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Pastoral Unity: Constructions of Nostalgic Retreat Space in Charlotte Brontë's Shirley

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Critical Reception of *Shirley*

Two years after the success of *Jane Eyre*, author Currer Bell published a second novel, *Shirley* (1849). To say that the work's reception was mixed at best and scathing at worst would be an understatement. Contemporary readers found themselves disappointed by a novel that ventured so far from the triumph of *Jane Eyre*. The work has been described as languid and cumbersome ("Shirley"), an artificial and unnatural history ("*Shirley*"), and full of disagreeable and intolerably rude characters (Lewes 159). What follows is my attempt to characterize and respond to this negative criticism.

The title of one contemporary review of the work "*Shirley*—by the Author of *Jane Eyre*" aptly sums up the framework of criticism Currer Bell received at the time of the work's release: this is a novel that must be examined in light of its clearer, more unified, and acclaimed predecessor *Jane Eyre.* While it seems that *Shirley* has suffered from this kind of expectation-based analysis, we are not necessarily incorrect in expecting a work of *Jane Eyre*'s caliber or impact from the author's second work, nor indeed has this manner of comparison fallen out of favor in contemporary criticism.

Upon reopening *Shirley* for scholarly discussion, critics appear to treat the novel like a veritable minefield, tiptoeing around the difficulties raised by the work, and more often than not ignoring whole themes and elements in order to assign merit to at least one aspect of the novel. These analyses, timid though they might be, have some validity, and

it is vital to understanding the spirit, if not the intent, of Charlotte Brontë to weigh all facets of the scholarly conversation. Criticism of *Shirley* tends to fall under five major areas of discussion: 1) Brontë on the problem of women in terms of power and potential (Feminist), 2) Brontë as the social problem novelist concerned with the Luddite riots and the element of industrial development in war-torn Great Britain (Marxist), 3)Brontë as the religious critic (Theological), 4) Brontë as the author of a novel lacking unity (Structural), and 5) Brontë as the author of a novel with an unclear genre (Genre Criticism).

The critical conversation about Brontë on the question of women, discussing their power and potential in a Victorian and patriarchal society, resounds with feminist voices who take issue with the conclusion of the novel in which Shirley seemingly submits and renounces her independent status and power to a lowly tutor. Shirley's independence and influence throughout the entire novel up until the finale seem to indicate that Brontë fashioned an independent and self-sufficient heroine who does not need to bow to patriarchal norms or conventions for fulfilment. By including Shirley's marriage to Louis Moore, Brontë seems to undermine that refreshing stride. In a 2004 article, Rebecca McLaughlin responds to this criticism by examining the context surrounding this "submission":

> Brontë again places emphasis on a term when Shirley declares to her uncle, 'I prefer a *master*'(p.223)…Shirley's own impassioned speech here and the stress placed upon it is one of the two main reasons critics find Shirley's marriage ultimately indicative of her subordination. Here in Shirley, more categorically than in Brontë's other novels, we get a definition of how the term 'master' is being used by the heroine. A 'master' for Shirley must be a man who can 'check,' 'control' or 'command' her, who she would find 'it impossible not to love' (pg. 513-14). What we need to question here is how seriously we should take Shirley's desire for a 'master.' (218)

McLaughlin argues that Captain Shirley Keeldar is not diminished by becoming Shirley Moore; that is to say that Shirley's marital shift is not the economic and managerial sacrifice it appears to be. McLaughlin argues that what has been misinterpreted as Shirley's submission to her husband's authority is in fact an example of the wit and playfulness with which Shirley navigates conversations with all the men with whom she comes into contact. McLaughlin refers specifically to the conversation between Shirley and her uncle, Mr. Sympson, following her rejection of Sir Phillip Nunnely, saying, "Shirley has deliberately (mis)led Mr. Sympson to believe she desires a man who will, as her '*master*,' demand her complete submission" (219). By disarming the claims of Shirley's submission McLaughlin is able to examine the relationship between Shirley and Louis as modeled by the themes she (McLaughlin) identifies in the three works that Louis has Shirley revisit as she returns to the schoolroom. Her analysis of these passages insists that Louis's and Shirley's relationship is a developing partnership rather than a submission of power on either side. McLaughlin concludes that Shirley wields the same power and influence at the close of the novel that she did at her entrance; however, she learns how to navigate a balance of power with her husband in order to raise him up to her level of social respectability.

Susan Zlotnick in her *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* article of 1991 presents a very different image of Captain Keeldar. Instead of focusing specifically on the rhetoric and context of Shirley's submission in marriage, Zlotnick claims that Shirley's independence and mobility within the patriarchal landscape are nonexistent from the start:

> Despite her public standing, Shirley remains marginal in a man's world (her philanthropic activities fail to circumvent the violent conflict at the mill)

> and unable to escape, in her own life, the patriarchal model of mother Eve she so feverishly rejects…The freedom with which Shirley's wealth endows her is a chimera, for it turns out to be nothing more than the freedom to choose her own captivity, which she promptly does by marrying Louis Moore. (293)

Zlotnick praises Shirley's rhetoric and details her submission as self-aware rather than playful, indicating her knowledge of her limitations and the economic consequences of her decision to marry: "I am glad to know my keeper, and am used to him. Only his voice will I follow; only his hand shall manage me; only at his feet will I repose" (Bronte 579). For Zlocknick, Shirley's submission is no submission at all because Shirley had no real masculine power to begin with.

As the industrial novelist, Brontë examines the interactions between struggling mill-owners whose storehouses overflow with products they are unable to export due to trade restrictions necessitated by the war with Napoleon, and the lowly mill-workers whose labor has become obsolete in light of the new wave of industrial innovation. This idea of obsolescence is the subject of an analysis by Peter J. Cupuano (2013) that compares the plight of the unemployed mill-worker with the position of female members of the working class. Cupuano finds that both groups share a lack of mobility and marketable skills:

> In the case of *Shirley,* a surface-level line of inquiry into manufactured objects reveals an inverted network from the mill to the parlor; that is, the redundancy of human hands caused by mechanization in the mill is concurrent with a surplus of female handiwork in the novel's middle-class homes…this inversion makes sense if we think about Brontë's novel in terms of its original historical context. (232)

These two groups are separated by class, social order and gender, but Capuano argues that through *Shirley*, Brontë is able to deepen our understanding of both through their similar

static position, i.e., their inability to move, evolve or escape the conventions of social station, skills and expectations.

The religious element in *Shirley* poses some interesting questions as even the earliest critics seemed to take issue with the curate characters that Brontë creates, both with the time devoted to their development and with how caricatured they seem to be. Why does Brontë devote so much time to the development of these figures when they do very little, if anything, to move the narrative along? J. Russell Perkin (2008) acknowledges some of this criticism: "Like a number of other Victorian reviewers, [George Henry] Lewes found the presence of the three curates a particularly egregious example of apparently irrelevant material" (389-90). Perkin reads *Shirley* as a running commentary on the several subgenres of the religious novel, as Brontë samples, borrows, and satirizes elements of the High Church, Tractarian, and 'Novel of Doubt' conventions. Perkin characterizes his conclusions early on in the essay saying: "*Shirley* can be read as a critique of a critique of the ideology informing the specifically high-church manifestation of the novel of religious controversy" (390). Ultimately Perkin concludes that *Shirley* enacts a dialogue between the tenets of Christian belief and the elements of Romantic sensibility. While Brontë, through her portrayal of what Perkin calls Caroline's "narrative of spiritual crisis," finds the church inadequate and flawed, the author does not lose faith in the Church of England as an institution.

The generic labels that have been applied to *Shirley* have been a matter of continuous contention among critics since the novel's publication, and for a novel that attempts to address so much, this is not surprising. The re-branding of a difficult work's

genre affords critics the ability to reintroduce a novel and redefine the contexts established throughout from the very first page. A proposed new genre also serves to iron out the previously complicated aspects that seem to work against themselves in such novels and thus addresses the problem of unity (or disunity). I believe that disunity in *Shirley* can be addressed by reading it as a pastoral novel. Further, I will provide evidence that the unifying thread binding *Shirley* together within the pastoral genre is Brontë's use of central characters who attempt to enact the pastoral motions of retreat, renewal, and return in a rapidly shifting landscape. What follows is my identification of the central criticism to which this reading will be a response.

An important work in the analysis of Brontë's second published novel comes from the January 1850 edition of the *Edinburgh Review*. G.H. Lewes' article addressing the work is often the basis for new or revisited critiques of *Shirley* as Lewes points out a number of problems with the work, most of which come as the result of comparison with *Jane Eyre.* Lewes affirms that:

> In *Jane Eyre* life was viewed from the standing point of individual experience; in *Shirley* that standing point is frequently abandoned, and the artist paints only a panorama of which she, as well as you, are but spectators. Hence the unity of *Jane Eyre* in spite of its clumsy and improbable contrivances, was great and effective: the fire of one passion fused the discordant material into one mould. But in *Shirley* all unity, in consequence of defective art, is wanting. There is no passionate link; nor is there any artistic fusion or intergrowth, by which one part evolves itself from another. (468)

This idea of unity in narrative, while not the sole focus of Lewes's criticism, seems to be, in his opinion, the most crucial one in examining the value of *Shirley* as a work of literature, and further, as a work of art. What Lewes seems to be championing here is the value of

individual experience as a unifying element of the novel; that is to say, for Lewes, what unifies a novel is an individual lens through which an audience receives the narrative. While individual experience of a narrator or of a narrative focus does not guarantee a novel's unity, in order to answer Lewes' critique, one must find a unifying element or factor that explains the shifting "standing point of individual experience" within the novel.

This area of criticism is of particular interest in that it lends itself easily to considerations of genre. One can make a strong case that apparent disparities in the unity of a novel are the results of misreading and misunderstanding the mechanics or elements of a specific genre. A dominant voice of *Shirley* criticism regarding unity is that of Jacob Korg in his 1957 article, "The Problem of Unity in *Shirley*." Building upon the criticism of Lewes, Korg identifies three integral components of *Shirley* that must be accounted for in order for the novel to be viewed as a unified, or to use his word "integrated", whole: 1) The time and thought given to the curates, 2) The attention given to labor disturbances, and 3) Mrs. Pryor and her secret identity as the mother of Caroline Helstone. Korg proceeds to address these three elements under the theme of romantic egoism, which so pervades all of Brontë's work, as the framework for tying them all together. He describes the work as a "philosophical novel; its philosophy often seems to encumber it seriously, but it does serve to pull the novel's parts together into a single fabric" (496). This analysis centers on characters, or rather character groups, representative of dissimilar notions of romanticism and the interactions of the these groups which serve more firmly to define and refine Brontë's "passionate belief in nature and individualism" (495). This appears to be a viable

argument for the unity of the work that rebrands the novel as philosophical, addresses elements of romanticism, and will serve as a model for the analysis that follows.

Janet Freeman revisits the idea of unity in 1988, and coincidently follows a similar spirit, if not structure, as that of Jacob Korg. Arguing for a center, or unity of the novel in the realistic and ever-shifting relations between the private and public themes in *Shirley*, Freeman addresses the same three elements of concern in regard to the work's unity that Korg identified in his analysis but she goes further, citing complications of the narrator's authority, uncertainty of truth, and consistency within the work. She elaborates:

> In short, the certainties of *Jane Eyre*, in which the only stories to depend on are those told by Jane herself, are things of the past in *Shirley*, where the authority by seeming to be everywhere seems really to be nowhere at all. Apparently, full knowledge, the kind of knowledge gained by attending to a single, supreme authority, is beside the point in this novel of public and private life. (561)

Freeman argues that the freedom and openness of the novel in its flexibility and instability are the true values of the work, and that trying to wrap the work up in a unified box misses the point.

In arguing for the validity of a pastoral reading of *Shirley*, I plan to follow at least the initial structure and spirit of critics Lewes, Korg, and Freeman. First, I will discuss the overall origin and climate of pastoral literature in 19th Century Britain and examine the models of pastoral literature with which Charlotte Brontë would surely have been familiar. Next, I will outline a clear definition for the pastoral genre with which I will examine the troublesome aspects of *Shirley* with regard to unity as identified by Korg. Following my argument for the validity of a pastoral reading of *Shirley*, I will examine questions the novel

raises for pastoral conventions, specifically: how the criticism regarding Shirley's submission in marriage changes when nostalgia is considered as a motivation for the union, what impact Shirley's reimagining of Eve as "Mother of Titans" has on the ideal rural landscape, and what "pasture" remains to retreat to in the world of *Shirley* as the rural landscape becomes infected by industry and mechanization.

Defining the Pastoral

In its varied forms, constraints, and evolutions the pastoral has been skillfully categorized as falling into one of three broad categories by Terry Gifford in his *Pastoral*. The first category refers to a classical form of poetry derived from Greek and Roman poems concerning rural living and shepherding in particular; the second is a more broad sense of the genre which refers to literature which sets up a stark contrast between the country and the city environments and philosophies. Finally, the third category refers to 'pastoral' as a pejorative term "implying that the pastoral vision is too simplified and thus an idealization of the reality of life in the country" (2). The first and third of these categories represent well-trodden and frontier grounds of literary analysis respectively. Raymond Williams's text *The Country and the City*, Harold E. Toliver's *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes*, William Empson's *Some Versions of the Pastoral*, and Gifford's own slim volume trace the progression of the pastoral's roots. They examine Theocritus and Virgil, and the evolution of pastoral conventions in prose, verse, and dramatic form. These works also discuss the shifting cultural definitions of nature and society through literary history, and how those shifting definitions impact the development of the pastoral genre. The third of Gifford's pastoral categories applies to more contemporary challenges and questions posed by an industrialized, technological, and digital age of history.

Gifford's second category lays out the most general sense in which a work may be read as pastoral; however, it also provides the richest landscape for reexamining works of literature that engage with rural and urban themes. What follows is my extension of Gifford's second category of the genre which will serve as the generic framework with which I will examine Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*. I will also discuss the pastoral of 19th Century Great Britain in order to frame Brontë's use of the genre in *Shirley*.

19th Century Pastoral

In order to argue that Charlotte Brontë engages with the pastoral genre in her work it is important to pin down two very slippery areas of content: 1) British pastoral literature of the 19th century and 2) the specific pastoral works that influenced Brontë's own work. Neither of these are rigidly defined areas of content. Historically, the pastoral genre has had many incarnations: from the traditional idyll, to the ecologue, georgic, bucolic, epic, drama, and novel. The earliest of pastorals, Theocritus' *Idylls*, was concerned with Arcadian shepherd folk whose interactions inspired singing competitions praising the simplicity, leisure, and calm of the natural world over the noise and confusion of the city. Virgil, in his *Ecologues*, added depth and socio-political contexts which broadened and more pointedly defined what the genre was capable of. Milton, the Romantic poets, authors of pastoral romance, and drama subgenres played with the central conceptions of the city and the country within the genre and introduced the wise-shepherd figure into realm of courtly love and romance. Throughout these works one finds a convention of nostalgic longing for the innocence of the Garden of Eden over the noise and bustle of the city which spurs figures to retreat from society into nature in pursuit of renewal.

This nostalgia is a central component of pastoral literature which has endured nearly as many reinterpretations as the genre itself. Ann C. Colley in her book *Nostalgia and Recollection in Victorian Culture* (1998) traces nostalgia's roots as a medical term

referring to a melancholy brought about by a state of homesickness, but "by the middle of the nineteenth century the concept of nostalgia as an independent clinical entity began to disappear" (3). Colley goes on to discuss several 19th Century writers and painters to examine nostalgia's evolution into a term denoting a strong longing for the innocence of a time passed. She argues that these artists and the characters that they create have nostalgic desires:

> All of them intermittently suffer from a desire for reunion, for some point of correspondence between their present and their past, their immediate surroundings and home. Caught in circumstances that dispossess and trap them in the tension between the real and the remembered, these figures (or the characters in their works) write or paint toward home in an attempt to reach a place where there is a possibility of continuity and where there is a sanctuary from the changes that come with the passing of time. (3-4)

Though Colley describes 19th Century nostalgia as moving towards a refuge against changes of the present, she tempers and clarifies this notion, claiming that the nostalgic desire is not backward or ignorant:

> Their homesickness does not necessarily contaminate their judgement so that they naively embrace something that never was, negate was is valuable in the present, and resist the possibilities of the future. On the contrary, their longing often gives them the means to move beyond themselves and their past – it creates new maps. (4-5)

19th Century nostalgia is not an emotion that blindly prefers the past over the future, but it uses memories of the past in order to progress during the present and in the future. The peace and quiet of the nostalgic space allows one the time and relief necessary to act in the future in order to mirror the positives of the past. One's longing for the past influences how one approaches and desires to shape the future. Aaron Santesso in his *A Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* (2006) treads much the same ground as Colley in

his analysis of nostalgia's roots but he offers a modern definition of nostalgia, taking into account the following:

> The history of nostalgia in eighteenth-century poetry suggests that nostalgia, then and now, is not a desire for the past per se; nor is it ever an emotion rooted in empirical reality or concrete autobiography. Rather, it is a longing for objects that are idealized, impersonal, and unattainable. A work may look to the past; it is only truly nostalgic if that past is idealized. (16)

Santesso identifies idealization as a necessary component of nostalgia itself, but also of nostalgia as it functions within pastoral. As the pastoral's primary emotion, nostalgia is the force that drives pastoral figures towards retreat as "Arcadia" and Eden are idealized paradises, but it is also an emotion that facilitates those figures' return to the city better able to progress. These retreat spaces provide these pastoral figures the quiet and separation necessary to devise better ways of navigating their environment upon their return. Colley and Santesso identify components of nostalgia that are vital to an understanding of the pastoral of the 19th Century and how nostalgia functions within the genre. The necessity of idealization in a nostalgic past coupled with the flexibility implied in Colley's discussion of moving beyond the past towards the future accurately describes how nostalgia functions in 19th Century pastoral, Brontë's *Shirley*, and the pastoral works that influenced its construction.

Pastoral literature in the 19th century was in flux responding to the shifting divisions between country and city spaces that accompanied the advent of the industrial revolution. Our insight into Brontë's specific readings is dependent upon a precious collection of surviving letters, references, and allusions within her work. Questions of class interaction and shifts of pastoral focus in an industrializing Britain marked the beginning of what Terry

Gifford identified as the pejorative use of the label 'pastoral.' Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* (1973) characterizes this shift in his analysis of George Crabbe's poetry:

> What we can see happening in this interesting development, is the conversion of conventional pastoral into a localized dream and then, increasingly, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, into what can be offered as a description and thence an idealization of actual English country life and its social and economic relations. It was against this, as well as against the conventional simplicities of literary neo-pastoral, that Crabbe was making his protest. (26)

The concern Williams identifies in Crabbe's work is that such a dramatic shift in focus and content for pastoral literature, specifically poetry, would perpetuate oversimplification by idealizing socio-economic forces at play in English country life. By holding up the English country construct as a substitute idyllic space, Crabbe worried that readers would ignore the disproportionate power structure of the classes in such areas.

This was a justifiable fear; however, it was misread subtlety rather than willful ignorance that brought Crabbe's fears to fruition. William Empson explores in his *Some Versions of the Pastoral* (1950) the subtle nuances of what he terms "the pastoral process of putting the complex into the simple" (23). Empson argues that embedded within the conventions of pastoral literature is a polite and necessary pretense which has been misconstrued as comic or presumptuous. Empson asserts that because members of the lower classes in the pastoral are shown to speak in a manner or style above their station, the effect can be read as ridiculous or comedic; however, he insists that in order for pastoral literature to be effective it must have a delicate balance, "to make that clash work in the right way (not become funny) the writer must keep up a firm pretense that he was

unconscious of it" (12). Empson points to pretense and assumed ignorance on the part of the pastoral narrator as integral components of the genre rather than reasons for its dismissal. He goes on to indicate that after the Reformation in Britain a wave of Puritan suspicion of the arts became more universal among differing classes. This development deeply impacted the way that pastoral literature was read:

> A feeling gradually got about that anyone below the upper middles was making himself ridiculous, being above himself, if he showed any signs of keeping a sense of beauty at all, and this feeling was common to all classes. It takes a general belief as harsh and unreal as this to make the polite pretense of pastoral seem necessarily absurd. (12)

This suspicion and general rejection of necessary conventions of pastoral literature by members of every class in England during this period led to the halt of the genre's development. Widely dismissed as a serious mode of artistic expression, pastoral literature survived though its reputation was majorly tarnished.

The pastoral bore the weight of this general dismissal up until the 19th century, as Rae Greiner describes in her article "*Bleak House*: Pastoral:"

> By Dickens's [Brontë's] time, the idea of escape into green nature could seem sentimental at best, at worst callously elitist and reactionary. As far as literary styles go, pastoral could be counted among the most old-fashioned, highfalutin, and socially irresponsible. Although pastoral writing has long considered class antagonism and its remedies, it has also been deemed a 'non-social' form that tried to dream class away, to pretend that there isn't any." (80-81)

Even as late as the 19th century, the pastoral was, as Greiner points out, largely dismissed and disregarded as outdated and overly sentimental. This is evidence of the impact that Post-Reformation skepticism had on the public perception of pastoral literature.

Though largely diminished, the pastoral of the 18th and 19th centuries was far from deceased as the industrial revolution ushered in new conceptions of the natural environment. As the factory and the machine entered into the nature versus society rift, different notions of how nature might function in pastoral literature emerged. Harold E. Toliver in *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes* (1971) outlines two philosophies that arise as a result of the industrial revolution: 1) the romantic pastoral philosophy and 2) the industrial philosophy. Now, in addition to the conventional landscapes that are at odds in pastoral literature (country and city), Toliver adds two philosophical approaches to how those two landscapes are conceived and how they function within the genre. Toliver identifies the conflict between the industrial philosophy and the romantic pastoral as having to do with how nature is treated. The difference between these two is that the industrial approach is concerned with "owning nature" (210) and the romantic approach sees nature as a "symbolic landscape" (210). While the romantic construction of nature maintains the reverence and spiritual weight attributed to an "Arcadia" or a "Garden of Eden," the industrial view of nature is centered on the ownership of and exploitation of natural resources. Consequently, in the romantic pastoral the natural environment is sought out as a setting for spiritual renewal, and in the industrial philosophy one desires to acquire and use the natural environment's resources. Both these constructions become important as they provide responses to the shifting landscape ushered in by industrialization; however, how they adapt to this shift is very different. Romantic pastoral, as Toliver says, "assume[s] that the creations of the imagination take precedence over whatever physical changes one might make in an environment" (226). As the natural gives way to an industrialized society, the figures of romantic pastoral can imagine Arcadia or Eden "in poems, in transcendent

objects, and in dreams" (226). Toliver expands the distinction between these industrial and romantic conceptions with a discussion of encyclopedic classification:

> The characteristic literature of an industrialized approach to nature is opposite in most respects to the characteristic romantic ways of regarding the idyllic place and the transcendent symbols that it contains. It is something like encyclopedic classification. If in romantic odes the tangible properties of objects are subdued one by one by some spiritualized power, encyclopedias collect those properties as useful information that enables us to manage the thing in itself, or the thing as a product. (227)

This economic evaluation of objects (a commodification of resources) set up in opposition to the romantic emphasis on symbolic value is central to pastoral of the 19th century. I would argue that it is also central to the construction of Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*. Toliver's two approaches to nature are found in Brontë's development of character and social conflict in *Shirley*.

Brontë's *Shirley* was published during a period when pastoral literature was largely dismissed and disregarded, however; the novel comments on central components of pastoral literature and its criticism. The work's portrayal of rural society pays specific attention to notions of class, the shifting landscape, and romantic and industrial views of nature. Brontë's pastoral in *Shirley* is a reflection of how pastoral changes in 19th Century literature in a broad sense, but it also reflects Brontë's specific literary influences and their versions of pastoral.

In a letter addressed to her friend Ellen Nussey in 1834, Brontë gives us perhaps the most comprehensive list of her own personal reading and a brief impression of her judgment of those texts. Brontë praises Sir Walter Scott above all others:

> You asked me to recommend some books for your perusal; I will do so in as few words as I can. If you like poetry let it be first rate, Milton, Shakespeare, Thomson, Goldsmith Pope (if you will though I don't admire him) Scott, Byron, Camp[b]ell, Wordsworth and Southey…Scott's sweet, wild, romantic poetry can do you no harm. (Brontë 2:130)

Scott's impact on Brontë's writing cannot be understated as Robert Stowell describes in his 1994 article "Brontë Borrowings: Charlotte Brontë and *Ivanhoe,* Emily Brontë and *The Count of Monte Cristo*": "In the same way that Chaucer used source material from Boccaccio, and Shakespeare took ideas from Chaucer, Charlotte Brontë borrowed from Scott. But she was also so much under his influence that her prose-style was affected by his evocative romances" (247). Stowell identifies several elements of Brontë's work, specifically within *Shirley*, as having their origin in Scott's work; even Shirley's surname Keeldar is borrowed from Scott's *The Black Dwarf*. But Brontë is as much a child of Wordsworth as she is of Sir Walter Scott. His influence on Brontë's early writing and her development as an author cannot be understated as one can detect Wordsworthian stylistic choices are evident in her work from the juvenilia onward. Fannie Ratchford identifies specific examples of the romantic poet's influence on Brontë's work in her 1941 book *The Brontë's Web of Childhood*: "To her group of supernatural beings she now adds 'the maiden of the sea that sings within her cell,' and the 'still, sad music,' of the maiden's song is a distant echo of Wordsworth's immortal line, 'The still, sad music of humanity'" (48). Brontë refers to Wordsworth specifically in *Shirley* twice. First, Brontë borrows the phrase "black-blue" (14) from "A Night Piece" in a description of the curate Malone's indifference to the smoky night sky: "He did not trouble himself to ask where the constellations and the planets were gone, or to regret the 'black-blue' serenity of the air-ocean" (17). Brontë also uses Wordsworth's phrase "Earth's first blood" (14) from his first

sonnet, “It is not to be of that the flood.” Shirley Keeldar uses this phrase to reassure Caroline Helstone that Robert Moore is not in danger during the assault on Hollow’s Mill: “We shall see. Moore and Helstone are of ‘earth’s first blood’—no bunglers—no cravens” (289). To understand Brontë’s opinion of the poet, however, we must look back to her description of him in her first novel, *The Professor*. Brontë offers her assessment of Wordsworth through the central figure of William Crimsworth as he describes his bride’s difficulty with the poet: “She had a difficulty in comprehending his deep, serene, and sober mind” (201). It is clear that Brontë was familiar with Wordsworth’s work, and there are several references in her letters that indicate she not only read his “The Prelude” (a long poem which deals with pastoral themes), but had also recommended it to her friends. Although “The Prelude” was published after *Shirley* had already been written, Brontë’s interest in a pastoral text written by Wordsworth is crucial to our understanding of her pastoral influences.

But the Wordsworth poem that is most likely to have impacted Brontë’s writing of *Shirley* and her view of the pastoral is “Michael, a Pastoral Poem” published in 1800. This poem is a product, or at least a component, of the shift that Crabbe is concerned with within pastoral literature (the perpetuation of oversimplifying socio-economic forces in English country life). It is also a work that challenges the conventional tropes of pastoral literature. In his brief analysis of the work, Terry Gifford describes the criticism (outlined above by Empson) that Wordsworth’s shepherd figure received:

> Wordsworth’s shepherd has a maturity, integrity and dignity that is both produced by his work and extends beyond it. The affront to sophisticated readers of poetry in 1800 can be imagined. But Wordsworth goes further in

> attacking the patronizing simplification of a common pastoral convention of the rural worker as bucolic clown. (6)

Wordsworth's "Michael" challenges the simplistic construction of the rural inhabitant. This shepherd also tempers an idealistic construction of the rural environment with realistic elements at both ends of the emotional spectrum. This development of a lower-class figure and the attention to a more realistic world view answer the concerns that Crabbe raised as to the future of the pastoral mode. Brontë borrows this elevation of a lower-class figure in her development of characters like William Farren who defy the stereotypical portrayal of rural workers through their wisdom and flexibility.

Wordsworth's "Michael" also presents a detailed snapshot of 19th century pastoral as described by Toliver. Wordsworth describes numerous objects as having symbolic value above their practical functions, including a lamp that hangs in the shepherd's cottage:

> The light was famous in its neighbourhood
> And was a symbol of the life,
> The thrifty pair had liv'd. For, as it chanc'd.
> Their Cottage on a plot of rising ground
> Stood single, with large prospect North and South,
> High into Easedale, up to Dunmal-Raise,
> And Westward to the village near the Lake.
> And from this constant light so regular
> And so far seen, the House itself by all
> Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
> Both old and young, was nam'd The Evening Star.
> (134-146)

This "aged utensil, which had perform'd/Service beyond all others of its kind" (117-118) comes to stand for a number of things in the poem. The lantern represents the shepherd Michael's and his wife Isabel's marriage and thrift, but also Michael himself as he is described with similar language: "And in his Shepherd's calling he was prompt/And

watchful more than ordinary men" (46-47). The lantern serves also as the spiritual "Evening Star": a beacon of hope and landmark to all those near the cottage. This elevation of common objects to symbols of spiritual significance falls neatly under the romantic pastoral that Toliver identified in *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes*. However, the symbolism of Michael's lamp pales in comparison to the significance of the poem's image of the Sheep-fold cornerstone both within the scope of the poem and my examination of pastoral.

This stone-setting ceremony serves two important pastoral functions: 1) it demonstrates the romantic pastoral's ability to "find the locality of 'Arcadia' in poems, in transcendent objects and in dreams" (Toliver 226) and 2) it shows Michael's construction of a nostalgic space for his son Luke to retreat to while in the city. Michael sets these two complex pastoral developments in motion in the following speech to Luke:

> When thou art gone away, should evil men
> Be thy companions, let this Sheep-fold be
> Thy anchor and thy shield; amid all fear
> And all temptation, let it be to thee
> An emblem of the life thy Fathers liv'd,
> Who, being innocent, did for that cause,
> Bestir in them good deeds. Now, fare thee well.
> (416-422)

In this speech Michael anticipates Luke's inevitable need for a space to retreat to when he faces the evils of the city. This space cannot be a physical one because of the financial troubles which require Luke to remain away from home therefore Michael must construct a symbolic object infused with nostalgia for his son to look back to in order to retreat.

Notice the idealization Michael uses in his speech to his son. There is no mention of the difficult and endless nature of the shepherd-childhood Luke is subjected to, nor does

Michael mention the current financial situation which necessitates Luke's leaving home. The portrait Michael wishes to paint of "home" for his son is an idealization, and therefore nostalgic and, by virtue of this portrait being constructed and non-physical, it is romantic.

Despite the significance of the romantic pastoral within Wordsworth's "Michael" it cannot be, as I termed it above, a "detailed snapshot" of Toliver's view of 19th century pastoral without some allusion to the industrial philosophy as well. Luckily, "Michael" concludes with references to this utility and ownership based conception of the pastoral:

> …at her [Isabel's] death the estate
> Was sold, and went into a Stranger's hand.
> The Cottage which was nam'd The Evening Star
> Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the ground
> On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
> In all the neighbourhood…(483-488)

While there is a faint glimmer of hope in the final lines of the poem, the events at the end of "Michael" are economic and industrial. The land is sold, the symbolic cottage has been leveled, and the land has been run through in preparation for planting and harvest. Wordsworth subtly refers to this second of Toliver's concepts of the treatment of nature in contrast to the unfinished Sheep-fold, acknowledging the addition of the industrial view of nature in the world.

Charlotte Brontë is as much a product of her time as was Wordsworth with respect to the pastoral. The pastoral of *Shirley* deals specifically with, and expands upon, the industrial and romantic philosophies identified by Toliver and demonstrated by Wordsworth. Where Brontë seems to push away from Wordsworth with her own pastoral is with the tone of her ending. *Shirley*'s conclusion is not the faint sliver of hope that

Wordsworth's "Michael" ends with, but a finale which shows the triumph of the romantic pastoral philosophy through its flexibility. I will show that though the pastoral 'fairyland' of Yorkshire has disappeared at the close of the novel, the nostalgic retreats that Caroline and Shirley are able to enact through their marriages to Robert and Louis Moore allow them to move forward. As romantic pastoral figures Shirley and Caroline are able to navigate the newly industrial landscape of Yorkshire thanks to the retreat afforded them by their nostalgically motivated marriages to the Moore brothers. Brontë's romantic pastoral, as demonstrated by these marriages, does not overcome the industrial philosophy of the 19th Century but adapts to it, finding substitute retreat spaces for her romantic pastoral figures as the wave of industrialization supplants the natural environment. While there is a sad inevitability to the events at the end of "Michael" Brontë's conclusion of *Shirley* shows her faith in the power of romantic pastoral to adapt to the shifting forces of industrialization. Before examining how these aspects of 19th century pastoral work within *Shirley*, I should clarify what I mean when I use the genre label 'pastoral' and how I plan to use Toliver's terms: romantic and industrial.

Boiled down to its thematic center, the pastoral is concerned with the complex relationship and friction that exists between two physical, or metaphorical, landscapes: 1) the rural or country space, which can be represented by a rural community, a public or private garden, forest, paradise, established tradition, or idealized past, and 2) the industrial or city space, which in turn may be represented by the royal court, urban environment, industry, innovation, invention, or novelty. Within this divided context, pastoral figures have a natural desire to retreat from the industrial environment into a country space in order

to achieve renewal and return from that country space better equipped to navigate that city environment. The force that compels these pastoral figures toward retreat and return is nostalgia, which is, as defined by Aaron Santesso and Ann Colley, the "longing for objects that are idealized, impersonal, and unattainable" (Santesso 16) that "gives them (pastoral figures) the means to move beyond themselves and their past" (5). These pastoral conventions, as I have identified them here, especially nostalgia, are very much at work within Brontë's *Shirley*.

The factions of romantic and industrial philosophies in the 19th Century are also vital to our discussion of *Shirley*. Whereas my expansion of Gifford's second category of the pastoral deals with the landscapes and ideologies at work in pastoral literature, Toliver's categories of 19th Century approaches to nature represent different strategies for navigating those landscapes and ideologies. The romantic pastoral treats the physical landscape of nature as a place for spiritual renewal, but it can also envision the paradise of "Arcadia" or Eden in poems, dreams and objects infused with symbolism. In romantic pastoral the retreat space, even as it is constructed in poems, dreams, and symbolic objects, must be nostalgic. The industrial approach navigates the natural environment by determining its practical use and the resources that can be extracted from it. The goal of the industrial philosophy is to own and put the natural environment to use. The industrial approach is, as Toliver describes it: "dynamically active, unspiritualized, and expressible as the power of industrial change and ownership" (226). These two philosophical strategies are integral to understanding the pastoral of Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*. Brontë addresses and wrestles with the conflict between the industrial and romantic philosophies through

Shirley's characters, their marriages, and her (Brontë's) depiction of the Luddite conflict in Yorkshire. Through her examination of these philosophies Brontë demonstrates the relevance and flexibility of romantic pastoral conventions in the face of the dismissal of the genre in literature and the advent of the industrial attitude toward nature.

The Problem of Unity:

Why Curates?

The article that is constantly referred to as a basis for the lack of unity, (or anything lacking) in *Shirley* is one with which we are already familiar, "Currer Bell's *Shirley*" from the January 1850 edition of the *Edinburgh Review*. Early on, Lewes speaks rather candidly about the seemingly functionless curate figures in *Shirley* terming them "offensive, uninstructive and unamusing." Further, Lewes calls into question the validity of such characters in reality:

> We are confident she has seen them, known them, despised them; and *therefore* she paints them! although they have no relation with the story, have no interest in themselves, and cannot be accepted as types of a class,—for they are not *Curates* but *boors*: and although not inventions, we must be permitted to say that they are *not true*. (159)

For Lewes, Korg, and the later critics of *Shirley*'s narrative structure, an explanation for the curates is essential to moving closer to a *Shirley* that is a unified whole. This problem relies upon isolating the curate figures within the scope of the novel and categorizing them as a group separate from the other characters in the novel. I believe this isolation to be a mistake.

Categorizing the curates as separate from the religious infrastructure they inhabit, as members of the church, diminishes the impact that they have as characters; however, as part of that infrastructure, the curates serve as components of a larger spectrum of religious

leadership. This spectrum includes not only curates Donne, Malone, and Sweeting, but also Mr. Hall, Mr. Helstone, and Moses Barraclough as well. Examined within this spectrum the curates do not stand as outliers outside the happy unity of the novel, but as integral components of a larger commentary on clergymen as a whole. This religious spectrum can be understood as lying between two extremes represented by Mr. Hall at one end and Moses Barraclough at the other. Mr. Hall represents the idyllic clergymen in *Shirley* as he is benevolent and kind, charitable and respectful in his interactions with his flock and, more specifically, with William Farren and Caroline Helstone. Moses Barraclough cannot be said to be a righteous or benevolent religious figure as he is a drunk and an opportunistic rabble-rouser. The remaining clergymen may be organized, in descending order in terms of piety, as follows: Mr. Helstone, Sweeting, Malone, and Donne. Given our unique insights into the private indiscretions and insensitive nature of Mr. Helstone through the narrative lens of his niece, it may surprise some to find him as second in piety to Mr. Hall in my spectrum. Despite his brusque militaristic demeanor and insensitivity towards his niece, Mr. Hall is an amiable and respected spiritual leader whose religious convictions and standards set him apart and above the curates. Helstone's authority and piety come through in his reprimands of the curates for their indelicate dinner-party conduct:

> What do I talk about the gift of tongues? Gift indeed! I mistook the chapter, and the book, and testament:—Gospel for law, Acts for Genesis, the city of Jerusalem for the plain of Shinar. It was no gift, but the confusion of tongues which has gabbled me deaf as a post. *You*, apostles? What!—you three? Certainly not:—three presumptuous Babylonish masons,—neither more nor less! (11-12)

While I do not believe that the curate figures should be isolated from all other groups within *Shirley*, one finds that there is a clear division between how the elder spiritual leaders, Mr. Hall and Mr. Helstone, and their younger counterparts conduct themselves. This division is clearly laid out by the description of the relationship between the curates and Mr. Donne's landlady, Mrs. Gale. This description comes during the course of the first scene of the novel where all three curates are having dinner together as the narrator allows us inside Mrs. Gale's thoughts:

> "These young parsons is so high and so scornful, they set everybody beneath their, 'fit;' they treat her with less than civility, just because she doesn't keep a servant, but does the work of the house herself, as her mother did afore her: then they are always speaking against Yorkshire ways and Yorkshire folk," and by that very token Mrs. Gale does not believe one of them to be a real gentleman, or come of gentle kin, "The old parsons is worth the whole lump of college lads; they know what belangs good manners and is kind to high and low." (7)

The curates represent more than just a generation of religious leaders lacking in experience and good manners. Mrs. Gale identifies a number of foreign characteristics in the curates in so small a quotation.

In so few lines Brontë tells us so much about Yorkshire, about the importance of tradition in the rural community, and about the foreignness and shortcomings of the newest generation of religious leadership in the area. Mrs. Gale identifies a confusion of culture and tradition as the basis for the curate's brusque condescension towards her; to do the housework in Yorkshire is not a sign of vulgarity but a proud tradition passed down by generations.

The curates are not only physically foreign in terms of geographical origin (Donne is a product of the southern English tradition and Malone is Irish), but also by way of comparison with the established authority and reputation of the elder parsons. Mr. Hall and Mr. Helstone represent pillars of tradition in Yorkshire that contrast with the upstart "college lad" curates. Without an understanding of the curate figures within a religious spectrum, it is easy to mark them as the frivolous caricatures Lewes took them to be in his review, but within a spectrum they mirror and embody the pastoral constructs of industry in opposition to rural tradition at the heart of Brontë's novel.

The curates are unfamiliar with and separate from the "Yorkshire ways and Yorkshire folk" they condescend to, and they represent forces of novelty and innovation that butt heads against the nostalgic traditions and sensibilities of Yorkshire. They also represent Toliver's industrial philosophy with regard to the rural community of Yorkshire. In the very first scene of the novel the curates are seen devouring food and drink at a dinner party in much the same way the industrial figure seeks to devour the environment. The curates' gluttony depicted in this scene contrasts with the conduct of Mr. Helstone and Mr. Hall and echoes the industrial philosophy of ownership and use of natural resources. The curates do not enjoy the food and company of dinner parties for comradeship or hospitality's sake; instead they devour for the sake of devouring. There is no reverence for the dinner table or civility among the curates, as the narrator details the damage they have done:

> The curates had good appetites, and though the beef was "tough," they ate a great deal of it. They swallowed, too, a tolerable allowance of the "flat beer." while a dish of Yorkshire pudding, and two tureens of vegetables, disappeared like leaves before locusts. The cheese, too, received

> distinguished marks of their attention; and a "spice-cake," which followed by way of dessert, vanished like a vision, and was no more found. (8)

The curates are compared to locusts in their consumption, and they use up all that is provided for them at dinner.

It is not just in their table manners, however, that the curates represent the industrial philosophy. This characterization is also reinforced by their relationship with, and perceptions of, the natural world (the fading rural landscape of Yorkshire). One of Brontë's earliest descriptions of Malone shows an indifference towards the rapidly industrializing landscape that sets him, and by association the other curates, further apart from their environment:

> Malone was not a man given to close observation of Nature; her changes passed, for the most part, unnoticed by him; he could walk miles on the most varying April day, and never see the beautiful dallying of earth and heaven; never mark when a sunbeam kissed the hill-tops, making them smile clear in green light, or when a shower wept over them, hiding their crests with the low-hanging, dishevelled tresses of a cloud. He did not, therefore, care to contrast the sky as it now appeared—a muffled, streaming vault, all black, save where, towards the east, the furnaces of Stilbro' iron-works threw a tremulous lurid shimmer on the horizon—with the same sky on an unclouded frosty night. (17)

It is not merely that Malone takes no notice of the movement of nature in Yorkshire, or any landscape for that matter, that gives this section its industrial significance. Malone demonstrates an inability to distinguish between, and therefore an inability to evaluate the impact of, the rural landscape of the past and the developing industrial elements of the present. Brontë's description of the iron-work furnaces and their impact on the night sky, indicates a sense of foreboding, of looming, and of violent invasion of the rural landscape, all of which is lost on Malone. In this ignorance Malone stands as a component of the

industrial forces at work in *Shirley*: for Malone, the sky polluted by the iron-work furnaces is of as little interest as the same sky clean and clear, and this suggests that, for Malone, the machines of industrial development have already become a part of the accepted landscape. This is the "unspiritualized" view of nature that Toliver describes as integral to the industrial philosophy. It is this indifference to the natural world which shows Malone to be an industrial force in *Shirley*.

To Lewes it was necessary that the curate characters be justified as contributing to the narrative in a substantial way for *Shirley* to be considered a more complete whole. The justification I have found is that if they are understood as components of a larger religious spectrum, the curates metaphorically represent the industrialization of Yorkshire as they contrast with their religious predecessors in youth, manner, and sensibility. Within this religious spectrum the curates represent novelty and innovation while their predecessors stand for tradition and nostalgia. Further, through these figures Brontë foreshadows the transition of Yorkshire from a rural landscape to an industrial one as the curates will inevitably supplant their more traditional elders. The curates also represent the industrial philosophy of ownership and use of natural resources as they devour the meals they eat together without any finesse or civility. This is reinforced by Brontë's portrait of Malone in the early chapters of *Shirley* which shows his inability to distinguish between the rural landscape of the past and the impact of industrialization. This ignorance of nature marks him as the product of an industrial sensibility. While these figures do not serve to move along the plot of *Shirley*, they are important in portraying the shift taking place as a result of the industrial revolution, and demonstrate an industrial view of nature within the novel.

The Pastoral Undertones of the Luddite Conflict

Read without a pastoral framework in mind, the interjection of the multiple riots, frame-breaking raids, and gunfights that constitute the labor disputes in *Shirley* does very little to further the plot, as Korg astutely points out in his "The Problem of Unity in *Shirley*." These disturbances are often outlier occurrences which prove to do little more than demonstrate Moore's position of influence within the rural community of Yorkshire and develop the reader's knowledge of his character. However, when read as events that elaborate the shift of the Yorkshire landscape from a rural space into a rapidly industrializing environment, these labor disturbances contribute to the unifying thread of the novel: the pastoral. In much the same way the spectrum of religious figures in the above argument were divided into opposing factions representing the central elements of pastoral works, the opposing sides of the labor disputes in the novel represent the romantic pastoral elements of tradition and familiarity and the industrial forces of innovation, ownership and usage.

Robert Moore occupies perhaps the most perilous position of any figure in the novel. This difficult position is a result of the restrictions of the Orders in Counsel, edicts brought about by the ongoing war with Napoleon which prevent Moore from trading freely, and the subsequent piling up of his cloth because of this inability to trade. Additionally, Moore must weigh the cost of employing a human work force against the promise of cheaper, more efficient processing of cloth with the use of newly invented machinery. Moore is also a representative of the industrial philosophy in that he wants to cultivate and benefit from the resources of the natural world in order to restore honor to his family name.

As if his political views and management style with regard to his former employees were not enough to alienate him from the rural inhabitants of Yorkshire, his foreign origins further characterize him as 'other' in his interactions with the labor force. Moore's position and movement within the novel inspire a unanimous response from the rural community:

> Misery generates hate: these sufferers hated the machines which they believed took their bread from them; they hated the manufacturers who owned those buildings. In the parish of Briarfield, with which we have at present to do, Hollow's-mill was the place held most abominable; Gerard Moore, in his double character of semi-foreigner and thoroughgoing progressist, the man most abominated. (27)

In this passage we see evidence that the rural community in conflict with Moore subscribes to the romantic pastoral practice of bestowing objects with symbolic significance. In this case the machines are described as physically robbing the labor class of its food, and this romantic pastoral philosophy is yet another obstacle Moore must overcome.

At the other end of the spectrum sits Hiram Yorke, a country gentleman of the "old school" who occupies the same socio-economic position as Moore. Between these two figures Brontë has established a dichotomy of the traditional expectations of a country authority figure and Moore's unsuccessful strides in that area. These characters are not so much put at odds as they are representative of two men in the same position of authority separated by tact, experience, and pastoral function in Yorkshire.

Yorke is a worldly, educated, and experienced country gentlemen but has learned to appreciate and use his rural beginnings in Yorkshire to his advantage. One of the starkest contrasts between these two figures is demonstrated through Brontë's description of a familiar character trait: regional accent. Among the earliest descriptions of Robert Moore,

Brontë describes the harshness of his accent: "His manner of speaking displeases. He has an outlandish accent, which, notwithstanding a studied carelessness of pronunciation and diction, grates on a British, and especially on a Yorkshire, ear" (24-25)[1]. This indicates a conscious effort on Moore's part to distinguish himself from the rural environment he means to conquer. Hiram Yorke, on the other hand, is a practiced expert at manipulating his manner of speaking:

> His manners, when he liked, were those of a finished gentlemen of the old school; his conversation, when he was disposed to please, was singularly interesting and original; and if he usually expressed himself in the Yorkshire dialect, it was because he chose to do so, preferring his native Doric to a more refined vocabulary, "A Yorkshire Burr," he affirmed, "was as much better than a Cockney's lisp, as a bull's bellow than a ratton's squeak." (43)

Hiram represents to the Yorkshire community the traditional expectations of how a country gentlemen ought to be, down to his preference for the Yorkshire accent. While he has traveled and speaks French fluently, Mr. Yorke knows when to play to the Yorkshire audience, a skill that sets him apart from Robert Moore, who clumsily offends with his foreign affectations and inexperience.

Mr. Yorke and Mr. Moore are further identified as different styles of country gentlemen in their separate management styles. Robert Moore's conduct with respect to the workforce previously under his employment proves to be just as grating to Yorkshire sensibility as his accent is to their northern ears:

> His last words had left a bad, harsh impression: he, at least, had "failed in the disposing of a chance he was lord of." By speaking kindly to William Farren,—who was a very honest man, without envy or hatred of those more happily circumstanced than himself; thinking it no hardship and no injustice to be forced to live by labour; disposed to be honourably content if he could

[1] There is some discrepancy among the different editions of *Shirley* in reference to this particular quotation, the Oxford University Press Edition substituting "carefulness" for "carelessness" here.

> get work to do,—Moore might have made a friend. It seemed wonderful how he could turn from such a man without a conciliatory or a sympathizing expression. (118)

Moore is so intent upon his industrial agenda, on the acquisition of machinery for his mill, that he exercises no human compassion for Farren in this scene. Further, throughout the novel Brontë characterizes Moore as often feeling emotion towards the cold machines he desires, claiming "Now Mr. Moore loved his machinery" (29), and asserting, "The rioters not having succeeded in effecting an entrance, his grim, metal darlings—the machines—had escaped damage" (323). Moore's affection for the mechanical forces of industrialization in Yorkshire is in direct contrast to the traditional management style of Mr. Yorke. Brontë describes the public perception of Mr. Yorke here:

> He was one of the most honourable and capable men in Yorkshire; even those who disliked him were forced to respect him. He was much beloved by the poor, because he was thoroughly kind and very fatherly to them. To his workmen he was considerate and cordial. When he dismissed them from an occupation, he would try to set them on to something else, or, if that was impossible, help them to remove with their families to a district where work might possibly be had. (42)

Mr. Yorke, as a rural manager who demonstrates compassion towards his employees and those he has to dismiss, represents the expectations that the rural community of Yorkshire have with respect to its labor management. The disparity between Mr. Yorke's and Mr. Moore's management styles shows the friction between the rural environment of Yorkshire and the invasion of industrialization through technological innovation.

When one polarizes the industrial and rural elements in literature one risks oversimplification which brings us back to that third pejorative use of the term "pastoral" identified by Gifford in *Pastoral*. From the rural and industrial camps (with respect to the

landscape) and the philosophies of romantic pastoral and industrial treatment of nature that have been identified in my discussion of *Shirley*, there seems to be a celebration of tradition but also a fear, a fundamental rejection, of any form of innovation. This fear is not what the pastoral is meant to champion. Within my definition of pastoral I emphasize the desire of pastoral figures to retreat from the industrial environment, in whatever form that takes, into a rural space for renewal. I also state that this move is only half of the pastoral convention, as Gifford says: "Pastoral's celebration of retreat is its strength and its inherent weakness. When retreat is an end in itself, pastoral is merely escapist" (47). The function of the retreat and renewal stages within the pastoral are intended to facilitate a return to the industrial space better equipped to navigate that environment. This justification for retreat and the championing of the rural environment to this end in *Shirley* is embodied by the exchange of words and ideas between William Farren and Robert Moore near the end of chapter eight. Here William Farren speaks directly to Robert Moore following the arrest of Moses Barraclough (for his involvement in the frame-breaking activities earlier in the novel). He presents a reasonable and measured analysis of the tensions that the Orders in Council and industrial developments have wrought in the community:

> I've not much faith i' Moses Barraclough," said he; "and I would speak a work to you myseln, Mr. Moore. It's out o' no ill-will that I'm here, for my part; it's just to mak' a effort to get things straightened, for they're sorely acrooked. Ye see we're ill off,—varry ill off: wer families is poor and pined. We're thrawn out o' work wi' these frames: we can get nought to do: we can earn nought. What is to be done? Mun me say, wisht! and lig us down and dee? Nay: I've no grand words at my tongue's end, Mr. Moore, but I feel that it wad be a low principle for a reasonable man to starve to death like a dumb cratur':—I will n't do't. I'm not for shedding blood: I'd neither kill a man nor hurt a man; and I'm not for pulling down mills and breaking machines: for, as ye say, that way o' going on 'll niver stop invention…Invention may be all right, but I know it isn't right for poor folks

> to starve…will n't ye gie us a bit o' time?—Will n't ye consent to mak' your changes rather more slowly? (117-118)

Through the mouthpiece of Farren, Brontë demonstrates an understanding of the difficult position that Moore, Farren, and their respective groups find themselves in at this particular time in Britain's history; she further suggests a desire on the part of the romantic faction to adapt, just more slowly. What Farren is asking of Moore is not to be spared from all forces of industrialization for all time; rather Farren asks for a more gradual introduction of the technology so as to be better prepared to navigate the new environment that comes along with it. Through this scene and this reasonable figure of William Farren, Brontë characterizes the pastoral of *Shirley* as more than "merely escapist." Further, what Brontë has tasked Farren with in this scene is the nearly impossible task of reconciling the romantic and industrial philosophies. In his failure to do so, Farren demonstrates the fundamental incompatibility of the two considerations of nature and retreat.

A Bit of Housekeeping

Identifying pastoral themes and characters within a work in order to address the concerns of critics as to the work's unity as a whole is one thing; however, this does not serve as a viable unifying argument. I believe that the pastoral elements, characters, and motivations that I have identified not only dispel concerns with specific components of the novel but also allow those components to contribute to a larger thematic unity within the novel which I mentioned earlier. That specific thematic unity is what I mean more fully to outline below.

Shirley Keeldar and Caroline Helstone are romantic pastoral figures who operate as such throughout Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*. As "romantic pastoral figures" these characters desire to retreat from industrial spaces into rural spaces in order to be renewed and to return those industrial spaces better equipped to navigate them. This desire is nostalgic. Also, as romantic pastoral figures, Caroline and Shirley have the ability to construct substitute spaces for renewal in response to the wave of industrialization in Yorkshire. These nostalgic urges and the gravitation toward rural spaces can be identified from the earliest stages of Caroline's and Shirley's friendship.

Separate from their respective socio-economic positions, Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar are products of the same sort of upbringing; both orphaned at young ages, they were raised by uncles who were less than ideal parents. The dissimilarities and

disagreements that arise between Caroline and Mr. Helstone, and between Shirley and Mr. Sympson result from the incompatibility of the romantic pastoral in the nieces and the industrial philosophy in the uncles. Mr. Helstone showed himself to be ignorant and disinterested towards his niece in his position as her guardian. This is an extension of his guiding philosophy concerning all women, which he outlines upon noticing the shift in his niece's appearance that seems to have taken place overnight:

> These women are incomprehensible. They have the strangest knack of startling you with unpleasant surprises. To-day you see them bouncing, buxom, red as cherries, and round as apples; to-morrow they exhibit themselves effete as dead weeds, blanched and broken down. And the reason of it all? that's the puzzle. She has her meals, her liberty, a good house to live in, and good clothes to wear as usual: a while that sufficed to keep her handsome and cheery, and there she sits now a poor little pale, puling chit enough. Provoking! (162)

Helstone applies a mode of thinking to women here similar to how Toliver describes the industrial philosophy as operating like an encyclopedia. Helstone's understanding, or lack thereof, of women is that if you provide them with meals, liberty, a good house, and clothing they should sprout and bloom splendidly, in the way a gardener would consult a manual in order to provide the proper light and watering for bringing up flowers. There is no tenderness or compassion in Helstone's concern for his niece in this section; if we continue with our metaphor, he is more disappointed in the progress of his gardening project. He does not understand what he has done wrong.

Equally insensitive and incompatible is the conduct of Shirley's guardian Mr. Sympson as the narrator asserts, "Miss Keeldar and her uncle had characters that would not harmonize,—that never had harmonized. He was irritable, and she was spirited; he was despotic, and she liked freedom; he was worldly, and she, perhaps, romantic" (392). Here

Brontë uses the term "romantic" to differentiate the two. This similarity of female oppression would seem to have given these two figures grounds enough for becoming fast friends; however, it is not this similarity of plight that bonds them. The foundation of the friendship between Caroline and Shirley comes from their mutual appreciation of the natural world. Brontë's description of one of their earliest exchanges sums up the similarity that ties them together:

> The very first interchange of slight observations sufficed to give each an idea of what the other was. Shirley said she liked the green sweep of the common turf, and, better still, the heath on its ridges, for the heath reminded her of moors: she had seen moors when she was travelling on the borders near Scotland. She remembered particularly a district traversed one long afternoon, on a sultry, but sunless day in summer: they journeyed from noon till sunset, over what seemed a boundless waste of deep heath, and nothing had they seen but wild sheep; nothing heard but the cries of wild birds. (177)

This remembered scene of sheep on the highlands recalls even the earliest of pastoral settings: the shepherd *Idylls* of Theocritus. Shirley's fond remembrance of, and Caroline's mutual admiration for, this natural landscape separate and distinct from the noise, bustle, and society of human industry, mark both of them as pastoral figures very early in the novel. Very soon thereafter Caroline gives voice to this shared identity in the language of regional identity:

> "You are a Yorkshire girl too?"
>
> "I am—Yorkshire in blood and birth. Five generations of my race sleep under the aisles of Briarfield Church: I drew my first breath in the old black hall behind us,"
>
> Hereupon Caroline presented her hand, which was accordingly taken and shaken. "We are compatriots," said she. (178)

What Caroline and Shirley recognize in each other at this moment is not merely a common place of birth, but a common philosophy. They share an identity and a tradition that is

connected with the land, with the natural world as Yorkshire, with its farmlands, its simple ways, and plainspoken inhabitants, exemplifies the pastoral rural environment.

Within the rapidly industrializing period and geographical position that these figures occupy, the physical, natural, renewal space of Yorkshire past is receding as technological innovation advances. Brontë details this predicament of the shifting landscape in her description of Caroline at the pivotal age of eighteen where one is caught between the past innocence of imagination and myth, and the uncharted future of bitter experience:

> Before that time our world is heroic; its inhabitants half-divine or semi-demon; its scenes are dream-scenes: darker woods, and stranger hills; brighter skies, more dangerous waters; sweeter flowers, more tempting fruits; wider plains, drearier deserts, sunnier fields than are found in nature…Elf-land lies behind us, the shores of Reality rise in front. (83)

This natural environment that Brontë describes harkens back to the Golden Age construction of Arcadia in classical pastoral texts, and she refers pointedly to the paradise of Eden with her 'more tempting fruits' description. Caroline at eighteen years old is meant to stand for the liminal space between the nature-dominated world of Yorkshire past and the rapid industrialization of the rural community that has begun. Over the course of *Shirley*, Brontë traces the progression of rural Yorkshire into industrialized Yorkshire and pays specific attention to how Shirley and Caroline, as romantic pastoral 'compatriots,' respond to this shift. Another important moment in the progression of the Yorkshire landscape comes from Brontë's narrator describing the state of the natural world:

> It was a peaceful autumn day. The gilding of the Indian summer mellowed the pastures far and wide. The russet woods stood ripe to be stript, but were yet full of leaf. The purple of heath-bloom, faded but not withered, tinged the hills. The beck wandered down to the Hollow, through a silent district;

> no wind followed its course, or haunted its woody borders. Fieldhead gardens bore the seal of gentle decay. On the walks, swept that morning, yellow leaves had fluttered down again. Its time of flowers, and even of fruits, was over; but a scantling of apples enriched the trees; only a blossom here and there expanded pale and delicate amidst a knot of faded leaves. (403)

The tone of *Shirley*'s narration here is like that of the calm before a terrible storm. There is an anticipation of some great change, not necessarily for the better, as the woods are ripe for the violent act of being stripped and the fading heath foliage is described as anticipating its inevitable withering. While the decay of the gardens is described as gentle, the time of bloom, of life, of generation in nature through fruit is decidedly past and the cold of winter is on the horizon. This hints at the transition Yorkshire is going through and to the shifting of the seasons as field and flower are overtaken by machinery and industry. But here also is a breath of hope in the delicate apple blossoms holding onto their branches past their season. However, this hope of overcoming, of coping with an industrializing landscape is slim as the pale blossoms lying against a backdrop of dying leaves. This transition in Yorkshire is fully realized in the concluding paragraphs of the novel as the nostalgic narrator answers the inquiries voiced by her housekeeper about the Yorkshire of days past. The housekeeper asks:

> "What was the Hollow like then, Martha?"
>
> "Different to what it is now; but I can tell of it clean different again: when there was neither mill, nor cot, nor hall, except Fieldhead, within two miles of it. I can tell, one summer-evening, fifty years syne, my mother coming running in just at the edge of dark, almost fleyed out of her wits, saying, she had seen a fairish (fairy) in Fieldhead Hollow; and that was the last fairish that ever was seen on this country-side." (542)

Positioned during this particular time in Yorkshire's history, *Shirley* poses a difficult challenge to its pastoral compatriots, Shirley and Caroline, as it is the landscape that makes a transition from one type of pastoral environment to another. In traditional pastoral storylines characters occupying the industrial landscape bodily move into the rural environment in search of retreat and return, whereas in industrializing Yorkshire, the established rural landscape is shifting in the opposite direction. Operating as good pastoral figures do, searching for a natural space in which to retreat, Shirley and Caroline devise expeditions into the natural world. Two such expeditions are planned by Brontë's pastoral figures; the first of which is suggested shortly after the beginning of their friendship. Caroline describes it here:

> "We were going simply to see the old trees, the old ruins; to pass a day in old times, surrounded by olden silence, and above all by quietude."
>
> "You are right; and the presence of gentlemen dispels the last charm, I think. If they are of the wrong sort, like your Malones, and your young Sykes, and Wynnes, irritation takes the place of serenity." (179)

With this excursion Shirley and Caroline propose a retreat into nature. Such a retreat is, by design, separate from society or the company of other participants than themselves whose addition to their party would negate the silence and sanctity of the natural space that harkens back to old times. Another such retreat is suggested later in the work by Shirley, this time to the seaside, and Caroline expresses her desire to go in language full of her longing to be renewed by the natural, in this case, sea-scape:

> "I shall like to go, Shirley," again said Miss Helstone. "I long to hear the sound of waves—ocean-waves, and to see them as I have imagined them in my dreams, like tossing banks of green light, strewed with vanishing and re-appearing wreaths of foam, whiter than lilies. I shall delight to pass the shores of those lone rock-islets where the sea-birds live and breed unmolested. We shall be on the track of the old Scandinavians." (206)

Caroline's construction of the seaside environment is informed by the ideal constructions of her dreams. Her desire to visit this place is fueled by the lack of humanity's impact on nature there, as the birds are unmolested, and by her desire to step into the shoes of the mythical past Norsemen who trekked there.

The link between these two proposed retreats of Shirley and Caroline, besides their similar rhetoric praising the quiet of the natural environment apart from the society of mankind and the nostalgic connections to ideal pasts in their descriptions, is that neither of these proposed retreats is able to occur. Shirley and Caroline are unable to pursue these retreat schemes because of the tumult of activity in Yorkshire due to the wave of industrialization that is invading the rural landscape: specifically the siege of Hollow's Mill and the aftermath of that attack. Consequently, their plans, that would have fulfilled their desires as pastoral figures for retreat, remain unrealized throughout the whole of the novel. Shirley captures the state of transition in Yorkshire by reproaching Caroline during the midnight assault on Hollow's Mill: "These are not the days of chivalry: it is not a tilt at a tournament we are going to behold, but a struggle about money, and food, and life" (287-288).

In order to satisfy their desire as pastoral figures to retreat from the rising tide of industrialization, Caroline and Shirley must find or construct substitute spaces in which to retreat, the way that Wordsworth's shepherd Michael tries to construct a space for his son Luke in "Michael, a Pastoral Poem." I believe that Caroline and Shirley construct nostalgic pasts that serve to replace the classical pastoral retreat spaces of physical landscape and natural environment. *Shirley*, under this thematic framework, can be read as a unified novel

that follows Shirley's and Caroline's progression through the rapidly industrializing Yorkshire to trace the success or failure of their ability to retreat into nostalgic pasts for renewal and return. It is with this larger thematic framework in mind that I will proceed to address the third of Korg's unity concerns and the rest of this analysis.

Return of the Matron: Mrs. Pryor and her Nostalgic Function

The final element of *Shirley* that needs to be addressed in any argument for the novel's unity has to do with a familiar character type of Charlotte Brontë's: a governess. Korg outlines this final element here: "the character of Mrs. Pryor and her secret that she is Caroline Helstone's mother. The revelation of this secret is elaborately prepared, but it seems to contribute little to the action" (126). In order to justify this elaborately prepared revelation, it is necessary to examine the figure in *Shirley* upon whom this revelation has the largest impact: Caroline Helstone. I categorize Caroline as a romantic pastoral figure in *Shirley*, and I claim that she substitutes a nostalgic past for a physical rural retreat space. This, however, would seem to be unfounded as Caroline's childhood is anything but ideal:

> She recollected—a dark recollection it was—some weeks that she had spent with him [her father] in a great town somewhere, when she had had no maid to dress her or take care of her; when she had been shut up, day and night, in a garret-room, without a carpet, with a bare uncurtained bed, and scarcely any other furniture; when he went out early every morning, and often forgot to return and give her dinner during the day, and at night, when he came back, was like a madman, furious, terrible. (87-88)

Idealization, specifically in the pastoral, does not represent the true past, but rather a construction of a perfect ideal, as outlined by Alexander Pope in 'An Essay on Pastoral': "So that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceiv'd then to have been " (5). Lacking a nostalgic past, Caroline demonstrates

a desire for knowledge of the past despite what she is able to piece together herself. This identifies nostalgia as one of the governing forces of her character. We are first made aware of the pull of nostalgia on Caroline as she questions her guardian, Mr. Helstone:

> "You term marriage miserable, I suppose, from what you saw of my father's and mother's. If my mother suffered what I suffered when I was with papa, she must have had a dreadful life."
>
> Mr. Helstone, thus addressed, wheeled about in his chair, and looked over his spectacles at his niece: he was taken aback…
>
> "Your father and mother? Who has been talking to you about them?"
>
> "Nobody; but I remember something of what papa was, and I pity mama. Where is she?"
>
> This "Where is she?" had been on Caroline's lips hundreds of times before; but till now she had never uttered it.
>
> "I hardly know," returned Mr. Helstone; "I was little acquainted with her. I have not heard from her for years: but wherever she is, she thinks nothing of you; she never inquires about you; I have reason to believe she does not wish to see you." (88)

The earnestness of Caroline's inquiries about her mother comes from a desire to know that at least she, Caroline, was not alone in being on the receiving end of her father's mistreatment; if her mother was subjected to this trauma, then Caroline need not feel so isolated by her experience. This knowledge alone would be enough for Caroline to conjure a slightly brighter past. However, this slim ray of light is scattered by her Uncle's cruel response and refusal to speak at length on the matter.

Later, we discover that nostalgia is not so easily defeated in its hold on Caroline as her desire for an idealized mother figure is explicitly expressed:

> Shirley had mentioned the word "mother:" that word suggested to Caroline's imagination…a gentle human form—the form she ascribed to her own mother; unknown, unloved, but not unlonged-for.
>
> "Oh, that the day would come when she would remember her child! Oh, that I might know her, and knowing, love her!"
>
> Such was her aspiration. (271)

Robbed of a true nostalgic past, Caroline is still moved by the force of nostalgia and constructs a mother-figure in her imagination along with very specific parameters for how she would interact and bond with this figure. Mrs. Pryor is that nostalgic subject, the idealistic mother who satisfies Caroline's most intimate hopes. Her revelation and reconciliation with her daughter serve a necessary plot function in that they give Caroline a reason to live. It also serves a pastoral function. With her retreat space restored Caroline is able to cope with reality: "But if you *are* my mother, the world is all changed to me. Surely I can live—I should like to recover—" (362). Previous to the revelation that Mrs. Pryor is her mother, Caroline's reality consisted of the following "facts:" her father had been exceedingly cruel to her, her mother had abandoned her and had no desire to hear of her, her caretaker was impatient and unable to understand women, the only man she desired to marry was destined for her best friend, and any possibility of her pursuing a profession was to be prevented by her guardian. Caroline's motivation for continuing to live in this manner dwindles significantly by this time in the novel. However, her discovery that she has a mother, benevolent and kind, clever and caring, serves as a balm for the traumas Caroline suffers and those she falsely assumes. This is a demonstration of the function and necessity of Mrs. Pryor's revelation within the scope of the novel as a whole.

A Prior Retreat

Caroline Helstone is not the first of Charlotte Brontë's female protagonists to exist as a character barred from retreat into nature and robbed of a nostalgic past. There is a notable similarity between *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* in this respect. Jane Eyre is as much a romantic pastoral figure operating without a traditional pastoral retreat space as Caroline Helstone. From that most recognizable of opening lines, Brontë describes restriction, (an inability for an orphaned female protagonist to retreat): "There was no possibility of taking a walk that day" (5). Although, in reality, it is the weather that impedes Jane from taking a walk, this simple statement can also be read as an analogue for the societal constraints imposed on Jane Eyre by her limbo status in the household of the Reeds. Recreational walks have been robbed of their leisure and renewal potential as they afford Jane no respite, no strategies with which she may better navigate her adopted household: "I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John and Georgiana Reed" (5). While Jane seems to be opposed to the notion of finding renewal in the physical landscape, Brontë shows her retreating into the pages of the Reeds' copy of Bewick's *History of British Birds* just a few lines later. Brontë shows Jane to be under the influence of pastoral nostalgia as much as Caroline is.

Jane enacts a very conventional pastoral retreat following the revelation that Rochester is married to the terrifying apparition of Bertha Mason, plunging straight into the countryside (if not a conventional pastoral landscape, then into the natural world) to escape the cruel reality of Rochester's deceit: "The great gates were closed and locked; but a wicket in one of them was only latched. Through that I departed: it, too, I shut; and now I was out of Thornfield" (273). Following this physical retreat into the countryside, Jane experiences the obstacles of the road, collapses, and is taken in and nursed back to health by the Rivers family. Jane quickly establishes a rapport and affection for the Rivers in much the same way that Caroline Helstone takes a liking to Mrs. Pryor previous to any knowledge of their relation. Jane responds to her own revelation and restoration of familial connection in the same way that Caroline does; the knowledge and the inheritance that come along with it renew and revitalize her. This renewal takes place in the middle of chapter thirty-three:

> It seemed that I had found a brother: one I could be proud of,—one I could love; and two sisters whose qualities were such that, when I knew them but as mere strangers, they had inspired me with genuine affection and admiration. The two girls on whom, kneeling down on the wet ground, and looking through the low, latticed window of Moor House kitchen, I had gazed with so bitter a mixture of interest and despair, were my kinswomen; and the young and stately gentlemen who had found me almost dying at his threshold was my blood relation. Glorious discovery to a lonely wretch! This was wealth indeed!—wealth to the heart!—a mine of pure, genial affections. This was a blessing, bright, vivid, and exhilarating;—not like the ponderous gift of gold; rich and welcome enough in its way, but sobering from its weight. (328)

Both Caroline Helstone and Jane Eyre are pastoral in their desire to retreat into rural space, whether physical or psychologically constructed, for renewal. These are romantic pastoral figures who are physically inhibited in their desires to retreat and are denied nostalgic pasts

in their positions as orphans and through the cruelty and silence of their adopted families. As these nostalgic pasts are restored to these figures they are able to enact the pastoral process of retreat and renewal and are able to return from their retreat spaces better able to navigate the remainder of their respective novels.

Shirley's Titanic Revision: Eve of Eden

These nostalgic pasts, these psychological substitute spaces in Brontë's work, are by nature constructed and idealistic, in much the same way the natural world is portrayed in all classical forms of the pastoral as paradisiac and Edenic. Perhaps the most striking of these constructed nostalgic pasts is that of Shirley Keeldar's Eve of Eden. The "Mother of Titans" mythos that Shirley constructs serves the same end that Caroline's discovery of her mother does. Shirley is another of Brontë's orphans who has been robbed of a nostalgic past to retreat to, but instead of constructing one of her own with simplistic hope for familial relation as Caroline and Jane had before her, Shirley reaches further back and revises the history of Eve into a satisfactorily nostalgic past.

Classical Eden is the archetype for the perfect natural environment. However, the vision of Eden to which Shirley is exposed, specifically John Milton's, is populated by a central female figure that causes the fall of humanity from divine grace. It is not difficult to find justification for Shirley's rejection of Milton's depiction of Eve in *Paradise Lost* as all description and reference to the mother of creation is framed in language that belittles and subjugates her in favor of Adam. From our first glimpse of the human race in *Paradise Lost* we find justification for Shirley's disapproval as Satan sees Adam and Eve for the first time:

> Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;
> For contemplation he and valour formed,

> For softness and sweet attractive grace,
> He for God only, and she for God in him:
> His fair large front and eye sublime declared
> Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad;
> She as a veil down to the slender waist
> Her unadorned golden tresses wore
> Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waved
> As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
> Subjection… (*PL* IV, 296-307)

The level of detail supplied here by Milton as to the difference in stature and position between these two figures is extensive. Adam is described as having godlike hair, well groomed, parted, and kept off of his shoulders while Eve's description speaks of an unkempt, wild, and unsophisticated mane of hair deemed lesser by comparison. Further, Milton also draws attention to Eve's hair as specifically "unadorned" though both Adam and Eve are naked before the fall of man. However, these descriptions of appearance fall short of the power of "not equal," "absolute rule," and "subjection." These themes of inequality and subjection endure throughout the entire work and are not so veiled as to be incomprehensible to Shirley or Brontë for that matter. Brontë would have been familiar with the themes and imagery of *Paradise Lost* as a result of her own reading of the text and the visual interpretations painted by John Martin. Milton's Eden and Eve as described above are naturally unacceptable to Shirley as components of a nostalgic past for her to retreat to, so she presents her spirited revision in a conversation with Caroline Helstone:

> "I would beg to remind him [John Milton] that the first men of the earth were Titans, and that Eve was their mother: from her sprang Saturn, Hyperion, Oceanus; she bore Prometheus—-"
>
> "Pagan that you are! what does that signify?"
>
> "I say, there were giants on the earth in those days: giants that strove to scale heaven. The first woman's breast that heaved with life on this world yielded the daring which could contend with Omnipotence: the strength

> which could bear a thousand years of bondage.—the vitality which could feed that vulture death through uncounted ages,—the unexhausted life and uncorrupted excellence, sisters to immortality, which, after millenniums of crimes, struggles, and woes, could conceive and bring forth a Messiah." (270)

This revision of Eve helps us understand the success with which Shirley is able to occupy and manage her socio-economic position in 19th century Yorkshire. The confidence and skill that Shirley wields in her dual role as Captain Keeldar, and Shirley Keeldar Esquire, manager of a large country estate, can be said to originate from this nostalgic past of hers; a female descendant of "Milton's Cook" as Shirley calls the Eve of *Paradise Lost*, would not so skillfully navigate the world of rural estate management as Shirley Keeldar Esquire, heir of Eve the Mother of Titans does. When disagreement arises between Shirley and Mr. Sympson, her Uncle and former guardian, on the question of suitable marriage partners, their discussion of belief and nonbelief harkens back to the 'paganism' that Caroline applies to Shirley's rejection of Milton's Eve and her own interpretation. Shirley speaks first:

> "An infidel to *your* religion; an atheist to *your* god."
> "*An—atheist! ! !*"
> "Your god sir, is the World. In my eyes, you too, if not an infidel, are an idolater: I conceive that you ignorantly worship: in all things you appear to me too superstitious. Sir, your god, your great Bel, your fish-tailed Dagon, rises before me as a demon. You, and such as you, have raised him to a throne, put on him a crown, given him a scepter. Behold how hideously he governs! See him busied at the work he likes best—making marriages." (466)

Shirley's repeated references to Mr. Sympson's deity as male and male-appointed harkens back to her rejection of Milton's Eve and the opinions of marriage that come from belief founded on Milton's Eve. It is Mr. Sympson who has raised this particular 'Bel' onto a throne, and it is this male god figure who is specifically concerned with the making of

marriages. What Shirley identifies in this section and what she is responding to with her revision is the lack of a female voice of any kind in her uncle's "religion." Her own Eve, the Mother of the Titans, gives Shirley and, by extension, all women, a voice of authority in response to the Mr. Sympsons of the world, but this conception of Eve also a generates a past, subject to interpretation as it might be, to which women can look back and find some sense of renewal.

With the three figures that I have presented who fulfill their desire for pastoral retreat through the construction of nostalgic pasts one discerns an important division in terms of the success of their substitute retreat spaces. Jane Eyre, Caroline Helstone, and Shirley Keeldar all, in one way or another, are unable to complete a physical pastoral retreat as a result of outside forces. Further, these figures are inhibited from retreating into what would be an acceptable substitute for a physical space, a nostalgic past, because of a traumatic childhood in the case of Jane and Caroline, or a negative portrayal of a female figure central to a creation-myth in the case of Shirley. Caroline Helstone and Jane Eyre, however, are developed by Brontë as having their familial relations, and, by extension, their nostalgic pasts restored by an external force. In their respective novels, both Jane and Caroline physically encounter and reunite with family members that they (Jane and Caroline) were previously unaware of or had thought of as lost forever. Shirley, on the other hand, constructs and maintains her own nostalgic past without any external reinforcement or familial reunion. I believe that this division is a result of the economic power and influence to which Shirley is heir. Though Shirley does not acknowledge or discriminate according to class in her friendships or interactions with other characters

within the novel, she does benefit from her elevated position as landowner. As a result of her affluence, Shirley does not need to have a nostalgic past restored to her, because her own constructed past is not challenged or thwarted by figures that exert influence over her. Caroline and Jane both suffer at the hands of guardians in positions of power with regard to their perceptions of their pasts as Mr. Helstone crushes any hope Caroline may have of learning anything positive about her mother, and Mrs. Reed deliberately sabotages Jane's chances of familial reconciliation. Shirley is not subject to these kinds of manipulations and disappointments as she is recognized and treated as a wealthy heiress from the moment her parents pass away.

By tracing the attempts of two figures separated by class to enact pastoral retreat in the shifting landscape of Yorkshire, Brontë presents us with a richer portrait of the romantic pastoral figure in an industrializing landscape. Brontë demonstrates that the ability to construct a nostalgic past to which one might retreat varies among the socio-economic classes. The affluent and powerful orphan (Shirley) is not dependent upon outside forces to restore a deliberately sabotaged nostalgic past the way the poor orphan (Caroline) is. Brontë's construction shows the impact of one's socio-economic position within the context of pastoral retreat: even among romantic pastoral characters, wealth helps considerably when navigating shifts in pastoral landscapes.

Nostalgic Matchmaking

Shirley Keeldar and Caroline Helstone are romantic pastoral figures who operate as good pastoral figures should: they are moved by a nostalgic desire to retreat into rural spaces for renewal. Within the industrial period that they inhabit, natural renewal spaces are receding under the tide of technological advances. In order to fulfill their desire to retreat, Shirley and Caroline find substitutes for the natural space in the form of imagined nostalgic pasts. But these nostalgic pasts encounter resistance in the form of various forces and characters in positions of influence over Caroline and Shirley. These oppressive forces, however, are no match for the pull of nostalgia which allows Caroline and Shirley to retreat, renew, and return to the industrial world better armed to live in it. Caroline desires knowledge of her mother in order to be comforted by the notion of a kindred spirit who endured her tyrannical father's wrath. She then bonds with Mrs. Pryor in whom she finds a surrogate mother figure and is finally restored to her nostalgic past by the revelation that her chosen surrogate is her actual mother. This restoration of a nostalgic past allows Caroline to pass through pastoral retreat, renewal and return and saves her life.

Caroline is presented with a vision of her mother by Mr. Helstone which inspires her nostalgic desire to know her mother despite the negative portrait he paints. In much the same way, Shirley Keeldar is presented with a construct of her ancestry which she finds unacceptable: the biblical representation of Eve. As a pastoral figure, Shirley is moved by

the force of nostalgia to construct an Eve of whom she is proud to call her ancestor and a past in which the female component of the creation myth is powerful instead of subservient. This construction of Eve is in keeping with the strength and ease with which Shirley is able to manage her power and influence in Yorkshire.

From the construction of nostalgic pasts we move to perhaps the most befuddling of elements within Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*: that of marriage. Love and marriage, both in the romantic pastoral and industrial senses, unrequited love, and resolution toward becoming the dreaded "old maid" figure dominate the individual anxieties of characters within *Shirley*, especially in relation to the four figures with whose marriages the novel closes. No other theme within the novel seems to move along the plot with such conviction as the interaction between those in love, previously in love, those pursuing marriage whether for economic or romantic reasons, and those resolved to never marry for various reasons. Further, the novel is filled with portraits of marriage and unrequited love both past and present, and Brontë colors her scenes with the tensions and context of these intimate relationships. The complex relationship between Hiram Yorke and Mr. Helstone, for example, is understood by the reader as having everything to do with the two men having been romantic rivals:

> Mrs. Helstone was hardly under the sod when rumours began to be rife in the neighbourhood that she had died of a broken heart; these magnified quickly into reports of hard usage, and, finally details of harsh treatment on the part of her husband; reports grossly untrue, but not the less eagerly received on that account. Mr. Yorke heard them, partly believed them. Already, of course, he had no friendly feeling to his successful rival; though himself a married man now, and united to a woman who seemed a complete contrast to Mary Cave in all respects, he could not forget the great disappointment of his life, and when he heard that what would have been so

> precious to him had been neglected, perhaps abused by another, he conceived for that other a rooted and bitter animosity. (46)

Brontë uses past relationships to flesh out the complex relationships between her diverse characters within *Shirley*, but marriage and romantic love do not only serve as devices of exposition; they also frame the worldview and expectations of the central figures of the novel. The attitudes towards marriage of those in positions of influence, specifically with regard to Caroline Helstone, within the novel shape how she constructs her own prospects as a woman who prefers a romantically inspired marriage. Mr. Helstone is quick to discredit the institution of marriage as he addresses his niece:

> "Uncle," said she [Caroline], "whenever you speak about marriage, you speak of it scornfully: do you think people shouldn't marry?"
>
> "It is decidedly the wisest plan to remain single, especially for women."
>
> "Are all marriages unhappy?"
>
> "Millions of marriages are unhappy: if everybody confessed the truth, perhaps all are more or less so."
>
> "You are always vexed when you are asked to come and marry a couple—why?"
>
> "Because one does not like to act as accessory to the commission of a piece of pure folly." (86)

Further, it is the perception of her parents' failed marriage and her consequent abandonment that Mr. Helstone manipulates in order to quash Caroline's curiosity about the past of which she has been robbed. Brontë shows us inside the curious mind of Caroline in order to shape our understanding of her (Caroline's) impression of marriage:

> This mother was then the drunkard's wife: what had *their* marriage been? Caroline, turning from the lattice whence she had been watching the starlings (though without seeing them), in a low voice, and with a sad bitter tone, thus broke the silence of the room:—
>
> "You term marriage miserable, I supposed, from what you saw of my father's and mother's." (88)

Brontë manipulates marriage to function as a device of separation as characters who have the potential for romantic connection have vastly different definitions of the institution of marriage. But before I explore those definitions it is necessary to frame the argument that follows as addressing one of the most important objections raised by critics of *Shirley*: that Shirley's submission to the patriarchal institution of marriage seems to be in direct opposition to her feminist identity throughout the novel.

The criticism that has preceded this analysis, in particular the articles of Rebecca McLaughlin and Susan Zlotnick, sought to reframe our reading of Shirley Keeldar and her attitudes towards and "submission" to marriage as either an extension of the playful wit of Shirley (McLaughlin) or in keeping with the minimal masculine power that Shirley actually wields throughout the novel (Zlotnick). In order to present a pastoral reading of this particular portion of the novel it is necessary to examine three complex relationships in the work that Brontë constructs as developing and progressing towards marriage or as having the potential to do so. The three relationship pairings that we are concerned with are those of 1) Shirley Keeldar and Robert Moore, 2) Caroline Helstone and Robert Moore, and 3) Shirley Keeldar and Louis Moore. Understood within the thematic envelope of Caroline and Shirley as romantic pastoral figures in the novel, nostalgia once again becomes the motivating force behind the success or failure of these romantic pairings.

Central to the development of the plot of *Shirley* is the supposed romantic involvement between Shirley Keeldar and Robert Moore. Their rapport and playfulness in public spheres sets up the assumption about their eventual marriage throughout the

Yorkshire community. These assumptions are, in all fairness, not completely without foundation as we can see in a scene from the School-Feast section of the novel:

> You would not have thought, to look at him, that he was a poor, struggling man seated beside a rich woman; the calm of equality stilled his aspect: perhaps that calm too, reigned in this soul. Now and then, from the way in which he looked down on Miss Keeldar as he addressed her, you would have fancied his station towered above hers as much as his stature did…She sought his eye once with hers: you could read, in its soft yet eager expression, that it solicited clearer replies. (262)

This, to all appearances, intimate tête-à-tête between landlord and tenant is justification enough for the rumors of love-making it inspires. In fact, the commonplace of this supposed intimacy is evident as Mr. Sympson, Shirley's guardian who has only been in Yorkshire for a short time, assumes Moore to be Shirley's secret suitor when he discovers her refusal of Sir Phillip Nunnely: "'Do you know (leaning mysteriously forward, and speaking with ghastly solemnity), do you know the whole neighbourhood teems with rumours respecting you and a bankrupt tenant of yours—the foreigner Moore?'" (465). Moore himself is taken in by this farce of intimacy, misreading, as the whole neighborhood does, Shirley's preferential treatment of him.

As I said above, marriage can also serve as a device of separation owing to different characters holding to different notions of what marriage ought to be. Moore's opinion of marriage can be said to be an economic or industrial one as evidenced by his conversation with the curate Malone:

> "The cloth we can't sell, the hands we can't employ, the mills we can't run, the perverse course of events generally, which we cannot alter, fill our hearts, I take it, pretty well at present, to the tolerably complete exclusion of such figment as love-making, &c."
>
> "I go along with you completely Moore. If there is one notion I hate more than another, it is that of marriage; I mean marriage in the vulgar weak

> sense, as a mere matter of sentiment; two beggarly fools agreeing to unite their indigence by some fantastic tie of feeling—humbug! But an advantageous connection, such as can be formed in consonance with dignity of views, and permanency of solid interests, is not so bad—eh?" (21)

Robert Moore subscribes to the industrial philosophy of ownership and utilization of natural resources, and he also views marriage this way. All of the sections I have quoted with regard to the supposed relationship between Shirley and Moore, especially these last two, are framed within some context of economic disparity between the two or of economic gain to be achieved by their union: in the scene at the School-Feast Moore is described as a poor wretch sitting beside a rich woman, Mr. Sympson points to Moore's bankruptcy when interrogating Shirley, Moore describes what fills his heart as practical concerns tied to his trade, and Malone describes the sentimental incarnation of matrimony as occurring between 'two beggarly fools.' Further, Moore says to Mr. Yorke, "Marriage! I cannot bear the word; it sounds so silly and utopian. I have settled it decidedly that marriage and love are superfluities, intended only for the rich, who live at ease, and have no need to take thought for the morrow" (140). In fact, it seems that Moore had no intention of seeking out matrimonial connection until an exchange with Mr. Yorke planted seed of marriage for fortune in his head, as Yorke informs Louis months later,

> "By the time he comes back he'll find himself checkmated. Louis, 'there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune, but, once let slip, never returns again.' I'd write to Robert, if I were you, and remind him of that."
>
> "Robert had views on Miss Keeldar?" Inquired Louis, as if the idea was new to him,
>
> "Views I suggested to him myself, and views he might have realized, for she liked him." (398-399)

It is safe to say, given the rhetoric used to describe the relationship between Robert Moore and Shirley Keeldar, that Moore's motivation for pursuing her as a marriage partner is

merely economic and by extension industrial. For Moore, securing a marriage with a woman with Shirley's fortune will allow him to continue his industrial agenda from a position of power and wealth rather than from that of a debtor. So the motivations for the Shirley Keeldar/Robert Moore marriage represent purely industrial, practical, and economic ends. This particular character pairing is not successful in producing a marriage at the end of the novel because Shirley's ideas about marriage are quite different from Moore's.

The disparity between the reality of Shirley's and Robert's relationship and the assumptions made about them by the community is made apparent when Moore recounts his unsuccessful proposal to Mr. Yorke:

> "You conceived an idea obnoxious to a woman's feelings," was her answer: 'you have announced it in a fashion revolting to a woman's soul. You insinuated that all the frank kindness I have shown you has been a complicated, a bold, and an immodest manoeuvre to ensnare a husband: you imply that at last you come here out of pity to offer me your hand, because I had courted you. Let me say this:—Your sight is jaundiced: you have seen wrong. Your tongue betrays you: you now speak wrong. I never loved you. Be at rest there. My heart is as pure of passion for you as yours is barren of affection for me.' (448)

This marks the end of this particular character pairing as it puts to rest any doubt of Robert and Shirley's romantic or matrimonial potential, and again it is in the fundamental difference between their approaches regarding marriage that the potential success of this pairing falls apart. Shirley sees right through the economic and industrial agenda of Robert's proposal and recoils from her discovery of Moore's presumption.

The second character pairing evolves a bit more successfully in that it results in a marriage at the close of the novel: the pairing of Caroline Helstone and Robert Moore. This

pairing succeeds in that it adheres to the powerful force of nostalgia which acts upon the pastoral figures in the novel, in this case Caroline. Whereas the supposed connection and prospective marriage of Shirley and Robert had its basis in economic and industrial motivations (simply put, it was thought of as more of a business transaction than an example of romantic love) the connection that binds Caroline and Robert Moore has deeper, nostalgic roots, at least on Caroline's side. At the beginning of the novel, Caroline and Robert have little more than a vague familial affection for each other: Caroline is subject to the school-room direction of Hortense while Robert provides the occasional distraction. This dynamic is perhaps best characterized by the narrator's description of the rare evenings that Caroline would spend at Hollow's cottage with Hortense and Robert Moore:

> Mr. Moore, released from the business-yoke, was, if not lively himself, a willing spectator of Caroline's liveliness, a complacent listener to her talk, a ready respondent to her questions. He was something agreeable to sit near, to hover around, to address and look at. Sometimes he was better than this,—almost animated, quite gentle and friendly. (67)

What the narrator describes here is a very innocent, almost indifferent affection and fellowship between Caroline and Robert. Further, Robert is described as an object to which questions are put and at which one looks rather than a man actively engaged in conversation. This dynamic shifts, at least in Caroline's mind, following a particular night in which Robert the object becomes Robert the romantic interest. Following a seemingly enchanted evening of Shakespeare, conversation, and a moonlit walk, Caroline expresses her new perception of Moore's relationship to herself:

> "When people love, the next step is they marry," was her argument. "Now I love Robert, and I feel sure that Robert loves me: I have thought so many a time before; to-day I *felt* it. When I looked up at him after repeating

> Chénier's[2] poem, his eyes (what handsome eyes he has!) sent the truth through my heart." (84-85)

Unfortunately this assumed shift in Robert's and Caroline's relationship is short-lived as the following day Robert resumes a cooler and indifferent posture towards his cousin. This dashes any hope of romantic development between the two and motivates most of Caroline's decisions and actions throughout the course of the novel. The disappointment that Caroline experiences as a result of Moore's coldness to her the following day is intensified by Moore's feud with her uncle and the restrictions that Mr. Helstone imposes on her as a result. Caroline experiences this previous state of bliss when she assumes a romantic connection between herself and Robert and this is the nostalgic construction on which her affection and later obsession with Moore are based. As a result of her inability to interact with Moore following his feud with her uncle and the distance that Moore himself imposes with his indifference toward her, Caroline develops a yearning, a desperate nostalgic desire to return to the evening in which Moore was kind and affectionate towards her. One realizes the depth of Caroline's affection for Robert Moore in her reflection following his coldness:

> "Different, indeed," she concluded, "is Robert's mental condition to mine: I think only of him; he has no room, no leisure to think of me. The feeling called love is and has been for two years the predominant emotion of my heart; always there, always awake, always astir." (147)

As the distance between these figures grows both physically and metaphorically throughout the course of the novel, Caroline's character becomes dominated by her affection (and it is a nostalgic affection) for Robert Moore. Her actions within the novel leading all the way

[2] *La Jeune Captive* by André Chénier 1819.

up to her falling ill and discovering her mother's identity are examples of her desperately trying to cope with a present devoid of Moore's presence. Caroline's actions are attempts to fill that void with employment and plans for a future without him. Perhaps the clearest example of this comes shortly after she owns her affections for Robert:

> "I shall not be married, it appears," she continued. "I suppose, as Robert does not care for me, I shall never have a husband to love, nor little children to take care of. Till lately I had reckoned securely on the duties and affections of wife and mother to occupy my existence. I considered, somehow, as a matter of course, that I was growing up to the ordinary destiny, and never troubled myself to seek any other; but now, I perceive plainly, I may have been mistaken. Probably I shall be an old maid. I shall live to see Robert married to someone else, some rich lady: I shall never marry. What was I created for, I wonder? Where is my place in the world?" (149)

It is interesting to note that even here, Caroline assigns economic motivation for the supposed future bride of Robert Moore. Caroline's nostalgic yearning for Moore is not to be diminished throughout the novel as is evident from her hallucinatory dialogue in reference to a lock of Moore's hair: "Don't take it from me, Robert! Don't! It is my last comfort—let me keep it. I never tell anyone whose hair it is—I never show it" (355). This particular pairing can be said to have survived the trials and tribulations experienced by both characters throughout the novel because of the strong force of nostalgia which accompanies Caroline as a romantic pastoral figure in the novel.

The last of these character pairings, that of Shirley Keeldar and Louis Moore, carries the most significance within the scope of the novel as their relationship does the most to move the plot along. Most of the novel works towards unearthing subtle glimpses of Shirley's and Louis's relationship which accumulate as the novel rushes towards the conclusion. Further, the development of this relationship is important thematically because

Shirley's decision to marry carries such weight within criticism of the work. Both Susan Zlotnick and Rebecca McLaughlin propose reasonable interpretations of the context in which Shirley decides to marry Louis Moore. These proposed interpretations strive to account for the apparent contradiction that action seems to indicate. In order to present my own reading of this apparent disparity it is necessary to examine what Brontë actually outlines when Shirley's attitude toward marriage is mentioned.

In reading *Shirley* the audience is in a unique position to ascertain Shirley Keeldar's and Louis Moore's romantic history in that Brontë offers up tiny glimpses of a narrative that only solidifies into a whole towards the end of the novel. Upon first reading it is not readily apparent that every time Shirley is confronted with possible suitors or lays out a description of what her ideal partner would be she is, in reality, referring to a man that she has already met and for whom she has cultivated a nostalgic affection. This notion is complicated by the juxtaposition Brontë sets up between descriptions of this ideal man whom Shirley desires and comments that Shirley makes about the limitations marriage would impose on her. In its first appearance, the latter of these juxtaposed elements is easily misconstrued upon a first reading as Caroline addresses Shirley's ability to remove herself from interactions with men:

> "But you could not, you were married."
>
> "No, I could not,—there it is. I could never be my own mistress more. A terrible thought!—it suffocates me! Nothing irks me like the idea of being a burden and a bore,—an inevitable burden,—a ceaseless bore! Now, when I feel my company superfluous, I can comfortably fold my independence round me like a mantle, and drop my pride like a veil, and withdraw to solitude. If married, that could not be." (181)

When this quotation is taken out of context and held up as the crux of an argument for the definitive opinion of Shirley Keeldar towards marriage, it seems to make a strong case that marriage was furthest from and most repugnant to her mind. Upon a second reading, however, it becomes clear that this particular effusion of Shirley's is the second part of a more specific analysis of marriage to men like Mr. Helstone:

> If I were convinced that they are necessarily and universally different from us—fickle, soon petrifying, unsympathizing—I would never marry. I should not like to find that what I loved did not love me, that it was weary of me, and that whatever effort I made to please would hereafter be worse than useless, since it was inevitably in its nature to change and become indifferent. That discovery once made, what should I long for? To go way—to remove from a presence where my society gave no pleasure. (181)

This is the specific scenario to which Caroline responds above. Further, this is the kind of marriage in which Shirley asserts she would not be able to be her own mistress. Once we understand this section of the text, the description that Shirley offers referring to her nostalgic affection for Louis Moore falls more neatly into line.

Another section which seems to convolute our understanding of Shirley and her attitudes toward marriage comes from Mr. Sympson's interrogation of his niece following her refusal of Sir Phillip Nunnely's proposal. Here Shirley conducts herself with a delicate balance of subtlety and facetiousness which is better understood upon a second reading of the work. The dramatic irony set up by a second reading of *Shirley* is quite effective as the audience is aware of a gentleman named Moore to whom Shirley refers fondly, whose qualities she refers to as those that she desires in a suitor, and that this is not the person to whom Mr. Sympson is referring. The qualities to which Shirley is attracted through her nostalgic attachment to Louis Moore are made plain in her rejection of Sir Phillip:

> Did I not say I prefer a *master*? One in whose presence I shall feel obliged and disposed to be good. One whose control my impatient temper must acknowledge. A man whose approbation can reward—whose displeasure punish me. A man I shall feel it impossible not to love, and very possible to fear. (462)

This language carries with it a tenor of domination and oppression which might be read as conflicting with the power and freedom that Shirley has and desires to retain, but her rhetoric here also seems to be tempered by her words a few lines earlier: "a tyrant would not hold me for a day" (461). A tyrant, a dominating oppressor, is not what Shirley desires of a husband as the man she has in mind is a tutor.

When we understand that Shirley's descriptions of and self-proclaimed preferences for a partner in marriage are based upon her former tutor Louis Moore from the very outset, her marriage to him at the close of the novel does not undermine her operation as a strong feminist character throughout the work. Further by understanding the context of all of Shirley's previous assertions about marriage, it becomes clear that to Shirley, marriage is not characterized by domination, oppression, and imposed limitations. Nostalgia is what fuels Shirley's continued affection for Louis in the years following her studying under him, and their marriage is the result of the pastoral force of nostalgia for the student/tutor relationship acting on the romantic pastoral figure of Shirley.

Conclusion

In order to address the general panning by critics of Brontë's novel, I suggested a reexamination of the novel under a new genre: the pastoral. In response to the numerous objections inspired by the complexity of this novel, I argued that *Shirley* can be considered a unified whole if my definition of the pastoral could dispel the three primary concerns that Korg raised in reference to the unity of the novel. I took as foundational, and extended, Gifford's second category of pastoral into my functional definition as it applies to *Shirley*. I defined the pastoral as referring to works that present the complex relationship between two physical or metaphorical landscapes: 1) that of rural space which can be represented by a rural community, the natural world, a golden age, a set of traditions or an idealized past, and 2) that of an industrial space, that can be represented by human society, the city, the royal court, industry, invention, or innovation. I outlined two different philosophical approaches to nature that existed in the 19th century: 1) the industrial philosophy that views nature as a consumable, practical producer of natural resources that must be owned and used in order to enact retreat and renewal, and 2) the romantic pastoral that views nature as a sacred, symbolic landscape which one might retreat to through transcendent objects or dreams. Further, I specified that within this realm of the pastoral, characters that I called romantic pastoral figures have a natural desire to retreat from industrial spaces, in whatever

form they take, into rural spaces. This natural desire in such characters, I argue, is brought about through the power of nostalgia.

I then offered pastoral explanations in response to the three objections raised against *Shirley* being considered a unified whole. The first objection that Korg raises is that the curates in the novel do little to move the plot along and seem to serve no narrative function. I responded with the notion that the first mistake critics make in their analyses of the curate figures is to isolate them from the other religious figures within the scope of the novel. Understood as components within a larger spectrum of religious leadership, the curates serve a very important function: they represent the wave of industrial innovation in Yorkshire in opposition to the established "old school" religious leaders and foreshadow the shifting of Yorkshire from a rural environment to an industrial one. I also identified the curates as industrial figures in the work citing their indelicate table manners. In order to further characterize the curates in this way I referred to the community's perception of them as insensitive to the traditions of Yorkshire manners and Malone's inability to distinguish the impact of industrialization on the landscape of the rural community. Read as components of this larger spectrum of religious leadership I made the case that the time and development that Brontë affords these characters is necessary to fleshing out the opposing pastoral landscapes and philosophies central to the novel's construction.

In response to the second of Korg's objections concerning the focus upon *Shirley's* Luddite riots, I argued that through the events and dynamics set up by this particular conflict within the novel, Brontë elaborates on the shifting of Yorkshire from a rural landscape to an industrial one. I set up a contrast between the management styles and

regional accents of two country gentlemen figures who are representatives of the industrial/rural sensibilities in order to show that the Luddite conflict, much the way the curate figures do, further defines the incompatibility of these two pastoral spaces. I went on to characterize Robert Moore as an industrial figure whose motivation for acquiring machinery is to restore his family's wealth. I paused briefly to address the concern that in so black and white a characterization of rural and industrial spaces we run the risk of over-simplifying and condoning the desire for pure escapism. I pointed out that Brontë acknowledges these concerns by instilling within the figure of William Farren the desire to have more time in which to cope with the influx of industrial technology in order to better prepare himself to navigate the new landscape. Farren's suggestion here demonstrates the necessity within pastoral texts of return as well as retreat and renewal, but it also demonstrates the impossibility of reconciling the romantic pastoral and industrial philosophies.

Before addressing the final of Korg's challenges about the unity of *Shirley*, I paused in order to acknowledge that, while I had answered the objections to *Shirley's* unity by suggesting the function of pastoral conventions within the novel, I had, to this point, not championed a specific unifying framework for the novel. I then suggested a unifying framework: that Shirley Keeldar and Caroline Helstone are romantic pastoral figures who are moved by nostalgia to retreat from industrial spaces into rural spaces in order to be renewed and return better prepare to navigate the industrializing world. Further, I asserted that *Shirley* traces the attempts of these characters to find substitute retreat spaces as the tides of industrialization in Yorkshire displace the rural landscape. I referred to Shirley's

and Caroline's early interviews and their bonding over fond remembrances of the natural world as a basis for their being pastoral figures, and outlined two proposed retreats they had planned as indicative of the shifting landscape in which these retreats were never realized. Further I used Brontë's description of Caroline's innocence at eighteen and the final image of the novel to punctuate the completed transition of Yorkshire from a rural space into an industrial one.

With this overarching theme in mind, I then proceeded to address Korg's final objection to *Shirley*'s unity: specifically the function of Mrs. Pryor and her secret identity as Caroline Helstone's mother. I argued that as a romantic pastoral figure, Caroline, while deprived of a nostalgic past into which she might retreat, is always under the influence of nostalgic urges concerning her mother. The revelation of Mrs. Pryor to her daughter of their familial connection serves to restore this nostalgic past to Caroline and allows her to experience retreat, renewal, and return as she shifts from the sick bed back into health.

After answering Korg's objections I continued to examine the notion of the nostalgic past as a substitute retreat space in *Jane Eyre*. I characterized the figure of Jane Eyre as exhibiting the same romantic pastoral tendencies and nostalgic urges towards estranged family members that Caroline does. I identified similarities in Jane's inability to access conventional retreat spaces and showed that the restoration of Jane's nostalgic past through familial reconciliation provided a retreat space for her.

From here I moved to examine Shirley's revision of the biblical figure of Eve, keeping in mind this concept of psychological substitute space for pastoral retreat. I argued

that Shirley, unable to retreat physically into the rural landscape and finding the patriarchal model for Eve unacceptable as a nostalgic retreat space, reconstructs the mythos of Eve. Reimagined as the mother of Titans, Shirley's Eve, and by extension, Shirley's conception of Eden, becomes an acceptable retreat space for Shirley.

Finally, I turned from my discussion of pastoral nostalgia to address the apparent contradiction that Shirley makes in marrying Louis Moore. I described a trio of relationship pairings and showed that those pairings motivated by economic and industrial concerns, that of Robert Moore and Shirley Keeldar, were ultimately unsuccessful as they did not satisfy the desires of the pastoral figures in question. The pairings that exhibited nostalgic affection, however, i.e. Robert and Caroline and Shirley and Louis, resulted successfully in marriage.

Charlotte Brontë did not craft a novel which merely borrows the themes and locations central to pastoral literature in *Shirley*. Her work examines and demonstrates, through her own pastoral, the difficulties raised by the advent of industrialization in Yorkshire. Her curates are not caricatured bores, but serve as necessary components of a religious spectrum. They are metaphorical representations of what industrialization means for Yorkshire, and they embody the de-spiritualized treatment of nature central to the industrial philosophy. Robert Moore is another industrial figure as he is devoted to using his land to restore his family's wealth. The Luddite riots and labor disturbances in the novel come about as the results of his foreign industrial management style clashing with the romantic pastoral sensibilities of the Yorkshire labor force. Brontë captures the

impossibility of reconciling both these pastoral philosophies by silencing William Farren's attempt to compromise between the two.

Shirley is not only a novel that can be united by an overarching pastoral theme, but it also engages with the pastoral to offer unique perspectives on important themes in 19th century English literature. *Shirley*'s pastoral examines the power of women, how marriage is viewed, and how romantic pastoral retreat can adapt when the landscape changes. Brontë demonstrates the power of nostalgia and shows her romantic pastoral figures triumphant in their marriages made from love and not economic practicality. She tempers this however with the disappearance of romantic pastoral 'fairyland' in her narrator's final speech. *Shirley* shows that the pastoral has evolved as the landscape has shifted, and Brontë's romantic pastoral figures have met the challenge of industrialization. With their nostalgically constructed retreat spaces, Shirley Keeldar and Caroline Helstone stand triumphant, showing that romantic pastoral still survives in an industrialized world.

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