



Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

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Victorianism and Anne Brontë

• Useful website: The Victorian Web:
<<http://www.victorianweb.org/index.html>>

• The Brontës: *noms de guerre*

- Charlotte: Best known, published the most.
- Emily: *Wuthering Heights*
- Anne: *Agnes Gray*, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*
- Branwell Brontë

Some Critical Background

- Jan B. Gordon says its "the longest single-narrative, enclosing epistolary novel of the nineteenth century" (719).
 - Two letters written by Gilbert Markham, a prosperous farmer, to his brother-in-law, Jack Halford.
- G. D. Hargreaves: "Markham's narrative reveals important information about himself and about relationships between men and women. He describes the story he plans to relate as 'the most important event in my life-previous to my acquaintance with Jack Halford at least'" (34).
- Carol A. Senf: "...Tenant is much more than a love story. More attuned to questions of gender, contemporary readers can also evaluate the significance of Helen's narrative silence after her marriage to Gilbert" (448).

Narrative Structure

- Preface, frame letter, three volumes, fifty-three chapters
- Documentation: Letters, diaries, memories & recollections
- Chs. 1-53: Gilbert Markham writing to J. Halford.
 - Letters written ~1847-8
- Narratives enclosed within Markham's letters:
 - Chs. 1-15: Markham's recollections about fall 1827~1829.
 - Chs. 16-44: Helen's diary, 6/1/1821 to 11/3/1827.
 - Chs. 45-53: Markham's letters pickup his memories from 1827-June 10, 1847.
 - Chs. 47-49: Helen's letters to Frederick.

Characters, lots of them

- Gilbert Markham (young and old)
 - Absent character: J. Halford (p. 9)
- Helen Graham (17)
 - Son: Arthur (24)
- Frederick Lawrence (39)
- Rev. Millward, Mrs. Wilson, Jane Wilson (19, 20, 37)
- Eliza Millward, Fergus Markham, Hargrave, Mrs. Hargrave, Esther Hargrave

Mor(al) Motifs

- Religion and Morality
 - Seven Heavenly Virtues v. Seven Deadly Sins
 - True Christianity
 - Dogma (37)
