bewick's intent as an artist and educator permits Brontë scholars to claim that Jane's interaction with *Water Birds* is one of *non-reading*. If adhering strictly to Price's division of materiality and text, then Jane's claim, "the letterpress thereof I cared little for," implies that she does not engage with the text. However, Bewick's model of understanding images as aids to the process of reading insists that Jane is reading by not only seeing Bewick's images, but also by allowing those images to incite her imagination. Her reading in this opening scene requires closer analysis previously neglected by scholars who describe Jane's attraction to the images as imaginative whimsy.

The vignettes Jane describes are integral to the book's content as are the imaginative visions they inspire. However, it is an injustice to Jane as a reader to see her only as an over-imaginative child skimming over the words on the page. She does in fact pay attention to the letterpress, even quoting particular lines that grab her attention. The pages she reads are in the introduction to Bewick's *Water Birds* that reveal the educational and imag-

inative intentions of his work. Jane quotes Bewick when describing her attention to "the vast sweep of the Arctic zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space" (Brontë, 10). Her eyes also rest on a four-line poem included by Bewick and written by James Thomson. The lines, "Where the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls/ Boils round the naked, melancholy isles/ Of farthest Thule" effectively create a poetic image of the wintry, Northern landscapes as a substitute for Bewick's own descriptions (Brontë, 10). She is drawn to the language and the engravings, as they both illustrate the realm Bewick claims is beyond man's reach and comprehension. Jane recognizes the connection between Bewick's text and his illustrations by stating, "The words in these introductory pages connected themselves with the succeeding vignettes, and gave significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray" (Brontë, 10). She does not alternate between looking at the images and reading Bewick's words. Rather, she partakes in a continuous process of reading, one in which the illustrations and the text feed into one another to create a more effective and imaginative visual reading experience. She also instills Bewick's images with the same imaginative power as the stories of adventure and love that the housemaid Bessie reads to the children of Gateshead. Jane's ability to recognize the effective power of illustration to incite imagination emulates Bewick's intentions for his readers.

It is important to acknowledge that this opening scene reveals Brontë's awareness of Bewick's illustrative philosophy. Jane lets her imagination take her beyond Bewick's pages. She recalls, "Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own: shadowy, like all

the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive" (Brontë, 10). Though this suggests a detachment from the text, it closely follows Bewick's intention for his work. Jane does connect to the text through imagination and even articulates that connection as a means of better understanding Bewick's work. Scholars who do not recognize Jane's imagination as an integral part of her visual reading experience risk falling into a trap in which framing the analysis within Victorian ideology limits the possibility of studying Jane's imagination outside the realm of whimsical daydreaming. The question as to whether or not Jane reads Bewick has important implications for how scholars will continue to analyze nineteenth-century literature. It affects how scholars understand the imagination as a connection to the real and the rational, and how imagination, even in twentieth and twenty-first century discourse, is gendered when analyzing female characters or authors. It also alters how we understand the process of reading.

After centuries of studying non-illustrated texts, scholars have effectively become blind to the crucial role illustration played in the nineteenth-century reading experience. Illustrated books became essential to British society both educationally and culturally. *Jane Eyre* reads one of those books, and it informs her own understanding of the connection between imagination and illustration. In acknowledging the significant place of illustration in the study of nineteenth-century texts, it is necessary to analyze how Brontë understood her project as a novelist and unpack the visual reading experience she hoped to provoke in her readers.

Bewick's model of illustration is not merely a lens through which to read the opening scene in *Jane Eyre*, but also a model utilized by Charlotte Brontë as an artist and a writer. Brontë, in developing her narrative style and artistic abilities, faced obstacles that Bewick had no need to consider. She had to understand her imagination and illustrative nature within the context of her sex. Having effectively demonstrated Bewick's use of fanciful images as complementary to the written word, this chapter unpacks Brontë's own ideas on the connection between fantasy and reason, paying particular attention to Jane's use of imagination as proof that the two can coexist in a young woman's life. More importantly, it examines how those ideas and convictions manifest in *Jane Eyre*. The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how a text, one that Brontë did not illustrate, can actively be about the power of illustration.

Most households in Victorian Britain would have included Bewick in their collection, but Charlotte Brontë had a special interest in his work that makes her reference to *Water Birds* all the more significant. At age twelve, Brontë read the *History of British Birds* for the first time and like many children before her, she found herself drawn to Bewick's engravings (Uglow, 317). Embodied with aspirations to become an artist, she studied every detail of the images. All of the Brontë children took pleasure in examining and copying Bewick's pictures, but Charlotte formed a special connection to them, often copying the more eerie vignettes such as the rocky shores and tumultuous storms. Elizabeth Gaskell describes Brontë's interest in drawing as "an instinctive desire to express [her] powerful imaginations in visible forms"

(Gaskell, 78). Much like the young and restless Bewick, young Brontë's attentions turned toward nature and sketching, often using the latter to capture the essence of the former. The images she copied down in her youth made a lasting impact, as evidenced by a poem Charlotte wrote in Bewick's honor after his death:

There rises some lone rock all wet
with surge
And dashing billows glimmering in
the light

Of a wan moon, whose silent rays emerge

From clouds that veil their lustre,
cold and bright (Uglow, 318)

This short poem describes the same images that Jane admires in her reading of *Water Birds*. However, Brontë's words do not simply describe one of Bewick's images. Even in her earliest stages as a writer, she recognized the illustrative power of words. In these lines, she uses poetic language to illustrate the imaginative visions Bewick's vignettes evoked in her as a child. Such an illustrative style of writing calls for readers to envision what she describes. It is this style that would develop and reach its critical peak in *Jane Eyre*. However, Brontë's ability to use her imagination developed at a much younger age with an education at the Brontë parsonage in Haworth.

Charlotte's upbringing grounded her in modesty and common sense through a practice of education that echoed the ideas of Bewick and the Romantic poets. While being deterred from frivolousness, the Brontë children

were also encouraged to indulge in their pleasures and exercise their wildly imaginative minds. Gaskell argues their secluded childhood in Haworth made them "thoughtful and dreamy" in a way that turned ordinary occurrences into fantastical and almost supernatural incidents (Gaskell, 58). The children often walked hand-in-hand through the moors, inventing their own adventures. Patrick Brontë made a point of discovering each of his children's talents and giving them an extensive literary education. Charlotte was therefore exposed to a wide range of artists and writers. In a letter to a friend, she wrote a reading list in which she recommends poetry, biography, history, and fiction. She praises writers such as Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Southey, and, though she focuses most of her energies on poets, she also encourages her friend to read Bewick's natural histories (Gaskell, 85). The upbringing at Haworth had a significant impact on the imaginative and artistic abilities Charlotte and her siblings. Her sisters Anne and Emily wrote famous novels and poetry alongside her and their only brother, Patrick, became an avid painter. In this way, Bewick's methods on the impact of imagination in children's education are proven quite effective in not only Charlotte's success as an author, but in the artistic successes of the entire Brontë family.

There is little biographical evidence to suggest that Brontë marked Bewick as a philosopher of education. She knew him as most Victorian readers knew him: an artist and a naturalist. Furthermore, a direct correlation between her childhood and Bewick's theories of education cannot be confirmed. And yet, in her later years as a writer, she expressed similar Romantic ideas about the imagination

in literature. She did not write a memoir or a treatise on the imagination, but expressed her ideas through both her narrative style and in her letters to critics. In these letters, she found herself defending not only her work, but also her ability to craft imaginative narratives such as *Jane Eyre*. It is important to understand the imaginative quality of her work because it is at the center of tension between her critics and her position as a woman in literature.

Early in her career, Brontë gravitated toward poetry, pulling inspirations from the Romantic poets she favored in her childhood. She understood perceptions of women in the literary world at a young age. Critics of her writing, who often urged her to curb the wild imagination she had possessed since childhood, did so in response to her sex. As a result, her belief in the power of imagination and illustration in literature often had to include a defense of women's imaginative abilities. One of her first encounters came from a correspondence with none other than Robert Southey. Brontë, aged twenty-two at the time, wrote to the poet in hopes of receiving his artistic opinion. Southey responded to Brontë with a letter resembling more of a warning than a constructive critique. Though he does not find her writing displeasing, his words echo Victorian anxieties over women's imaginations and divulge a prejudice over women's limited positions in society:

The day dreams in which you habitually indulge are likely to induce a distempered state of mind; and in proportion as all the ordinary uses of the world seem to you flat and unprofitable, you will be unfitted for them

without becoming fitted for anything else. Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation (Gaskell, 102-103).

Southey does not tell Brontë to subdue her creative thoughts or stop writing altogether, but instead warns that her poetry and pursuit of literary success cannot coexist with a woman's proper duties in life. He also does not deny her ability to be imaginative, as Edgeworth does, but claims that Brontë cannot be happy if she chooses to indulge her imagination. He assumes she has not yet taken on the proper duties of a woman that will inevitably deter her from "seek[ing] in imagination for excitement" (Gaskell, 102-103). Brontë graciously responded; her letter claimed she would heed his warning and not fall to "the folly of neglecting real duties, for the sake of imaginative pleasures" (Gaskell, 104). She also defends herself against his assumption of her duties, "I am not altogether the idle dreaming being it would seem to denote" (Gaskell, 104). In her position of governess, Brontë insists she has no time for daydreaming while admitting, "In the evening, I confess, I do think, but I never trouble any one else with my thoughts" (Gaskell, 104). Even in the earliest stages of her writing career, Brontë's understanding of imagination had to be within the context of her gender. Though more timid and humble at the time she wrote to Southey, Brontë's thoughts on the role of imagination and artistry in aiding literature became more bold and assertive, as

did her responses to those who urged her to reign in her vivid and illustrative imagination.

For some critics, Brontë's poetic prose made them question the proper role of women in fiction, stemming from a fear of women's deviation from reality. After her initial launch into the publishing world, Brontë was anxious about her potential reviews. Even under the pseudonym of Currer Bell, she feared critics would judge her writings not by their merit as literary works, but by her role as a woman in literature. One review, written by one of Brontë's long-time correspondents G.H. Lewes, appeared in the *Edinburgh* after the publication of *Shirley* with sub-headings of "Mental Equality of the Sexes?" and "Female Literature," making the author's femininity the article's primary concern (Gaskell, 292). Brontë responded hotly to the review, writing, "After I had said earnestly that I wished critics would judge me as an *author*, not as a woman, you so roughly—I even thought so cruelly—handled the question of sex" (Gaskell, 293). For advisors like Southey and Lewes, Brontë's sex remained an integral part to any discussion about her authorial merits. Hidden in their critiques and warnings was a preconceived and ignorant notion that a woman lacked the capabilities to indulge her imaginations while upholding her societal duties. Brontë defied this notion through her work as a novelist and her role as a devoted sister and governess. Not only did she indulge her imagination, she actively and deliberately channeled it through her writing.

Brontë's correspondence with Lewes offers her most impassioned defense of the importance of imaginative work in literature. In one letter, Lewes warns her to "beware of

melodrama" and "not to stray far from the ground of experience" (Gaskell, 233). Lewes writes his warning to Brontë as an outsider wary of the female imagination. He attempts to deter her from the Romantic literary heroes of her childhood and suggests another author after whom Charlotte should model herself: Jane Austen. Brontë responds to Lewes' letter by mocking his words in which he describes Austen as "one of the greatest artists, one of the greatest painters of human character" (Gaskell, 241). Charlotte contradicts him, explaining her dismay at reading Austen and finding, "a carefully-fenced, highly-cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck" (Gaskell, 240). Where Lewes praises Austen's lack of sentiment and poetry, Brontë asks, "Can there be a great artist without poetry?" (Gaskell, 241). In another letter to Lewes, Charlotte addresses his lack of confidence in her fiction by explaining her experiences early in her career. She had heeded the warning of Southey and "restrained imagination, eschewed romance, repressed excitement...and sought to produce something which should be soft, grave, and true" (Gaskell, 233). Yet publishers did not accept her early work, claiming it "was deficient in 'startling incident' and 'thrilling excitement.'" (Gaskell, 233). After refuting Lewes' idea on the inferiority of fiction, she then delivers these lines on the commanding power of imagination that is filled with the sentiments of Bewick and the Romantic poets:

Then, too, imagination is a strong, restless faculty, which claims to be heard and exercised: are we to be quite deaf to her cry, and insensate

to her struggles? When she shows us bright pictures, are we never to look at them, and try to reproduce them? And when she is eloquent, and speaks rapidly and urgently in our ear, are we not to write her dictation? (Gaskell, 233-234)

Here, Brontë acknowledges reality's limitations and understands imagination as a powerful force that great artists must not suppress, even in their descriptions of real experiences. To her, imagination is visual, something that manifests in "bright pictures" to be copied. It is also auditory, something that commands to be written. The pictorial and literary necessity of imagination makes it a sensory entity that demands use beyond acts of whimsical daydreaming; it demands application. These applications are designed to alleviate "the lengthened sameness of the way" as Bewick so eloquently explained. It is this understanding that emboldens her to write, "Miss Austen being...without 'sentiment,' without *poetry*, maybe *is* sensible, real (more *real* than *true*), but she cannot be great" (quoted in Gaskell, 241).

Just as scholars cannot fully ascertain Bewick's thoughts on imagination and illustration without studying his philosophy on children's education, they cannot examine Brontë's understanding of the power of imagination as an artist without factoring in her awareness of her position as a woman in literature. She not only had to argue that the use of poetry and imaginative prose was necessary in her writing, but she also had to demonstrate that her sex was capable of using imagination in a productive manner. *Jane Eyre* illustrates the power of visual reading

and imagination as both Bewick and Brontë understood it. The novel expresses the impact of imagination on children's education, demonstrates the use of illustration to understand reality, and describes and promotes the act of reading as a visual experience. Scholars have defined the novel as a social problem novel for its depiction of child abuse, feminist literature due to its strong female heroine, and even gothic romance for its eerie passages and ghost stories. But it has yet to be examined as a novel about the power of imaginative illustration and a young woman's ability to wield it.

The themes of illustration and imagination that come forth in *Jane Eyre's* opening scene are woven throughout the rest of the novel through Jane's imagination and artistic abilities. Those same themes also come forward in Brontë's deliberate use of illustrative language, language that commands the imaginations of readers in a fashion rival to Bewick's vignettes. In addition, through Jane's character, Brontë demonstrates a young girl's ability to be imaginative and to use illustration or illustrative means to prompt and dictate the sensory demands of the imagination.

Scholars agree that Jane possesses an active and strong imagination, but the function of that imagination in the novel remains a subject of debate. Countless books and articles have been dedicated to unpacking the mind of the heroine in Brontë's most "imaginative and poetical" work (Glen, 50). Throughout the novel, Jane's imagination inspires her to envision beyond the cultivated walls of Austen's universe, to dream about the forlorn North and stormy seas, and to entertain thoughts of adventure and travel. In a way, she is Brontë's direct answer to Ma-

ria Edgeworth's claim that young girls cannot be excited by stories of adventure. Jane had this to say about *Gulliver's Travels*: "I doubted not that I might one day, by taking a long voyage, see with my own eyes the little fields, houses, and trees, the diminutive people, the tiny cows, sheep, and birds of the one realm" (Brontë, 25). Jane, a young girl with little choice but to be a governess, allows the stories and pictures she reads to inspire dreams of her own adventure to distant lands. Here, the images have an immediate effect on her imagination and are essential to her visual reading of the book. However, her imagination is ever connected to her reality.

After Jane suffers her aunt's punishment of being locked away in the haunted red room, she begins to read illustrations differently. She describes the same images that had once given her pleasure and excitement as ghoulish and full of dread, making her unable to look at the book she once treasured (Brontë, 26). Her imagination also becomes useful when she calls her cousin a "slave-driver" and compares him to "the Roman emperors" (Brontë, 13). Jane remembers her reading of Goldsmith's *History of Rome* and claims to have "drawn parallels in silence," therefore using the way she imagines the cruelty of Nero and Caligula to understand her own mistreatment at Gateshead (Brontë, 13). Jane's reading of *Water Birds* creates a moment in which Jane is making the connection between the Bewick's letterpress and his images to prompt a productive use of the imagination in readers. This connection is one that Jane carries forward in her other acts of visual reading during childhood and one that feeds the application of her artistic abilities in adulthood.

Illustration as a useful tool for expressing and managing imagination is most astutely represented through Jane's own talents as an artist. Similar to the youthful Brontë and Bewick, Jane knew that to paint, draw, and illustrate "was to enjoy one of the keenest pleasures" (Brontë, 148). She understands drawing as an application for her wild and vivid imagination even as a child. In the early months of her residency at the restrictive Lowood school Jane dreams of hot meals and a full stomach. However, on the same day she begins drawing again at Lowood, she claims her dreams shifted so that her mind "feasted instead on the spectacle of ideal drawings" (Brontë, 88). She imagines penciling picturesque landscapes, butterflies, roses and even expresses desire to "translate currently a certain little French story-book which Madame Pierrot had that day shown [her]" (Brontë, 88). She sees drawing as a type of "translation" from words or ideas into images of one's own imagination. As an adult, Jane uses her artistic abilities to create drawings of two different kinds, similar to the illustrative style of Bewick. First, she finds useful applications for her illustration, either sketching the portraits of others or using them in her instruction of Adele, Jane's ward as a governess at Thornfield Hall. Her most defining act as a portraitist comes when she uses drawing to discipline her feelings for her employer, Mr. Rochester. "Reason...in her own quiet way" instructs Jane to draw herself, plain and imperfect in chalk and then draw on ivory the delicate, lovely Ms. Ingram (Brontë, 187). Jane does this and creates a contrast "as great as self-control could desire" (Brontë, 188). The exercise keeps her mind and hands busy from the impossible feelings that, without the

aid of drawing, she might have been “unequal to maintain, even externally” (Brontë, 188). This is an instance in which Jane, possessing talent and understanding of the application of illustration, uses her drawings not to “translate” her feelings, but to discipline them. She exaggerates both her and Ms. Ingram’s features to embody her idea of their differences, hoping to return her to rational thoughts concerning Mr. Rochester.

Perhaps the most intriguing details of these portraits are their labels. Jane titles her own image, “Portrait of a Governess, discontented, poor, and plain,” and Ms. Ingram’s, “Blanche, an accomplished lady of rank” (Brontë, 187). Both labels include the profession or status of the women drawn along with what Jane views as their defining characteristics. This presents the images, and the other portraits Jane draws throughout the novel, almost as if they were depicting specimens in one of Bewick’s natural histories. If a connection to Bewick can be detected through the minor parallels between his birds and Jane’s portraits, then Jane’s imaginative paintings of northern landscapes and sinking ships are nothing short of a direct reference to his mysterious images.

Jane describes her watercolors as having “risen vividly” to her mind with each subject serving as “a pale portrait of the thing [she] had conceived” (Brontë, 147). They are portraits of the horizons she tries to look beyond as she stands at the windows of Lowood and Thornfield. They are filled with rolling clouds, stormy seas, shipwrecks, and piercing icebergs of the far north — objects of awe and terror that should never flit into a young woman’s head. In examining each of the three paintings that Jane “touched with as brilliant

tints as [her] palette could yield,” Rochester insists that Jane lived in a kind of artist’s dreamland. Rochester says to her, “You had not enough of the artist’s skill and science to give it full being: yet the drawings are, for a school-girl, peculiar. As to the thoughts, they are elfish” (Brontë, 147). Not only do “school girls” not possess the scientific skills or talents of the artist to fully translate their imaginations, they also do not have thoughts similar to the ones Jane illustrates (Brontë, 147-148).

Jane creates these vivid and colorful images during her free time, attempting to capture the imagined landscapes that she “was quite powerless to realise” (Brontë, 147). However, as Jane describes her paintings to the reader, it is almost as if she tries to paint or translate the images through words. Her first painting, uncanny and vibrant, shows “light lifted into relief a half-submerged mast, on which sat a cormorant, dark and large, with wings flecked with foam” (Brontë, 148). Another portrays a ring of white flame, “above the temples, amidst wreathed turban folds of black drapery, vague in its character and consistency as cloud” (Brontë, 148).

Brontë’s vivid prose attempts to accomplish what Jane’s paintings could not: to capture the eerie landscapes of her imagination. Rather than provide actual images to represent Jane’s artistic abilities, Brontë prompts the reader to envision what Jane is describing, asking *them* to make the connection between imagination and illustration.

Brontë’s illustrative narrative style demands that her work be *seen* as well as *seen through*, creating images not through drawing, but through the poetic and metaphorical language G.H. Lewes warned would lead to

her unhappiness. In spite of his early issues with the poetic nature of Brontë's writing, Lewes later praised the vividness of her prose in *Jane Eyre*: "The pictures stand out distinctly before you: they are pictures, and not mere bits of 'fine writing.' The writer is evidently painting by words a picture that she has in her mind" (125). Absent any physical images, the novel effectively demonstrates the power and necessity of illustrations both in the practical world and in literature. Not only is this accomplished through the character of Jane, an artist in her own right, but also through the very prose that brings her imagination to the forefront. As Jane stands at various windows in the novel, looking out over the horizon, she stands at a threshold where reality meets fancy and imagination. These instances result in vividly descriptive vignettes as Jane describes the action of looking out:

I discovered, too, that a great pleasure, an enjoyment which the horizon only bounded, lay all outside the high and spike-guarded walls of our garden: this pleasure consisted in prospect of noble summits girdling a great hill-hollow, rich in verdure and shadow; in a bright beck, full of dark stones and sparkling eddies (91-92).

Like Bewick's vignettes, these descriptions of the horizon are boundless, prompting the reader to envision the landscape Jane details. Such descriptions draw attention to Jane's vibrant imagination, but they also use words in an attempt to illustrate it. Furthermore, these moments of vivid, illustrative prose create a type of pause in which Brontë intentionally tries to inspire the imaginations

of readers. Though necessary to the novel, these moments do not propel the plot forward, nor do they provide any critical context for characters' actions. However, they actively create a visual experience for the reader, an experience Brontë understood as a child copying Bewick and one she fully exploits in *Jane Eyre*. Brontë consistently reminds her readers that they should be envisioning her novel, telling them to envision the scenes Jane describes. Jane explains, "A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play; and when I draw up the curtain this time, reader, you must fancy you see a room in the George Inn at Millcote" (Brontë, 111). She asks the reader to look upon a page with no pictures and still see images. Jane herself understands the act of visual reading as demonstrated in her engagement with Bewick. She also makes the connection between translating images and words into imaginative and illustrative visions.

As she describes her life with Rochester during his years of temporary blindness, she recalls, "he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing for his behalf, and of putting into words, the effect of the...landscape before us...and impressing by sound on his ear what light could no longer stamp on his eye" (Brontë, 519). Rochester's ability to envision nature and books is not hindered by his inability to physically see, for Jane illustrates his surroundings through her words, inspiring his imagination to see what his eyes cannot. These lines mark Brontë's final statement about the connection between illustration and imagination and its power. Rochester reads without looking at the letterpress of books and he moves through nature without having to look at its wonder. All of this is ac-

complished through Jane, a young woman capable of using her imaginative spirit and artistic abilities to help the man she loves imagine and understand the world around him. It is these qualities that make Jane not only Bewick's ideal reader, but also Brontë's.

Conclusion

Being a young child, Jane could have easily skimmed through Bewick's pages and only looked at his vignettes of the two Arctic explorers or the marooned ship as a sign of her whimsical nature. Significantly, Jane reads the words in Bewick's introduction, connecting them to the images with which she is all too familiar. In those introductory pages, she engages in a continual process of reading; she uses the illustrations, the words, and her own vivid imagination to inform one another rather than alternate between the three. She sees through illustrations, both real and imaginative. In doing so, she is not disengaging from reality or creating obstacles to keep her from achieving her goals. She uses her understanding of illustration in her work and self-discipline while also indulging in the pleasure it offers her. By insisting that Jane reads Bewick through a model he intentionally crafted, *Jane Eyre* becomes a novel centered upon the power and necessity of imaginative illustration.

Because Brontë created pictures through her imaginative prose, understanding her intent as an author prompts the unpacking of Bewick's intentions as an artist. Furthermore, Brontë's intimacy with Bewick's work insists upon more critical analysis of her reference to his introduction. Bewick's model of illustration as an ideal form of relieving the repetitive or dull aspects of reality and litera-

ture comes through in Jane's character and in Brontë's vivid prose. By understanding Bewick's intent as an artist, scholars may gain a better understanding of illustration's role in nineteenth-century literature and how it intersects with discourses on imagination and reading. However, for the purposes of this paper, Bewick's intent and Jane's reading reveal Brontë's goal as a novelist to provoke readers into envisioning her work through their own imaginations. *Jane Eyre* has been classified under many genres such as gothic romance and feminist literature, yet its effectiveness within those genres relies heavily on its role as a novel of illustration.

Through her illustrative prose, Brontë is best able to call upon readers to imagine the social problems that plague young Jane and her peers. She can more effectively narrate the eerie and mysterious scenes that earn the novel's classification as a gothic romance. Lastly, it is through her ability to craft a novel that uses imagination as an aid in its comprehension and effectiveness that Brontë arguably asserts her most radically feminist notion: women can indulge in their imaginations and use them for their own practical purposes.

Through her work in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë had proven herself a master at effectively engaging imaginations through illustrative language. If such a strong case can be made for Charlotte Brontë's model of using illustration to inspire and discipline imagination, then it is the duty of scholars to question why she chose not to follow in Bewick's footsteps more closely by illustrating physical pictures in her novel. Why would an avid artist writing during Britain's great age of illustration adamantly refuse to illustrate her own edition

when asked by her publisher (Danger, 262-263)? If she understood the power of illustration, and experienced it through her own encounters with Bewick, then why not attempt to translate some of her imaginative scenes into physical vignettes? In what ways could physical illustrations limit the effectiveness of texts, particularly for a writer insistent upon crafting images in readers' minds through prose? To begin answering these complex questions, further investigation is required regarding the role of illustration in nineteenth-century literature. Illustration's ability to bridge the gap between the material and textual world of Price's scholarship demands that future studies should endeavor to explore the relationship between images and the texts they embellish. These relationships would inevitably vary based on genre, gender, and individual authors. To best understand Bewick's own intent for his illustrations, this analysis has had to consider the genre of natural history, Bewick's position

as a man, and his philosophy concerning the benefits of provoking imagination in youth. This type of analysis should be applied to more illustrated texts in order to better understand the processes of nineteenth-century reading. Illustrated books had such a cultural impact in Britain during the Victorian age that scholarship cannot afford to ignore or turn a blind eye to the reading of illustrations when analyzing the century's rich literature. Such research requires study beyond the limits of this paper. However, by revealing the specific visual reading that Brontë sought to craft in her novel, this paper seeks to encourage future research that dismisses twentieth and twenty-first century limitations on studying illustrated books. Looking beyond those limitations will create a more rounded way of examining nineteenth-century literature and allow for more focused research on the study of Victorian processes of reading through seeing.

Bibliography

Sources Cited

- Bewick, Thomas. *History of British Birds: Volumes I and II*. 1847.
- Bewick, Thomas. *A memoir of Thomas Bewick/ written by himself*. ed. Iain Bain. Oxford University Press: London. 1975.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Penguin Books Ltd,: New York, NY. 2006.
- Danger, Sara R. "Transforming Images: Victorian Women Writers, Popular Images, and the Literary Marketplace." ProQuest Information and Learning Company. 2005.
- David, Clement. "Note the Literary Allusions." *The English Journal*, National Council of Teachers of English. vol 54.1. 1965. 59-60.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Dent & Sons LTD.: London. 1908.
- Gettelman, Debra. "'Making Out' Jane Eyre." *ELH*. The John Hopkins University Press. 74.3. 2007. 557-581.
- Glen, Heather. *Charlotte Bronte: The Imagination in History*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY. 2002.
- Gribble, Jennifer. "Jane Eyre's Imagination." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. University of California Press. 23.3. 1968. 279-293.
- Price, Leah. *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain*. Princeton University Press. 2012.
- Richardson, Alan. *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832*. Cambridge University Press: New York, NY. 1994.
- Summerfield, Geoffrey. *Fantasy and Reason: Children's Literature in the Eighteenth-century*. Methuen & Co. Ltd.: London. 1984.
- Uglow, Jenny. *Nature's Engraver: A Life of Thomas Bewick*. Farrar, Stratus and Giroux: New, York, NY. 2006.

Sources Consulted

- Bewell, Alan. *Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History*. John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD. 2017.
- Conover, Robin St. John. "Jane Eyre's Triptych and Milton's Paradise Lost: An artistic Vision of Revisionist Mythmaking." *Victorian Review*. Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada. 22.2. 1996. 171-189.
- Hennelly, Mark M. "Jane Eyre's Reading Lesson." *ELH*, The John Hopkins University Press. 51.4. 1984. 693-717.
- Heritage, Barbara. "Authors and Bookmakers: *Jane Eyre* in the Marketplace." *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*. University of Chicago Press. 106.4. 449-485.
- Pyle, Forest. *The Ideology of Imagination: Subject and Society in the Discourse of Romanticism*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA. 1995.