

Fall 2022

The Divine Consumptive: The Depiction of Tuberculosis in Jane Eyre

Haley Highfield

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Highfield, H.(2022). *The Divine Consumptive: The Depiction of Tuberculosis in Jane Eyre*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/7124>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you by Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact digres@mailbox.sc.edu.

THE DIVINE CONSUMPTIVE:
THE DEPICTION OF TUBERCULOSIS IN *JANE EYRE*

By

Haley Highfield

Bachelor of Arts
Shorter University, 2014

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degrees of Master of Arts in

English

and Master of Library and Information Science

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2022

Accepted by:

Rebeca Stern, Director of Thesis

Eli Jelly-Schapiro, Second Reader

Cheryl L. Addy, Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

© Copyright by Haley Highfield, 2022
All Rights Reserved.

ABSTRACT

Disease was a constant and unavoidable facet of life in British society during the Victorian Era. Despite the overwhelming prevalence of disease, the true cause of these illnesses remained mysterious until the turn of the century. With the origins of many of these diseases being either unknown or ascribed to mistaken sources, effective treatment was an impossibility. Tuberculosis is a prime example of this conundrum. Even with an estimated twenty-five percent of the British population dying from this particular disease during the nineteenth century, the actual provenance for infection was not discovered until 1882 with Robert Koch's identification of the tuberculosis bacillus, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

It is unsurprising, given the scourge of tuberculosis, that this illness would be depicted in the art created during this time. By examining this art, we can learn how this disease was perceived before the acceptance of germ theory. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, published in 1851, exemplifies this mode of cultural anthropology. In *Jane Eyre*, the pivotal character of Helen Burns succumbs to tuberculosis. Helen's death from tuberculosis exemplifies the societal conception of tuberculosis prior to Koch's discovery, which places the disease in the realm of the spiritual rather than the temporal. Tuberculosis, typically, causes death after a slow deterioration of the body that left the mind intact, which gave rise to the notion that the sufferer was gradually leaving worldly plane for a heavenly one. The consumptive Helen Burns becomes a religious mystic who

converts the titular Jane Eyre to Christianity and, thus, shapes the entirety of the novel's plot. Brontë's use of tuberculosis as a foundational element in *Jane Eyre* is unquestionably due to the pervasiveness of the affliction in not only Victorian society as a whole but in her own life, as well. Tuberculosis as a spirit-making disease is emblematic of the Victorian perception by and large.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: A NINETEENTH-CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF TUBERCULOSIS	1
CHAPTER 2: THE PATHOGENESIS OF TUBERCULOSIS.....	4
CHAPTER 3: HELEN BURNS: THE PERSONAL SAVIOR OF JANE EYRE.....	14
CHAPTER 4: RELIGIOUS LEADERS VS. HELEN BURNS.....	26
CHAPTER 5: LIVING HELEN’S THEOLOGY	39
CHAPTER 6 : CONCLUSION	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF TUBERCULOSIS

The Victorian understanding of consumption, or tuberculosis as it would come to be known, was shaped more by aesthetic than scientific ideas. One only has to look to some of the literary greats of the era for an understanding of the common perception of this disease. In Thomas Moore's *Life of Lord Byron: With His Letters and Journals*, Howe Browne, the Marquis of Sligo, recounts a conversation between Lord Byron and himself that took place in 1810, where Lord Byron, while looking at himself in a mirror, exclaimed, "How pale I look!—I should like, I think, to die of a consumption" (Moore 347). When Lord Sligo questioned why Byron would desire to die by consumption, Byron replied, "Because then the women would all say, 'See that poor Byron—how interesting he looks in dying'" (Moore 347). Another literary example of the embrace of tuberculosis as a fashionable disease can be found in Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "Metzengerstein":

The beautiful Lady Mary! How could she die? - and of consumption! But it is a path I have prayed to follow. I would wish all I love to perish of that gentle disease. How glorious! to depart in the hey-day of the young blood - the heart all passion - the imagination all fire - and so be buried up forever in the gorgeous

autumnal leaves! (2)

Consumption is depicted again and again throughout the Victorian era in novels like Elizabeth Gaskell's 1855 *North and South* and Charles Dickens' 1848 *Dombey and Son*. Tubercular characters also appeared outside of Great Britain in works like Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* published in France in 1862, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* first released in 1852 in the United States, and several by the Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky. Although tuberculosis "had been known among Europeans since the time of the ancient Greeks" (Carpenter 55), it spiked to unprecedented levels with the rapid growth of cities in the 1800s (Carpenter). With an estimated 500-600 deaths per 100,000 caused by tuberculosis during the 19th century, it is no surprise that the disease is reflected in that century's art (Duffin).

Charlotte Brontë's 1842 novel *Jane Eyre* is emblematic of the Victorian understanding of tuberculosis in its portrayal of the consumptive Helen Burns. Helen Burns, a fourteen-year-old orphan, is presented as being a Christ-like character with a spiritual understanding that elevates her above any other character in the novel—even above traditional religious leaders like Mr Brocklehurst and St John Rivers. It is Helen who shapes Jane's religious and spiritual understanding of the Christian faith before her untimely death from consumption, and her having tuberculosis is essential to that. Susan Sontag explains this decidedly unmodern perception of tuberculosis:

According to the mythology of TB, there is generally some passionate feeling which provokes, which expresses itself in, a bout of TB. But the passion must be thwarted, the hopes blighted. And the passion, although usually love, could be a

political or moral passion. (Sontag 22)

We learn through the novel that Helen Burns' tuberculosis is emphatically moral, as she above all of Jane's teachers, guardians, and companions shapes Jane's Christian faith.

CHAPTER 2:

THE PATHOGENESIS OF TUBERCULOSIS

To understand how tuberculosis came to be viewed as a disease of passion, one must first understand tuberculosis impacts its victims. Tuberculosis is a bacterial disease caused by the pathogen *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* that most often attacks the lungs (*MedLine*). It is spread from person to person through respiratory aerosols and droplets exhaled by a carrier and inhaled by others; a single sneeze from a person with active tuberculosis can carry 40,000 disease-laden droplets (Cole and Cook). These airborne disease particulates allow for spread through both direct means, such as when an infected individual breathes, sneezes, or coughs on others, and indirect means in which the droplets hang suspended in the air after being expelled for unsuspecting victims to inhale. When the tuberculosis pathogen enters the alveolar sacs in the lungs of a susceptible individual, it triggers an inflammatory response as the body's immune system—specifically macrophages, B and T lymphocytes, and fibroblasts—from granulomas around the invading pathogen in an attempt to isolate it (Zuñiga, et al.). The bacteria then takes advantage of the macrophages surrounding it by multiplying within them and spreads to other regions of the lungs. Some of the granulomas will calcify within the lungs and allow the bacteria within to lie dormant while waiting for the immune system

to weaken; this weakening lets the infection transform from being latent to active. The time from initial infection to becoming symptomatic depends on how well a person's immune system is able to fight off the disease, which means it varies from mere weeks to years after infection (WHO; CDC). Tuberculosis usually begins with a continual dry cough that lasts a month or so before proceeding into one that produces phlegm and blood (CDC; John Hopkins Medicine, Behr). The tubercular patient also develops a fever and experiences a general sense of malaise and fatigue. Additionally they will generally lose great amounts of weight due to lack of appetite, which furthers their affliction and creates a sense of delicacy. Death from consumption typically takes two to five which is quite a slow decline when compared with other fatal contagious illnesses (Behr, et al). The large variability in time from initial infection to death helps explain why this particular disease was so mysterious to and poorly understood by Victorians—it was difficult to pinpoint when and where someone contracted consumption due to the lag from initial infection to active disease.

Current data shows that one in three people on Earth are infected with the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and ten-percent of those individuals will develop an active tuberculosis infection (Borgdorff, et al; Zúñiga, et al). In 2020, roughly 0.0005% of the population of Great Britain died from tuberculosis (UK Health Security Agency). In the nineteenth-century, it is estimated that twenty-five-percent of the British population died from it (Saleem and Azher). Tuberculosis was indisputably different from other common contagious diseases like cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and typhus that were fatal within a matter of hours or days (WHO; CDC). The manner in which it killed was also quite different—it was not a bloody or gruesome death but one where the sufferer slowly

suffocated to death with very few physical signs. While tuberculosis could kill entire households, it was less likely to happen and less obviously discernible than those other diseases, as well. The obvious community spread with other contagions afflicting the Victorian populace attested to illnesses like typhoid and cholera coming from a particular source, as people within the same locality were stricken down around the same time. Any type of communicable disease spread through the air from one person to another would have also been completely alien in this time—much less one that could lie latent for years—for germ theory would not be developed and widely recognized for nearly another half-century after the 1847 publication of *Jane Eyre*.

The commonly held conception of the contraction of tuberculosis in the Victorian era was a mixture of genetics, a predisposition based on personality, and environment (Karamanou, et al; Lawlor; Sontag; Bewell). Despite it being “the single greatest killer among the infectious diseases, taking a far larger toll than all the epidemics of cholera combined” (Carpenter 55), tuberculosis’ ubiquity did not make the nature of the disease any less inscrutable. In *Health, Medicine, and Society in Victorian England*, Mary Wilson Carpenter elaborates on how tuberculosis’ dissimilarities from other common diseases helps create its Victorian understanding:

Unlike cholera, with its shockingly violent, agonizing, and sudden death, tuberculosis was mythologized as the ‘beautiful death’ and associated with poetic and artistic talent that first burned feverishly and then peacefully passed from earthly sorrows to heavenly visions. For some time during the early nineteenth century, it was actually fashionable to have the look of a consumptive: to be extremely thin, languid, and pale. (55)

With a connection established between temperament and consumption, it is understandable that many Victorians would view tuberculosis as being innate to an individual rather than something that could be contracted at random. A tubercular person would have been born with an inclination towards the illness and then through either contact with a diseased environment or another type of external factor like grief, the seeds of disease would have germinated (Barnes). In 1826 René-Théophile-Hyacunthe Laënnec, inventor of the stethoscope, wrote:

Among the occasional causes of phthisis, I know none of more assured operation than the depressing passions, particularly if strong and of long continuance; and it is worthy of remark, that it is the same cause which seems to contribute most to the development of cancers, and all the other accidental productions which are not analogous to any of the natural tissues. (346)

Laënnec's opinion on the causes of tuberculosis "continued to enjoy the status of virtually unquestioned dogma among physicians concerned with tuberculosis" (Barnes 25) until the end of the nineteenth-century. He included an anecdote to demonstrate how the mind could cause one to become consumptive in which he describes a convent where many of its inhabitants contracted tuberculosis due to their focus on the suffering of Christ:

I had under my own eyes [...] a striking example of the effect of the depressing passions in producing [tuberculosis]; in the case of a religious association of women. The diet of these persons was certainly very austere, yet it was by no means beyond what nature could bear. But the ascetic spirit which regulated their

minds, was such as to give rise to consequences no less serious than surprising. Not only was the attention of these women habitually fixed on the most terrible truths of religion, but it was the constant practice to try them by every kind of contrariety and opposition, in order to bring them, as soon as possible, to an entire renouncement of their own proper will. The consequences of this discipline were the same in all: after being one or two months in the establishment, the catatonia became suppressed; and in the course of one or two months thereafter, phthisis declared itself! (346-347)

Readers of *Jane Eyre* can see a reiteration of religious fervor causing consumption in Helen Burns.

If the possibility of becoming ill with tuberculosis is latent within certain individuals and then activated by circumstance, then Helen's fate after being exiled to the Lowood School by her father following the death of her mother would be a natural conclusion for her character with her high level of intelligence, introspective nature, and deeply held religious beliefs. The mystifying origins of consumption that were attributed to many different causes—from inborn predisposition to extrinsic causes ranging from situational occurrences to habitat—made for powerful inspiration that was culturally relevant and timely for the era of the novel's publication. The use of term "phthisis" was to describe pulmonary tuberculosis from the eighteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth demonstrates how just how little the disease was understood—it describes how the disease was perceived operate rather than the location where the disease was found or the causative agent. "Phthisis" was derived from the Greek word "phthinein"

that translates as “to decay” until the fourteenth-century in England when “consumption,” from the Latin “con” for “altogether” and “sumere” meaning “take up,” became an interchangeable descriptor of the disease (Bryne; Carpenter). It was not, however, until the nineteenth-century when “consumption” became favored over “phthisis.” Fortunately for humanity, tuberculosis would not remain a mystery as the Victorian Era came to a close, as multiple discoveries and advances culminated in the isolation and identification of the tuberculosis bacillus, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* by Robert Koch in 1882 (Carpenter; Barberis, et al; Daniel). Effective treatment for tuberculosis, however, would not be discovered until 1944 in the form of the antibiotic streptomycin (Barberis, et al; Daniel)—well over a hundred years too late for the Brontë family.

Charlotte Brontë had an intimate understanding of understanding of pulmonary tuberculosis and the resultant bodily deterioration from watching multiple members of her own family succumb. As the third of the six children born to Patrick and Maria (Branwell) Brontë, she witnessed each of her siblings—Maria, Elizabeth, Branwell, Emily, and Anne—die of consumption before dying herself of the same disease, according to her personal physician (Barker). Modern historians debate whether the pregnant Brontë did, in fact, die from a tuberculosis infection or rather dehydration brought on by hyperemesis gravidarum, or extreme morning sickness, but her physician listed phthisis, or tuberculosis, as the cause of death on the death certificate (Weiss; Fitzgerald). This familial contagion became a direct source for material for the novel *Jane Eyre* wherein Charlotte Brontë wrote the character of Helen Burns using the life and death of her eldest sister, Maria (Brontë; Gaskell; Barker). For Brontë, consumption

would be inextricably linked with the Clergy Daughters' School—the real life counterpart of Jane and Helen's Lowood School—after the two eldest Brontës contracted the illness while students there. In July of 1824, Maria and Elizabeth Brontë, aged ten and nine respectively, became boarders at the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire (Barker; Lock & Dixon). Charlotte joined them the following month at just eight-years-old and was, in turn, followed by six-year-old Emily in November (Barker; Lock & Dixon). On February 13, 1825, just seven months after sending Maria and Elizabeth away to the Clergy Daughters' School, Patrick Brontë received a letter informing him that his eldest child had fallen gravely ill and that he needed to bring her home (Barker; Lock & Dixon). It was apparent when she returned to the family home in Haworth that Maria had contracted phthisis and would not survive very long; she died on May 12, 1825 at the age of eleven (Barker). Patrick Brontë had only a few weeks to mourn the death of Maria when news reached him that Elizabeth had also fallen ill with tuberculosis and was being sent home from the school (Barker; Lock & Dixon). Elizabeth lingered for an even shorter amount of time after returning home and died aged ten on June 15; she had been at the Clergy Daughters' School for ten short months (Barker; Lock & Dixon). Maria and Elizabeth Brontë were among eleven of the total fifty-three students who were withdrawn from the school in period of July 1824 to June 1825 with six of those dying shortly after leaving (Barker). Charlotte and Emily Brontë left the school when Elizabeth did, but Charlotte's short tenure remained imprinted in her mind.

The echo of the Clergy Daughters' School and the deaths of the two oldest Brontë siblings—particularly that of Maria—is clear in the depictions of Lowood School and

Helen. In a letter to William Smith Williams, one of the editors and publishers of *Jane Eyre*, Brontë explicitly states that her sister Maria was the inspiration for Helen Burns:

You are right in having faith in the reality of Helen Burns's character: she was real enough: I have exaggerated nothing there: I abstained from recording much that I remember respecting her, lest the narrative should sound incredible.

Knowing this, I could not but smile at the quiet, self-complacent dogmatism with which one of the journals lays it down that 'such creatures as Helen Burns are very beautiful but very untrue.'

(Charlotte Brontë to William Smith Williams 28 Oct. 1847)

Maria Brontë was by all accounts an intelligent, pious girl. Her father shared an anecdote that took place when Maria was ten-years-old that demonstrates both of these qualities: "Lastly, I asked the oldest, what was the best mode of spending time. She answer'd, by laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity" (Patrick Brontë to Elizabeth Gaskell). After the release of *Jane Eyre*, former classmates from the Clergy Daughters' School were able quickly to identify the institution and the author from the description of Lowood School. In a letter wherein Charlotte Brontë responded to her editor about a schoolmate who had told the press that she was able to link Currer Bell with Brontë's true identity, Brontë insisted that none of the girls she attended school with "could possibly remember" her but that they would instead recall Maria:

They might remember my eldest sister, Maria; her prematurely-developed and remarkable intellect, as well as the mildness, wisdom, and fortitude of her character might have left an indelible impression on some observant mind

amongst her companions.

(Charlotte Brontë to William Smith Williams 5 Nov. 1849)

The mark that Maria Brontë left on her sister was so indelible that Charlotte Brontë could not imagine that others did not also hold strong remembrances of her sister. By crafting the character of Helen Burns, she made certain that Maria would indeed be remembered for a period far longer than her brief lifespan.

Sadly, for the Brontë family, the scourge of tuberculosis did not end with the deaths of Maria and Elizabeth, but instead continued to decimate its members with the deaths of Branwell, Emily, and Anne happening in quick succession in 1848 and 1849 (Barker). In a letter written in January of 1849 following the deaths of both Branwell and Emily but preceding the death of Anne, Charlotte Brontë described how she had come to recognize the symptoms of pulmonary consumption in her siblings:

All the days of this winter have gone by darkly and heavily like a funeral train; since September sickness has not acquitted the house — it is strange — it did not used to be so — but I suspect now all this has been coming on for years: unused any of us to the possession of robust health, we have not noticed the gradual approaches of decay; we did not know its symptoms, the little cough, the small appetite, the tendency to take cold at every variation of the atmosphere have been regarded as things of course — I see them in another light now.

(Charlotte Brontë to William Smith Williams 13 January 1849)

The Brontë children had been sickly throughout their lives, including Maria and Elizabeth, and Charlotte had come to realize that a weakened immune system often

presaged consumption. After Anne's death, Charlotte Brontë reflected upon being the sole survivor of her father's children as it seemed that she had escaped their shared fate while paradoxically having been the sickliest: "[Emily and Anne] are both gone — and so is poor Branwell — and Papa has now only me — the weakest — puniest — least promising of his six children — Consumption has taken the whole five" (Charlotte Brontë to William Smith Williams 4 June 1849). Although the surviving Brontës blamed tuberculosis for Branwell Brontë's death, many scholars look to his well-known struggle with alcohol and laudanum addiction as being at least somewhat responsible for his premature death (Barker; Neufeldt). Brontë's apprehension of and familiarity with the symptoms of pulmonary consumption must have been all the more alarming when she began to recognize them in herself six years after she seemingly had escaped the affliction that killed each of her siblings. Tuberculosis was an ever-present specter that loomed over the Brontë family for twenty-six years from the deaths of Maria and Elizabeth in 1829 until the death of Charlotte Brontë in 1855; it is unsurprising, then, that it would play a role in what is arguably Charlotte Brontë's most well-known and still consistently read novel.

CHAPTER 3:

HELEN BURNS: THE PERSONAL SAVIOR OF JANE EYRE

It seems that Charlotte Brontë gave credence to the miasma theory with the presentation of the Lowood School and its surrounding environs being the cause of Helen's consumption as well as the typhus outbreak that eventually leads to the school's being moved and restructured; this would be a logical inference from the deaths of her sisters Maria and Elizabeth who took ill while at the Clergy Daughters' School. In an ostensibly contradictory move, Jane describes the beauty of the school's surroundings in spring, then puts forth the location of the Lowood School as the cause for disease:

Have I not described a pleasant site for a dwelling, when I speak of it as bosomed in hill and wood, and rising from the verge of a spring? Assuredly, pleasant enough, but whether healthy or not is another question. That forest dell, where Lowood lay, was the cradle of fog and fog-bred pestilence. (1.8.91)

Helen Burn's death, though, cannot simply be ascribed to the diseased environment of the Lowood School—it must also be linked to her position as uniquely spiritual and deep-thinking child. She alone dies of consumption when a multitude of other students are struck down by typhus. Her illness is more subtle and her death a creeping one, whereas the girls with typhus would have died in less than a month from the time they were infected and in less than half that time from the first symptom (Doppler and Newton).

Helen's body gradually diminishing with her mind remaining intact gave the appearance of one repudiating an earthly existence for a heavenly one. Charlotte Brontë's understanding of tuberculosis as a disease that could enhance or deepen one's faith comes as little surprise, considering her deep Christian faith. Brontë was the child of an Anglican priest and thus grew up in a home steeped in that faith; she also studied and gave much thought to matters of religion throughout her life. Author Marianne Thormählen describes the Brontë home thusly: "The spiritual elements that were present in Haworth Parsonage can be viewed as a microcosmic representation of religious currents in Britain from 1800 to 1850" (13). The Brontë family patriarch, Reverend Patrick Brontë, served as a perpetual curate, or residential parish priest, at St. Michael and All Angels' Church, the parish church in Haworth, West Yorkshire (Barker; Thormählen).

As a reverend in the Church of England, Patrick Brontë would have believed and taught that only a personal relationship with Christ informed and guided by the biblical interpretations of the ecclesia would allow one to enter heaven after death.

Anglicans emphasized the need for clergy to act as intermediaries for their parishioners rather than believing that a personal relationship with God alone would suffice. From her writings, both her published novels and personal letters, we are given to understand that Charlotte Brontë also adhered to this doctrine. Despite this belief, Charlotte presents readers with a slightly different type of Christian dogma in the ideology of Helen Burns.

Helen's difference from the other schoolgirls becomes apparent in the first scene where Jane, and thus the readers as well, meet her. On Jane's first day at the Lowood

School she describes the divide between the healthy and unhealthy girls with the dreary setting of the school looming over the school's students:

I shuddered as I stood and looked round me: it was an inclement day for outdoor exercise - not positively rainy, but darkened by a drizzling yellow fog; all under foot was still soaking with the floods of yesterday. The stronger among the girls ran about and engaged in active games, but sundry pale and thin ones herded together for shelter and warmth in the veranda; and amongst these, as the dense mist penetrated to their shivering frames, I heard frequently the sound of a hollow cough. (1.5.58)

Here in this scene of outdoor play, Jane first meets Helen. Jane is not playing with the other students nor commiserating with the cold, wan ones huddled off to the side, but instead reading an inscription on a plaque. The plaque names the schools, its founders, and a Bible verse from the Book of Matthew: "Let your light so shine before men so that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" (Matt.5.16 qtd. in Brontë). While pondering this plaque, Jane first encounters Helen:

I read these words over and over again. I felt that an explanation belonged to them, and was unable to fully penetrate their import. I was still pondering the signification of 'Institution,' and endeavoring to make out a connection between the first words and the verse of Scripture, when the sound of a cough close behind me made me turn my head. I saw a girl sitting on a stone bench near. She was bent over a book, on the perusal of which she seemed intent. From where I stood I

could see the title - it was 'Rasselas' - a name that struck me as strange, and consequently attractive. (1.5.56)

Helen's immediate introduction during a moment of religious contemplation by Jane is purposeful on Charlotte Brontë's part, as Helen is the first character in the novel to speak of religious matters with Jane in a conversational manner rather than a dogmatic one, and she will ultimately reshape Jane's Christian faith. Jane surprises herself with her desire and willingness to speak to Helen, a stranger, which is something that she would not normally do, as Jane intimates, "I hardly know where I found the hardihood thus to open a conversation with a stranger. The step was contrary to my nature and habits [...]" (1.5.59). The immediate kinship that Jane feels with Helen foreshadows the deep relationship the two girls will form. Helen's choice of literature also tells us a good deal about her; *Rasselas*, the shortened title of Samuel Johnson's *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* [sic], is a philosophical romance that "stress[es] that no single system produces happiness, and demonstrat[es] that philosophers, scientists, hermits, and the wealthy all fail to achieve it. The characters are stripped of their illusions, but retain a humane awareness that, while imagination may be delusive and that desire brings disappointment, they are also necessary to keep life 'in motion'" (Birch). *Rasselas* seems to be a very weighty and dense story for a child of Helen's age to parse—Jane even deems it "dull" (1.5.59). Her engrossment in a didactic and moralistic text works to reinforce the link between Helen and the divine.

Helen Burns' singularity is fully explored in her religious credo. In Jane and Helen's very next conversation after they meet, Helen shares what Jane terms her "doctrine of endurance" (1.6.67): "It is far better to endure patiently a scar which nobody

feels but yourself, than to commit a hasty action whose evil consequences will extend to all connected to you; and, besides, the Bible bids us return good for evil” (1.6.66). Jane “heard her with wonder” (1.6.67) and “could not comprehend” (1.6.67) Helen’s belief system, but she does recognize the rightness in it, as she says, “Still I felt that Helen Burns considered things by a light invisible to my eyes. I suspected she might be right and I wrong” (Brontë 1.6.67). Helen goes on to expound upon her doctrine, explaining to Jane,

No ill-usage so brands its record on my feelings. Would you not be happier if you tried to forget her severity, together with the passionate emotions it excited? Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity, or registering wrongs. We are, and must be, one and all, burdened with faults in this world: but the time will soon come when, I trust, we shall put them off in putting off our corruptible bodies; when debasement and sin will fall from us with this cumbrous frame of flesh, and only the spark of the spirit will remain - the impalpable principle of life and thought, pure as when it left the Creator to inspire the creature; whence it came it will return, perhaps again to be communicated to some being higher than man - perhaps to pass through gradations of glory, from pale human soul to brighten to the seraph! (1.7.70)

Fascinatingly, Helen seems to be a living embodiment of the biblical precept given from Christ’s Sermon on the Mount in which he said to his followers: “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek

also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well” (NIV Bible, Matt.5.38-40).

Helen’s miraculous ability to forgive mistreatment, or “those who have trespassed against [her]” as it were, comes from an ideology that would not have been taught in the Haworth Parsonage: Christian universalism. Christian universalism, also known as universal salvation, is the belief that all souls will be reconciled with Christ no matter how sinful or if they ever sought to know Christ and that all will ultimately achieve salvation (Schwarz). This is in direct contradiction with the prevailing Christian belief among mainstream Victorian Anglicans that held that true believers had to pray to receive forgiveness from Christ in order to be redeemed. Christian universalism would have been especially unusual at the Lowood School with its headmaster Mr Brocklehurst, modeled on the Anglican reverend and Clergy Daughters’ School founder William Carus Wilson, who had very strong Calvinist inclinations (Alexander and Smith). Helen goes on to further explain this belief that all of mankind is redeemable:

I hold another creed, which no one ever taught me, and which I seldom mention, but in which I delight, and to which I cling, for it extends hope to all; it makes eternity a rest - a mighty home, not a terror and an abyss. Besides, with this creed, I can so clearly distinguish between the criminal and his crime, I can so sincerely forgive the first while I abhor the last with this creed, revenge never worries my heart, degradation never too deeply disgusts me, injustice never crushes me too low; I live in calm, looking to the end. (1.6.70)

Where does Helen gain this belief in universal salvation? Is it an innate wisdom that comes to one when they are close to death, and thus closer to the Kingdom of God? It

may be so, for Helen's death is close when she shares her personal theology with Jane.

Helen Burns is so emblematic of the Victorian idea of tuberculosis acting as a method of spiritual distillation that scholar Stevie Davies believes that even her surname of "Burns" points to this concept, with fire and burning being a means of purification (551). Purification through fire is a Biblical theme that Charlotte Brontë would have been familiar with, so the use of "Burns" as an appellation with double-meaning for the devout Helen is not a farfetched assumption. Matthew 3:11-12 speaks to the holiness of fire when John the Baptist foretells of the coming of the Holy Ghost as a flame that will cleanse the world:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (KJV)

The notion that consumptives would exemplify of a fiery purification that brings its sufferers closer to God can be seen in the term "consumption" itself. Verse 12:29 of the Book of Hebrews even describes God as being a "consuming fire" (KJV) "Consume", as evidenced from the Biblical use is predominantly associated with fire and immolation, so the description of a tubercular individual as being a "consumptive" who was totally consumed by the flame of a disease that burns away the body is apt. In naming Helen Burns, Charlotte Brontë underlines the Divine origin of tuberculosis as mechanism for achieving righteousness.

Jane Eyre's arrival in winter at the Lowood School is followed by a spring that brings death and misery to the school's pupils. Jane tells readers that "fog-bred pestilence [...] which quickening with the quickening of spring, crept into the Orphan Asylum, breathed typhus through its crowded schoolroom and dormitory, and ere May arrived, transformed the seminary into a hospital" (1.8.91):

Helen was ill at the present: for some weeks she had been removed from my sight to I knew not what room upstairs. She was not, I was told, in the hospital portion of the house with the fever patients; for her complaint was consumption, not typhus: and by consumption I, in my ignorance, understood something mild, which time and care would be sure to alleviate. (1.9.93)

Unfortunately for poor Jane, Helen was not to recover. Jane's first thought of death comes when she realizes a doctor has been called to attend a student, which means that student must be close to death; Jane thinks to herself: "How sad to be lying on a sick-bed, and to be in danger of dying! This world is pleasant - it would be dreary to be called from it, and to have to go who knows where?" (1.9.94). Even after Helen's assurance to Jane that there is indeed a heaven and that all will be allowed in, Jane still has doubts. When Jane realizes that "Helen Burns was numbering her last days in this world, and that she was going to be taken to the region of spirits, if such region there were" (1.9.95), she is devastated and struck with an urgent need to see and speak with Helen before she passes. It is in this last meeting between the two that Helen affirms the Victorian belief that death from tuberculosis is painless:

I am very happy, Jane; and when you hear that I am dead, you must be sure and not grieve: there is nothing to grieve about. We all must die one day, and the

illness which is removing me is not painful; it is gentle and gradual: my mind is at rest. (1.9.97)

The reality, of course, is that Helen was slowly being deprived of oxygen from her scarred and phlegm-filled lungs, less and less able to breathe, no matter how hard they labored. Helen's unshakeable faith is the last thing she ever speaks of when Jane questions her about where she will go after death:

'But where are you going to, Helen? Can you see? Do you know?'

'I believe; I have faith: I am going to God.'

'Where is God? What is God?'

'My Maker and yours, who will never destroy what He created. I rely implicitly on His power, and confide wholly in His goodness: I count the hours till that eventful one arrives which shall restore me to Him, reveal Him to me.'

'You are sure then, Helen, Helen, that there is such a places as heaven; and that our souls can get to it when we die?'

'I am sure there is a future state; I believe God is good; I can resign my immortal part to Him without any misgivings. God is my father; God is my friend: I love Him; I believe he loves me.'

'And shall I see you again, Helen, when I die?'

'You will come to the same region of happiness: be received by the same mighty, universal Parent, no doubt, dear Jane.' (1.9.101)

This exchange affirms Helen Burns' unwavering belief in not only her own salvation but that of all mankind with her use of the term "universal Parent." Tuberculosis served as a spirit-making disease that gently ushered Helen, and many others both fictional and real,

into God's waiting embrace. In *Romanticism and Colonial Disease*, Alan Bewell sums up the Victorian understanding of tuberculosis as a disease that separates one's body from the spirit in a refining process: "Consumptives occupied a threshold state between life and death and were often said to pass out of this world with such ease that neither the victim nor those looking on could discern when the boundary had been crossed" (1.15.185).

Indeed, Jane fails to notice the moment of Helen's death as they sleep side-by-side: "Miss Temple, on returning to her own room at dawn, had found me laid in a little crib; my face against Helen Burn's shoulder, my arms around her neck. I was asleep, and Helen was - dead" (1.9.98).

When readers next meet Jane, she is an individual certain of her Christian faith. As a token of the faith that Helen has inspired within her, Jane, in adulthood and after most events of the novel, in return gifts Helen a gravestone to mark her burial place that bears the simple inscription of her name and the phrase "Resurgam" (1.9.98), Latin for "I shall rise again." It seems a fitting epitaph for one so certain that she would continue on after death in the Christian tradition.

It is understandable that Charlotte Brontë would view this terrible disease as being painless and giving victims religious clarity, after she witnessed her saintly sister Maria succumb to it (Barker). This belief in consumption having the capacity to confer heavenly insight is encapsulated in Helen's remonstrance of Jane for her focus on worldly love rather than the eventual realization of Divine love:

'Hush Jane! you think too much of the love of human beings; you are too impulsive, too vehement: the sovereign hand that created your frame, and put life

into it, has provided you with other resources than your feeble self, or than creatures feeble as you, Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits: that world is round us, for it is everywhere; and those spirits watch us; and if we are dying and in pain and shame, if scorn smote us on all sides, and hatred crushed us, angels see our tortures, recognise our innocence (if innocent we be: as I know you are of this charge which Mr Brocklehurst has weakly and pompously repeated at second hand from Mrs Reed; for I read a sincere nature in your ardent eyes and on your clear front), and God waits only the separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward. Why, then, should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness—to glory?’ (1.8.85)

Helen Burns is an embodiment of the consummate Christian who has absolute faith in a life after death with a loving God in heaven and, therefore, has no need for earthly fulfillment. Her death from consumption is thus less tragic, as it is simply a mean to a glorious end. The portrayal of Helen Burns would have been in perfect alignment with the perception that the British had of tuberculosis and its victims nineteenth century, and it may have also served as a comfort to those like Brontë, who had lost a loved one to the extremely pervasive disease that dispatched one in four British citizens.

CHAPTER 4:

RELIGIOUS LEADERS VS. HELEN BURNS

If a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl is the ultimate religious authority in *Jane Eyre*, what are readers to make of the men, Mr. Brocklehurst and St. John Rivers, formally recognized by the Church of England as extensions of the episcopacy and, thus, acting *In persona Christi* when ministering to their flocks? As the child of an Anglican clergyman, Charlotte Brontë was well versed in the doctrine and inner workings of the Victorian Church of England and in Christian thought and theology as a whole. In *The Brontës and Religion*, Marianne Thormählen states that the “spiritual elements that were present in Haworth Parsonage can be viewed as microcosmic representations of religious currents in Britain from 1800 to 1850 (13). Charlotte Brontë’s religious acumen is apparent in both her novels and personal writings. While her personal relationships with men of the cloth make the negative depictions of Mr Brocklehurst and Mr Rivers seem contradictory and perhaps even as indictments of those men in her life, Brontë’s awareness and comprehension of matters of faith and the cultural attitudes towards tuberculosis makes the depiction of clergymen in the novel clearer.

The Reverend Mr Brocklehurst, the first of the two religious functionaries introduced in the novel, is categorically a villain. Mr Brocklehurst is the despotic and greedy “treasurer and manager” (1.5.58) of the Lowood School before eventually being demoted due to mismanagement and the resultant typhus outbreak there. The

conversation between him and young Jane when he arrives to interview her before she leaves Gateshead shows that ten-year-old Jane's Christian faith is lacking the

religious zeal that she would demonstrate after being converted by Helen Burns, and that Mr Brocklehurst's faith is one of fire and brimstone rather than love and service. When Mr Brocklehurst asks Jane if she is "a good child" (1.4.35) and Mrs. Reed denies that Jane is, Mr Brocklehurst warns Jane that she faces eternal damnation:

‘Children younger than you die daily. I buried a little child of five years old only a day or two since,—a good little child, whose soul is now in heaven. It is to be feared the same could not be said of you, were you called hence.’ (1.4.36)

Mr Brocklehurst's version of Christianity is in direct opposition to Helen Burns'—in Mr Brocklehurst's faith, one turns to God out of fear of being cast into a pit of hellfire and "burning there for ever" (Brontë 35) after death; whereas in Helen's faith, mankind should be unafraid of death, because it is a "certain [...] entrance to happiness [and] glory" (1.8.85). Mr Brocklehurst is in direct opposition to the First Epistle of John wherein the author is instructing early Christians on how they may ascertain whether their faith is true:

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

(1 John 4:16—18)

Mr Brocklehurst taught the fear of death where Helen, whose death is imminent, taught Jane that death was to be wholeheartedly embraced. Mr Brocklehurst's focus on fear over

love mimicked the Calvinist teachings that were being endorsed by many in the Anglican Church (Goroncy; Thormählen). Calvinist doctrine holds that man is born either unconditionally destined for heaven or hell with no allowance made for free will:

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.

(Chapter 21, Section 5)

This belief is in direct contradiction with that of Helen Burns that all were destined for Heaven. It is unsurprising that Calvinism would be condemned by Charlotte Brontë, as she had been inculcated with strident belief in the invalidity and wrongness of Calvinism by her father, an Evangelical who upheld the Wesleyan Methodist tradition (Thormählen; Barker). The Evangelical movement, which was the “predominant religious current in the Church of England” (Thormählen 15) during Patrick Brontë’s religious education, holds that “true holiness lay in becoming a new creation through faith in Jesus Christ” (Hutchinson & Wolffe 1). With faith alone being necessary to salvation in the Evangelical view, the opposition to Calvinist predetermination is evident. The Protestant and intra-Anglican schism between predetermination and free grace was further delineated in Wesleyan Methodism. Wesleyan Methodism, a theology that arose from the Evangelical Awakening of the eighteenth century, put forth the teachings of Jacobus Arminius that were formed as a direct challenge to the Calvinist tenet of

predetermination in favor of the belief in free will (Campbell). As a believer in the concept of 'free grace', Charlotte Brontë's uses Calvinism to signify that Brocklehurst does not have true faith in God as one of the born-again. Readers can see Mr Brocklehurst's Calvinist doctrine laid bare when he rebukes Miss Temple for not having shorn one of the pupil's curly hair:

'Madam,' he pursued, 'I have a Master to serve whose kingdom is not of this world: my mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh; to teach them to clothe themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel; and each of the young persons before us has a string of hair twisted in plaits which vanity itself might have woven.' (1.7.78)

In this statement, Mr Brocklehurst demonstrates the Calvinist tenet that mankind is totally depraved and that any good done by man is only possible through God. The Calvinist Point of Faith regarding total depravity comes from John Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* [*Institutes of the Christian Religion*], a defining text for Protestantism:

For our nature is not only utterly devoid of goodness, but so prolific in all kinds of evil, that it can never be idle. Those who term it concupiscence use a word not very inappropriate, provided it were added, (this, however, many will by no means concede,) that everything which is in man, from the intellect to the will, from the soul even to the flesh, is defiled and pervaded with this concupiscence; or, to express it more briefly, that the whole man is in himself nothing else than concupiscence. (Book 2, Chapter 1, Section 8)

With this statement guiding Calvin's adherents, it is easier to understand how Mr Brocklehurst treated his pupils so harshly—depravity was their inheritance as the descendants of Adam and the Original sin. However, the desire to raise children with stringent morality was not unique to strict Calvinists, as many Evangelical parents and guardians “regarded themselves as divinely-appointed spiritual advisors [who] adopted priestly roles towards their children” and were tasked with guarding against “the irregularities of children [as they] were inherently hateful as offenses against God [and would] incur divine punishment” (Rosman 71).

Charlotte Brontë's thoughts on Calvinism may have shaped her negative portrayal of Mr Brocklehurst, but her main aim was, undoubtedly, to show that even purported men of faith could be corrupt. She unequivocally states this was the case in the preface dated 21 December 1847 from the second edition of the novel, while also condemning a “narrow human doctrine” that only served to “elate and magnify a few” i.e. Calvinism:

Conventionality is morality. Self-righteousness is not religion. To attach the first is not to assail the last. To pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee, its not to lift an impious hand to the Crown of Thorns. These things and deeds are diametrically: they are as distinct as is vice from virtue. Men too often confound them; they should not be confounded: appearance should not be mistaken for truth; narrow human doctrines, that only tend to elate and magnify a few, should not be substituted for the world-redeeming creed of Christ. There is—I repeat it—a difference; and it is a good, and not bad action to mark broadly and clearly the line of separation between them. (i)

Mr Brocklehurst lacks many of the Christian values that a minister should have; in fact, his defining trait is hypocrisy. While he preaches simplicity to the point of deprivation for the pupils in his keeping in regards to food and clothing, his wife and daughters show how he fails to ‘practice what he preaches’:

Mr Brocklehurst was here interrupted: three other visitors, ladies, now entered the room. They ought to have come a little sooner to have heard his lecture on dress, for they were splendidly attired in velvet, silk, and furs. The younger two of the trio (fine girls of sixteen and seventeen) had gray beaver hats, then in fashion, shaded with ostrich plus, and from under the brim of this graceful headdress fell a profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled; the elder lady was enveloped in a costly velvet shawl, trimmed with ermine, and she wore a false front of French curls. (1.7.79)

If Helen is more spirit than flesh, then Mr. Brocklehurst must be her opposite due to his embrace of earthly comforts. The contrast between the teachings of Mr. Brocklehurst and his lived reality can be seen as an allegory for the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican from Luke 18:9-14 in a lesson taught by Christ is recounted:

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted themselves that they were righteous, and desired others. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed this with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would lift up so much as his eyes

unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (KJV)

The Pharisaic Mr Brocklehurst embraces a legalistic view of the Bible rather than a spiritual one that would have him extend God's grace. His sanctimoniousness is amplified further when he accuses Jane of being of being "servant and agent" (1.7.80) of "the Evil One" (1.7.80) with the hypocrisy of his wife and children's dress in full view:

'My dear children,' pursued the black marble clergyman, with pathos, 'this is a sad, melancholy occasion; for it becomes my duty to warn you, that this girl, who might be one of God's own lambs, is a little castaway: not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien. You must be on your guard against her; you must shun her example: if necessary, avoid her company, exclude her from your sports, and shut her out from your converse. Teachers, you must watch her: keep your eye on her movements, weigh well her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul: if, indeed such salvation be possible, for (my tongue falters while I tell it) this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayer to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut—this girl is—a liar!' (1.7.81)

It is obvious why Jane Eyre would turn to the kind and understanding Helen Burns with her inalienable belief in Jane's goodness and eventual salvation, rather than the cruel, self-righteous Mr Brocklehurst, when in need of succor. Indeed, following the

verbal attack by Mr Brocklehurst, Jane wishes for the comfort of Helen: “so overwhelming was the grief that seized me, I sank prostrate with my face to the ground. Now I wept: Helen Burns was not here; nothing sustained me” (1.8.82).

Roughly a decade after her first encounter with Mr Brocklehurst, Jane Eyre meets another cleric in the form of the complicated St. John Rivers. His physical appearance, age, personality, and even preaching style are completely unlike Mr Brocklehurst’s, but he, too, batters Jane’s soul. He is a Greek statue to Mr. Brocklehurst’s “black marble” (1.7.81):

Had he been a statue instead of a man, he could not have been easier. He was young—perhaps from twenty-eight to thirty—tall, slender; his face riveted the eye; it was like a Greek face, very pure in outline; quite a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin. It is seldom, indeed, an English face comes so near the antique models as did his. (2.29.139)

While he made be made of cold, unyielding stone like Mr Brocklehurst, he seemingly fully lives out the beliefs he espouses from the pulpit. Jane is given her first chance to assess the character of St. John Rivers when she attends one of his sermons soon after arriving at the Moor House:

It began calm—and indeed, as far as delivery and pitch of voice went, it was calm to the end: an earnestly felt, yet strictly restrained zeal breather soon in the distinct accents, and prompted the nervous language. This grew to force—compressed, condensed, controlled. The heart was thrilled, the mind astonished, by the power of the preacher: neither were softened. Throughout there was a

strange bitterness; an absence of consolatory gentleness: stern allusions to Calvinistic doctrines—election, predestination, reprobation—were frequent; and each reference to these points sounded like a sentence pronounced for doom. When he had done, instead of feeling better, calmer, more enlightened by his discourse, I experienced an inexpressible sadness; for it seemed to me—I know not whether equally so to others—that the eloquence to which I had been listening had sprung from a depth where lay turbid dregs of disappointment—where moved troubling impulses of insatiate yearnings and disquieting aspirations. I was sure St. John Rivers—pure-lived, conscientious, zealous as he was—had not found that peace of God, which passeth all understanding: he had no more found it, I thought, than had I; with my concealed and racking regrets for my broken idol and lost elysium [...] (2.30.150)

Jane immediately recognizes that, for all of his piety, St John Rivers does not have the same calm certitude of eternal life that Helen Burns' faith gave her. Jane found comfort in the teachings of Helen Burns but is unable to do so in those of St John Rivers, which fail to "soften" the heart or mind.

St John Rivers resembles Helen Burns the most in his abjuration of a worldly life, as seen in his against warning to Jane to not waste "the talents which God has committed to [Jane's] keeping" (2.31.201-202):

[T]ry to restrain the disproportionate fervour with which you throw yourself into common-place home pleasures. Don't cling so tenaciously to ties of the

flesh; save your constancy and ardour for an adequate cause; forbear to waste them on trite transient objects. (2.31.202)

St John Rivers fully rejects “ties of the flesh” (2.31.202) for himself, as evidenced by his leaving behind his family and home, denying his attraction to the beautiful Rosamond, and the rest of his life in England behind to go be a missionary in India. Notwithstanding his renunciation of his life in England and physical being—for he knows that he will die in India, St. John’s motives can not be seen as entirely pure and selfless. When speaking of what drives him, St. John describes himself thusly:

Reason, and not Feeling, is my guide: my ambition is unlimited; my desire to rise higher, to do more than other, insatiable. I honour endurance, perseverance, industry, talent; because these are the means by which men achieve great ends, and mount to lofty eminence. (1.32.180)

Unfortunately, St John does not limit the lack of feeling to himself and his individual ambition, as we see in his treatment of Jane, a person who is guided by feeling.

In his role as minister, St John Rivers pushes Jane to aspire to the level of abnegation that he himself is striving toward. This becomes clear in his treatment of her, and, so, Jane shares how this pressure has begun to affect her:

[...] I daily wished more to please him: but to do so, I felt daily more and more that must disown hard my nature, stifle hang my faculties, wrest my tastes from their original bent, force myself to the adoption of pursuits which I had no natural vocation. He wanted to train me to an elevation that I could never reach; it racked me hourly to aspire to the standard he uplifted. (2.34.212)

St John's urging of Jane to accede to his wishes from a pure and unselfish desire to guide her to her Heavenly reward, as he was desirous of a "help-meet and fellow labourer" (2.34.216) in the form of a wife to join him in India in order to care for him and his household as that 'help-meet.' It seems none of his impulses for his God-given mission are unprofaned by his worldly desires. He has admittedly sought to manipulate Jane as her "tractability" (2.34.218), or specifically his ability to bend her will to his, "interested him" (2.34.218). When Jane begs for mercy after St. John makes clear his desire that Jane marry him and to join him in India, he ignores her plea and arrogantly speaks for both God and Jane's own heart:

'God and nature intended you for a missionary's wife. It is not personal, but mental endowments they have given you: you are formed for labour, not love. A missionary's wife you must—shall be. You shall be mine: I claim you—not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service.' (2.34.216)

Jane tries to please St John by agreeing to join him in India while also retaining her sense of self by not marrying him. He refuses this compromise. Jane refutes St John's assertion that God's will is for her to travel to India with St John as his wife:

'God did not give me my life to throw away; and to do as you wish me would, I begin to think, almost to do as you wish me would, be almost equivalent to committing suicide. Moreover, before I definitively resolve on quitting England, I will know for certain, whether I cannot be of greater use by remaining in it than by leaving it.' (2.35.233-233)

Here, Jane is stating that God may wish her to remain in England and help Rochester

achieve redemption. If Jane Eyre were to marry St John Rivers, she would cease to exist as an individual, as demonstrated in St John's proclamation, "A part of me you must become" (2.34.224). After experiencing love with Rochester, Jane is unable to reconcile herself to marrying St John. When he claims that "enough of love follow upon marriage to render the union right even in [Jane's] eyes" (2.34.225), Jane replies, "'I scorn your idea of love'" (2.34.225).

St. John's complete disregard for love is worrisome when viewed in relation to the scripture in 1 Corinthians that speaks of the importance of love:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. (KJV 1 Corinthians 13:1-8)

St John Rivers has been gifted with an abundance of knowledge and even a faith that "moves mountains," or removes all obstacles, but he apparently lacks the capacity to

love. He is described as being “cold” roughly half-a-dozen times, “hard” at least eight times, and resembling “stone” three times—these qualities are extended to his heart which cannot love. St John continues pressuring her to become his wife and fellow missionary and demands a reason for her refusal, which causes Jane to tell him, “‘If I were to marry you, you would kill me. You are killing me now’” (2.35.230). Jane begins to doubt her resolve to not give in to St John Rivers’ desires when he, again, usurps biblical text for his own means. While leading the Moor House residents in prayer one evening, he chooses a selection from the Book of Revelation to evince a fear of damnation in Jane if she does not submit to him:

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21:7-8 KJV)

This tactic of self-serving biblical exegesis begins to work on Jane where St. John’s outright demands had failed.

Reaching a crisis-point when overwhelmed by St John’s insistence on her becoming a missionary, Jane pleads with God for clarity on what she should do: “I sincerely, deeply, fervently longed to do what was right; and only that. ‘Shew me, shew me the path!’ I entreated of Heaven” (2.35.239). God seems to answer Jane’s prayers when she experiences an “inexpressible feeling [in her heart] that thrilled it through, and passed at once to [her] head and extremities” (2.35.240) that “was not like an electric

shock; but it was quite as sharp, as strange, as startling: it acted on my senses as if their utmost activity hitherto had been but torpor; from which they were now summoned, and forced to wake” (2.35.240). In what has to be viewed as a moment of divine intervention or a miracle, Jane then hears the disembodied voice of Mr Rochester calling out to her. In removing the intercession of faith leaders and speaking directly to God, Jane is, again, embracing the In this moment, Jane places her fate in the hands of God, as Helen Burns had taught her roughly a decade before at the Lowood School

CHAPTER 5:

ADAPTING HELEN BURN'S THEOLOGY

Jane Eyre seemingly takes Helen Burn's teachings to heart and uses them throughout the rest of the novel. When Jane arrives at the Lowood School, her only exposure to Christianity in the Reed household has left her fearing that only the avoidance of death altogether will keep her from the pits of hell. She is uncertain in matters of faith when first arriving at the school. Even in the face of Mr Brocklehurst's theology of fear, readers can see that Helen's conversion of Jane to Christianity was successful when the tale jumps eight years into the future where Jane desires leave the Lowood School and prays to be freed:

I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seem[ed] scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it and framed a humbler supplication; for change, stimulus: that petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space; 'Then,' I cried, half desperate, 'Grant me at least a new servitude!'

(1.10.106)

It is telling that Jane turns immediately to prayer to remedy her situation, when in the very beginning of the novel Jane's response to questioning about how she will avert damnation to hell is "to keep in good health, and not die" (1.4.36) rather than through salvation via Christ. Jane's prayers for servitude are answered when she is employed by Mr Rochester to serve as a governess to his ward Adèle at Thornfield Hall. Jane's

answered prayer would also serve as spiritual impetus for Mr Rochester that would lead

to the redemption of his soul. However, Jane Eyre's embrace of Helen's theology is limited—she does not adhere to the concept of universal salvation nor is she able, or willing, to completely embrace Helen's beliefs when it comes to self-abnegation. Even with her incomplete faith, Jane Eyre serves as a missionary in carrying forth Helen Burns' theology as seen in the conversion of Mr Rochester, who undergoes purification through literal fire.

Jane Eyre's Christian faith is most apparent when it comes to her dealings with Mr Rochester. Jane turns to God upon discovering Mr Rochester's duplicity concerning his wife Bertha, secreted in the attic; Jane describes how she finds solace at her lowest:

Self-abandoned, relaxed, and effortless, I seemed to have laid me down in the dried-up bed of a great river; I heard a flood loosened in remote mountains, and felt the torrent come: to rise I had no will, to flee I had no strength. I lay faint; longing to be dead. One idea only throbbed life-like within me—a remembrance of God: it begot an unuttered prayer: these words went wandering up and down in my rayless mind, as something that should be whispered; but no energy was found to express them:—‘Be not far from me, for trouble is near: there is none to help.’

(2.26.75)

The invocation of Psalm 22:11, a hymn that was sang by King David when he cried out for God to save him from his enemies and feels that all hope is lost, is especially poignant in this moment. Jane then hears a voice—thought to be her conscience but maybe a higher power—that tells her that she must leave Thornfield Hall so that she can avoid being “thrust [...] down to unsound depths of agony” (Brontë 2.27.76). Marianne

Thormählen argues that Helen taught Jane that the conscience has a Divine origin when she says, “If all the world hated you, and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved you, and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends” (Brontë 1.8.85). Thormählen points to Helen’s subsequent remark as evidence for this claim: “[T]he sovereign hand that created your frame, and put life into it, has provided you with other resources than your feeble self, or than creatures feeble as you”(1.8.85). When Jane does as her conscience orders and tells Mr Rochester that she must leave him and Thornfield Hall, they have the following exchange:

‘What shall I do, Jane? Where to turn for a companion, and for some hope?’

‘Do as I do: trust in God and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet again there.’

‘Then you will not yield?’

‘No.’

‘Then you condemn me to live wretched, and to die accursed?’ His voice rose.

‘I advise you to live sinless; and I wish you to die tranquil.’ (2.27.101)

Jane’s belief that they shall meet again in heaven is not shared by Mr Rochester at this moment, but her surety that they can be reunited after death speaks volumes, since she finds leaving her beloved torturous and does not wish to be separated from him. Jane’s precipitate departure from Thornfield Hall tests her faith. Jane wanders aimlessly after leaving and claims that “God must have led [her] on” (2.27.108). She takes a coach with a direction unknown to her for two days before being deposited on a moor near small village of Whitcross with no money or connections to help her find lodgings. This

desolate situation leaves her sleeping outdoors for two days without repast, but Jane manages to find divinity when all alone on the moors overnight:

We know that God is everywhere; but certainly we feel His presence most when His works are on the grandest scale spread before us: and it is in the unenclosed night-sky, where His worlds wheel in the silent course, that we read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence. I had risen to my knees to pray for Mr Rochester. Looking up, I, with tear-dimmed eyes, saw the mighty milky-way. Remembering what it was—what countless systems there swept space like a soft trace of light—I felt the might and strength of God. Sure I was of His efficiency to save what He had made: convinced I grew that neither earth should perish, nor one of the souls it treasured. I turned my prayer to thanksgiving: the Source of Life was also the Saviour of spirits. Mr Rochester was safe: he was God's and by God would he be guarded. I again nestled to the breast of the hill; and ere long, in sleep, forgot sorrow. (Brontë 2.28.113)

Jane's ability to give thanks to God even when her situation is so dire is further demonstration that she has been completely transformed by faith since her childhood. An impressive instance of realized belief occurs when Jane Eyre has reached her lowest point alone and hungry in the wilderness—she is guided by a star to the home of the Rivers siblings where she is welcomed. This celestial guidance is, of course, reminiscent of the Magi being guided to the stable in Bethlehem where the Christ had been born. With all of this intractable belief in Christianity on display, it is not surprising that Providence seemingly answers Jane Eyre when she begs Heaven to “shew [her] the path” (Brontë

2.35.239) she should take. With Almighty God having pointed Jane Eyre towards Mr Rochester, Jane's belief that joining with Rochester in the sacrament of marriage is as divine as the noble missionary life she would have with St John Rivers is sound. This equivalency is obvious in her unspoken rejoinder to St. John after his urging her yet again to submit to his scheme:

'My spirit,' I answered, mentally, 'is willing to do what is right; and my flesh, I hope is strong enough to accomplish the will of Heaven, when once that will is made distinctly clear to me. At any rate, it shall be strong enough to search—inquire—to grope and outlet from this cloud of doubt, and find the open day of certainty.' (Brontë 2.36.242)

This passage illustrates the difference between the personal doctrine of Helen Burns and that of her acolyte Jane Eyre. Helen's faith required a complete surrender to a higher power with a total abdication of the world and the body needed to navigate it, whereas Jane's understanding of religious purpose allows for the possibility that God works in concert with the believer at times and desires His creations to enjoy the life He has given them. Jane manages to balance the extreme submission of Helen that relegated her to a solely spiritual creature to one with the desire to live in the world—Jane embodies that faith.

In Mr Rochester, we see a man who like Helen was burned, although his purification through fire was literal whereas hers was consumption, burning away her body from within. Mr Rochester is too much of the world, so his being met with flame produces a man who is balanced between the worldly realm and the spiritual one. Mr.

Rochester describes to Jane how the fire at Thornfield, which left him a blind amputee, is the impetus for him turning to God where he had previously spurned the very idea:

‘Jane! you think me, I daresay, an irreligious dog: but my heart swells with gratitude to the beneficent God of this earth just now. He sees not as man sees, but far clearer: judges not as man judges, but far more wisely. I did wrong: I would have sullied my innocent flower—breathed guilt on its purity: the Omnipotent snatched it from me. I, in my stiff-necked rebellion, almost cursed the dispensation: instead of bending to the decree, I defied it. Divine justice pursued its course; disasters came thick on me: I was forced to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. *His* chastisements are mighty; and one smote me which has humbled me for ever. You know I was once proud of my strength: but what is it now, when I must give it over to foreign guidance, as a child does its weakness? Of late, Jane—only—only of late I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconcilment with my Maker. I began to sometimes pray: very brief prayers they were, but very sincere. (2.37.275276)

It seems that the ability to inspire belief within Jane also allowed Helen to indirectly inspire the same with Mr. Rochester, as he was a convert of her convert. Of course, Mr. Rochester’s belief seems to share the commonality of allowing its adherents to take part in the world with Jane’s adaptation.

The portrayal of Helen Burns as religious mystic who has been purified by tuberculosis allows Charlotte Brontë to use the cultural conception of that disease to

create a double in Mr Rochester—a second figure in the novel who finds grace through a fiery purification. The salvation of Mr Rochester makes *Jane Eyre* a Christian parable appropriate for the Victorian Era with its combination of cultural conceits of disease and the powerful force of sentimentality.

CHAPTER 6:

CONCLUSION

Jane Eyre became an instant bestseller upon its publication, and it remains one of the most well-read and well-beloved romances in the Western literary canon having remained in print since its first publication in 1847. The novel's timelessness belies the fact that it serves as an artifact of medical historiography; the novel imparts an understanding of the Victorian view of tuberculosis in a time immediately before its mysteries would be solved. Cultural perceptions of tuberculosis and its causes varied not only across the globe but nation to nation within Europe, so tuberculosis' ability to act as a spirit-making disease in Great Britain and the English-speaking world is not only unique to a time but to certain locations, as well.

Perhaps the British preoccupation and understanding of tuberculosis is what inspired Robert Koch to isolate the bacteria responsible for infection. With the cause of tuberculosis known, tuberculosis lost its association with divinity and became a disease that led its sufferers to be shunned. Tuberculosis patients were locked away from the public in sanatoriums, which for the poor meant being imprisoned in hospitals that were comparable to jails (Dubos & Dubos). The British government even proclaimed consumption to be a 'notifiable disease' that made the infected legally required to report their illness to the government in order to protect their fellow citizens. The rapid shift in

the Victorian view of tuberculosis that happened in the fifty years that followed the novel's publication makes the novel as useful tool for examining the recent history of this millennia old disease.

Understanding disease through a literary—or a narrative—lens not only provides insight into the past, but it can allow physicians to treat their patients more effectively. In a move to combat the coldness of modern Western medicine's unilateral reliance on biomedicine, a movement for 'narrative-based medicine' has developed in many American medical schools (Lijoi; Morris; Zaharias). Proponents of narrative-based medicine claim that "narrative knowledge and skills have the power to improve healthcare by increasing the accuracy and scope of clinicians' knowledge of their patients and deepening the therapeutic partnerships they are able to form" (Charon 1). Doctors can learn from the stories the ill and afflicted tell and use that knowledge to better cure disease and provide treatment. By reading *Jane Eyre* as an illness-narrative and artifact of historical understanding of disease, members of the formal medical establishment can see how the cultural understanding of disease impacts the spread of contagion, medical treatment—or lack thereof—of the afflicted, and the place in society that the ill inhabit. A fuller understanding of disease outside of the immediate effects on the human body is necessary to mitigate future epidemics.

Helen Burns' role as religious mystic with elevated spiritual understanding thanks to purifying powers of tuberculosis contravenes another popular Victorian depiction tuberculosis, which understood the disease as one that afflicted the morally corrupt. For Victorians, "the consumptive female [had the potential] to become threateningly sexual,

contaminating, and dangerous” (Byrne 34) in a parallel of the cultural “dichotomy that surrounded *all* Victorian [...] women, constructing them as part angel, part whore” (Byrne 34). Consumption was often employed by Victorian novelists as a tool to purify fallen women before their inevitable death. David S. Barnes describes Alexandre Dumas *filis’ La Dame aux Camélias*, a novel that epitomizes the trope of a fallen woman achieving redemption through tuberculosis , “as perhaps the consummate expression of the nineteenth-century ideal,” (Barnes 52), writing:

Alexandre Dumas *filis* brings together all the elements through which tuberculosis conveyed an idealized image of femininity in the nineteenth-century: the disease’s wasting effect on the body is portrayed as enhancing feminine beauty; the fallen woman is paradoxically depicted as more virtuous than the “respectable citizens around her; the impossibility of pure love in an imperfect world propels the tragic inevitability of the plot; and the heroine is finally redeemed through suffering and death. The consumptive courtesan Marguerite Gautier comes to represent Everywoman, required to be both virtuous and alluring, compelled to find identity in worldly suffering and the promise of otherworldly redemption. (52)

Tuberculosis serves as a means for redemption for the fallen women of countless nineteenth-century novels, including Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, George du Maurier’s *Trilby*, Mrs. Humphrey Ward’s *Eleanor*, and Ellen Woods’s *East Lynne*. Each tubercular heroine is ultimately redeemed through their disease and dies sanctified. Helen Burns from these women in that she did not fall from grace before she was sanctified by

consumption. Like Christ or the virgin martyrs of the Catholic Church, Helen Burns' suffering and death after leading a blameless life serves to redeem others.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Work

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Vintage Classics, 2009.

Secondary Works

Alexander, Christine and Margaret Smith. "Revd William Cards Wilson (1791-1859).

The Oxford Companion to the Brontës, 2011. *Oxford Reference*, https://pascal-usc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01PASCAL_USCCOL/1brpj2a/cdi_ouporo_10_1093_acref_9780198662181_013_0212.

Barnes, David S. *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France*. University of California Press, 1995.

Behr, Marcel A., et al. "Revisiting the Timetable of Tuberculosis." *The British Medical Journal*, vol. 362, 2018, pp. 2738. *PubMed Central*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6105930/>.

Bewell, Alan. *Romanticism and the Colonial Disease*. John Hopkins UP, 2000.

Birch, Dinah. "Rasselas." *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 2009.

Blotch, Donald G. "Evangelicalism." *Dialog: A Journal of Theology*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2008, pp. 16-20. *EBSCOhost*, https://pascal-usc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01PASCAL_USCCOL/1brpj2a/cdi_proquest_jfurnals_202933341.

Borgdorff, Martien J, et al. Natural History of Tuberculosis: Duration and Fatality of Untreated Pulmonary Tuberculosis in HIV Negative Patients: A Systematic

Review.” *PLOS One*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2011, pp. e117601. *PubMed Central*,

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3070694>.

Brontë, Charlotte. Letter to William S. Williams of Smith, Elder & Co. 28 October 1847.

Henry H. Bonnell Collection, MS MA 2696.34. The Morgan Library & Museum.

Manuscript. <https://www.themorgan.org/collection/charlotte-bronte/letters/2>

Brontë, Charlotte. Letter to Williams S. Williams, of Smith, Elder & Co. 5 November

1849. *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle*, edited by Clement K. Shorter, 2006, p.

358. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/19011/19011-h/19011-h.htm>

Brontë, Patrick. Letter to Elizabeth Gaskell. 20 June 1855. Elizabeth Gaskell Collection,

University MSS EL B121 F/3. The University of Manchester Library.

Manuscript.

<https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Gaskell2~91~1~21129~163334>

Calvin, John. *Institutes of Christian Religion*. Project Gutenberg, 26 Jan 2021,

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/64392>.

Campbell, Ted A. *Wesleyan Beliefs: Formal and Popular Expressions of the Core Beliefs*

of Wesleyan Communities. Abingdon Press, 2010. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/southcarolina/detail.action?docID=3039216>

Charon, Rita, et al. *The Principles and Practice of Narrative Medicine*. Oxford UP, 2016.

“Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics.” Harvard Library’s Curiosity

Collection, [https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/contagion/feature/tuberculosis-in-](https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/contagion/feature/tuberculosis-in-europe-and-north-america-1800-1922)

[europe-and-north-america-1800-1922](https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/contagion/feature/tuberculosis-in-europe-and-north-america-1800-1922).

Doppler, Johannes F. and Paul N. Newton. “A Systematic Review of the Untreated

- Mortality of Murine Typhus.” *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, vol. 14, no. 9, 2020, pp. e0008641. *PLOS*, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32925913/>.
- Drife, James Owen. “Saving Charlotte Brontë.” *BMJ*, vol. 344, p.e567.25, Jan. 2012. *PubMed*, doi:10.1136/bmj.e567
- Dubos, René Jules and Jean Dubos. *The White Plague: Tuberculosis, Man, and Society*. Rutgers UP, 1987.
- “Etymologia: Typhus.” *Emerging Infections Diseases*, vol. 15, no. 6, 2002, pp. 977. *PubMed Central*, doi:[10.3201/eid1506.999999](https://doi.org/10.3201/eid1506.999999)
- Glaziou, Philippe, et al. “Trends in Tuberculosis in the UK.” *Thorax*, vol. 73, no. 8, 2018, pp. 702-703. *PubMed Central*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6204963/>.
- Goroncy, Jason. “Holiness in Victorian and Edwardian England: Some Ecclesial Patterns and Theological Requisitions.” *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies*, vol. 73, no. 4, 2017. *AOSIS Publishing*, <https://hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/4539/9569#5>.
- Karamanou, Marianna, et al. “From Miasmas to Germs: A Historical Approach to Theories of Infectious Disease Transmission.” *Le Infezioni in Medicina* vol. 20, no. 1, 2012, pp. 58-62. *PubMed*, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22475662/>.
- Lawlor, Clark. *Consumption and Literature*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.
- Lijoi, Andre F. and Ana D. Tovar. “Narrative-medicine: Re-enganging and Re-energizing Ourselves through Story.” *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*,

- vol. 5, no. 5, 2022, pp. 321-330. *SagePub*,
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0091217420951039>
- Morris, David B. "Narrative Medicines: Challenge and Resistance." *The Permanente Journal*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2008, pp. 88-96. PubMed Central, doi:10.7812/TPP/07-088.
- Neufeldt, Victor A. "Brontë, (Patrick) Branwell (1817–1848), writer and painter." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford University Press,
<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-3526>.
- Rosman, Doreen. *Evangelicals and Culture*. 2nd ed., Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.
- Schwarz, Hans. "Universalism." *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Ian A. McFarland, et al., Cambridge University Press, 1st edition, 2011. *Credo Reference*,
<https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/cupdet/universalism/0?institutionId=6481>.
- Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1978.
- Thormählen, Marianne. *The Brontës and Religion*. Cambridge UP, 1999.
- "Tuberculosis." *Centers for Disease Control*,
<https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/basics/default.htm>.
- "Tuberculosis." *World Health Organization*, 14 October 2021,
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis>.
- "Tuberculosis TB." *Johns Hopkins Medicine*,

- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/tuberculosis-tb>.
- UK Health Security Agency. “Reports of cases of tuberculosis to enhanced tuberculosis surveillance systems: UK, 2000 to 2020.” Department of Health and Social Care, October 2021.
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1025880/uk-tb-official-statistics-2021.pdf
- Vrettos, Athena. *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture*. Stanford UP, 1995.
- Weiss, G. “The Death of Charlotte Brontë.” *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, vol. 78, no. 4, 1991, pp. 705-708. *PubMed*, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1923177/>
- Zaharias, George. “What is Narrative-based Medicine? ” *Canadian Family Physician*, vol. 64, no. 3, 2018, pp. 176-180. *PubMed Central*, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5851389/
- Zuñiga, Joaquin, et al. “Cellular and Humoral Mechanisms Involved in the Control of Tuberculosis.” *Clinical and Developmental Immunology*, vol. 2012, May 2012, p.193923. *Hindawi*, doi:10.1155/2012/193923.